Effects of Indirect Corrective Feedback and Metalinguistic
Corrective Feedback on Chinese-Lower Secondary
Students' English Writing Ability

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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ยูชิน หลิว : ผลกระทบของการเขียนข้อแนะนำเพื่อแก้ไขโดยอ้อมและ
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งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาผลกระทบที่แตกต่างกันของคำติชมการแก้ไข
ทางอ้อม และคำติชมการแก้ไขทางภาษาศาสตร์ต่อความสามารถในการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ
ของนักเรียนชั้น มัธยมศึกษาตอนต้นของจีน และสำรวจความคิดเห็นของนักเรียนที่มีต่อคำติชม
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และทางภาษาศาสตร์จะช่วย เพิ่มความสามารถในการเขียนของนักเรียน แม้ว่าผลเชิงปริมาณ
จากการทดสอบ เของตัวอย่าง อิสระระบุว่าความแตกต่างระหว่างคำติชมทั้งสองประเภท
ไม่ชัดเจน ผลจากการสัมภาษณ์ระบุว่านัก ศึกษาชอบคำติชมการแก้ไขทางภาษาศาสตร์มากกว่า
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The current study aimed to investigate the different effects of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' English writing ability and explored students' opinions towards the two types of feedback in two aspects: students' preference and students' understanding. The participants were thirty grade 8 students who studied at a public school in Rizhao City, Shandong Province, China. The instruments for collecting data were pretest, posttests, and interview questions. Quantitative results from paired sample t-tests indicated that both indirect and metalinguistic corrective feedback improved students' writing ability. While quantitative results from the independent sample t-test and two-way repeated measure ANOVA revealed that the difference between the two types of feedback was not significant. The results from the interview revealed that students preferred metalinguistic corrective feedback because it was easier to understand. This study confirmed the positive effects of indirect and metalinguistic corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' writing ability.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The role of English in China has become more and more important since globalization. National English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (Ministry of Education, 2017) mentioned that one of the most important things in the curriculum is to develop students' basic literacy. To be specific, after attending the English curriculum, students need to achieve the following goals: having a good mastery of language knowledge, acquisition of language skills, and development of communication ability. All of those aimed to lay a solid foundation for further study of English or other scientific and cultural knowledge of English. Writing, being one of the fundamental language abilities, holds significant importance in the realm of English education. However, Among the set of English language acquisition skills, writing has been identified as the most formidable challenge (Nunan, 1991). Thus, the cultivation of English writing proficiency among students is of paramount importance in the field of English teaching. The English curriculum standard for compulsory education in 2011 clearly stated that lower-secondary students have the ability to the agreed level 3. The writing objectives are listed as follows: First, students can provide common punctuation marks; Second, students can use clear charts and posters to express facts and feelings. Thirdly, students can make some greetings and invitations with samples. Fourthly, students can write stories with pictures in the accurate form of expressions or sentences (Ministry of Education, 2011). The requirements not only

stress the role in communication but also understand common forms and grammatical structures to improve writing accuracy.

In the realm of second language acquisition, it is inevitable for learners to make errors, whether in oral or written language production. Consequently, it becomes the responsibility of lower-secondary school educators to identify and correct these errors. The ultimate goal is to improve the accuracy of writing and language skills among students (Li & He, 2017). Ferris (1999, 2004) pointed out that "the majority of students do want their writing language errors to be corrected."

The effectiveness of Written Corrective Feedback in facilitating second language acquisition has been a subject of extensive debate, with varying perspectives on its theoretical impact (Ferris, 1999, 2004, 2006; Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2007).

Truscott (1996) put forth the argument that providing corrective feedback on the written output of second language students is not only unnecessary and ineffective but may also have a counterproductive effect. A reasonable number of research began to agree on the effectiveness of written corrective feedback (Abdulloh, 2021; Bitchener, 2008; Ene & Upton, 2018; Knoch, 2008a; Mao & Lee, 2021; Sheen, 2007; Zhang et al., 2021).

Subsequently, researchers delved into examining whether specific types of written corrective feedback are more likely to assist students in enhancing their writing abilities. The empirical study focused on the different effects of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' English writing ability.

1.2 Statement of Problems

English writing, as a productive ability to learn English, focuses on the core of cultivating students' comprehensive language ability (Ministry of Education, 2017). As for writing ability, lower-secondary students who are capable of entering secondary schools can correctly write different forms of passage, such as invitations, letters, and explanations with given information (Ministry of Education, 2011). Writing accuracy plays an essential role to help students to achieve this goal. One way to improve students' writing accuracy involves teachers' feedback. Previous research found that written corrective feedback is effective. Lee (2009) mentioned that corrective feedback helps students improve their writing ability. Chandler (2003) made a comparison of the writing accuracy between experimental groups: group one and group two. Group One had the task of rectifying the errors pointed out by the researcher, whereas Group Two receive no feedback. The results indicated that the writing accuracy of group one obtained significant improvement than group two. The identification of research gaps pertaining to prior investigations on written corrective feedback serves as a foundation for conducting the new study. A multitude of recent studies have extensively investigated and compared not only the overall effectiveness of feedback but also the potential variations in these effects based on different types of feedback employed.

The manner in which EFL teachers respond to errors during instruction plays a pivotal role in the learning journey of students, particularly those in lower-secondary schools, as it constitutes the foundational stage of their language acquisition process. A handful of research further examined the effect of different types of written corrective feedback. Studies examining the comparative advantages of various

feedback types have commonly classified them into two categories: direct and indirect feedback. (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012:65). More researchers in favor of direct, explicit feedback argued that direct feedback is more facilitative of improved accuracy (Knoch, 2008b, 2010; Van Beuningen et al., 2008, 2011). Worth mentioning here, based on the different classifications of written corrective feedback, direct corrective feedback includes direct feedback with metalinguistic feedback. According to research by Knoch (2010) and Révész (2015), explicit direct corrective feedback, which includes both direct corrections and metalinguistic explanations, has the potential to enhance students' awareness and comprehension significantly. It is noticeable that most of the research compared the direct CF and indirect CF without mentioning metalinguistic CF. Even though it might be inclined to conclude that direct CF is more effective than indirect feedback, it would be premature to take this position. Currently, there is a lack of certainty regarding which specific types of linguistic errors are more responsive to particular types of corrective feedback. Further research is needed to determine the most effective approach for addressing different types of errors in second language acquisition.

Additionally, a good portion of research abroad is based on contexts where English is regarded as a second language and most domestic studies on WCF mainly target college students (Ferris & Roberts,2001; Mao & Lee, 2021; Sheen, 2007; Zhang et al., 2021). In the context of Chinese lower-secondary schools, the research related are few, but this period is quite vital to English language learning.

Furthermore, the writing skill in the public schools in Rizhao City, Shandong province is not prioritized as much as reading and listening due to the small portion of writing in the high school entrance exams. And also based on the heavy workload of

the teachers, it is not possible to provide direct corrective feedback (Lee,2021). Another reason why the current study chose to identify indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback is that those two types of CF suit the local school's teaching requirements and parents' desire which are teachers correcting all the errors in students' writing pieces. This research aimed to focus on Chinese lower-secondary students' writing ability by using two types of corrective feedback: indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the effects of indirect corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' English writing ability?

2. What are the effects of metalinguistic corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' English writing ability?

3. Are there any differences in the effects of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' English writing ability?

4. What are the opinions of Chinese lower-secondary students after receiving both types of feedback?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the effect of indirect corrective feedback on the improvement of the English writing ability of Chinese lower-secondary students.

2. To investigate the effect of metalinguistic corrective feedback on the improvement of the English writing ability of Chinese lower-secondary students.

3. To compare the different effects of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback on the improvement of English writing ability of Chinese lower-secondary students.

4. To investigate students' opinions towards indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback after they receive the treatment.

1.5 Definition of Terms

1. Indirect corrective feedback: Ellis (2008) stated that: "indirect written corrective feedback referred to demonstrating the existence of the error by circling, underlining, or otherwise highlighting the error without providing further information about the nature of the error." In this study, indirect corrective feedback is the way that teachers underline and circle the errors without further explanation.

2. Metalinguistic corrective feedback: According to Ellis (2008), metalinguistic corrective feedback refers to providing students with hints or clues about the nature of their errors. In this study, metalinguistic corrective feedback is the way that teachers give students the error codes and brief descriptions by reminding them where and what the error is. Codes and brief descriptions were explained to the students before the instruction.

3. English Writing ability: The English writing ability is known for its multi-componential nature, which includes various essential aspects that can be well understood and measured using the concepts of complexity, accuracy, and fluency, as proposed by Skehan (1998) and Ellis (2003, 2008).In this study, four types of errors were targeted in this study namely, wording and spelling, content, grammar, and structure based on the scoring rubric presented by Brown in 2009.

4. Chinese lower-secondary student: Chinese lower-secondary students refer to students who come from a public school in Rizhao City, Shandong province, and enrolled in the course of reading and writing.

5. Students' opinions towards written corrective feedback: Students' opinions towards written corrective feedback in this study refer to Chinese lower-secondary students' preferences and understandings towards indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback.

1.6 Scope of the Study

1. Population

The research study consisted of 30 lower-secondary students enrolled in a public school located in Rizhao City, Shandong Province, China, during the academic year of 2023. These 30 students were then divided into two distinct groups, identified as Group A and Group B, for the purpose of conducting the study.

2. The variables

Indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic were the independent variables, and the Chinese lower-secondary students' writing ability was the dependent variable.

3. Contents

One writing test and eight writing tasks were assigned during the process of the study. The writing test was used to test students' English writing ability before and after the treatment. Eight writing tasks served as the media for providing

feedback. The semi-structured interview was used to get students' opinions regarding two types of feedback.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Although, there was a noticeable number of researchers proved the positive evidence of written corrective feedback (Abdulloh, 2021; Bitchener, 2008; Knoch, 2008b; Ene & Upton, 2018; Mao & Lee, 2021; Sheen, 2007; Zhang et al., 2021). There were many researchers who have the opposite opinion (Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2007; Shintani & Ellis, 2015; Ekiert & di Gennaro, 2019; Pourdana et al., 2021). Indeed, the main objective of this study was to gather evidence to strengthen the argument for the positive impact of written corrective feedback on second language learning.

Additionally, some researchers have discovered the effectiveness of certain types of WCF. Most of them explored direct corrective feedback and indirect corrective feedback (Knoch, 2010a; STEFANOU & RÉVÉSZ, 2015). The comparison between those two types of feedback is still limited. And in addition, several research studies have been conducted to investigate the impact of written corrective feedback on the writing accuracy of senior high school students and college-level students (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Mao & Lee, 2021; Sheen, 2007; Zhang et al., 2021). There were a few about the effect on the writing accuracy of lower-secondary school students' level.

So, this study took Chinese lower-secondary students as participants to widen the range of research subjects. And the result of the study aimed to add more information about the existing knowledge about the positive effects of corrective feedback and filled the gap about the effectiveness of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' writing ability.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the present study was based on the process-based approach presented by Guth (1989), Kemper et al. (2009), Soew (2002), and Tripple (1996). In Soew's (2002) study, the teaching of process writing was categorized into four distinct steps: pre-writing preparation, first draft, revision, and proofreading. In addition to these, according to his argument, teaching activities such as providing feedback, conducting assessments, and engaging in post-writing tasks can be introduced subsequent to the initial draft writing session. Thus, in the research, indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback were provided after the first draft and the students will rewrite based on the feedback provided by the teacher.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research discovered the effectiveness of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback and detected whether the effectiveness was different. Thus, for the literature review part, it provided basic information about writing ability including the definition of English writing ability, the definition of English writing accuracy, the definition of errors, error analysis, and common errors made by Chinese lower-secondary students. In addition, the paper presented introductory details regarding written corrective feedback, encompassing the definition, categorization, students' perspectives on corrective feedback, and an overview of prior studies exploring written corrective feedback.

2.1 English Writing Ability

2.1.1 The Definition of English Writing

Based on the definition of Byrne (1988), writing is the process of translating ideas into language. White and Arndt (1991) mentioned that writing indicates the ability to share ideas, arouse feeling, and the ability to persuade other people.

2.1.2 The Definition of English Writing Ability

Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987) stated that writing ability refers to the ability to write with thinking, the ability to use rich expressions, and the ability to make use of feedback. Connor (1994) believed that writing ability is composed of four elements: grammar ability, the ability to conceive articles, social language mastery, and the ability to use writing strategies. According to a prevailing viewpoint among

researchers and language practitioners, the concept that the elements of second language (L2) performance and L2 proficiency are multi-componential in nature is widely acknowledged and accepted in the field of language learning and teaching. These constructs are best understood through the concepts of complexity, accuracy, and fluency, which effectively and comprehensively capture their primary dimensions. This viewpoint has been supported by scholars such as Skehan (1998) and Ellis (2003, 2008). Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF) have been commonly employed as descriptors to assess the performance of language learners in both oral and written contexts. These metrics not only help evaluate learners' immediate performance but also serve as indicators of their underlying language proficiency, which influences their overall language abilities. Furthermore, CAF has been employed to measure progress in language learning, as noted by Housen and Huiken (2009). The pioneering work of Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) marked the exploration of writing ability through the dimensions of fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Building upon this foundation, Ellis (2005) further emphasizes that linguistic complexity, accuracy, and fluency serve as valuable indicators of learners' level of second language acquisition and overall proficiency.

2.1.3 English Writing Accuracy

Accuracy, which is also referred to as correctness, is regarded as the oldest and most easily recognizable element within the triad of complexity, accuracy, and fluency. This aspect focuses on the degree of deviation from a particular norm or standard in language use (Hammerly, 1991; Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998).

Instances of deviation from the norm are typically classified as errors. The writing accuracy in this study is shown by the scores. In other words, the fewer errors made in students' writing, the higher the writing accuracy of the composition.

2.1.4 Writing Errors

2.1.4.1 The Definition of Errors

No matter what stage you are at in the process of language learning, you cannot ignore errors. And for a long time, there is not a unified standard for the clear definition of error. Dulay et al. (1982) contend that errors are components present in both spoken conversation and written composition, which essentially "deviate from the standard of mature language performance."

Corder (1967) first put forward that error refers to regular patterns in the learners' speech, which constantly differed from the target structure, and revealed cognitive competence. According to Corder (1967), he proposes classifying slips of the tongue or pen as "mistakes" and distinguishing them from errors, which may serve as indicators of learners' current language knowledge up to a specific stage. And he further supplemented that error is the result of behavior failure. Friedenberg & Stuckey pointed out in 1991 that errors are mistakes or imperfect learning in pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, and grammar by second language learners who can speak fluent English. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002): "errors occur in language use due to reasons such as ignorance, fatigue, or lack of attention." Moqimipour and Shahrokhi (2015) stressed that errors are also caused by "inadequate mastery of some target language rules". Ellis's definition of error in 1994 can be defined as a deviation from the target language standard, while Carl James put the

definition of error in 1998 as an unsuccessful use of the language. Hu (2006) believed that errors were wrong forms of grammar.

In summary, the observation indicates that errors in language usage provide an accurate reflection of the learner's current stage of language development. These errors serve as valuable insights into the learner's language system and the areas that require further improvement or development.

The language errors in this research referred to the deviated language forms that student learners have in terms of language correctness and suitability when referring to standard written English expressions in the same context.

2.1.4.2 Errors Analysis

Corder (1967) emphasizes the importance of studying errors made by learners as it offers valuable insights into the process of foreign language acquisition. Such analysis can shed light on how individuals learn a second language. Additionally, studying errors can provide feedback to teachers regarding the effectiveness of their instructional approaches and teaching styles. Furthermore, Corder (1976) identified two primary purposes for examining errors made by language learners: the diagnostic purpose and the prognostic purpose. The diagnostic purpose revolves around error analysis and helps us understand the learner's progress in language acquisition. By analyzing errors, we can gain insights into the areas where the learner faces challenges and needs further support. On the other hand, the prognostic purpose is a valuable means to guide teachers in adapting their lessons to address the specific issues faced by the learners. By understanding the patterns and types of errors, teachers can modify their instructional strategies to better meet the

individual needs of the learners, fostering more effective language learning experiences.

In 2016, Dipolog-Ubanan conducted a study focused on error analysis, which involved 30 Mainland Chinese students with Mandarin as their first language and English as their second language. The researcher employed interviews and questionnaires as research instruments to examine the various types of errors made by these ESL students.

The study's findings revealed that Chinese students frequently committed errors in three main areas: word choice, word form, and grammar, particularly when engaging in writing tasks. Moreover, a significant number of these students expressed the belief that grammar was the most challenging aspect to master in their English language learning journey. These results shed light on the specific linguistic challenges faced by Mandarin-speaking students when learning English as a second language.

James (2001) classified errors into four types, substance errors which refer to errors in punctuation, spelling, and capitalizing, lexical errors which involve errors in word choices and collocations, grammatical errors which include syntactic and morphological errors, and cohesive and coherent errors which mean errors, lexical cohesion, substitution, and conjunction.

Ferris and Roberts (2001) sorted errors into five types, which include errors in verbs (errors in verb form or tense), noun endings (incorrect or omitted endings of

plural or possessive structures), articles (incorrect or omitted determiners), wrong word , and sentence structure (errors in sentence boundaries, word order, word or phrase omission, and other wrong sentence structures).

Wang (2006) sorted errors into five types, lexical, grammatical, semantic, textual and mechanical errors.

Tang and Liu in 2018 stated four main categories of errors which are wording and spelling, grammar, content, and structure.

2.1.5 Problems of Chinese Students' Writing

In a research study conducted by Nair and Hui (2018), the findings indicated that: "students predominantly made errors in the areas of grammar and sentence structure."

Zhan (2015) conducted a study that revealed the most predominant error found in the writing of Chinese students was the incorrect usage of tense and verb forms. The research also identified several other common errors made by these students, including spelling mistakes, improper use of specific words and phrases, influence from the Chinese language on expressions, errors in singular and plural noun forms, and various other aspects of writing. The study highlighted a range of linguistic areas where Chinese students frequently encountered difficulties in their written English language proficiency.

Huang's (2002) study revealed that among Chinese students, the four most frequent errors observed in their writing were related to mechanics of writing, tenses, prepositions, and subject-verb agreement.

Based on previous research which has investigated the common errors made by Chinese students which are spelling, grammar especially tenses, and also the researcher took the local context into consideration. The common errors researcher encountered during the process of teaching and the researcher consulted with other teachers in the same school. The errors that were targeted in the current study included four categories namely, spelling and wording, grammar, content, and structure.

2.2 Writing Instruction

2.2.1 Process-based Approach

The process-based writing approach is different from the traditional writing teaching method that focuses on the evaluation of writing results. It regards the process of English writing as a communicative social activity, and the focus of teaching should be on the writing process, emphasizing the exploration of students' initiative and creativity (Chen,2021). Raimes (1979, p. 36) emphasized that writing serves as a means to express ideas and convey meaning. Additionally, Raimes posited that the act of writing is a reflective process for the writer, allowing for introspection and contemplation. Hayes and Flower (1981) proposed the first cognitive-oriented writing process model, and Graves (1983) proposed a process-writing model based on this model.

2.2.2 Instructional Stages of Process-based Approach

In 1965, Rohman proposed a writing model that consists of three distinct stages. The first stage is the "pre-writing stage," which involves planning and conceptualizing the content of the writing piece. The second stage is the "composing

stage," where the writer drafts the initial version of the text. Finally, the third stage is the "re-writing stage," during which the writer engages in the process of rewriting and revising the draft to improve its clarity, coherence, and overall quality.

According to Farris (1987), writing involves several steps that take place in a specific order, such as prewriting, writing, and revision.

Based on Janet Emig's (1971) observations of both students and professional writers, she noted that proficient writers prioritize the generation of ideas over writing correctly. She found that if writers overly concern themselves with correctness during the drafting phase, it can disrupt the creative flow. As a result, the writing process, according to Emig, can be divided into several stages: pre-writing, planning, initiating and formulating, revising and editing, and reflecting on the final product.

Murray (1976, pp. 79-80) divided the writing process into three stages, namely, preparation, writing, and rewriting. Pre-writing preparation: clarifying the topic, selecting the audience, choosing the form of writing, and writing. The writing stage is the process of writing the first draft; the rewriting stage is the process of reconsidering the writing. The rewriting stage: reconsider the topic, form, and audience.

According to Applebee (1986), the writing process can be broken down into the following stages: conceptualization, first draft, peer review, revision or second draft, and rewriting.

In Guth's (1989) work, the writing process was succinctly outlined into five key stages: triggering, information gathering, composing, revising, and editing.

Tripple (1996) summarized the process teaching method into four stages: first, prewriting; second, writing; third, revising; and fourth, editing.

Soew (2002) categorized the process of teaching writing into four main stages: prewriting, first draft composition, revision, and proofreading.

The following figure illustrates the framework of the Instructional stages of the process-based approach.

Process-based approach

Tripple (1996) summarized the process approach into four stages: first, prewriting; second, writing; third, revising; and fourth, editing.	Soew (2002) proposed a four-step division for process writing instruction, which includes prewriting, first draft, revising, and proofreading.	Based on the information provided, Kemper et al. (2009) divided the process writing instruction into five steps: prewriting, writing, revising, editing, and finalizing.	In Guth's work from 1989, the writing process was outlined as consisting of five stages: triggering, gathering information, writing, revising, and editing.

First step: pre- writing

Second step: first draft

Third step: revising (teacher provide feedback)

Fourth step: second draft

Final step: submitting the writing

Figure 1 Framework of Instructional Stages of the Process-based Approach

2.3 Corrective Feedback

2.3.1 The Definition of Corrective Feedback

According to Ellis (2009), feedback holds significant importance in language learning as it serves as a motivating factor for learners and contributes to enhancing their linguistic accuracy. This applies to both structural and communicative teaching methodologies. Kepner (1991) characterizes feedback as "a diverse set of responses provided to language learners concerning the correctness of their language usage."

According to Sheen (2007), corrective feedback refers to the responses offered by individuals to language users, indicating instances where their language usage is deemed incorrect. Hyland and Hyland (2006) define feedback as the information given to learners to help them revise their interlanguage. Additionally, Hinkel (2011) provides a definition of corrective feedback: "feedback learners receive on the linguistic errors they make in their oral or written production of a second language."

2.3.2 The Classification of Written Corrective Feedback

Corrective Feedback could be sorted into different types according to different classification standards. Based on the feedback provider, it could be sorted into teacher feedback and peer feedback. Based on the explicitness of feedback, it could be divided into indirect feedback, metalinguistic feedback, and direct feedback. Corrective feedback can be categorized based on the number of errors targeted into two types: focused corrective feedback and unfocused corrective feedback. Additionally, based on the form of feedback, it can be classified as either written feedback or oral feedback.

Corrective feedback can be categorized into different types based on various classification standards. In terms of the feedback provider, it can be classified as either teacher feedback or peer feedback (Ellis, 2009). In regard to the explicitness of feedback, it can be further divided into three categories: indirect feedback, metalinguistic feedback, and direct feedback, as identified by Ellis (2008). Based on the number of errors targeted, corrective feedback can be categorized as focused corrective feedback or unfocused corrective feedback (Sheen, 2007). Additionally, in terms of the form of feedback, it can be classified as either written feedback or oral feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

In the context of L2 writing, Truscott (1996) uses the term "written corrective feedback" (WCF) to refer to grammar correction or written error correction. For the purposes of this paper, the concept of written corrective feedback is derived from prior research and includes elements such as feedback information, error correction, feedback providers, and feedback recipients.

Taking into account the research aims, corrective feedback is understood as the information given by teachers to aid students in identifying and rectifying errors in their English writing (Ellis, 2009).

2.3.2.1 Direct, Indirect, and Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback

In A Typology of Written Corrective Feedback (Ellis, 2008), various types of written corrective feedback, widely recognized by linguistic scholars, were presented. Ellis categorized the feedback into three primary groups: direct, metalinguistic, and indirect.

Direct Written Corrective Feedback: It involves providing explicit instructions to students about the correct form of the error, such as replacing "had" with "has" (Li & Vuono, 2019). Bitchner and Knoch (2010) emphasized that direct corrective feedback offers students clear guidance on the accurate correction of errors.

Ellis (2008) pointed out that since when direct written corrective was applied, the right answer was given to students directly, direct written corrective feedback has an advantage in guiding learners explicitly.

Indirect Written Corrective Feedback: As described by Ellis (2008), refers to the practice of indicating the existence of an error, such as the use of "had," by circling, underlining, or highlighting it without explicitly stating the specific error type or providing explicit information about its nature. Ellis also noted that indirect feedback can guide students to learn and improve their ability to consider the correct form on their own. Ferris (2002) highlighted that indirect written corrective feedback engages students in paying closer attention to their own errors, promoting self-correction rather than solely relying on provided correction forms, as is the case with direct written corrective feedback. Thus, with that in mind, this research paper explored the implicit forms of written corrective feedback in terms of indirect written corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback.

Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback: According to Ellis (2008), metalinguistic corrective feedback involves giving the student a clue or brief description, such as "use the present perfect," or utilizing an error code like "T" (for tense), to identify and specify the nature of the error. In the research conducted by Ellis et al. (2008), metalinguistic corrective feedback was described as providing learners with metalinguistic clues that explain the nature of the error and the

necessary correction. This form of feedback aims to activate learners' explicit knowledge by helping them comprehend the specific error they made.

2.3.2.2 Focused and Unfocused Corrective Feedback

Another important distinction to consider is between 'unfocused' and 'focused' corrective feedback. According to Ellis et al. (2009): "focused corrective feedback involves the deliberate selection of particular errors for correction, while other errors are left unaddressed. Highly focused corrective feedback narrows its scope to correct a single error type, such as errors in the use of the past simple tense. In contrast, somewhat less focused corrective feedback targets more than one error type but still confines the correction to a limited number of pre-selected types, such as simple past tense, articles, and prepositions. Unfocused feedback refers to one kind of feedback in which all of the students 'errors are corrected by teachers." "This type of CF can be viewed as 'extensive' because it treats multiple errors." (Ellis, 2008). In other words, unfocused feedback, also known as comprehensive feedback, was provided on a wide range of linguistic error categories while focused feedback was provided on only one or a few targeted linguistic errors (Bitchener, & Ferris, 2012).

Liu and Brown (2015) expanded the classification of written corrective feedback (WCF) by categorizing it into three types based on its scope. These types include highly focused feedback, which targets a specific error type, mid-focused feedback, which addresses multiple error types (typically ranging from two to six), and highly unfocused feedback, which aims to address all errors in the written work. In their work, Mao and Lee (2021) built upon Liu and Brown's framework and introduced a diagrammatic representation of comprehensive and focused written corrective feedback (WCF) along a continuum, as illustrated in Figure 3. At one end

of the continuum lies comprehensive WCF, which covers feedback on all errors (hence highly unfocused). On the opposite end is highly focused WCF, offering feedback on a single error category. The more types of errors are targeted, the less focused the WFC became. Mao and Lee (2021) extended the continuum by introducing mid-focused WCF, which is defined as feedback targeting a range of error categories, typically around five to six. The continuum offers a valuable framework that highlights the notion that as teachers provide WCF across a larger number of error categories, moving towards the unfocused end of the continuum, the feedback becomes increasingly less focused.
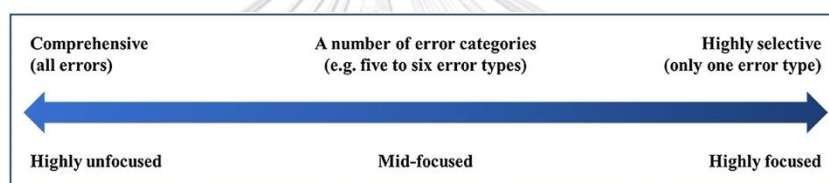
Figure 2 Comprehensive and Focused WCF on a Continuum from Mao&Lee, 2019

2.3.3 Student's Perception Towards Written Corrective Feedback

Lee (2005) discovered that students showed a preference for comprehensive written corrective feedback (WCF) over selective WCF. Li and He (2017) conducted a study on three types of written corrective feedback, namely direct, indirect, and metalinguistic written CF, to investigate the preferences of Chinese secondary EFL learners and teachers' practices regarding these types. They found that gender and language proficiency had an impact on students' preferences for WCF, particularly in relation to metalinguistic feedback. According to Chen et al. (2016), students showed a positive attitude towards explicit forms of written corrective feedback (WCF) and favored receiving detailed comments that covered both content and grammar aspects

of their written work. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2021) discovered that learners' preferences for written corrective feedback were influenced by the nature of the feedback and the specific type of error being addressed. In general, learners tended to prefer feedback that was more explicit in its explanations and guidance.

2.4 Review of Previous Studies on Written Corrective Feedback

This part reviewed both national and international articles about written corrective feedback. The review included the effectiveness of written corrective feedback, teachers' belief in written corrective feedback, and factors that influence the effects of written corrective feedback.

2.4.1 Other Studies

Many researchers have studied the effectiveness of written corrective feedback on second language acquisition. (Bitchener, 2008; Ene & Upton, 2018; Knoch, 2008a; Sheen, 2007; Truscott, 1996). There is a controversy about whether written corrective feedback is useful for second language acquisition. Truscott's (1996) influential study argued that written CF is not helpful and even harmful to L2 acquisition and suggested that it should not be practiced in L2 classes. While written corrective feedback has shown effectiveness in language classrooms (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Ene & Upton, 2018; Sheen, 2007). In a study conducted by Bitchener et al. (2005), the researchers compared the impact of two types of written corrective feedback. They investigated the effects of direct correction alone versus direct correction accompanied by meta-linguistic explanations. The findings of the study showed that learners who received direct feedback accompanied by metalinguistic explanations performed notably better than those who only received direct feedback

without any additional linguistic explanations. Bitchener's research in 2008 revealed that the effectiveness of various types of corrective feedback is measured by how much direct or indirect feedback contributes to enhanced accuracy in language use. Although numerous researchers have reported positive results regarding the effectiveness of written corrective feedback, there have been notable design flaws in some studies (Bitchener, 2008; Ferris, 2008). The absence of a control group makes it challenging to determine whether the observed effects are solely due to error correction or influenced by other factors. Recent studies have aimed to examine and compare the effectiveness of feedback, particularly across different types of feedback. Direct and indirect feedback have received considerable attention in this regard (Ferris, 2002, 2006; Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

Indeed, some researchers support the notion that direct feedback is more effective in the context of written corrective feedback. They argue that direct feedback explicitly points out the errors made by learners and provides clear indications on how these errors should be corrected (e.g., Bitchener, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007). On the other hand, others contend that indirect feedback, which engages students in problem-solving, is superior in fostering independence and autonomous learning (Ferris, 2003, 2006).

In Sheen's (2007) study, it was observed that students who received direct metalinguistic feedback demonstrated better performance compared to those who only received direct feedback. In contrast to other studies that highlighted the effectiveness of different types of feedback, according to Ferris and Roberts (2001), "there was no significant difference in accuracy between two types of indirect feedback: underlining and underlining with codes." On the other hand, Chandler (2003) reported:

"significant accuracy improvements in groups that received underlining as indirect feedback, but no significant gains were observed in groups that received underlining along with codes."

In Diab's (2015) research, a comparison was conducted between two types of feedback: indirect error correction with metalinguistic feedback and only metalinguistic feedback. The findings revealed that no significant difference was found among the groups concerning pronoun agreement errors. However, a notable difference was observed in lexical errors, with the group receiving direct metalinguistic feedback showing a significant improvement in this aspect.

2.4.2 Other Studies in China

In China, there are some studies investigating the issue. Song (2011) studied the students' preference for written corrective feedback and teachers' belief in written corrective feedback. Song stated that written corrective feedback can improve the accuracy of students' writing and students generally hold a positive attitude towards written corrective feedback. Yan (2014) explored four models of teachers' written corrective feedback, direct feedback, lineation, and code feedback, error lineation feedback, and zero feedback through qualitative and quantitative analysis. And the findings of her research showed that intermediate-level students and under-intermediate-level students made remarkable progress. Ran (2021) explored the types of errors in which fossilization in high school students' writing occurred and the effectiveness of written corrective feedback in reducing fossilization. Tian (2021) explored the different types of written corrective feedback on past simple tense and found out that direct corrective feedback and metalinguistic feedback showed equal effects when students language proficiency is advanced. On the other hand, for

students with lower proficiency, metalinguistic corrective feedback had a stronger effect in the long run. The research of Wang (2021) revealed that WCF is conducive to students' linguistic accuracy in writing tasks. Both direct feedback only and direct feedback with meta-linguistic explanation (ME) investigated do have significant differences in their effects but the effect of the latter seems to be longer lasting. Direct feedback with metalinguistic explanation better suits both students with high language proficiency and low language proficiency than direct feedback only in short-term and long-term periods.

In summary, the effectiveness of written corrective feedback has not got conclusive results. As an increasing number of studies validated the beneficial impact of written corrective feedback, researchers have increasingly focused on determining the most effective type of corrective feedback. In this empirical study, the main objective was to investigate the distinct effects of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback on the writing ability of Chinese lower-secondary students.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provided information about the methodology employed in the study. This chapter included the research design, the participants, the research instrument, the pilot study, research procedures, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study was conducted in a public school in Rizhao City, Shandong Province using the quasi-experimental repeated measures design with two experimental groups. Both groups received two types of corrective feedback at different times. White and Sabarwal (2014) stated that quasi-experimental studies primarily focus on comparing the outcomes of two treatments that employ distinct teaching techniques or methods. Thus, the study employed the quasi-experimental design. According to Ellis (1999) : "a repeated measures research design involves each participant contributing multiple sets of data." This could include participants being exposed to more than one treatment or being measured on multiple occasions throughout the study.

The following table presented the research design

Table 1 Research design

	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest 1	Treatment	Posttest 2
Group A	**O₁** English Writing Ability	**X₁** Indirect corrective feedback	**O₂** English Writing Ability	**X₂** Metalinguistic corrective feedback	**O₃** English Writing Ability
Group B		**X₂** Metalinguistic corrective feedback		**X₁** Indirect corrective feedback	

3.2 The Participants

There were 30 students participated in the study. All of the 30 students were in grade 8 from one public lower-secondary school in Rizhao City, Shandong Province, China. They were informed that the research cannot help them gain extra points and they voluntarily joined the project. There are five classes, and the researcher chose one of the classes that she taught. The sampling design of the study was using convenience sampling design. Group A and Group B, two experimental groups that were composed of all pupils, were formed. The results from the independent sample t-test of the pretest revealed that before the treatment Group A and Group B shared the same level of English writing ability. There was no difference between two groups before the experiment.

3.3 Research Procedures

There are three stages for the current study: pre-experiment, experiment, and post-experiment. For the pre-experiment phase, all students were divided into two groups. To make sure there exists no significant distinction in the two groups' English writing skills, the independent sample t-test was performed. For the experiment phase, students in Group A received indirect corrective for 4 weeks and took a posttest, and then received metalinguistic for 4 weeks. Students in Group B received metalinguistic corrective feedback for 4 weeks and then took a posttest and then received indirect corrective feedback for 4 weeks. For the post-experiment phase, both groups received the second posttest and focused group semi-structured interview. In order to eliminate any potential order effect caused by the repeated measures, all students in the study received both indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback. Moreover, the two types of corrective feedback were given in a different order to each student. By doing so, the researchers ensured that any influence of the order in which the feedback was administered was balanced across all participants.

The following figure illustrates the procedures of the study.
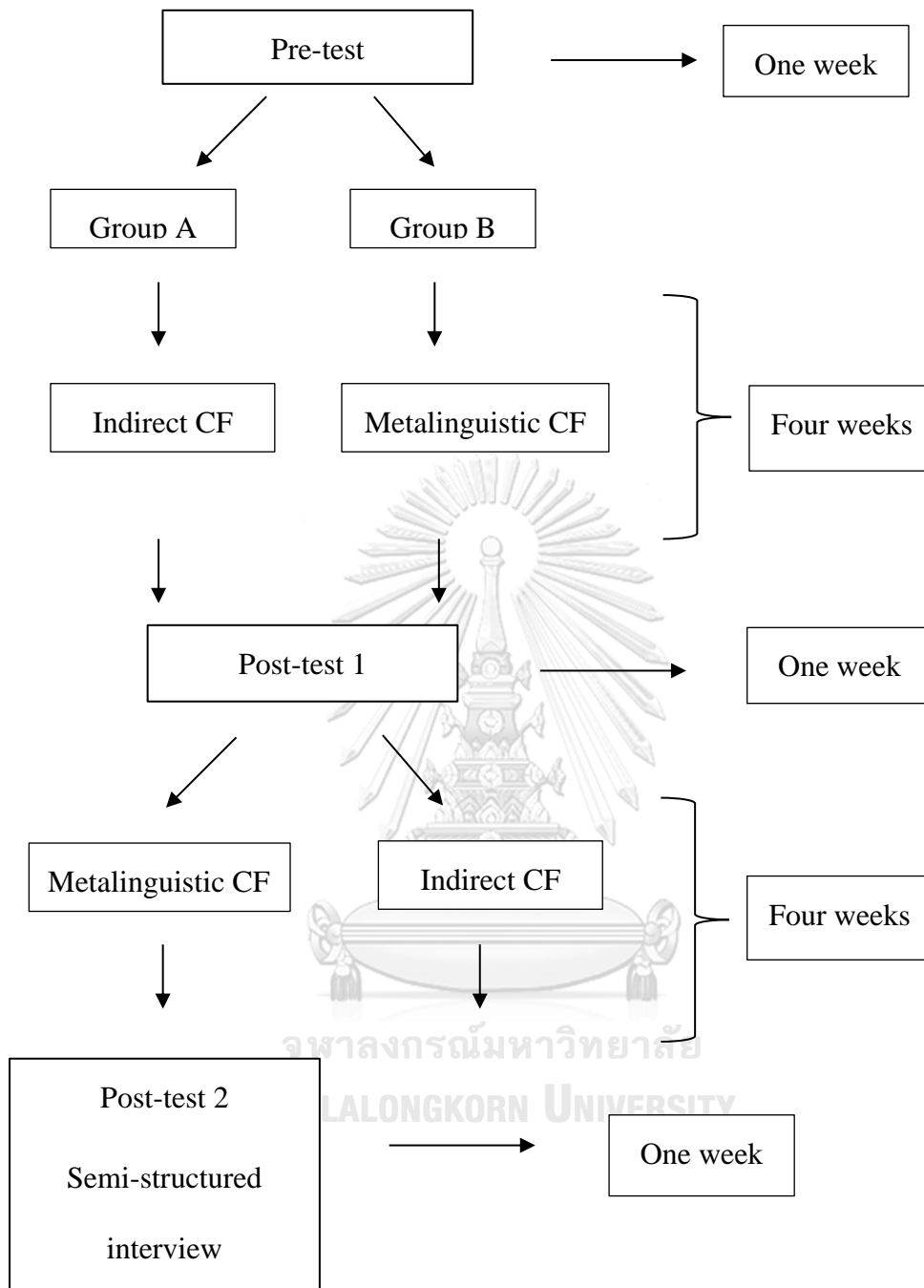
Figure 3 Procedures of the Study

3.4 Research Instruments

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in this study by using the following research instrument: lesson plan, writing test and writing task with scoring rubrics, and semi-structured interview.

3.4.1 Lesson Plan

In this study, the lesson plans were formulated following the process-based approach. There are four stages for process-based writing instruction. First step: pre-writing, in the first step teachers present the background knowledge and the useful sentences and keywords related to the topic, and students brainstorm the information that they will use in the writing piece. Second step: first draft, students use the language form and the key vocabularies that are presented in the first step, and they construct the first draft. Third step: revising (teacher provides feedback), teachers provided students with two types of feedback based on the different phases of the study. And students were given time to revise their drafts. Fourth step: revised draft and submission. Students submit the revised draft.

The details of the lesson plan can be seen in Appendix B

```
┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐
│ Pre-writing  │     │ First draft  │     │   Revision   │     │ revised draft│
│  (teacher    │     │  (teacher    │     │  (students   │     │     and      │
│ presents the │     │ collect all  │     │ revise their │     │  submission  │
│   reading    │ ──▶ │ the writing  │ ──▶ │ writing      │ ──▶ │  (teacher    │
│  paragraph   │     │ pieces and   │     │ pieces based │     │ collect all  │
│ related to   │     │ give         │     │   on the     │     │ the writing  │
│ the writing  │     │ feedback :   │     │  provided    │     │   pieces )   │
│ topic and    │     │              │     │  feedback)   │     │              │
│ deliver the  │     │ indirect     │     │              │     │              │
│ key          │     │ corrective   │     │              │     │              │
│ kownledge).  │     │ feedback or  │     │              │     │              │
│              │     │ metalinguisti│     │              │     │              │
│              │     │ c corrective │     │              │     │              │
│              │     │ feedback)    │     │              │     │              │
└──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘
```
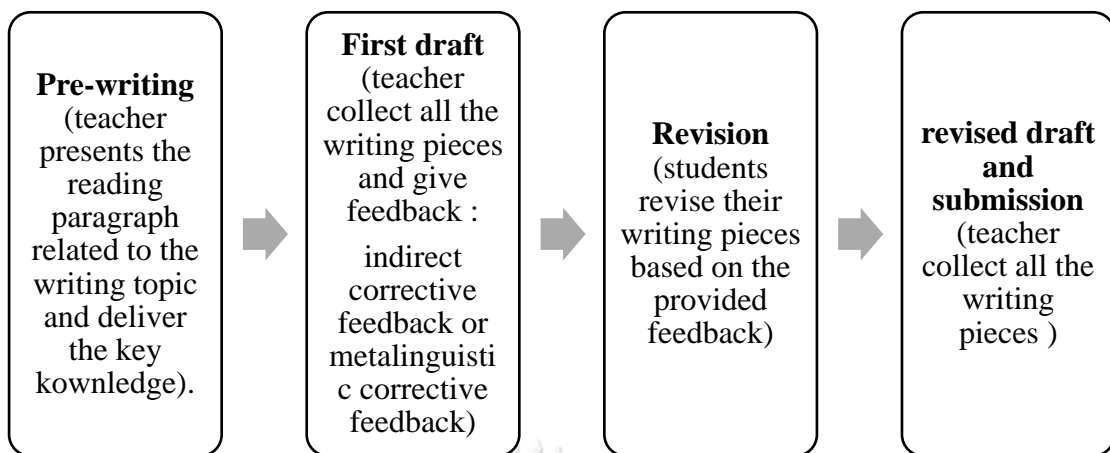
Figure 4 Steps of the Lesson Plan Based on Process-based Approach

To elaborate more about how to give feedback in the first draft stage. As presented in the research procedure, the researcher presented the same lesson in the pre-writing stage. The only difference between Group A and Group B was that they receive different corrective feedback.

Here are the samples of how researcher provided the feedback.

Sample of indirect corrective feedback

Hello, I am <u>Sam</u>.. How <u>is</u> you? Thank you for the letter. I <u>am</u> happy <u>yestertoday</u>. I and my friend <u>is playing</u> football yesterday. After I <u>play</u> the football. I <u>eat</u> two <u>apple.</u> Sam only <u>eat</u> one. I <u>have</u> a good time. What <u>do</u> you do yesterday? I hope you are <u>hapyy</u> too.

Sample of metalinguistic corrective feedback

Hello, I am Sam. How <u>*is*</u> *you?(S/V) Thank you for the letter. I* <u>*am*</u> *happy* <u>*yestertoday*</u>*.(VT,SP) I and my friend* <u>*is playing*</u> *football yesterday.(VT) After I* <u>*play*</u> *the football.(VT) I* <u>*eat*</u> *two* <u>*apple*</u>*.(VT,PL/SG) Sam only* <u>*eat*</u> *one.(VT) I* <u>*have*</u> *a good time. (VT)What* <u>*do*</u> *you do yesterday?(VT) I hope you are hapyy too.(SP)*

S/V indicates subjective-verb agreement error. VT indicates verb tense agreement error. SP indicates spelling error. PL/SG indicates plural/singular error.

More details about the samples of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback can be seen in Appendix L and Appendix M.

3.4.2 Writing Test and Writing Tasks

One writing test and eight writing tasks were included in the study. The writing test was chosen carefully from English compositions in the exams in lower-secondary schools. All the writing tasks were parallel tasks. And for the topics of the writing tasks, it was based on the topic of each unit of the academic English book they currently used in the academic year of 2023. One writing task was used to test students twice. During the experiment phase, Group A and B received the same writing task every week based on the essence of process-based writing instruction. And all the writing tasks were intended to provide students with opportunities to write the target language point.

All participants were required to finish the target writing task in 20 minutes. And the writing piece should contain at least 80 words. The research graded the writing tests and writing tasks based on the scoring rubric adopted by Brown (2007).

The writing test was graded under four criteria namely: wording and spelling; grammar; content and structure.

More details about the writing test and writing tasks were presented in Appendix C and Appendix D.

3.4.3 Semi-structured Interview Questions

Interview questions were adapted from the questionnaire presented by Lee in 2005. The interview questions were designed to explore students' opinions regarding their preferences and understanding of both indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback at the conclusion of the experiment. The aim was to gather insights into how the students perceived and experienced these two types of feedback during the study.

The interview question both in English and Chinese can be seen in Appendix E

3.5 Verifying the Instruments

To ensure the quality of the research instrument, the Item-Objective-Congruence (IOC) forms were constructed and submitted to three experts in the field of English education to check the effectiveness and appropriateness of the research instrument including instructional instrument and data collection instrument which include writing test/ task, scoring rubric, lesson plan, and interview questions. Altogether, four IOC forms were constructed to verify the effectiveness of the instruments. The experts were asked to evaluate the instruments based on the following criteria: 1=congruent,0=questionable, -1=incongruent. If the mean score of each item is equal or higher than 0.5, it indicates that the research instrument is

acceptable to use in the research, and if the mean score of the IOC is below 0.5, it indicates the research instrument needs to be revised based on their feedback.

Changes were made after receiving the feedback from the IOC form.

3.5.1 Verifying the Lesson Plan

According to the results of the IOC form, the average score for the lesson plan was 0.54 which means the lesson plan is acceptable to use as the research instrument. In addition, experts suggested revising the lesson plan as follows:

Expert 3 stated in the IOC form that the teaching procedures need to be rethought. Before students are going to write their first draft, the teacher needs to ask students to share their ideas about their past experiences. This step can also facilitate students' learning about the passage. Students can use the table that the teacher prepared to organize their thoughts. Then writing will be facilitated.

Experts 1 2 3 all recommended rethinking the time allocation for the activities.

After the validation, the lesson plan was adjusted based on their advice. A group discussion was added before they write their first draft, and the time allocation was changed.

The details about the lesson plan Item-Objective-Congruence (IOC) form can be seen in Appendix H.

3.5.2 Verifying the Writing Test

To check the appropriateness of the writing test/task before the experiment, three experts were asked to evaluate the sample writing test. According to the results of the IOC form, the average score for the writing test was 0.8 which means that all three experts hold positive opinions towards the writing test.

The details about the writing test Item-Objective-Congruence (IOC) form can be seen in Appendix I.

3.5.3 Verifying the Scoring Rubric

The average score of the scoring rubric was 0.73 which indicates the scoring rubric is appropriate to assess students' writing tests and tasks.

The details about the scoring rubric Item-Objective-Congruence (IOC) form can be seen in Appendix J.

3.5.4 Verifying the Interview Questions

Based on the results of the IOC form, the average score for the interview questions was 0.72 which indicates that interview questions are valid and acceptable for collecting the data. Though the mean score is above 0.5, all three experts expressed concern about the academic terms used in the interview questions may confuse the students. After the validation, the interview questions were adjusted as follows: use the L1 during the interview in order to reduce students' pressure and simplify the terminologies into easy and understandable examples.

The details about the interview questions Item-Objective-Congruence (IOC) form can be seen in Appendix K.

3.6 Inter-rater Reliability

Two raters were assigned to grade one-third of the writing samples using the exact same scoring criteria in order to ensure inter-rater reliability. One rater is the researcher herself and another rater is an ESL teacher with 10 years of teaching experience. The scores were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient to

evaluate the degree of agreement between the choices made by two raters. The Pearson's correlation coefficients of the two scores for the pretest and two post-tests were presented in the following table:

Table 2 Pearson's correlation coefficients for interrater reliability

Writing test	Pretest	Posttest1	Posttest 2
Pearson's r	0.995	0.952	0.947

To interpret Pearson's r, the r value is 1 indicating the perfect agreement. The r value between 0.9-1 is considered an excellent agreement,0.8-0.9 is a good agreement, 0.7-0.8 is an acceptable agreement, 0.6-0.7 is a questionable agreement, 0.5-0.7 is a poor agreement if the r value is below 0.5 indicating the agreement is unacceptable.

As presented in Table 2, Pearson's correlation coefficient for two scores in three writing tests were 0.995,0.952and 0.947 respectively which indicates the consistency of scores among two raters.

3.7 The Pilot Study

After revising all the research instruments based on the experts' advice. The pilot study was employed to testify the appropriateness of the writing task. And also, the pilot study aimed to test the feasibility of the lesson plan items of the time allocation of each step of the lesson plan, and the appropriateness of the tasks. the

participants in the pilot study have the same level of language proficiency as the experimental group in the study.

Six students who share the same learning environment were divided into two experimental groups: Group A and Group B. Both groups were assigned the same writing task. All the feedback was given by the same teachers.

In conclusion, the pilot study proved the possibility of the research instrument. After interviewing some of the students from the pilot group, small changes were made in terms of the time allocation of the lead-in questions should be shorter while the time for the group discussion should be extended and they generally gave praise on how the researcher use the simple form to guide and shape their writing.

3.8 Data Collection

The data were collected for 11 weeks.

In the pre-experiment stage, the researcher let students finish the writing test and collect all the writing pieces. Then the researcher marked the errors and use the rubrics to calculate the score. In addition, the researcher divided the group of students into two groups based on the students' writing scores and checked for any significant differences between the groups using the paired sample t-test.

In the experiment stage, the participants were required to finish a writing task every week. Students were graded based on the rubric for the first time and students revised their wiring piece based on the provided feedback then students submit the second draft.

In the post-experiment stage, all participants were assigned to finish the same writing test within 20 minutes. Then the researcher graded the writing test based on the scoring rubric. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were performed to find out what students thought about metalinguistic and indirect corrective feedback. Six interviewees joined the semi-structured interview voluntarily. They were informed that taking the interview cannot gain the extra point.

The table below presented the data collection procedure.

Table 3 Data Collection Procedure

Week	Content	Types of feedback	Product
1	Pretest	None	Writing test
2-5	Writing task 1-4	Group A: Indirect corrective feedback Group B: metalinguistic corrective feedback	Writing tasks
6	Posttest 1	None	Writing test
7-10	Writing task 5-8	Group A: metalinguistic corrective feedback Group B: Indirect corrective feedback	Writing tasks
11	Posttest 2	None	Writing test

3.9 Data Analysis

The data in the current study involved both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.9.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The research instrument used to answer the first and second research questions was the English writing test which was provided before and after the treatment. The research compared the pretest and post-test scores by using paired sample t-test to examine the effects of two types of corrective feedback. Descriptive statistics like means scores and standard deviations of the writing tests were calculated.

In order to investigate the different effects of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback. English writing tests were used. Two-way repeated measures ANOVA was used to detect whether there are any differences when students receive indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback.

3.9.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

The semi-structured interview was used as the research instrument to answer the fourth research question. This question aims to investigate students' opinions in terms of preferences and understanding towards indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback. The data was analyzed using content analysis.

3.10 Summary

To sum up, the current study used the quasi-experimental repeated measures design with two experimental groups. The current study involved 30 students. The participants were split into two distinct groups: Group A (consisting of 15 individuals) and Group B (also comprising 15 individuals). Students received the pretest before

the treatment. The independent sample t-test was used to make sure there was no difference in students' writing abilities before the experiment. Paired sample t-tests were used to identify the effects of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective. Two-way repeated measures ANOVA was used to compare the different effects of two types of corrective feedback. Six students participated in the semi-structured interview voluntarily to discover students' opinions in terms of students' preferences and students' understanding of two types of corrective feedback. The results was presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presented the results from the study concerning the effects of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' writing ability. The study was conducted in a public school in Rizhao City, Shandong Province, China with 30 students in 8th grade. Following the administration of the pretest, the students were categorized into two groups: Group A and Group B. Students from Group A and Group B were asked to finish the same four writing tasks. One writing task was assigned one week and they were assigned to write it two times. The research gave Group A indirect feedback on their first draft and gave Group B metalinguistic corrective feedback, and they revised based on the feedback and wrote the second draft. All the scores were collected from their first drafts. After four weeks, the first posttest was assigned. And then Group A and Group B were treated with different types of corrective feedback: Group A with metalinguistic feedback and Group B with indirect corrective feedback for four weeks. The second posttest was assigned, and semi-structured interviews were conducted to detect students' opinions toward two types of corrective feedback.

To obtain the quantitative data, the scores of the pretest and posttests and the score for every first draft of each writing task were calculated. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired sample t-tests, and two-way repeated measures ANOVA. Regarding the qualitative data collection, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with six students who willingly volunteered to participate in the interview process.

The results were presented to answer the four research questions.

4.1 Research Question 1:

What are the effects of indirect corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' English writing ability?

To investigate the effects of indirect corrective feedback, the scores of the pretest and posttests were calculated. The writing test was presented in Appendix (see Appendix B). The total score is 100 including four aspects which are wording and spelling, grammar, content, and structure. The scoring rubric was adopted by Brown (2007). Paired sample t-test was used to analyze the mean scores from the pretest and posttests to see whether the scores differed at the significant level of 0.05.

In order to see the differences before and after students received the indirect corrective feedback, the mean scores, standard deviations, t-values, and statistical significance from the pretests and two posttests were presented in the tables below.

Table 4 the differences in Group A's writing ability after the pretest and posttest1

Writing test (total score =100)	Mean scores	S.D.	t	Sig.
Pretest	74.8	7.321	-11.466	.00*
Posttest 1	80.27	6.798		

*p<.05, n=15

Table 5 the differences in Group B's writing ability after the pretest and posttest 2

Writing test (total score =100)	Mean scores	S.D.	t	Sig.
Pretest	73.4	7.366	-5.334	.00*
Posttest 2	82.13	3.944		

*p<.05, n=15

To assess the improvement in students' writing after receiving the indirect corrective feedback, the researchers performed paired sample t-tests for Group A between the pretest and posttest 1, and for Group B between posttest 1 and posttest 2. This analysis was conducted to observe any significant differences in writing performance before and after the application of the indirect corrective feedback for each group. From Table 4, it can be seen that there was a great improvement in group A students' writing ability after receiving four weeks of indirect corrective feedback. The mean score in the pretest was 74.8, while the mean score in the posttest 1 was 80.27. the mean difference was 5.47. The results of the analysis of paired sample t-test in comparing the group A students' writing ability (received indirect corrective feedback) found in the pretest (before the experiment) and the posttest 1 (after receiving four weeks' indirect corrective feedback) show a significant improvement (t=-11.466, p=.000). At a significance level of .05 (p .05), the results showed a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of group A students' pretest and posttest1 performance. This suggests that the students' performance improved significantly after the intervention or treatment.

From Table 5, group B students' posttests 2 mean scores were higher than the pretest mean scores. The mean score of posttest 2 was 82.13, while the mean score of pretest was73.4. The mean difference was 8.73 and the t-value is -5.334. The results revealed that there was a difference between group B students' writing ability in pretest (before receiving the indirect corrective feedback) and posttest 2(after receiving indirect corrective feedback) ($p < .05$).

Conclusively, the results pointed out that there is an outstanding improvement in students' writing ability after the implementation of providing the indirect corrective feedback from both the significant difference at the level of .05($p < .05$) between Group A's pretest and posttest1 and Group B's pretest and posttest 2.

4.2 Research Question 2:

What are the effects of metalinguistic corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' English writing ability?

The results of the pretest and posttest were computed to examine the effects of metalinguistic corrective feedback. The writing test was presented in Appendix (see Appendix B). Four factors—wording and spelling, grammar, substance, and structure—make comprise the overall score of 100.The scoring rubric was adopted by Brown (2007). The mean scores from the pretest and posttests were analyzed using a paired sample t-test to determine whether the scores varied at the significant threshold of 0.05.

In order to see the differences before and after students received the metalinguistic corrective feedback, Group A's writing ability after the pretest and posttest 2 was presented in the tables below.

Table 6 the differences in Group A's writing ability after pretest and posttest 2

Writing test (total score =100)	Mean scores	S.D.	t	Sig.
Pretest	70.48	7.321	-9.074	.00*
Posttest 2	83.33	6.161		

*p<.05, n=15

Table 7 the differences in Group B's writing ability after the pretest and posttest 1

Writing test (total score =100)	Mean scores	S.D.	t	Sig.
Pretest	73.4	7.366	-5.512	.00*
Posttest 1	80.53	4.033		

*p<.05, n=15

In order to see the difference in the improvement in students' writing after receiving metalinguistic corrective feedback, paired sample t-tests of group A's pretest and posttest 2, and paired sample t-tests of group B's pretest and posttest 1 were calculated.

Based on the data presented in Table 6, it is evident that group A students' posttest 2 mean score (83.33) was higher than their pretest mean score (70.48). The mean difference between the two scores was 12.28, and the t-value was -9.074. These results demonstrate a significant difference in group A students' writing ability between the pretest (before receiving metalinguistic corrective feedback) and posttest

2 (after receiving metalinguistic corrective feedback) at a significance level of .05 (p < .05). This suggests that the metalinguistic corrective feedback had a positive impact on their writing performance. From Table 7, it can be seen that there was a great improvement in group B students' writing ability after receiving four weeks of metalinguistic corrective feedback. The mean score in the pretest was 73.4, while the mean score in the posttest 1 was 80.53. the mean difference was 7.13. The results of the analysis of paired sample t-test in comparing the group B students' writing ability (received metalinguistic corrective feedback) found in the pretest (before the experiment) and the posttest 1(after receiving four weeks' indirect corrective feedback) show a significant improvement (t=-5.512, p=.000). The findings showed a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of group B students' pretest and posttest1 performance at a significance level of .05 (p < .05).

Conclusively, the results pointed out that there is an outstanding improvement in students' writing ability after the implementation of providing the metalinguistic corrective feedback from both the significant difference at the level of .05(p<.05) between the group A's pretest and posttest 2 B's pretest and posttest 1.

4.3 Research question 3:

Are there any differences in the effects of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' English writing ability?

To examine the differences in the effects of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback, the researchers employed both the independent sample t-test and the two-way repeated measures ANOVA. These statistical analyses were used to compare the effects of the two types of corrective feedback on student performance. The following tables presented the results.

Table 8 The difference between Group A and Group B in the pretest

Pretest (total score =100)	Mean scores	S.D.	t	Sig.
Group A	74.8	7.321		
			0.522	.606
Group B	73.4	7.366		

*p<.05, n=15

As shown in Table 8, the mean score of the students in Group B was marginally higher than the mean score of the students in Group A, as indicated in Table 8. Students in Group A received a mean score of 74.8. Students in Group B received a mean score of 73.4. The t-value was 0.552 and the mean difference was 1.4. The independent sample t-test findings showed that the mean difference was not statistically significant because the p-value was higher than 0.05. This suggests that

prior to the treatment, students in both Group A and Group B exhibited similar levels

of proficiency in English writing ability.

Table 9 Two-way repeated measures ANOVA

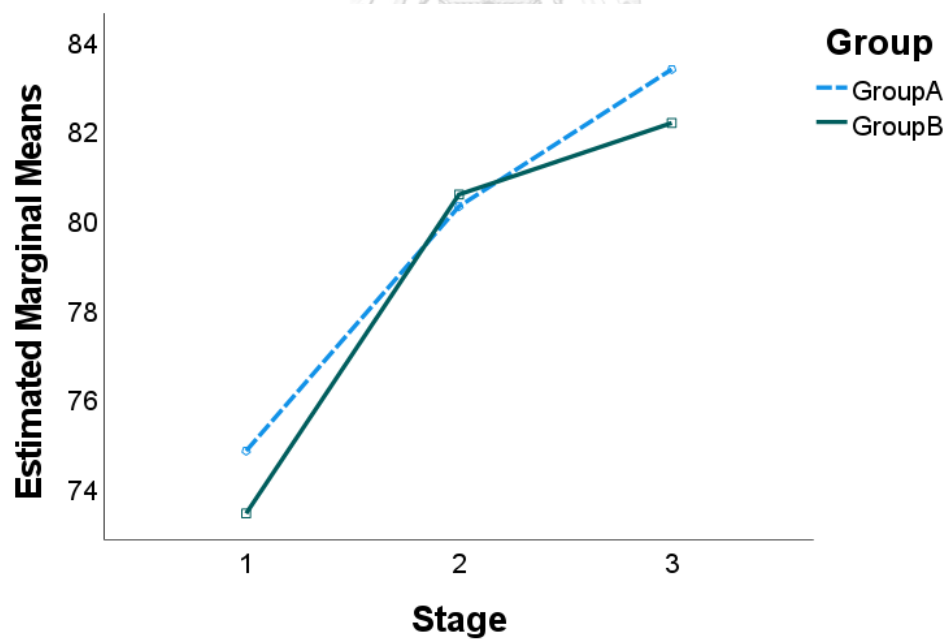| Stage	Group	
	Group A	Group B
Pretest	74.8±7.32	73.4±7.37
Posttest1	80.27±6.8	80.53±4.03
Posttest2	83.33±6.16	82.13±3.94
Tests of Within-Subjects Effects	F	P
Stage	73.231	0.000
Stage×Group	0.760	0.429

Figure 5 Estimated Marginal Means of Score

A two-factor repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the between-group and within-group differences in scores after participants from Groups A and B received two stages of teaching.

1. Within-Subjects Effects:

Stage: The computed F-value of 73.231 in the analysis of the two-way repeated measures ANOVA showed a significant effect of the stage (time) variable on the scores ($p < .001$). Inferring a discernible improvement in the results of the students over time shows that there was a significant difference in the scores between the pretest and posttest.

Stage × Group: In the two-way repeated measures ANOVA, the obtained F-value of 0.760 indicated that there was no significant interaction effect between the stage (time) and group variables ($p = 0.429$). This result suggests that the change in scores over time was not significantly different between Group A and Group B, meaning both groups showed a similar level of improvement in their writing scores throughout the study.

2. Group Comparisons:

Pretest: Group A had a mean score of 74.8 (±7.32), while Group B had a mean score of 73.4 (±7.37) at the pretest stage.

Posttest 1: Group A had a mean score of 80.27 (±6.8), while Group B had a mean score of 80.53 (±4.03) at the first posttest stage.

Posttest 2: Group A had a mean score of 83.33 (±6.16), while Group B had a mean score of 82.13 (±3.94) at the second posttest stage.

These findings support the notion that the treatment was helpful because there was a substantial increase in scores from the pretest to both posttest phases (Stage effect). Additionally, there was no significant difference in score changes between Group A and Group B, suggesting that the type of corrective feedback (indirect or metalinguistic) did not significantly impact the rate of improvement in scores (no significant Stage × Group interaction).

These findings suggested that providing two different types of corrective feedback did not have a significant impact on score changes, as the scores showed similar patterns of improvement for both Group A and Group B.

In summary, this can also be indicated that there was no difference between providing indirect corrective feedback or metalinguistic corrective feedback on students' writing ability.

4.4 Research question 4:

What are the opinions of Chinese lower-secondary students after receiving both types of feedback?

To answer this research question, the researcher investigated students' opinions of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback by using semi-structured interviews with six students who voluntarily joined the interview. Students answered the interview questions in Chinese and their answers were translated into English. The data were analyzed qualitatively based on their answers. The responses were illustrated in two aspects: students' preferences towards indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback and students' understanding of both types of corrective feedback.

4.4.1 Students' Preferences

From the response of the participants, it is revealed that most students (5 out of 6) preferred metalinguistic corrective feedback. The most common reason for their preferences given by the students was: the metalinguistic corrective feedback can tell them the exact problem they made. The detailed answer about their preferences towards different types of corrective feedback was presented below.

Student 1: "I think metalinguistic corrective feedback fits me more than the one that the teacher only underlined my errors. Sometimes when the teacher underlined the sentence, I don't know how to fix it, so I tend to delete the whole sentence. But then the total number of words will not be enough for the requirements. And this usually happens to me when I want to write a long and complex sentence. If the teacher provides the error code, I can immediately correct it based on the feedback. For example, when the teacher underlines the sentence and writes with UNR (unrelated information), I will understand that the sentence does not fit the subject of the passage. Metalinguistic corrective feedback is more understandable."

Student 2: "I prefer the one that with the error code. When the teacher provides the correction with underlining the word, I have to figure out that is it a misspelling or is it the wrong word usage. I sometimes spend a lot of time determining what the teacher means. When the teacher underlined the wrong word with an error code like SP, I can know that I spell it wrong which helps me to improve not only the writing but also the ability of the vocabulary."

Student 3: "I like both two types of corrective feedback, but if I have to choose one, I like the one that provides the error code. Only by underlining the error, I can

correct it at that time, but when I write the second draft, the error I made earlier, I forgot it all. When the teacher gives the error code, I have a deeper memory of the error I made, and I will pay more attention to it when I rewrite it."

Although most of the students (five out of six) hold a positive attitude towards metalinguistic corrective feedback. The participant who liked indirect corrective feedback more than metalinguistic corrective feedback had different opinions towards the merits other students mentioned.

Student 4:" I receive indirect corrective first and then metalinguistic corrective feedback. I feel comfortable when the teacher provides the correction only using the underline. I am familiar with the correction form. It is direct. I can get what is wrong immediately by looking at the underlined word or sentence. And besides that, the reason why I prefer indirect corrective feedback is that I get the chance of thinking about what I did incorrectly. By figuring out the errors I made, I learned again. It helped me a lot to summarize and reflect on the errors and next time I will perform better. Metalinguistic corrective feedback on the other hand deprived the learning phase for me by telling me what I do wrong. I can easily detect the errors, but I cannot have a deeper memory of them. So, I prefer indirect corrective feedback.

In summary, most of the students prefer metalinguistic corrective feedback because it provides better clarification for students to revise the draft. They generally think that metalinguistic corrective feedback is more understandable. However, one student thinks that indirect corrective feedback is better in the aspect of inspiring him to reflect and rethink the errors.

4.4.2 Students' understandings of both types of corrective feedback

When the researcher asked the question: which type of corrective feedback do you understand more? All students have a similar response. They all think metalinguistic corrective feedback is easily understood.

Student 1: "I think it is easy for me to understand the way that the teacher provides the error code. Because the teacher already corrected the error with clear instructions. I can easily understand how I could fix the error."

Student 2:" I think the second type (referred to metalinguistic corrective feedback) is easy for me to understand. By looking at the underlined word or sentence and the error code above the underline, I understand how to revise it while the first correction type (referred to indirect corrective feedback) cannot help me that much. So, I think metalinguistic corrective feedback is more understandable."

Student 3:" I understand the type that provides the error code more than the one that simply underlined the error. For example, when the teacher put down SP above the incorrect word with the underline. I know that I spell the word wrong. And if the teacher only underlines the error, I have to guess what kind of error it is. Another thing that I want to stress is that I am familiar with the correction that only underlined the sentence. But it is confusing sometime since other teachers tend to underline the good sentence, I have to think twice when I saw the underlining sentence."

Conclusively, all students viewed metalinguistic corrective as the more understandable corrective feedback. They believed that with the error code, they have a better understanding of how to fix the errors and revise the draft.

4.5 Summary

In conclusion, the study's findings regarding the effects of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback, as well as the differences between these two types of corrective feedback, are presented. The results highlight the impact of each feedback approach on students' writing performance and shed light on any disparities between the two feedback methods. The first three questions were asked concerning the effects and the difference. The findings indicated a noteworthy enhancement in the students' writing proficiency when they were provided with both indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback. However, the results also revealed that the difference between indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback was not significant. In terms of the last research question related to students' opinions toward two types of corrective feedback. Most students hold a positive attitude toward metalinguistic corrective feedback. When it comes to understanding both types of written corrective feedback, students all believed metalinguistic corrective feedback was easier to understand.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the findings of the current study and discusses the comparison between the current study and previous studies. Furthermore, this chapter provides the pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research.

5.1 Summary of the Study

This study is a quasi-experimental research study using the repeated measures design with two experimental groups. It aimed to investigate the effects of indirect and metalinguistic corrective feedback, compare the different effects of those two types of corrective feedback, and further investigate students' opinions towards two types of corrective feedback.

The study comprised a sample of 30 8th-grade students from a public low-secondary school located in Rizhao City, Shandong Province, during the second semester of the academic year 2023. The selection of participants was based on researcher convenience. The participants were then split into two distinct groups, namely Group A and Group B. The experiment consisted of two phases. Students received the pretest before the experiment. And for the first experiment, Group A received indirect corrective feedback for four weeks while Group B received metalinguistic corrective feedback. then both groups received the first posttest. For the second experimental phase, Group A received metalinguistic corrective feedback for four weeks while Group B received indirect corrective feedback. After that, they

all received the second posttest. The teaching instruction used in the experiment was process-based writing instruction. There are five steps which are pre-writing, first draft, revision, second draft, and submission.

There were two research instruments in the study. The first was the instructional tool which consist of lesson plans designed based on process-based instruction. The second tool was data collection tools which include pretest and posttests and semi-structured interview questions.

In this 11-week experiment, students attended the class twice a week with 45 minutes for each session. Students finished one writing task per week, for each writing task they wrote it two times. Before the experiment, students were required to finish the pretest to detect their writing ability. After the pretest, students received the first period of teaching and received the first posttest and then received the second period of teaching and received the second posttest.

Inter-rater reliability was calculated to make sure the consistency of two raters at different times. Paired sample t-tests were used to compare students' writing abilities before and after the post-tests. Independent sample t-tests were used to compare if students from Group A and Group B shared the same level of English writing ability. Two-way repeated measures ANOVA was used to see if any different effects between indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' English writing ability are there. Content analysis was used to analyze students' opinions toward the two types of corrective feedback.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

There are four major findings according to the research questions.

The results concerning the effects of indirect corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' writing ability indicate a significant improvement. There was a noteworthy difference between Group A's pretest and posttest 1 mean scores and Group B's pretest and posttest 2 mean scores at a significance level of .05. In summary, the students' writing ability showed a substantial enhancement after they received indirect corrective feedback.

The findings regarding the effects of metalinguistic corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' writing ability showed a significant improvement. There was a remarkable difference between Group A's pretest and posttest 2 mean scores and Group B's pretest and posttest 1 mean scores at a significance level of .05. These results suggest that the students' writing ability exhibited a substantial enhancement after they received metalinguistic corrective feedback.

In addition to assessing the effects of the treatment, the data from the pretest of both experimental groups were analyzed using an independent sample t-test to ensure that there were no significant differences between Group A and Group B before the intervention. The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the two experimental groups at the beginning of the study.

Furthermore, a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was performed to assess the impact of the two types of corrective feedback. The results from this analysis demonstrated that no significant difference was found between the two types of

corrective feedback in terms of their effects on the students' writing ability. In other words, both indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback showed similar efficacy in improving the students' writing skills.

Last but not least, to answer the last question, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the data. The results from the interview that most of the students preferred metalinguistic corrective feedback because they believed that metalinguistic corrective could help them locate and rectify the errors they made and compared to indirect corrective feedback, the metalinguistic corrective is more understandable.

5.3 Discussion

The main objectives of the current study were to examine the effects of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback on the writing ability of Chinese lower-secondary students. Additionally, the study aimed to explore students' opinions toward these two types of corrective feedback methods. By analyzing the students' writing performance and gathering their perspectives, the researchers sought to gain valuable insights into the effectiveness and acceptance of each feedback approach. Accordingly, the findings of the study were discussed into three major aspects: the effects of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback, the different effects of those two types of corrective feedback, and student's attitude towards the two types of corrective feedback.

5.3.1 Effects of Indirect Corrective Feedback and Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback

To explore the effects of indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback, the researchers utilized paired sample t-tests to analyze the

pretest and posttest scores. As shown in the previous table, Chinese lower-secondary students' writing ability improved significantly after receiving indirect and metalinguistic corrective feedback. Numerous studies have consistently supported the beneficial impacts of written corrective feedback on language learning (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Ene & Upton, 2018; Sheen, 2007). These studies have demonstrated that both indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback contribute positively to language use, ultimately aiding students in enhancing their English writing abilities. This current study can be considered as giving a piece of additional evidence to support the previous studies. In addition, the current study differed on the target learners, previous research supported the effects of written corrective feedback on the university level (Ashwell,2000; Ferris&Roberts,2001) and high school level (Saukah et al., 2017). It provides that written corrective feedback is effective not only for students at the university level or high school level but also helps lower-secondary students.

However, the result of the study is different from that of Chen (2011) who believed that there is no positive effect of written corrective feedback on improving language accuracy. Chen (2011) conducted research that indicates that written corrective feedback has little effect on composition modification for senior high school students. The discrepancy between this study and Chen's may be due to the duration of the experiment and the research instrument. In Chen's study (2011), it was conducted after one final exam, and it was measured using a questionnaire. As a result of these differences, Chen's findings were different from those of the present study.

5.3.2 Different Effects of Indirect Corrective Feedback and Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback

The third question figured out the different effects between indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback on Chinese lower-secondary students' writing ability. The independent sample t-test and two-way repeated measures ANOVA were used to analyze the data. In the pretest, it was discovered that before the experiment, there was no difference between the two groups. After the treatment, students improved significantly but there was still no significant difference between the two groups. It can be concluded that both indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback were equally effective in terms of improving Chinese lower-secondary students' writing ability. Considering the different effects between indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback, the results of the current study aligned with the findings reported by Ferris and Roberts (2001) observed: "no statistically significant difference in accuracy between the two types of indirect feedback: underlining and underlining with codes." This consistency in the outcomes suggested that the effectiveness of these two types of feedback may be similar in terms of improving accuracy in language use. The findings of the present study are consistent with the research conducted by Hong (2004), who concluded: "that there is no significant difference in performance on self-correction between indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback."

However, the findings about the different effects between indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback contradict those of (Chandler,2003; Ferris et al.,2013; Makino, 1993; Saukah et al., 2017). In Chandler's (2003) study, it was discovered that significant accuracy improvements were observed in groups that

received underlining as an indirect feedback method. However, these gains were not evident in groups that received underlining combined with codes. The potential disparity between the current study and Chandler's research might be attributed to the distinct dependent variables measured. In Chandler's study, the focus was on assessing grammatical and lexical accuracy, while the present study concentrated on evaluating the overall writing ability of the students.

The difference between the current study and the study conducted by Saukah et al. (2017) lies in their findings regarding the effectiveness of metalinguistic corrective feedback compared to indirect corrective feedback. Saukah et al. (2017) concluded that students who received metalinguistic corrective feedback produced higher-quality writing compared to those who received indirect corrective feedback. They believed that metalinguistic corrective feedback was particularly effective in improving language use and mechanics. A plausible explanation for the variation in findings could be attributed to disparities in the study's subjects and the utilization of feedback approaches. The subjects in both studies may have differed in terms of their language proficiency, educational background, or other relevant factors. Saukah et al. (2017) conducted an experiment with 53 senior high students, whereas the current study involved 30 lower-secondary students.

Additionally, the feedback provided in the study by Saukah et al. (2017) was short-term and not used as a technique of teaching. In summary, differences in student groups, the use of feedback as a teaching technique, and the short-term nature of the feedback could contribute to the variation in findings between the current study and Saukah et al.'s (2017) study regarding the effectiveness of metalinguistic corrective feedback and indirect corrective feedback.

5.3.3 Students' Opinions Toward Indirect Corrective Feedback and Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback

From the semi-structured interviews, it was found that students hold a positive attitude toward written corrective feedback. This finding aligned with previous findings concerning students' willingness to be corrected (Li & He, 2017). In research from Li and He (2017) reported that participants show their desire for written corrective feedback from teachers. As for preference, most students (five out of six) preferred metalinguistic corrective feedback. They believed that metalinguistic corrective feedback is more explicit which can help them identify the errors. The result corresponds with (Chen et al.,2016; Lee,2005; Zhang et al.,2021). Chen et al. (2016) demonstrated that students had a positive attitude towards explicit types of written corrective feedback (WCF) and preferred receiving extended comments that covered both the content and grammar aspects of their written work. Zhang et al. (2021) found that learners' preferences for WCF were influenced by the nature of the feedback itself and the specific type of error being addressed. In general, learners tended to favor feedback that was more explicit in its explanations and guidance.

One student mentioned that indirect corrective feedback can lead to confusion. This finding supports previous studies (Chandler,2003; Roberts,2001; Saragih et al.,2021). Saragih and colleagues (2021) conducted a study showing that students generally displayed a lower preference for employing the indirect strategy. The researchers asserted that compared to other strategies, the indirect approach was considered less helpful and motivating. This finding was in line with the conclusions of Roberts (2001) and Chandler (2003), who also agreed that the use of the indirect strategy could lead to difficulties in gaining knowledge as it tended to confuse

students. Consequently, unclear and insufficient information provided through this strategy resulted in students struggling to comprehend the material and feeling demotivated in their learning process.

Another point that needs to be discussed here from the semi-structured interview is that some students mentioned that the process of correcting the errors by themselves when receiving indirect written corrective and metalinguistic corrective feedback helps them acquire knowledge and avoid making the same mistake in their new writing. This finding supports many previous results (Ellis et al., 2008; D. R. Ferris, 2002) that indirect written corrective feedback can encourage the students to self-correct their errors, and moreover, it can help develop long-term memory and self-monitoring.

5.4 Pedagogical Implication

From the findings of the study, some pedagogical implications can be applicable in English writing classrooms.

Firstly, it is important to note that the National English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (Ministry of Education, 2017) emphasize the significant importance of fostering students' fundamental literacy skills as a key objective of the English curriculum. Among the four fundamental language skills, writing has increasingly gained significance in English teaching. As a result, nurturing students' writing ability in English is deemed indispensable. Teachers should place a greater emphasis on providing writing instruction to students to ensure their well-rounded language development.

Second, the results revealed that both indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback improved lower-secondary students' writing ability. This aligned with what Bitchener and Knock (2008) asserted, as long as the form of corrective feedback, corrective feedback regardless of the type of teacher feedback will enable students to perform better in writing and language accuracy.

Third, students preferred more explicit corrective feedback which can help them locate and identify the errors. Applying metalinguistic corrective feedback is beneficial because of those reasons.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The present study proved the positive effects of indirect and metalinguistic corrective feedback on improving Chinese lower-secondary students' writing ability. There are still certain limitations in this study. The main limitations of the present study are as follows.

First, the participants involved in the current study were only 30 students and they are all from one grade and one class in one public school, whose results may fail to generalize to all lower-secondary students in other schools in China.

Second, the current study faced challenges in selecting a control group due to the school's ethical code, which prevented the use of a regular class of students for the no-treatment group. Additionally, attempts to recruit volunteer students to form a control group were unsuccessful. Both students and their parents did not perceive the value of participating in a learning experiment without receiving feedback. As a result, the researchers were unable to establish a proper control group for the study.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Research

The following are some recommendations for further studies.

First, future research should involve more participants in diverse schools and different grades which can make sure the reliability of the results. By employing students in different grades, the results can include students in different language proficiency levels which can lead to more statically meaningful data.

Second, future research should include the control group.

Third, the current research only interviewed students once at the end of the experiment. For future study, another interview can be conducted after the first phase of the experiment.
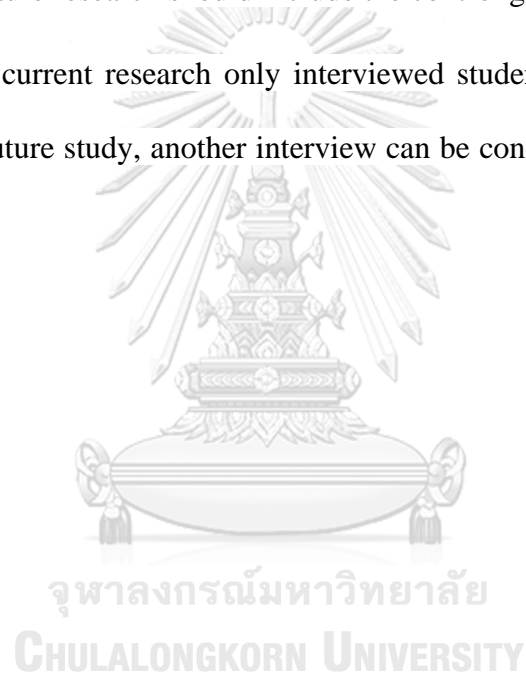
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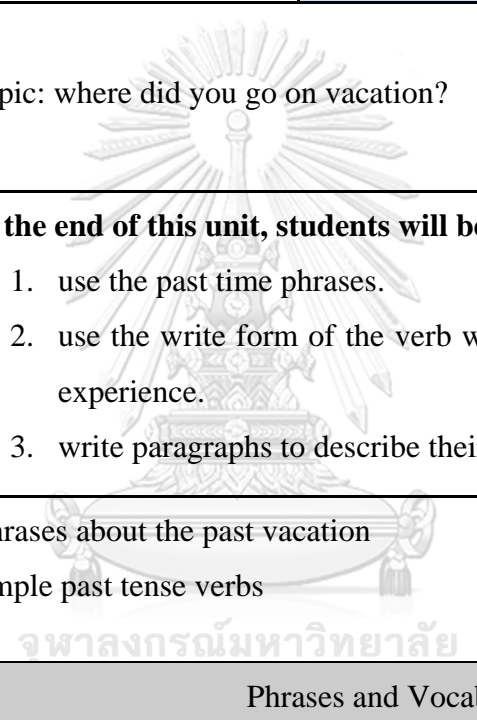Zhang, Z. V., & Hyland, K. (2018). Student engagement with teacher and automated feedback on L2 writing. *Assessing Writing, 36*, 90–102. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2018.02.004

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Long-range Planning

Week	Topic	Activities	Materials
1		Pretest	Tests (sample test can be seen in Appendix C)
2	Where did you go for vacation?	- Study the sample reading - Complete the table for organizing ideas - Write the writing task 1 - Revise the draft based on the feedback	- Lesson plan (sample lesson plan can be seen in appendix C) - Writing task (sample writing task can be seen in appendix D)
3	Why don't you talk to your parents?	- Study the sample reading - Complete the table for organizing ideas - Write the writing task 1 Revise the draft based on the feedback	- Lesson plan (sample lesson plan can be seen in appendix C) Writing task (sample writing task can be seen in appendix D)
4	What's the matter?	- Study the sample reading - Complete the table for organizing ideas - Write the writing task 2 - Revise the draft based on the feedback	- Lesson plan (sample lesson plan can be seen in appendix C) - Writing task (sample writing task can be seen in appendix D)
5	How often do you exercise?	- Study the sample reading - Complete the table for organizing ideas - Write the writing task 4 - Revise the draft based on the feedback	- Lesson plan (sample lesson plan can be seen in appendix C) - Writing task (sample writing task can be seen in appendix D)

Week	Topic	Activities	Materials
6	None	Finish the post-test 1	Writing test
7	I will help to clean up the parks.	- Study the sample reading - Complete the table for organizing ideas - Write the writing task 3 - Revise the draft based on the feedback	- Lesson plan (sample lesson plan can be seen in appendix C) - Writing task (sample writing task can be seen in appendix D)
8	Will people have robots?	- Study the sample reading - Complete the table for organizing ideas - Write the writing task 4 - Revise the draft based on the feedback	- Lesson plan (sample lesson plan can be seen in appendix C) - Writing task (sample writing task can be seen in appendix D)
9	What were you doing when the rainstorm came?	- Study the sample reading - Complete the table for organizing ideas - Write the writing task 4 - Revise the draft based on the feedback	- Lesson plan (sample lesson plan can be seen in appendix C) - Writing task (sample writing task can be seen in appendix D)
10	An old man tried to move the mountain.	- Study the sample reading - Complete the table for organizing ideas - Write the writing task 4 - Revise the draft based on the feedback	- Lesson plan (sample lesson plan can be seen in appendix C) - Writing task (sample writing task can be seen in appendix D)
11		Post-test 2	Writing test

Appendix B

Sample lesson plan

Grade	Grade 8	**Approximate Length of Lessons**	one lesson
Language	English as a Foreign Language	**Approximate Minutes per Lesson**	45 minutes
Topics	Topic: where did you go on vacation?		
Learning Outcomes	**At the end of this unit, students will be able to** 1. use the past time phrases. 2. use the write form of the verb when they described the past experience. 3. write paragraphs to describe their last trips.		
Learning content	Phrases about the past vacation Simple past tense verbs		
	Phrases and Vocabulary		
	• last week • last month • three years ago • few years ago • yesterday • stayed at home • visited the park		
Materials Resources	**Textbook:** **Reading materials:**		

Monday, July 15th

I arrived in Penang in Malaysia this morning with my family. It was sunny and hot, so we decided to go to the beach near our hotel. My sister and I tried paragliding. I felt like I was a bird. It was so exciting! For lunch, we had something very special — Malaysian yellow noodles. They were delicious! In the afternoon, we rode bicycles to Georgetown. There are a lot of new buildings now, but many of the old buildings are still there. In Weld Quay, a really old place in Georgetown, we saw the houses of the Chinese traders from 100 years ago. I wonder what life was like here in the past. I really enjoyed walking around the town.

Tuesday, July 16th

What a difference a day makes! My father and I decided to go to Penang Hill today. We wanted to walk up to the top, but then it started raining a little so we decided to take the train. We waited over an hour for the train because there were too many people. When we got to the top, it was raining really hard. We didn't have an umbrella so we were wet and cold. It was terrible! And because of the bad weather, we couldn't see anything below. My father didn't bring enough money, so we only had one bowl of rice and some fish. The food tasted great because I was so hungry!

The table for constructing the writing piece

When	Who	Weather	Feeling	What did you do

Procedures			
		Teachers	**Students**
Step 1 **pre-writing** **(40 mins)**		• To prepare students for writing the paragraphs about the last trip, the teacher will show the picture of the teacher's trip and let the student	• guess based on the pictures(5mins) • students learn the two paragraphs and the key vocabularies in it.

Procedures		
	Teachers	**Students**
	• guess where it is. (5mins) • the teacher will present the two paragraphs and highlight the key vocabulary in it. (25 mins) • the teacher will present the table that can help students organize the ideas about their last vacation. (10 mins)	• (25 mins) • students fill in the table based on their owner experience. (10mins)
Step 2: first draft (5 mins)	• the teacher will let the student write their first draft. • Teacher will assign them to finish the whole draft after class and submit it.	• students will write the first draft.
Step 3: Revision	• The teacher will provide the feedback.	• Students will receive the feedback.
Step 4: Revised draft and submission	• The teacher will let the students revised the draft and collect the revised draft.	• Students will revise the draft and submit the revised draft.

Appendix C: Sample Writing Test

书面表达。(满分100分,20分钟)

假如你是Wang Lin，请根据下面表格中提供的信息，给你的新朋友Jack写一封电子邮件，介绍你的业余爱好。

注意：1. 必须体现所提供的全部细节信息，可在此基础上适当发挥；

2. 词数：80左右。

Hobbies	Beginning time	The place	The number	Times
Playing soccer	ten years ago	park		
Collecting coins	five years ago		nearly 300	from the Song Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

English version of the writing test

please use the message provided in the table and write an email to your new friend Jack about your new hobbies.

Notes:1. You need to include all the information from the table in your writing

      2.words: at least 80

Hobbies	Beginning time	The place	The number	Times
Playing soccer	ten years ago	park		
Collecting coins	five years ago		nearly 300	from the Song Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D

Sample writing task

【题目要求】

假设你的名字叫小明。你很喜欢旅游，你和家人去年夏天去了长城。

请以"The visit to the Great Wall" 为题，写一篇不少于80词的英语短文。

The visit to the Great Wall

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

English version of the writing task

Your name is Liming. You enjoy taking a vacation. Last summer you went to the great wall with your family. Please write a paragraph using the topic: the visit to the great wall.

Notes: at least 80 words

The visit to the Great Wall

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E

Semi-structured interview questions

1. Which type of corrective feedback you do prefer? Why?

2. Which type of corrective feedback help you more revising the draft? How?

3. Which type of corrective feedback is easier for you to understand? Why?

4. How do you benefit from the indirect corrective feedback?

5. How do you benefit from the metalinguistic corrective feedback?

6. Do you want your teacher to use the error code?

Chinese Version of the interview questions

1.你更喜欢哪一种批改方式？为什么？

2.你觉得哪一种批改方式在你修改作文时对你帮助更大？ **那些方面帮助更大？**

3.你觉得哪种批改方式对你来说更容易**理解？**为什么？

4.**你能从划横**线这种批改方式中收获什么？

5.**你能从划横**线加给出错误代码这种批改方式中收获什么？

6.**你希望老**师批改的时候给你标注出来错误代码吗？

Appendix F

Scoring rubric (from Brown 2009)

Score	5	10	15	20	25
Wording and Spelling (25%)	Very poor knowledge of words and word forms, and not understandable	Very poor knowledge of words and word forms, but still understandable	Limited range confusing words and word forms	Few misuses of vocabularies and word forms, but no change in meaning	Effective choice of words and word forms
Grammar (25%)	Dominated by grammar-related errors, and not understandable	Dominated by grammar-related errors, but still understandable	Frequent grammar-related errors	Occasional grammar-related errors	Correct grammar
Content (25%)	Wrote something, but did not meet the minimum requirements for word count	Topic is not clear, and the details are not related to the topic	Complete and clear topic, but some details are not related to the topic	Complete and clear topic, but some details are almost not related to the topic	Complete and clear topic, and details are related to the topic
Structure (25%)	Ideas were so disorganized that the writing needed major revision	Failed to follow more than 3 instructions, ideas needed better organization	Followed most instructions, needed better organization	Followed instructions, ideas were well-organized	Followed all instructions, well-organized ideas made comprehension easier

Appendix G

Error Code for Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback Adapted

from (Tang&Liu,2018)

Error code for wording and spelling		
Error type	Example	Code
Punctuation/capitalization	can I help you.	PC
Missing word	I like eat.	MW
Spelling	He is biher than her	SP
Wrong word usage	He is biggest than her.	WW
Error code for grammar errors		
Error type	Example	Code
Verb tense	I eat an apple yesterday.	VT
Singular vs plural	There are many girl here.	PL/SL
Subjective-verb agreement	He are a boy.	SV
Error code for content errors		
Error type	Explanation	Code
Logical issues	Something is wrong with the logic.	LOG
Unrelated information	The sentence has nothing to do with the prompt.	UNR
Too short	You did not write enough sentences.	TS
Error code for structure errors		
Error type	Explanation	Code
Move the sentence	You should not write the sentence here.	MOVE
Reorganize the body	What you wrote in the body needs reorganization.	REORG
No conclusion	You did not write an ending/conclusion.	NO CONC

Appendix H

Lesson plan Item-Objective-Congruence (IOC) form

Item	Experts			IOC mean score	Comments	Result
	1	2	3			
Learning objective						
The learning objective is clearly stated.	1	1	1	1		Valid
Teaching Procedures						
The teaching steps are clearly stated.	1	1	1	1		Valid
The activities are suitable for students' level of learning.	1	1	-1	0.33	Expert 3: activities after reading the passage need to be added like group students' together and let them share ideas about their own experience.	Invalid
The activities facilitate students achieve the learning objectives.	0	1	-1	0	Expert 3: Before students are going to write about their own experiences, probably the teacher needs to ask students to share their own experiences after reading Jane's story. They can talk with peers and use the timetable the teacher design at the beginning. Then the students 'writing process can be facilitated.	Invalid

Item	Experts			IOC mean score	Comments	Result
	1	2	3			
The time allocation is appropriate.	0	0	-1	-1	The time allocation needs to be revised.	Invalid
Materials						
The worksheet/sample reading passage match with students' level of proficiency.	1	1	0	0.66		Valid
The reading passage matches with the unit topic.	1	1	1	1		Valid
The materials facilitate students achieve the leaning objective.	0	1	1	0.66		Valid
Assessment						
The assessment aligns with the learning objective.	1	1	0	0.66		Valid
Average score				0.54		Valid

Appendix I

Writing test Item-Objective-Congruence (IOC) form

Item	Experts			IOC mean score	Comments	Result
	1	2	3			
Discrimination						
The writing task/test is able to discriminate between students of different level.	0	1	1	0.66		Valid
Clarity						
writing instructions are easy for students to understand.	0	1	1	0.66		Valid
Difficulty						
The writing task/test matches with students' level of proficiency.	1	1	1	1		Valid
Timing						
Students are able to finish the writing test/task within provided time.	1	1	1	1		Valid
Evaluation						
The scoring rubrics is appropriate to evaluate the writing test/task.	0	1	1	0.66		Valid
Average score				0.8		Valid

Appendix J

Scoring rubric Item-Objective-Congruence (IOC) form

Item	Experts			IOC mean score	Comments	Result
	1	2	3			
Clarity						
The scoring rubric is written in clear and concise language.	0	1	1	0.66		Valid
Specificity						
The scoring rubric is specific and provides detailed criteria.	0	1	1	0.66		Valid
Comprehensiveness						
The scoring rubric is easy to understand.	1	1	1	1		Valid
Usefulness						
The scoring rubric is useful for students and teachers.	0	1	1	0.66		Valid
Evaluation						
The scoring rubrics is appropriate to evaluate the writing test/task.	0	1	1	0.66		Valid
Average score				0.73	Expert1: the scoring rubric need to be more objective and specific.	Valid

Appendix K

Interview questions Item-Objective-Congruence (IOC) form

Item	Expert			IOC mean score	Comments	Result
	1	2	3			
Which type of corrective feedback do you prefer? Why?	1	1	0	0.66		Valid
Which type of corrective feedback help you more revising the draft? How?	1	1	1	1		Valid
Which type of corrective feedback is easier for you to understand? Why?	1	1	1	1		Valid
How do you benefit from the indirect corrective feedback?	1	1	1	1		Valid
How do you benefit from the metalinguistic corrective feedback?	1	0	-1	0	Expert 1.2.3: Specify the terminology and replace it with simple term or specific examples	Invalid
Do you want your teacher to use the error code?	1	1	0	0.66	Expert 3: Specify the terminology and replace it with simple term or specific examples	Valid
Average score				0.72		Valid

Appendix L

Sample of writing pieces received indirect corrective feedback
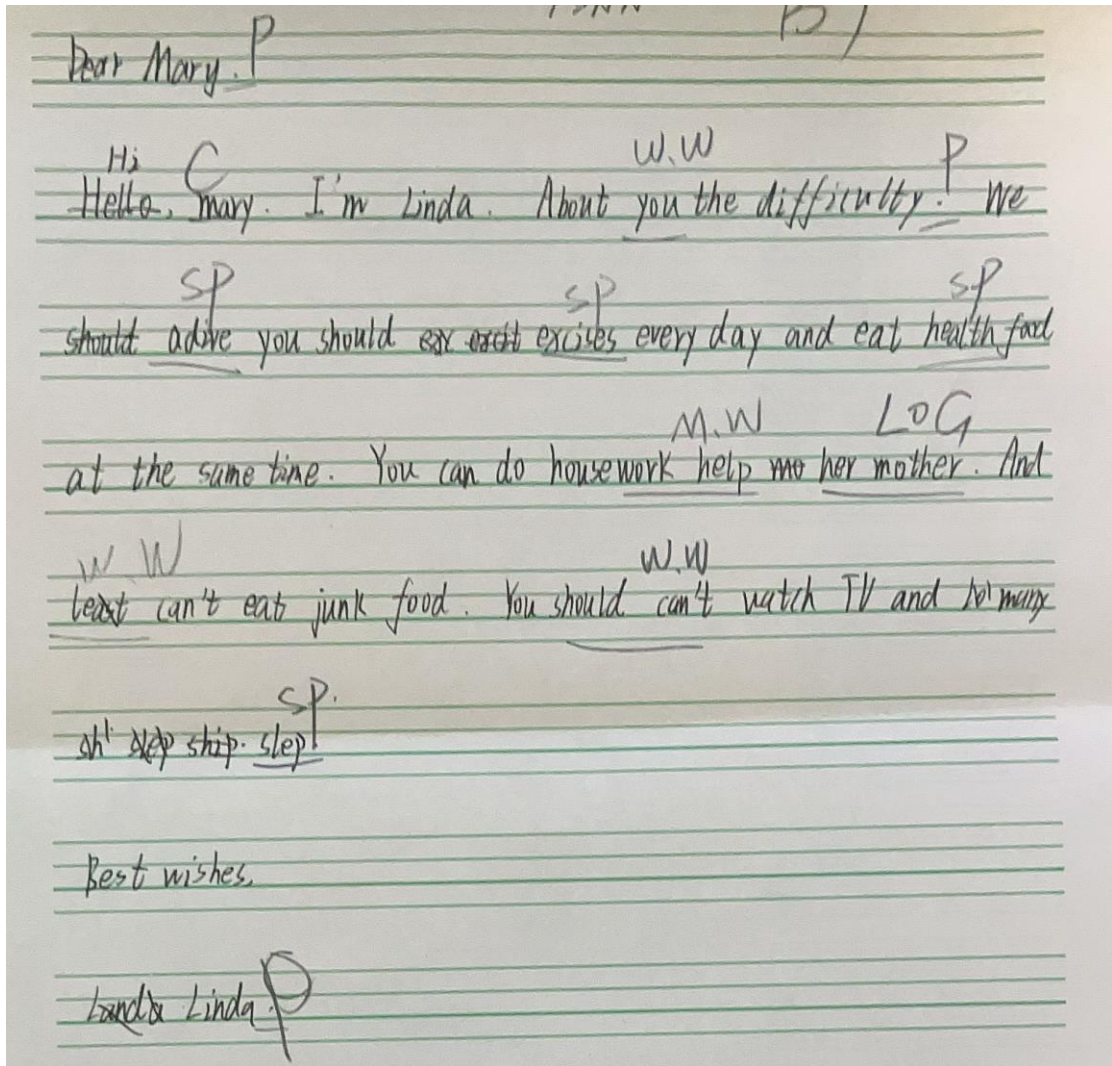
Dear Jack,

How are you! Let me tell you my habbies. I like to play soccer . Because I think it is interesting . At ten years ago I beginning to play soccer. One day . I walked in the park and under the tree . I saw some boys play soccer. It was cool I liked soccer. And I like to collecting coins, too. At five year ago I beginning to collect coins. The mumoer times from the Song Dynasty to Qing Dynasty. What's you habby? Can you tell me ?

Yours,
Amelia

Appendix M

Sample of writing pieces received metalinguistic corrective feedback

Dear Mary.

Hi
Hello, mary. I'm Linda. About you the difficulty. We
should adve you should eat exdt exicies every day and eat health food
at the same time. You can do housework help me her mother. And
least can't eat junk food. You should can't watch TV and hot many
sh' slep ship. slep!

Best wishes,

Linda Linda.

VITA

NAME   Yuxin Liu

PLACE OF BIRTH   China