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Corrective Feedback and its Effects on Memoranda and Letters of Students of Sunyani Technical University, Ghana

Edward Owusu
Senior Lecturer, Department of Communication Studies, and Dean, School of Graduate Programmes, Research and Development, Sunyani Technical University, Sunyani, Ghana

Abstract:
This paper is an attempt to examine the effect of corrective feedback (CF) on the memoranda and business letters of students of Sunyani Technical University, Ghana. In Ghana, this is one area in SLA that has not received a lot of recognition. Noticing Hypothesis was the theoretical underpinning the research adopted. The design of the research was sequential exploratory mixed methods approach. The field data (students' texts and questionnaire items) were collected from selected 60 (sixty) first year students of Sunyani Technical University. The respondents were segmented into three groupings – Direct Feedback (DF), Indirect Feedback (IF), and No Feedback (NF) groups. Each student-participant composed 4 texts in all before questionnaires were administered. In all, a total of 300 sample size was used. This comprises 240 texts and 60 questionnaire items. After a pre-test was conducted, three interventions (DF, IF, and NF) were used on the pre-test texts of the student-respondents before they took the post-tests. The result of the study showed that CF in general has positive impact on students' texts. The research further revealed that DF and IF interventions correct memorandum and business letter errors better than the NF; but the potency of the DF intervention is stronger than that of the IF. It was recommended that language teachers should use DF intervention in grading the scripts of students.

Keywords*: Corrective feedback; pre- and post-tests; direct feedback; indirect feedback; no feedback; business write-ups*

1. Introduction and Background

One of the earliest definitions on CF was given by Chaudron (1977:31) who considered it as "any reaction of the teacher which clearly transforms, disapprovingly refers to, or demands improvement of the learner utterance." Synonyms of CF which have been used by other authors include: error correction, negative evidence, and negative feedback (Méndez et al., 2010:241). Han (2008) as cited in Méndez et al., (2010:241) proposes that error correction implies an evident and direct correction, whereas CF is a generic way of providing some clues, or eliciting some correction, besides the direct correction made by the teacher. Han (2008) has thus, conceptualised the term error correction as an immediate and a palpable way of correcting errors and CF as broad term of offering feedback on students' errors. Lightbown and Spada (1999:171-172) on their part define corrective feedback as: '...any indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect.' This indication according to Lightbown and Spada (1999) could take the form of both explicit and implicit responses geared towards helping the learner attain correct usage of the target language. Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam(2006:340) define CF as: '... the form of responses to learner utterances that contain error. The responses can consist of (a) an indication that an error has been committed, (b) provision of the correct target language form, or (c) metalinguistic information about the nature of the nature of the error, or any combination of these.' (2006:340).

Ferris (2003) has drawn a line between explicit or direct CF and implicit or indirect CF and has defined the direct or explicit one as a CF providing the correct linguistic form or structure by the teacher to the student by scripting it above the linguistic error. This may comprise the crossing out of an unnecessary structure – morpheme, word, phrase, clause, or sentence –; the insertion of a missing structure; or writing the correct form or structure. She has accordingly defined the indirect or implicit CF as indicating that an error has been made without clearly mentioning the type of error or writing the correct form (Ferris, 2003). This may take the form of underlining or circling the error, recording in the margin of the script the number of errors made in a given line, or using a code to show where the error has been made and what type of error it is (Ferris and Roberts, 2001). Here, students are left to reread and subsequently edit the errors in their scripts rather than the teacher indicating it clearly. Correction of errors in Second Language Teaching and Learning has long been a contentious issue. Earlier, Fanselow (1977) had recommended the provision of effective CF – isolating the error and giving explicit information. Conversely, earlier studies by Allwright (1975), Chaudron (1977) Long (1977), and Zamel (1985) revealed that the provision of corrective feedback is always problematic (Méndez, Cruz, and Loyo, 2010:241). These problems had to do with ineffectuality of teachers' corrections, ambiguity, and discrepancy regarding the written comments on students' texts. Also, Allwright (1975) and Hendrickson (1978) had proposed that pushing students in their output, rather than providing them with explicit corrective feedback, could facilitate their interlanguage development. This stand, clearly negates the use of explicit CF in SLA environments. One therefore wonders whether the second language learner could be in the better position to point out his or her own errors when given the opportunity. Truscott

(1996:327) had even advocated an abandonment of grammar correction in classroom interaction due to its limitations. According to him, (a) substantial research shows it to be ineffective and none shows it to be helpful in any interesting sense; (b) for both theoretical and practical reasons, one can expect it to be ineffective; and (c) it has harmful effects (p.327). Responding to Truscott's (1996) aversion to grammar correction, Ferris (1999:8) had opposed Truscott's view and made a claim about the efficacy of teacher error/grammar correction in second language writing classes in this way. According to her, correction develops and improves students' written language skills, and as such, teachers cannot afford to rule it out. (p. 8). In recent times (that is the 2000's), Lyster and Mori (2006) had also reported on ambiguous, random and unsystematic feedback on errors by teachers. Hernández and Murrieta (2009) saw very insignificant CF in the foreign language classroom which can be linked to acceptance of errors for fear of interrupting the communication. However, Ferris and Helt (2000) expressed some merits in the use of indirect feedback. Chandler (2003) also tilted in favour of explicit CF in writing skill of EFL learners. According to him, explicit feedback lessens the misperception of learners and they can easily review their errors; again, learners are provided with enough information to correct more intricate errors and explicit feedback is more immediate.

Akbarzabeh, Saeidi, and Chehreh (2014), in their study on the effect of oral interactive feedback on the accuracy and complexity of EFL learners' writing performance, decided to use elicitation and metalinguistic clues in giving CF. Their study revealed that learners who received CF outperformed those who did not receive any feedback. They reiterated that correction of learners' errors should not be abandoned.

Pakbaz (2014:12) conducted a study on the effect of written (explicit and implicit) corrective feedback on EFL learners' writing performance. The study investigated whether there was any positive effect of giving explicit or implicit written CF on 20 intermediate L2 learners' ability to write in English (Pakbaz, 2014:12). 10 of the respondents received implicit CF; the other 10 received explicit CF on their writing tasks. Three different writing tasks – a pre-test, an immediate post-test and a delayed post-test – were given. His study revealed that students' writing ability in using past tense and article use on the immediate post-test outperformed that of the pre-test. The effect, according to the study, was long lasting since their performance on the delayed post-test showed an increase in the learners' writing ability in the stated structures and this effect was retained in their memory for one month (Pakbaz, 2014:12). Thus, there is a positive feedback effect of giving written CF. However, on implicit and explicit written CF, the study showed an equal effect (Pakbaz, 2014:16).

Many of the experimentations in business communication assessments have, to a large extent, involved peer assessment[1] (Agarwal and Chakraborty 2006:383). Peer assessment is a tool that could be used in providing feedback to peers to help them improve on their performance (Agarwal and Chakraborty, 2006:383). Peer assessment on its own, is not an all-inclusive pedagogic method, as Du-Babcock (2006:261) has stated: '... we need to introduce new theory and build new teaching approaches into our pedagogy while continuing to stress the fundamentals of effective business communication.' Corrective Feedback (CF) is a new trend in English language teaching and testing. The study therefore examined the impact of CF on the memoranda and letters of students of Sunyani Technical University, Sunyani, Ghana. The objective of this study was to determine the type of CF that has the greatest impact on students' texts in terms of the prescribed rubrics and punctuations, mechanics, and grammar.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinning for this research is Noticing Hypothesis. Propounded by Schmidt (1990; 1993a), the Noticing Hypothesis (NH) holds that second language learners must consciously notice the grammatical form of their input in order to acquire grammar (Schmidt 1990, 2001, 2010; Truscott 1998). Thus, input does not become intake for language learning unless it is noticed, that is, intentionally registered (Schmidt, 2010:1). This means that for one to obtain grammatical knowledge, one has to deliberately detect the grammatical structure of one's input. In its easiest form, learners learn about the things that they attend to and do not learn much about the things they do not attend to (Schmidt, 2010:2). Learners thus study the information that they have consciously registered in their minds already. The NH has two forms – the strong and the weak hypotheses. The strong form of the hypothesis, which is supported by Schmidt (1990; 1993a; 1994; 1995b) states that 'noticing is necessary condition for learning.' For a learner to study any learning material, the principle of noticing has to take place before the learning would be successful. For example, if someone wants to read a material written in a target language, he or she must first identify the grammatical form of his or her input before he or she could obtain the grammar of the language. The weak form simply says that 'noticing is helpful but might not be necessary (Truscott, 1998:104).' Though this form recognizes the NH, it does not see it as an indispensable tool that must happen before learning will take place.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

The research employed Sequential Exploratory Mixed Methods (SEMM) design which uses both qualitative and quantitative data. However, SEMM involves the process of first, collecting qualitative data to explain a situation, and then soliciting quantitative data with the view of providing explanations to the relationships established in the qualitative data (Creswell et al. 2003:211). Therefore, I first collected classroom data in the form of texts at both pre- and post-test levels. After that, I used questionnaire items in collecting data. The design of the research also used experimental. In

[1] Peer assessment is an interactive and dynamic process that involve learners in assessing, critiquing and making value judgment on the quality and standard of work of other learners (Juwah 2003)

experimental study, one control group and two experimental groups (A and B) were composed for the participants. The experimental Group A participants received Direct Feedback technique (DF). Those in experiment Group B received Indirect Feedback technique (IF). The intervention used the control group was No Feedback (NF). This classification is in line with classical experimental study research, where groups (experimental and control) are established against some form of planned intervention(s) (Saunders et al., 2007:136).

3.2. Participants, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

The participants were first-year (level 100) students of the 2016/2017 academic year batch, offering Higher National Diploma in Hospitality, Catering and Institutional Management (HND HCIM) programme in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism of Sunyani Technical University, (STU), Sunyani, Ghana. Level 100 students were used because it is at this level that students offer one of the required courses, Communication Skills, which incorporates business communication topics like letters and memoranda. Out of a population of 120 students, 60 were randomly sampled. A sample size of 300 was used. This comprises 240 texts, and 60 questionnaire items.

3.3. Data, Instruments, Procedure, and Analysis

The instruments used in collecting data were texts (memorandum and business letter) and questionnaire items. The 60 participants were divided into 3 groups (with 20 members in each of the groups) namely: Experimental Group A, Experimental Group B, and Control Group. The participants were then asked to develop one memorandum and one letter at the pre-test stage. After the pre-test, the texts of the Experimental Group A students were graded using the DF intervention, those in Experimental Group B received IF, and those in the Control Group received NF intervention.

After one week, the participants were asked to write their texts again at the post-test level. This was after different interventions were applied on their pre-test scripts. The one week period enabled me to analyse the 120 scripts (40 from each of the three groups) with different interventions. After the post-test, the participants were asked to fill a questionnaire. The essence of the questionnaire was to solicit their views on the interventions used in analysing their pre-test scripts. Afterwards, their questionnaires were analysed using version 16 of SPSS.

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Analysis of Texts

The analysis is presented under the three main interventions of Direct Feedback (DF), Indirect Feedback (IF), and No/Control Feedback (NF) applied on the texts of the participants. Each sub-section showcases the problematic areas identified in the various pre-test items and whether the intervention applied was useful at the post-test stage.

4.1.1 Analysis of the Texts of the DF Group

The section is segmented into two parts – memorandum and business letter texts.

4.1.1.1 Memorandum Texts of the DF Group

- Rubrical Errors

At the pre-test level, the DF participants did not commit any significant rubrical errors[2]. However, 7 (35%) out of the 20 DF participants did not append signatures after names of senders. This includes participants with text serial numbers: SDMA3, SDMA5, SDMA8, SDMA10, SDMA11, SDMA12, and SDMA18. Again, 10 (50%) participants in this category made alignment error. This error was found in SDMA2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, and 18[3]. For example, in the illustration below, one realizes that the rubrics have not been properly aligned:

From: Administrative Assistant
To: Members of Staff
Date: 13th June, 2016
Subject: NOTICE OF OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the post-test level, when the DF intervention was applied, all participants who had various rubrical errors at the pre-test level, were able to notice the gaps or the errors and subsequently, corrected them. This outcome corroborates with the Noticing Hypothesis. Thus, CF facilitated the noting ability of students; therefore they were in a position to correct errors at the post-test level. An example of such learning is indicated below:

From: Administrative Assistant
To: Members of Staff
Date: 13th June, 2016
Subject: NOTICE OF OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- Language and Formatting Errors

At the pre-test stage, various language and formatting errors of mechanics, grammar, and punctuation marks were found in the memoranda of the DF participants. These issues found, have been presented in Table 1. From Table 1, it is obvious that 89 mechanical, 73 grammatical, and 45 punctuation errors were found. All put together, a total of 207 were corrected

[2] Some examples of rubrical errors are: wrong alignment, wrong date format, repetition of sender's name at the bottom of the memo, wrong subject, lack of proper memo heading, and the presence of subscription.

[3] From this point of the thesis to the end, codes numbers which are in the same category, and are in series, will be represented by the number only, though the first code would be written in full. This measure is to avoid repetition of the code letters in the write up.

in the pre-test memo scripts of the DF Group. Table 1 also shows the post-test memo errors of the DF participants. That is 32 mechanical, 23 grammatical, and 16 punctuation errors were seen. In effect, a total of 71 errors were found in the post test memo scripts of the DF Group.

Pre-Test			**Post-Test**		
Error Type	Examples	Errors Found	Error Type	Examples	Errors Found
Mechanics:			Mechanics:		
. Spelling	. Comfrence, Confrence (Conference),	30	. Spelling	. Confrence (Conference), Recieved (Received),	10
. Spacing/ Word-Division	. Conferen Ce (Conference), 2. Here By (Hereby),	10	. Spacing/ Word-Division	Here By (Hereby)	5
.Capitalisation	. Annual General Meeting (Annual General Meeting), May (May),	42	.Capitalisation	. Annual General Meeting (Annual General Meeting),	14
. Paragraph Inconsistency	Mixture Of Indented And Block Paragraphs	7	. Paragraph Inconsistency	Mixture Of Paragraphs	3
Sub-Total		89	Sub-Total		32
Grammar:			Grammar:		
. Syntactic	I Wish To Bring To Note That (I Wish To Bring To Your Notice That...),	16	. Syntactic	I Wish To Bring To Note That (I Wish To Bring To Your Notice That...),	5
. Concord	The Meeting Which Come Of ... (The Meeting Which Comes Off)	11	. Concord	Their Names Is... (Their Names Are...),	4
. Tense	All Supervisors Are Request To... (All Supervisors Are Requested To...)	16	. Tense	How Foods Are Processing (How Foods Are Processed)	3
. Semantic	Ambiguous Structures	13	. Semantic	Dangling Modifiers	4
. Lexical	Comes Of (Comes Off), ...Conference Hall 7:00 O'clock Am (Conference Hall At 7:00 O'clock Am),	17	. Lexical	Incereament At Staff Salaries (Increment Of Staff Salaries),	7
Sub-Total		73	Sub-Total		23
Punctuation Marks:			Punctuation Marks:		
. Comma	Omission And Wp Of Comma	11	. Comma	Omission And Wp Of Comma	5
. Full Stop	Omission And Wp Of Full Stop	17	. Full Stop	Omission And Wp Of Full Stop	6
. Colon And Semi-Colon	Agenda; (Agenda :), As Follows; (As Follows :)	9	. Colon And Semi-Colon	Omission And Wp Of Colon And Semi-Colon	5
. Apostrophe	Administrater Office (Administrator's Office)	8	. Apostrophe		-
Sub-Total		45	Sub-Total		16
Total		207	Total		71

Table 1: Errors Corrected in the Pre- and Post-Test Memos of Df Group
Key: Wp: Wrong Placement

4.1.1.2 Business Letter Texts of the DF Group

- Rubrical Errors

At the pre-test level, I found a number of rubrical errors in the business letters of the DF Group. For example, 5 (25%) of the 20 business letters did not have signatures. This includes texts with serial numbers SDLA5, 11, 4, 10, and 8.Also, 4 (20%) texts did not have sender's address (SDLA1, 18, 15, and 9); 4 (20%) did not have recipient's address (SDLA2, 14, 12, and 11); and 4 (20%) scripts lacked full name of sender after the subscription (SDLA11, 4, 10, 8). Additionally, two participants (10%) could not properly align the salutation with the subscription. For example, in text SDLA14, the participant matched Dear Sir against Yours truly, and in text SDLA13 the participant aligned Dear Sir with Yours sincerely. These permutations are not standard in business letters (see McClave 2008:132 and Locker and Kienzler 2010:637). At the post-test level, the application of the DF intervention resulted in significant reduction of these rubrical errors as participants were able to correct these errors. This is an indication of the efficacy of the DF intervention.

- Language and Formatting Errors

The major categories of errors of mechanics found in Table 2 include: mechanics 93, grammar 103, and punctuation 49. In all, a total of 245 errors were seen and corrected in the pre-test business letter of the DF Group. At the post-test level of Table 2, the application of the DF intervention resulted in a significant reduction of the pre-test errors found in the business letters of the DF Group. Therefore, 29 mechanical, 39 grammatical, and 15 punctuation errors were found and corrected. Overall, a total of 83 errors were seen and corrected in the post-test business letters of the DF Group.

Pre-Test			**Post-Test**		
Error Type	Examples	Errors found	Errors Type	Examples	Errors found
Mechanics:			Mechanics:		
. Spelling	equiped (equipped), morden (modern)	41	. Spelling	saperated (separated), past (paste), limted (limited)	11
. Spacing/ Word-Division	can not (cannot), compan y (company),	8	. Spacing/ Word-Division	can not (cannot)	1
.Capitalisation	food and drugs authority (Food and Drugs Authority)	40	.Capitalisation	An Addition to… (An addition to…),	17
. Paragraph inconsistency	Mixture of indented and block paragraphs	4	. Paragraph inconsistency		-
Sub-Total		93	Sub-Total		29
Grammar:			Grammar:		
. Syntactic	First and foremost, freezing. (The first one is freezing.),	12	. Syntactic	Examples of okro, beans, mazi … (Examples of such foods are okra, beans, maize..),	8
. Concord	Our company produce and process… (Our company produces and processes…)	11	. Concord	some chemical (some chemicals), Food are (Food is/Foods are),	11
. Tense	food is been process… (food is being processed…),	43	. Tense	To processed… (To process…) to be process… (to be processed),	14
. Semantic	Ambiguous structures, dangling modifiers	12	. Semantic		-
. Lexical	First all… (First of all…)	25	. Lexical	… the place which the … (… the place where the…)	6
Sub-Total		103	Sub-Total		39
Punctuation marks:			Punctuation marks:		
. Comma	Omission and WP of comma	20	. Comma	Omission and WP of comma	6
. Full stop	Omission and WP of full stop	17	. Full stop	Omission and WP of full stop	4
. Colon and semi-colon	Omission and WP of colon or semicolon	10	. Colon and semi-colon	Omission and WP of colon or semicolon	4
. Apostrophe	Im (I'm/I am), cant (can't)	2	. Apostrophe	Your's faithfully (Yours faithfully),	1
Sub-Total		49	Sub-Total		15
TOTAL		245	TOTAL		83

Table 2: Errors Corrected in the Pre- and Post-Test Letters of DF Group

4.1.2 Analysis of the Texts of the IF Group

The section is divided into two parts of memorandum and business letter texts.

4.1.2.1 Memorandum Texts of the IF Group

- Rubrical Errors

At the pre-test level, I corrected a number of rubrical errors. 15 of the 20 IF Group participants (75%) made alignment errors. This includes participants with text serial numbers SIMA1, 2, 4, 6 – 12, 14 – 16, 19, and 20. At the post-test stage, 13 of the 15 participants who made wrong alignment error at the pre-test level, were able to correct this error. Samples of the pre-test alignment error (A) and post-test corrected alignment sample (B) are illustrated below:

(A)	(B)
Ref No: SP/04/05/16/XY	Ref No : FLA55
FROM: Human Resource Manager	FROM : Administrative Assistant
To: The Secretary	To : Staff
DATE: June 16, 2016	Date : June 22, 2016
SUBJECT: MEETING	Subject : MEETING

The IF intervention was strong in correcting rubrical errors as the participants were able to interpret the error symbols used and corrected the errors accordingly at the post-test level.

- Language and Formatting Errors

Table 3 highlights the language and formatting errors corrected at the pre- and post-test level of memo scripts of the IF Group. From Table 3, 101 mechanical, 59 grammatical, and 30 punctuation errors were corrected. Overall, a total of 190 errors were found and corrected in the pre-test memos of the IF Group. At the post-test level, 99 mechanical, 46 grammatical, and 42 punctuation errors were seen and corrected. All put together, a total of 187 errors were spotted and corrected in the post-test memos of the IF Group.

P RE-TEST			**POST-TEST**		
Error Type	Examples	Errors found	Error Type	Examples	Errors found
Mechanics:			Mechanics:		
. Spelling	atend (attend), saftt, staffs, staaf (staff)	43	. Spelling	speach (speech)	42
. Spacing/ Word-Division	achie ve (achieve), Hallon (Hall on)	3	. Spacing/ Word-Division		-
.Capitalisation	general manager (General Manager), I Wish (I wish),	55	.Capitalisation	I Write (I write), june (June)	57
Sub-Total		101	Sub-Total		99
Grammar:			Grammar:		
. Syntactic	... be held 10 to inform to all ... (be informed that the meeting will be held at 10am),	4	. Syntactic	In general adminitrative performed well (In general, the Administrative Staff performed well)	4
. Concord	To learn how food and beverage service are done (To learn how food and beverage services are done),	13	. Concord	One of the leading company (One of the leading companies),	10
. Tense	be remind (be reminded), to informed (to inform),	21	. Tense	... to be discuss ... (to be discussed...)	10
. Semantic	All saftt Should come without full (All staff should make it a point to attend)	2	. Semantic	Make sure your usual lateness goes sleeping this time around (On this occasion, do not come late)	7
. Lexical	Without fell, without full (without fail), thiscars (discuss)	19	. Lexical	Secondary (Secondly), discuss about (discuss)	15
Sub-Total		59	Sub-Total		46
Punctuation marks:			Punctuation marks:		
. Comma	In line with the Administrative Board. (In line with the Administrative Board's decision, ...)	9	. Comma	Fourthly the incoming staff... (Fourth, the incoming staff...)	13

P RE-TEST			POST-TEST		
. Full stop	Thank you (Thank you.)	12	. Full stop	Thank you (Thank you.)	19
. Colon and semi-colon	… will be the following. (… will be the following:), The agenda is to discuss (The agenda is to discuss:)	7	. Colon and semi-colon	The following are agenda for the meeting; (The following are the agenda for the meeting :)	8
. Apostrophe	The companies conference hall (The Company's Conference Hall)	1	. Apostrophe	companies uniform (company's uniform)	1
. Hyphen	send off (send-off)	1	. Hyphen	co.operation (co-operation)	1
Sub-Total		30	Sub-Total		42
TOTAL		190	TOTAL		187

Table 3: Errors Corrected in the Pre- and Post-Test Memos of the IF Group

4.1.2.2 Business Letter Texts of the IF Group

The errors have been grouped into rubrical and language and formatting errors.

- Rubrical Errors

At the pre-test stage, I corrected some rubrical errors in the business letters of the IF Group. For instance, 8 (40%) of the letters did not have recipients' address. These texts are: SILA3, 5, 7, 11, 12, 14, 17, and 19. Again, 4 (20%) of the texts (SILA1, 3, 5, and 12) did not have subscription, signature, and full name. At the post-test section, the IF Group was able to correct all the rubrical errors identified in the pre-test stage. However, SILB14 repeated the same error of lack of recipient's address.

- Language and Formatting Errors

Table 4 showcases language and formatting errors corrected in the pre- and post-test letters of the IF Group. From the pre-test section of Table 4, 97 mechanical, 73 grammatical, and 38 punctuation errors were identified and corrected. Generally, a total of 208 pre-test errors were seen and corrected. At the post-test level, 70 mechanical, 63 grammatical, and 32 punctuation errors were found and corrected. In total, the overall post-test language and formatting errors found and corrected were 165. If you subtract 165 from 208, you get 43. This means that the IF intervention corrected 43 business letter errors in the texts of the IF Group at the post-test stage.

P Re-Test			Post-Test		
Error Type	Examples	Errors Found	Error Type	Examples	Errors Found
Mechanics:			Mechanics:		
. Spelling	Recieved (Received), Seperated (Separated),	66	. Spelling	Morter (Mortar), Pistle (Pestle), Cos (Cost),	41
. Spacing/ Word-Division	Highquality (High Quality)	3	.Spacing/ Word-Division	Liq Uids (Liquids), Person Al (Personal),	3
.Capitalisation	I Wish To… (I Wish To…), Yours Faithfully (Yours Faithfully)	28	.Capitalisation	May (May), Yours Faithful… (Yours Faithfully)	26
Sub-Total		97	Sub-Total		70
Grammar:			Grammar:		
. Syntactic	Abc Company In Sunyani. (Abc Company Is In Sunyani.)	10	. Syntactic	Was Received (It Was Received)	9
. Concord	The Investment That Have Been … (The Investment That Has Been…)	15	. Concord	One Of The Best Company (One Of The Best Companies…) ,	13

P Re-Test			Post-Test		
. Tense	On How Food Is Processing... (On How Food Is Processed...), Was Processe (Was Processed)	27	. Tense	Food Is Now Process... (Food Is Now Processed)	21
. Semantic		3	. Semantic		4
. Lexical	This How... (This Is How...), As Food Is Import To Human... (As Food Is Important To Human),	18	. Lexical	May Company (My Company)	16
Sub-Total		73	Sub-Total		63
Punctuation Marks:			Punctuation Marks:		
. Comma	After This Process They Are ... (After This Process, They Are...), Dear Sir (Dear Sir,)	25	. Comma	Dear Sir (Dear Sir,)	18
. Full Stop	I Thank You Very Much (I Thank You Very Much.)	8	. Full Stop	Thank You (Thank You.)	11
. Apostrophe	Factorys (Factory's), Fake One's (Fake Ones)	5	. Apostrophe	Your's Faithfully, (Yours Faithfully),	3
Sub-Total		38	Sub-Total		32
Total		208	Total		165

Table 4: Errors Corrected in the Pre- and Post-Test Letters of the If Group

4.1.3 Analysis of the Texts of the NF Group

The section is also divided into two parts of memorandum and business letter texts.

4.1.3.1 Memorandum Texts of the NF Group

- Rubrical Errors

Some rubrical errors were made by the NF Group. One (1) participant, SNMA1, did not append a signature against the sender's name. 11 (55%) made alignment errors of wrong alignment. At the post-test level, alignment errors were reduced. This is to say that five (5) participants committed the errors again. They are participants with text codes: SNMB2, 3, 5, 12, and 15. Again, the participant who committed the signature error at the pre-test level, could not correct this error as it was repeated at the post-test level.

- Language and Formatting Errors

Table 5 highlights language and formatting issues in the pre- and post-test memoranda of the NF Group. At the pre-test section, 85 mechanical, 65 grammatical, and 26 punctuation errors were found and corrected. Overall, a total of 179 errors were seen and corrected. At the post-test section, these errors were recognized and corrected: mechanics 95, grammar 74, and punctuation 17. In all, a total of 186 errors were found and corrected. This means that the number of post-test errors were heavier than those of the pre-test errors. This is an indication of the ineffectiveness of the NF method used.

Pre-Test			Post-Test		
Error Type	Examples	Errors found	ErrorType	Examples	Errors found
Mechanics:			Mechanics:		
. Spelling	assistan (assistant), abscent (absent)	46	. Spelling	notic (notice), discusion (discussion)	44
. Spacing/ Word-Division	canbe (can be), tobe (to be)	14	. Spacing/ Word-Division	dis cuss (discuss), 15thJune (15th June)	15
.Capitalisation	I Want (I want), I Therefore, (I therefore,)	25	.Capitalisation	I Wish (I wish), june (June), t, his Month (this month)	36
Sub-Total		85	Sub-Total		95
Grammar:			Grammar:		
. Syntactic	Transitional and Null-Subject clause errors	9	. Syntactic	Null-subject clauses. Wrong sequence of tense errors	14
. Concord	The meeting include... (The meeting includes...)	12	. Concord	All member (All members)	11

Pre-Test			Post-Test		
. Tense	tobe serve... (to be served), ... be please... (... be pleased...)	17	. Tense	Be welcome (Be welcomed), to reminded (to remind)	13
. Semantic	The meeting should been the Staff member the company (The meeting is for staff members of the company)	9	. Semantic	With the decision made on the 10th May 2016 on the annual general meeting. (With the decision we made on the 10th May, 2016 on the Annual General Meeting, I write to invite ..)	8
. Lexical	I want remind you... (I want to remind you...)	18	. Lexical	I Wish to you Count on your Co-operation (I wish to count on your co-operation),	28
Sub-Total		65	Sub-Total		74
Punctuation marks:			Punctuation marks:		
. Comma		8	. Comma	10th May 2016 (10th May, 2016)	7
. Full stop	Declarative structures without full stops.	11	. Full stop	Thank you (Thank you.)	5
. Colon and semi-colon	Lack of colon after the rubrics	4	. Colon and semi-colon	The agenda is to dis cuss (The agenda is to discuss:), as follows (as follows:)	3
. Apostrophe	The meeting go's ...(The meeting goes...)	3	. Apostrophe	ourQueens Conference Hall (our Queen's Conference Hall)	2
Sub-Total		26	Sub-Total		17
Total		176	Total		186

Table 5: Errors Corrected in the Pre- and Post-Test Memos of the NF Group

4.1.3.2 Business Letter Texts of the NF Group

- Rubrical Errors

The pre-test level of the NF Group produced some letter rubrical errors. For instance, SNLA8 wrote the salutation and the heading on the same line:

Dear Sir, HOW FOOD ARE PROCESS IN ABC COMPANY

This style is uncommon in business letters. One would have expected this:

Dear Sir,

HOW FOODS ARE PROCESSED AT ABC COMPANY LIMITED

Furthermore, SNLA15 misaligned the salutation, Dear Sir, with the subscription, Yours sincerely. At the post-test level, SNLB8 was able to correct the heading error; but, SMLB15 repeated the error of wrong alignment. This shows that NF is inefficacious.

- Language and Formatting Errors

Table 6 showcases language and formatting issues in the pre- and post-test letters of the NF Group. At the pre-test section, 97 mechanical, 73 grammatical, and 38 punctuation errors were identified and corrected. In all, a total of 208 pre-test errors were identified and corrected. At the post-test section, 90 mechanical 70 grammatical, and 37 punctuation errors were seen and corrected. All put together, 197 errors were identified and corrected through the NF intervention.

P Re-Test			Post-Test		
Error Type	**Examples**	**Errors Found**	**Error Type**	**Examples**	**Errors found**
Mechanics:			Mechanics:		
. Spelling	recieved (received), compay (company),	66	. Spelling	Explaination (explanation), procedured (procedure),	61
Spacing/ Word-Division	highquality (high quality), advance ment (advancement),	3	. Spacing/ Word-Division	Liq uids (liquids), person al (personal), further more (furthermore)	3
.Capitalisation	I Wish to... (I wish to...), yours faithfully (Yours faithfully)	28	.Capitalisation	may (May), yours faithful... (Yours faithfully)	26
Sub-Total		97	Sub-Total		90
Grammar:			Grammar:		

Pre-Test			Post-Test		
. Syntactic	ABC Company in Sunyani. (ABC Company is in Sunyani.)	10	. Syntactic	In response to your letter which was receved on 20th May 2016. (In response to your letter which was received on 29th May, 2016, I wish to ...)	9
. Concord	How food are ... (How foods are/How a food is..),	15	. Concord	These cage (These cages),	16
. Tense	On how food is processing... (On how food is processed...), was processe (was processed)	27	. Tense	Food is now process... (Food is now processed), was establish (was established),	25
. Semantic	Dangling modifiers	3	. Semantic	Dangling modifiers	4
. Lexical	This how... (This is how...), As food is import to human... (As food is important to human)	18	. Lexical	may company (my company), I wish to inform you about now we ... (I wish to inform you about how we...)	16
Sub-Total		73	Sub-Total		70
Punctuation marks:			Punctuation marks:		
. Comma	After this process they are ... (After this process, they are...), Dear Sir (Dear Sir,)	25	. Comma	Dear Sir (Dear Sir,)	23
. Full stop	I thank you very much (I thank you very much.)	8	. Full stop	Thank you (Thank you.)	11
. Apostrophe	factorys (factory's), fake one's (fake ones)	5	. Apostrophe	factorys (factory's), Your's faithfully, (Yours faithfully),	3
Sub-Total		38	Sub-Total		37
Total		208	Total		197

Table 6: Errors Corrected in the Pre- and Post-Test Letters of the NF Group

4.2. Analysis of Questionnaire

After the scripts were analysed, the participants were asked to fill a questionnaire and indicate the type of CF that has the greatest impact on students' texts in terms of punctuation, mechanics, and grammar (PMG). The finding is depicted in Figure 1.

4.2.1 CF that has the Greatest Impact on Students' Texts in Terms of Punctuation, Mechanics, and Grammar (PMG).

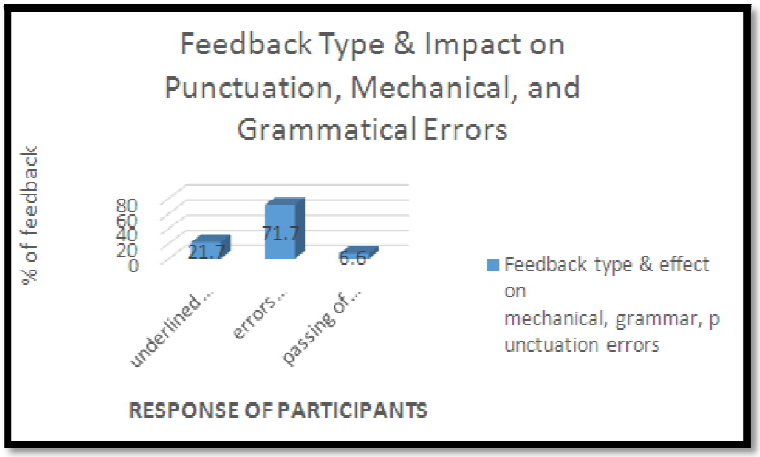

Figure 1: CF That Has the Greatest Impact on Students' PMG Errors

From the Figure 1, 83 (71.7%) majority think that the DF technique is a better error corrector as against 13 (21.7%) and 4(6.6%) who selected IF and NF respectively.

4.2.2 CF that has the Greatest Impact on Students' Texts in Terms of Rubrics in Writing Memoranda and Business Letters (ReMeL)

The participants were again asked to indicate the kind of CF that has the greatest impact on the rubrics of students' memos and letters (RoMeL). The result is illustrated in Figures 2.

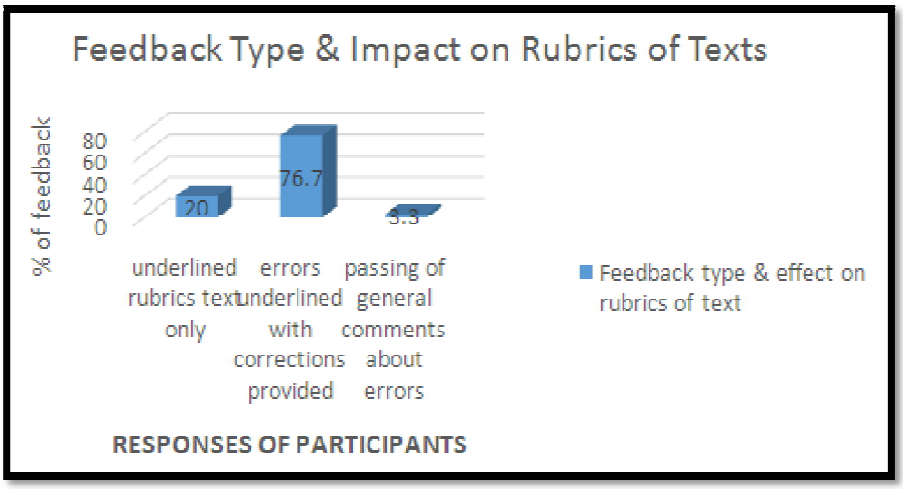

Figure 2: CF That Has the Greatest Impact on the Romel of Respondents

From Figure 2, 46 (76.7%) majority of the respondents selected DF as the best RoMeL corrector, 12 (20%) chose IF, and 2 (3.3) selected NF. The implication is that the DF intervention has the greatest impact on the RoMeL of participants.

5. Discussions of Results

In comparing the rubrical errors of the three (DF, IF and NF) Groups at the pre- and post-test levels, it was generally realized that, at the post-test level, the participants were able to correct a majority of the errors pointed out directly at the pre-test level. Noticing Hypothesis (NH) strongly aided the participants in the DF and IF groups, especially, as they were able to work on major errors identified at the pre-test level[4]. For example, on memoranda, the DF intervention succeeded in eradicating all errors of wrong alignment of salutation and subscription. A comparative analysis of the total language and formatting errors at the pre- and post-test levels of the memo scripts of the Direct Feedback (DF) Group revealed that the 207 errors committed at the pre-test level were significantly reduced at the post-test level to only 71 errors. The difference is 136 errors. Furthermore, in juxtaposing the 83 business letter errors corrected at the post-test level, with the 245 errors corrected at the pre-test level, one realizes that the participants in the DF were able to notice 162 errors and subsequently correct them at the post-test level. The major differences of errors in the pre- and post-test memorandum and business letter items of the DF Groups show how efficacious the DF intervention is in terms of correction of errors. Therefore, the application of the DF intervention, activated the capacity of the participants in noticing the errors. Since the errors committed at the pre-test levels in both composition of memoranda and business letters were considerably reduced at the post-test levels, I argue that DF is a strong interventional tool for correcting business communication texts.

The IF participants were also able to decode the indirect CF intervention applied on the rubrics of their texts at the pre-test level and subsequently produced the right formats at the post-test level. For example, 15 of the 20 IF participants made memo errors of wrong alignment at the pre-test level. However, at the post-test level, 13 of the 15 understood the indirect CF intervention as they were able to correct this anomaly. This is an indication that the indirect CF is also strong in eradicating rubrical errors. At the language and formatting section of the memo scripts of the IF participants, a total of 190 errors were seen and corrected at the pre-test level. When the indirect CF was applied, a total of 187 errors were found and corrected at the post-test section. The difference between the two figures is only 3. This number is insignificant. This implies that the IF was weak in correcting language and formatting errors of the IF Group. Again, a total of 208 mechanical, grammar, and punctuation marks were spotted and corrected at the language and formatting section of the business letters the IF participants; 165 were seen and corrected at the post-test level. The difference between the two figures is 43. This implies that the IF intervention helped students to notice some of the language and formatting-related gaps in their write ups at the post-test level. The inference is that IF worked better on letter rubrical errors than it did on errors that emanated from language and formatting. This explains why for example, almost all the IF participants who committed various letter rubrical errors at the pre-test level, were able to correct them at the post-test level.

Here, the conclusion is that although indirect CF has positive effect on students' scripts, its strength cannot be compared with that of direct CF as seen in the case of the DF Group. The memo and business letter rubrical errors of the NF Group brought out some revelations. At the pre-test levels of both the memo and business letter scripts, the NF Group members were not able to correct some errors when they were given the opportunity to reproduce new scripts at the post-test levels. For example, 5 (SNMB2, 3, 5, 12, and 15) of the 11 participants, whose memoranda had alignment errors,

repeated the same errors at the post-test level. Again, at the post-test level, six participants (SNLB1, 6, 11, 14, 15, 16) repeated business letter errors of no subscription, signature, and full name. The indication is that the NF did not yield positive results on the scripts of the NF Group in terms of correcting of errors of alignment, subscription, signature, and full name. Therefore, the NF intervention was not potent. Concerning the business letter scripts, SNLB3, and 5 committed name before signature error at the subscription section, though the assessor had earlier commented on this error at the pre-test level. At the pre-test level, only SNLB3 committed this error. For SNLB3 to have repeated this error and for a fresh case to have been recorded is an indication of inefficacy of the No Feedback intervention.

The inefficacy of the NF was further revealed when the language and formatting errors of the memoranda and business letters the NF Group were analysed. For the memo scripts, a total of 176 errors were seen and corrected at the pre-test level; but at the post-test level, this figure shot up to 186. One would have expected the reverse to happen. Specifically, pre-test errors such as word-division/spacing, capitalisation, syntax, and lexis went up from 14, 25, 9, and 18 to 15, 36, 14, and 28 respectively at the post-test level. This situation is a strong indication that NF does not have a place in memoranda and business letters. The participants could not notice the pre-test errors and subsequently could not correct them at the post-test stage. This also defeats the Noticing Hypothesis. For the business letter scripts for instance, 208 pre-test language and formatting errors were seen and corrected; and 197 were also spotted and corrected at the post-test level. The difference is only 11. This figure is insignificant since the participants were given a second opportunity to rewrite their letters at the post-test level. The results from the analysis of the questionnaire items corroborated the results of the analysis of scripts. From Figure 1, it is obvious that the participants agree that the DF corrects flaws better than the IF and NF. That is 43 (71.7%) majority of the participants confirmed this assertion as against 13 (21.7%) and 4(6.6%) for the IF and NF techniques respectively. The findings of this questionnaire item validates the results of the classroom texts which exhibited superiority of the DF in correction of errors. Again from Figure 2, the 46 (76.7%) majority who selected DF as the best RoMeL corrector as against the 12 (20%) and 2 (3.3%) who selected IF and NF respectively, is an indication of the effectiveness of the DF intervention in correcting RoMeL flaws.

6. Conclusion

From the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that DF and IF have positive effect on the texts students; but the effect of NF was sporadic. The post-test assessments of all the DF and IF Groups showed that the students were able to correct both rubrical and language and formatting errors. For example, all the participants in the DF and IF Groups corrected major rubrical errors such as mismatch of salutation and subscription, wrong alignment, wrong and missing rubrics, date, signature, and full name. However, the CF that had the greatest effect on students' PMG, is the DF intervention. From Table 7, one realizes that lesser errors were found and corrected at the post-test stages of the DF Groups. This is significant as compared to the post-test errors of the IF and NF Groups.

Institution	Group/ Intervention	Memoranda PMG Errors		Comments (Memo)	Letters PMG Errors		Comments (Letter)
		Pre-Test	Post-Test		Pre-Test	Post-Test	
STU	DF	207	71	Very sig.[5]	245	83	Very sig.
	IF	190	187	Insignificant	208	165	Significant
	NF	176	186	Depreciated	208	197	Insignificant

Table 7: Total Pre- and Post-Test PMG Errors of All the Groups

Again, the research revealed the potency of the DF and the IF interventions in terms of their ability to correct RoMeL errors. The use of the DF and the IF interventions helped the students to notice the RoMeL errors and corrected them accordingly. However, the NF Group could not make any progress in correcting RoMeL errors. This means that the NF intervention did not help them to notice their RoMeL flaws. Examples are found in SNMB2, and 15 where the NF participants repeated a wrong alignment error committed earlier at the pre-test level.

7. Recommendations

Based on the results, discussions and conclusion, I recommend that:

- I recommend that teachers who teach Business Communication and other English language-related courses should offer CFs on students' texts. This is because, CFs in general, have positive impact on students' texts.
- I also recommend that for smaller classes (of between 1 – 45 students) DF should be the intervention used in grading students' texts. But where the class size is large (from 46 and above) teachers who find DF more laborious and time-consuming, may use the IF.
- Since the NF was weak in correcting classroom text errors, it should only be used as a prelude to the use of DF or IF interventions. That is, in some take-home assignment cases, when students submit their texts, teachers may challenge them to go and grade their own scripts before the teachers would use either the DF or the IF in grading students' scripts.

[5]Very sig. (Very significant) means the margin between the pre-test and post-test errors is a positive one, which means that students corrected massive errors at the post-test level. Significant means few errors were corrected at the post-test stage. Insignificant means fewer errors were corrected at the post-test level. Depreciated means the post-test errors outweighed the pre-test errors.

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