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Research Paper

Written Corrective Feedback in Language Education: A Qualitative Meta-Synthetic Study

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Abstract

The present qualitative meta-synthetic study examines the effectiveness of written corrective feedback (WCF) studies published in six scholarly journals during a time-span of seven years. From 36 articles published about corrective feedback, 15 research studies, which directly focused on WCF, went through extensive review and qualitative content analysis to explore its efficiency in the field of Applied Linguistics. Thorough qualitative content analysis revealed four core themes: the multidimensionality of written

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corrective feedback, effectiveness of direct and indirect written corrective feedback, written languaging, and negotiability of written corrective feedback. It was found that WCF is multi-faceted, improves grammatical accuracy, fosters metalinguistic knowledge, helps learners to correct their errors during revision, and is negotiable between the teachers and the learners. The findings provided theoretical and practical implications for a reconsideration of WCF in the field of teaching English as a foreign language.

***Keywords**:* Feedback, Corrective Feedback, Written Corrective Feedback, Meta-Synthesis

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1. Introduction

Second language (L2) learning is facilitated by feedback, which is the information provided to the learners based on their performance (Panadero & Jonsson, 2020). Research studies (e.g., Webb & Moallem, 2016) suggested that the timing of feedback, whether given immediately or after a delay, may influence learning. It is widely acknowledged that language learners make better progress in their second language when they receive explicit feedback. In non-pedagogic interactions, feedback is given implicitly, as in the case of backchanneling (implicit positive) and clarification requests (implicit negative). Although the past three decades have experienced the proliferation of WCF research (Zheng, Yu, & Liu, 2023), both the researchers and the practitioners are still fascinated by the various roles that corrective feedback plays in second language instruction and how best to integrate it

into classroom interactions for the benefit of second language development (Lyster, 2012). Contrary to the theoretical claims that the underlying interlanguage system of a learner is only influenced by positive evidence (Soodmand Afshar & Doosti, 2022) and not by negative evidence, according to different theoretical perspectives that differ from cognitively to socially oriented, corrective feedback is not only helpful but may also be important to enhance learners in the process of second language learning. For instance, when dealing with feedback, a cognitive-interactionist second language acquisition perspective assigns roles both to positive evidence (Yenkimaleki & Van Heuven, 2022) and negative evidence in such a way that activates the detection of non-target output; Skill Acquisition Theory highlights the role of feedback in combination with practice that assists learners to move from demanding to more automatic second language usage; and sociocultural theory considers feedback as a kind of other-regulation activity that offers dialogically mediated assistance to learners as they move towards being more self-regulated second-language users (Lyster & Saito, 2010).

1.1 Types of Corrective Feedback

How to provide feedback might yet be a challenge for language educators because they are required to adopt strategies to give accurate and constructive feedback to the students (Bal-Gezegin, Akbaş, & Başal, 2023). One fully recognized taxonomy amongst numerous ways of classifying corrective feedback is Lyster and Ranta's (1997) identification of six types of corrective feedback, which had its roots in a thorough analysis of teacher-student interactions in French immersion classrooms. Later, Ranta and Lyster (2007) suggested that each of the six types of feedback may be categorized as a prompt or reformulation. They claimed that reformulation comprises recasts and explicit correction because both of these moves supply the learners

with target reformulations of their non-target output. Prompts include a variety of signals, other than alternative reformulations, that direct learners toward self-repair. These involve teacher repetition, elicitation, clarification requests, and metalinguistic clues.

According to Lyster and Ranta (1997, p. 46), a recast is "the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error". In contrast to recasts, explicit correction provides the right form and "clearly indicates that what the student had said was incorrect" (p. 46). On the other hand, prompts—also known as elicitations by some and as negotiation of form by Lyster and Ranta (1997)—withhold the right forms and give the students hints or cues to help them retrieve these forms from their existing knowledge. In educational environments, where teachers can decide freely whether to supply or withhold proper forms in response to students' errors, the distinction between providing and withholding correct forms has proven to be beneficial.

When comparing implicit and explicit feedback types, it is more difficult to draw clear distinctions between them since various factors interact to determine the extent to which a feedback type is explicit from the learner's standpoint. Recasts might be provided in a continuum from implicit to explicit forms depending on several factors: (a) the type of interaction, where recasts are more noticeable in explicit language-focused exchanges than in communicative exchanges; (b) the communicative orientation of the classroom as a whole, where recasts are easier to notice in form-focused classrooms than in meaning-focused classrooms; and (c) the orientation of the individual learners, where form-oriented learners benefit more from recasts than meaning-oriented learners. Short recasts with few alterations

incorporating intonational stress fall at the explicit end of the spectrum (e.g., Loewen & Philp, 2006).

Corrective feedback in the form of explicit feedback comes in a variety of forms, particularly with regard to informativeness—that is, the degree to which the ungrammaticality's source is disclosed (Ortega, 2009). While some explicit feedback approaches provide the correct form spontaneously, others choose not to provide the correct form and provide either metalinguistic information or merely a metalinguistic “clue” instead—i.e., not an explanation—that shows the learner's utterance is ill-formed. Considering what Ortega (2009) refers to as demand, which is "the degree of conversational urgency exerted upon interlocutors to react to the negative feedback" (p. 75), prompts, which also range from implicit to explicit, can be distinguished from recasts and explicit corrections.

Among all the feedback types utilized in educational settings, recasts are by far the most frequently used. There are several reasons for their widespread use, including the notion that they are "pedagogically expeditious" (Loewen & Philp, 2006, p. 551). Some other scholars have documented their fulfillment of specific scaffolding functions that facilitate a shift toward a more academic register, particularly in content-based instructional contexts (Gibbons, 2003), as well as their significant discourse functions that help to advance lessons when the target forms are beyond the students' abilities (Lyster, 1997).

One fundamental requirement for good feedback is that it should result in feedforward, making it beneficial to subsequent projects (Orsmond et al., 2011). Effective feedback models encourage feeding forward by outlining strategies for advancement, assisting students in considering their

following learning stages, and moving them toward a more dialogic process (Careless et al., 2011). Feedback that is explicit, purposeful, and given at the appropriate level can provide information that can support the promotion of efficient learning processes. According to Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) and Hattie and Timperley (2007), constructive feedback underpins quality performance (feed-up), provides opportunities for the students to close the performance gap between their actual and desired performance (feedback), and assists them in taking the next steps in their learning and acting on them (feedforward). Feedback significantly affects learning, but how it is given can determine whether it has positive or negative consequences (Panadero & Jonsson, 2020). If students have difficulty understanding the feedback or cannot comprehend the ideas to enhance their performance, they will encounter difficulties (Carless et al., 2011).

1.2 Main aim and the research question

The present meta-synthetic study provides a comprehensive overview of written corrective feedback studies that have been left underexplored to a large extent in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. The authors' main purpose is to explicitly address the status quo of written corrective feedback research in the six leading journals of the field. We reviewed the nature and scope of research into the realm from 2010 to 2016 to provide a more comprehensive account of the research exploring this ubiquitous term in the field of language teaching and learning. This meta-synthesis might, then, yield further insights into the way researchers define, study, challenge, and conceptualize the concept and its effectiveness as this approach can capture the nature of any concept in the field better (Ahmadi Safa, Yousefi, & Ranjbar, 2019). Therefore, to complement and add to the

existing research on written corrective feedback in language instruction, the following research question is raised:

How does recent research conceptualize Written Corrective Feedback in Applied Linguistics research studies?

2. The study

2.1 Identification of the primary studies

In the present study, six comprehensive international peer-reviewed Applied Linguistics journals were selected based on the following criteria: 1) they were all published in English language, 2) they were all selected from professional journals enumerated by Egbert (2007) and Weber and Campbell (2004), 3) it was consulted widely with two experts in the field over the selection of the samples. The experts obtained their PhD degrees in Applied Linguistics, and they were teaching and doing research at one of the famous and prestigious universities in Iran. One of the experts was a full professor in Applied Linguistics who had more than 20 years of experience in teaching and doing research in foreign language education. The other expert was an assistant professor in Applied Linguistics and had professional and international experience working on projects about the effect of providing written corrective feedback for English as a foreign language students. The information comprises a corpus of articles dispersed over a time span of seven years, from 2010 to 2016. The six journals selected were Applied Linguistics (AL), Language Learning (LL), Language Teaching Research (LTR), Studies in Second Language Acquisition (SSLA), The Modern Language Journal (MLJ), and TESOL Quarterly (TQ).

To gather the data sources, the following steps were taken: First, the electronic versions of all the articles published in the six journals mentioned above were collected. We then scanned the titles, abstracts, and key words sections of the articles, searching for terms or phrases such as error correction, written corrective feedback, written response, different types of feedback (clarification requests, elicitation, explicit correction, metalinguistic clues, recast, and repetition), and CF. We also used the search function of Adobe Reader to ensure the inclusion of the potential studies. Table 1 shows the frequency of all the research articles related to feedback published in the above-mentioned journals.

Table 1

Articles Year	AL	LL	LTR	MLJ	SSLA	TQ	Total
2010	2	0	2	0	0	1	5
2011	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2012	0	2	1	0	2	0	5
2013	0	0	1	2	2	0	5
2014	0	1	3	0	1	0	5
2015	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
2016	0	1	8 (6SI*)	3	1	0	13
Total	2	4	16	7	6	1	36

Distribution of Corrective Feedback Studies in the Journals
*SI= Special Issue

Once the target studies were recognized, the abstracts of the articles were meticulously screened, in view of a set of inclusion/exclusion criteria, resulting in the final sample of articles.

2.2 Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

The initial screening of the studies resulted in a set of criteria to help the selection of the final corpus of the study. Based on the criteria, the studies selected had to;

1. Examine L2 written corrective feedback provided by a teacher, peers, or a computer.
2. Focus on the grammatical accuracy of students' writing, rather than other aspects of writing.
3. Employ an experimental or quasi-experimental design that includes a control group or a comparison group. In fact, the studies selected had to contrast at least two groups: a treatment group (with feedback) and a control or comparison group (without feedback).

2.3 Data Coding

The final sample consisted of 36 studies, an overview of which is shown in Table 2. Table 2 summarizes some characteristics of the studies in terms of author/s, year of publication, journal of publication, and the focus of the studies.

Table 2

An overview of written corrective feedback studies

NO	Year	Author(s)	Journal	Focus
1	2009	Bitchener and Knoch	*Applied linguistics*	*Written corrective feedback*

2	2010	Friedman	*Applied Linguistics*	Oral corrective feedback
3	2012	Beuningen, De Jong, and Kuiken	*Language learning*	*Error Correction in Writing*
4	2012	Suzuki	*Language Learning*	*Written languaging*
5	2014	Shintani, Ellis, and Suzuki	*Language Learning*	*Written Corrective feedback*
6	2016a	Lee and Lyster	*Language Learning*	Oral corrective feedback
7	2010	Evans, Hartshorn, McCollum, and Wolfersberger	*Language Teaching Research*	*Written corrective feedback*
8	2010	Vásquez and Harvey	*Language Teaching Research*	Beliefs about Corrective feedback
9	2012	Zheng	*Language Teaching Research*	*Peer feedback on Writing*
10	2013	Rahimi	*Language Teaching Research*	*Written corrective feedback*
11	2014	Lado, Bowden, Stafford, and Sanz	*Language Teaching Research*	Morphosyntax Negative evidence
12	2014	Li	*Language Teaching Research*	Corrective feedback on grammar

13	2014	Kartchava and Ammar	*Language Teaching Research*	Corrective feedback on grammar
14	2015	Yu and Lee	*Language Teaching Research*	*Group peer feedback on writing*
15	2016	Lee, Mak, and Burns	*Language Teaching Research*	*Feedback innovation in writing*
16	2016	Park, Song, and Shin	*Language Teaching Research*	*Indirect Written corrective feedback*
17	2016	Allen and Mills	*Language Teaching Research*	*Peer feedback on writing*
18	2016	Brown	*Language Teaching Research*	A met-analysis on Oral corrective feedback
19	2016	Dilāns	*Language Teaching Research*	Oral corrective feedback
20	2016	Nassaji	*Language Teaching Research*	Analysis and Synthesis of CF
21	2016	Rouhshad, Wigglesworth, and Storch	*Language Teaching Research*	Peer feedback in oral Negotiation
22	2016	Wang and Loewen	*Language Teaching Research*	Nonverbal behavior in corrective feedback
23	2013	Li	*The Modern Language*	Implicit and explicit

			Journal	oral feedback
24	2013	Sato	*The Modern Language Journal*	Beliefs on peer interaction and peer corrective feedback
25	2015	Kang and Han	*The Modern Language Journal*	A quantitative meta-analysis
26	2015	Stefanou and Revesz	*The Modern Language Journal*	*Direct written corrective feedback*
27	2016	Gurzynski-Weiss	*The Modern Language Journal*	Oral corrective Feedback
28	2016	Li, Zhu, and Ellis	*The Modern Language Journal*	Corrective feedback on Grammar
29	2016	Shintani and Aubrey	*The Modern Language Journal*	*Synchronous and asynchronous written corrective feedback*
30	2012	Goo	*Studies in Second Language Acquisition*	Oral corrective feedback
31	2012	Sato and Lyster	*Studies in Second Language Acquisition*	Peer interaction and oral corrective feedback
32	2013	Goo and Mackey	*Studies in second language acquisition*	A review on Recast
33	2013	Lyster and Ranta	*Studies in Second Language Acquisition*	A response to No. 32

34	2014	Coyle and Larios	*Studies in Second Language Acquisition*	*Written corrective feedback*
35	2016b	Lee and Lyster	*Studies in Second Language Acquisition*	Oral corrective feedback
36	2010	Hartshorn, Evans, Merrill, Sudweeks, Strong-Kraus, and Anderson	*Tesol Quarterly*	*Dynamic corrective feedback on writing*

As illustrated in Table 2, from the whole research articles, 15 studies dealt with written corrective feedback. It is worth mentioning to ensure the reliability of the coding procedures, the primary studies were coded several times.

2.4 Data Analysis

At the initial step, the research studies found were analyzed several times, and a summary of all the studies (whether the focus was on written corrective feedback or not) was given in the result section. As adopting an appropriate methodological approach to collect and analyze data will result in well-justified meta-inferences about research problems (Soodmand Afshar & Ranjbar, 2023), a rigorous qualitative content analysis was used to portray how research studies conceptualize WCF in the field. We attempted to provide a rich and detailed description of the content, chiefly those sections that contained the types of corrective feedback, its efficiency, and the factors that affected them. This rigorous scrutiny of the content was executed through an iterative process (for some articles, we read, analyzed, and

reconsidered the sections more than once, emphasizing the key points) to arrive at common themes and categories associated with WCF in the field.

3. Results

This section reports all the 36 studies that were found in the selected Applied Linguistics journals from 2010 to 2016 in order to synthetize the most important results of the analysis. The focus in the discussion section was only on the 15 studies, that addressed written corrective feedback.

Bitchener and Knoch (2009), in a longitudinal study aiming at the efficiency of WCF, argued against some of the theoretical issues which were in opposition to WCF, summarized some of the latest empirical studies, and indicated the finding of a-ten-month study on the effects of WCF on two functional uses of the English article system. The participants, who were 52 ESL students, were divided into four groups receiving: direct corrective feedback (DCF) and written and oral meta-linguistic explanation (ME), DCF and written ME, DCF only, and a control group. Each of the treatment groups was shown to outperform the control group on the post-tests and all three delayed post-tests. No difference was found in the helpfulness of various CFs given among the three treatment groups.

The study by Friedman (2010) employed language socialization approach to focus on children's use of forms in Russian by means of ethnographic observations and videotaping two classrooms' interactions. It was concluded that corrective feedback makes students socialize into speaking pure language and affects their ideologies in a way that they do not mix languages anymore.

Beuningen, De Jong, and Kuiken (2012) examined the accuracy of 268 second language learners' writing samples, giving them direct and indirect comprehensive CF. Results of their study indicated that both direct and indirect comprehensive CF gave rise to enhanced accuracy in both treatment groups in comparison to the self-editing group and those who did not receive CF. Both during the revision and in the post-tests and delayed post-tests, the treatment groups were more accurate in their writing samples. Furthermore, it was concluded that grammatical accuracy was solely the effect of direct CF, while learners' non-grammatical accuracy was promoted mostly by indirect CF. Findings also suggested that comprehensive CF is a beneficial tool for teachers who want to assist L2 learners to improve the accuracy of their writing over time.

Suzuki (2012) studied how written languaging is at work by inquiring 24 Japanese learners of English to compose their own explanations in Japanese about the corrections they received on their written drafts. Whether the grammar-based type or the lexis-based type of written languaging is more influential was then explored by examining the success of instant text revisions. It was found that learners could successfully correct the errors during immediate revision while provided with written languaging about direct feedback on linguistic errors. It was also discovered that accuracy can be improved by both lexis- and grammar-based written languaging. It was concluded that having the chance to do languaging about or ponder on the developing linguistic knowledge in the course of L2 learning for the learners could mediate L2 learning and development.

Shintani, Ellis, and Suzuki (2014) explored the effects of two types of written corrective feedback (direct CF and Metalinguistic Explanation) on the students' accuracy of two structural points with and without the

opportunity to rewrite. It was revealed that DCF lasted longer than ME, and having a chance to revise the texts is also beneficial to the students. They also pointed out that DCF followed by revision is more useful than ME while dealing with complex syntactical structures. The results of their study showed that students focus on the global meaning of the texts when feedback is directed at two features simultaneously.

Lee and Lyster (2016a) studied the effects of diverse sorts of corrective feedback delivered while 100 L2 learners were being trained in speech perception in five different groups. Three groups received auditory CFs, one visual, and the control group received no feedback. Results indicated that in post-tests and delayed post-tests, the treatment groups who received auditory CF performed considerably better in trained over untrained words, while the group who received visual CF did not perform so well.

Evans, Hartshorn, McCollum, and Wolfersberger (2010) examined how one of the three contextual variables (the learner, the situation, and the instructional methodology) might have an influence on the accuracy of 27 ESL students' L2 writing. The researchers proposed a novel instructional methodology with the deliberate intention of improving L2 writing accuracy. They discussed their presented central component of the methodology as dynamic written corrective feedback.

Examining the perspectives about corrective feedback, Vásquez and Harvey (2010) designed a study to determine to what extent graduate students' ideas, thoughts, or beliefs about corrective feedback would be affected by their attendance in classroom-based research replication. The study was a replication project of Lyster and Ranta's (1997) study, and the findings of the analysis of various data sources (e.g., questionnaires, journal

entries, and a group interview) showed considerable changes in some of the students' beliefs about CF. Following the project, many students reported that they had gained a more sophisticated understanding of the error correction and they also reduced their concentration on the affective dimension of CF. Moreover, it was revealed that future teaching practice and attitudes towards research are influenced by the changes in beliefs about CF.

Hartshorn, Evans, Merrill, Sudweeks, Strong-Krause, and Anderson (2010) described an instructional strategy they developed to improve students' accuracy based on the insights gained from practice, research, and theory. They referred to this instructional methodology as dynamic written corrective feedback (WCF). The results demonstrated that although rhetorical competence, writing fluency, and writing complexity were largely unaffected by the dynamic WCF pedagogy, significant improvement was observed for writing accuracy.

Hartshorn, Evans, Merrill, Sudweeks, Strong-Krause, and Anderson (2010) presented an educational technique they developed to boost students' accuracy based on the knowledge gathered from theory, research, and practice. This instructional strategy was called dynamic written corrective feedback (WCF). The findings of their study showed that while writing accuracy improved significantly, writing fluency, writing complexity, and rhetorical competency were largely unaffected by the dynamic WCF pedagogy.

Zheng (2012), in an ethnographic study, investigated the learning possibilities obtained from the social learning perspective. To this end, peer feedback activities in the process of writing were studied in an English classroom for non-English majors in a college in China. Through inquiries

that were guided by the principles of Exploratory Practice (EP), the research study intended to determine whether the practice in this particular teaching and learning context was viable. Zheng discovered five groups of cooperative patterns through classroom observation, discourse analysis, interviews, discussions, and student writing drafts. These patterns were defined by the five patterns of discursive interaction: collaborative, expert-novice, dominant-dominant, dominant-passive, and passive-passive. The first two of these patterns were revealed to be obviously reciprocal in nature while the other three appeared not to be so. Moreover, it was stated that the teacher and students' appreciation of the merits and demerits of the activity were mostly alike. Teachers were found to have a deeper understanding of the subject, but they were in need of more training to make them able to turn the problems into possible learning opportunities for the learners.

Inspired by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (SCT) (1962), Rahimi (2013) examined whether training peers in how to review texts can result in superior forms of feedback and better scaffolding. Two groups of Iranian English learners (n=56) were assigned to the treatment and control groups to investigate the effects of training student reviewers on the quality of their CF and their writing. Results of the study indicated that there was a shift in the treatment group from formal aspects of writing to the global ones, which were content and organization of the texts. It was concluded that the trained group performed better in their writing in comparison to the untrained group.

To examine absolute beginners' learning of some features of Latin morphosyntax, Lado, Bowden, Stafford, and Sanz (2014) compared the efficiency of computer-delivered task-essential practice combined with feedback containing (1) negative evidence with metalinguistic information or (2) negative evidence without metalinguistic information. Three

comprehension-based tests and one production test were run to examine language development in terms of accuracy, reaction time, and the effects of training. Participants of the study showed improvement on both accuracy and reaction time; however, those receiving metalinguistic information outperformed the other group. Regarding the untrained aspects, there was also an advantage for the metalinguistic feedback group on both learning and transferring from comprehension to production.

Li (2014) studied the effects feedback has on three different groups (recasts, metalinguistic correction, and control) and its association with the learners' proficiency and the nature of the linguistic target. To this end, 78 Chinese as a foreign language learners received feedback on the use of classifiers and perfective *–le*. Findings showed that recasts were beneficial to the high-level learners in learning perfective *–le,* but they were efficient for both proficiency levels regarding the classifiers. Metalinguistic correction was revealed to be more operative for the beginners, and the study also challenged the common belief of an advantage of explicit feedback over implicit feedback.

Kartchava and Ammar (2014) assigned 99 ESL students to four groups and studied the noticeability and effectiveness of three different types of corrective feedback (recasts, prompts, and a combination of the two). The treatment focused on simple past tense and questions in the past. The results of the pre-test post-test study revealed that the noticeability of CF was determined by the grammatical feature it addresses, since feedback on past tense errors was perceived more, and the level of accuracy was better for the past tense than that of the question. It was also shown that feedback is more effective when they ask the learners to self-correct alone or in combination with target exemplars.

Yu and Lee (2015), in a case study, examined the motives of two Chinese university students for taking part in group peer feedback activities. The study was directed by the constructs of activity and motive in activity theory. To collect data from the EFL writing classroom, video recordings of peer feedback sessions, semi-structured interviews, stimulated recalls, and student texts were used. Findings showed that the sociocultural context shaped and mediated the students' motives. Moreover, motives were found to have a direct effect on the participation of the students in group peer feedback and also on their subsequent revisions.

Lee, Mak, and Burns (2016) investigated the strategies used by two secondary teachers in Hong Kong who tried to implement feedback innovation in their writing classes after receiving some professional development input, as well as the variables that affected their endeavors at feedback innovation. It was pointed out that putting what teachers had learned from teacher training courses into practice was practically possible to some extent, and many factors such as school rules and the limited power of teachers, lack of support from colleagues, teachers' professional learning, teacher appraisal, and students' attitudes had an influence on feedback innovation.

Park, Song, and Shin (2016) studied 40 students of intact Korean classes to see if giving indirect feedback to learners' written output in form of underlining the errors and letting the learners self-correct themselves could be beneficial. It was shown that the learners were capable of self-correcting more than a third of their errors. Results also revealed that more proficient language learners could self-correct their errors on particles better than their less proficient counterparts. It was concluded that for certain 'treatable' errors like orthography and particles, the simple act of underlining the errors and

asking students to self-correct them might be beneficial. The significance of taking individual learner factors into account, such as the nature of prior L2-learning experience and its length, was also highlighted by the findings of the study.

In a mixed-methods research study, Allen and Mills (2016) examined 54 undergraduate university students who provided and received feedback on two distinct texts in a context of foreign language writing. The quantity and kind of the provided feedback were examined, taking into account if it changed or preserved the meaning. According to the results, the total number of suggestions offered was significantly predicted by the reviewer's proficiency level. Although lower proficiency writers incorporated significantly fewer meaning-related suggestions into their revised texts than higher proficiency authors, writer proficiency did not significantly predict the number of suggestions. Variations in offering and incorporating suggestions also appeared for various pairs (matched or mixed proficiency), they were not statistically significant, though. The results shed additional light on how L2 proficiency regulates the peer feedback procedure.

Brown (2016) synthesized findings in the first thorough integration of classroom CF research to classify the proportions of CF types that instructors provide and their intended linguistic foci. The results revealed that grammar problems received the largest percentage of CF (43%) and recasts accounted for 57% of all CF, while prompts included 30%. Furthermore, he acknowledges a variety of contextual and methodological factors (i.e., moderators) that could influence CF choices in various teaching contexts, including student proficiency, teacher experience, and second or foreign language context.

Dilāns (2016) examined how teachers perceived giving oral corrective feedback (CF) to minority students learning a second language and compared that with how CF was really given in L2 classrooms. Sixty-six Latvian teachers made up the sample of the study, out of whom 13 teachers attended the interviews. The findings demonstrated that all significant oral CF types were believed to be provided consistently. As observations revealed, although various types of feedback including explicit correction, elicitation, integrated recasts, and repetition were provided in the classroom interactions, they were not used as frequently as explicit isolated recasts.

Nassaji (2016) conducted a synthesis and analysis of recent research on interactional feedback and its developments and contributions to second language acquisition (SLA). He asserted that in the development of instructional techniques and their consequences for teaching, educators should exercise caution against oversimplification and recognize that there is no singular solution for the actions or methodologies instructors adopt in L2 classrooms. He emphasized that educators must consider the intricate relationship between feedback and learning. He also noted that even if research demonstrates the efficacy of a method for language instruction, it does not necessarily mean that L2 educators can implement it in their practice freely. It is clearly evident that no single educational method or feedback strategy can resolve all the issues faced by learners. Nonetheless, this should not be interpreted as teachers selecting feedback strategies arbitrarily. To achieve efficiency, the selection of feedback types must be made wisely. He concluded that, when the feedback is delivered implicitly, as in recasts, students may or may not recognize the corrective force of feedback, depending on the kind of target structure.

Rouhshad, Wigglesworth, and Storch (2016) compared the characteristics of negotiations in face-to-face (FTF) and synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) modes among intermediate dyads of equivalent proficiency. Twelve dyads carried out two analogous decision-making tasks, one in FTF mode and one in SCMC mode, and were asked to provide corrective feedback to their partner when required. The analysis revealed that negotiation was minimal in terms of form and meaning for both modes, with the FTF mode having more meaning-related negotiations. The results indicated that the mode of interaction influenced the type of negotiations and their results in terms of modified output and successful uptake.

Wang and Loewen (2016) studied eight teachers' nonverbal behavior in corrective feedback during 48 observations across nine English as a second language (ESL) classrooms. The findings indicated that educators utilized numerous nonverbal behaviors' in their corrective feedback, encompassing hand gestures (notably iconic, metaphoric, deictic, and beats), head movements, emotion displays, kinetographs, and emblems. Common nonverbal behaviors observed were nodding, head shaking, pointing at an object, and pointing at an individual.

Li (2013) examined 78 students of Chinese as a second language from two large American universities to investigate the relationships between implicit and explicit feedback, and language analytic ability and working memory, which are two components of aptitude. Three groups were established for native speaker-non-native speaker (NS–NNS) interaction conditions: one group received recasts as a sort of implicit feedback, another received metalinguistic correction as a kind of explicit feedback, and the third group received no feedback in case of their non-target-like oral production of

Chinese classifiers. A grammaticality judgment test and an elicited imitation test were utilized to assess the efficacy of the treatment. The Words in Sentences subtest of the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) measured language analytic ability, while a listening span test evaluated working memory. The findings from a principal components analysis and a structural equation modelling analysis indicated that working memory constituted an aptitude component. Language analytic ability was identified as a predictive factor for the influence of implicit feedback, while working memory mediated the effects of explicit feedback, as demonstrated by the findings from multiple regression analyses.

A mixed-methods study conducted by Sato (2013) investigated second language learners' beliefs regarding peer interaction and peer corrective feedback, along with the feasibility of a second language intervention. The study focused on enhancing collaborative learning and instructing learners on how to provide CF to their peers. One hundred and sixty-seven Japanese students were divided into four groups, with three of those groups receiving treatment. Both questionnaires and interviews were utilized, revealing that the learners held positive beliefs regarding peer interaction and peer CF. The intervention served as a facilitating factor for the peers to develop trust in their classmates as valuable learning resources. The students who received training on CF during the treatment demonstrated increased willingness and confidence in delivering CF. Furthermore, a collaborative classroom environment and positive social relationships among learners were identified as influential factors in language development.

Kang and Han (2015) employed a meta-analytic approach to synthesize 21 empirical research studies with the goal of determining if written CF enhances the grammatical accuracy of second language writing

and identifying the effective factors involved. The findings suggest that written CF has the potential to enhance grammatical accuracy in second language writing, with its effectiveness mediated by learners' proficiency, the context, and the genre of the writing task.

Stefanou and Revesz (2015) conducted an experimental classroom study investigating the effectiveness of direct written corrective feedback in relation to variations in learners' grammatical sensitivity and meta-linguistic understanding. Eighty-nine EFL learners were divided into three groups: one receiving direct feedback, another receiving direct feedback and metalinguistic remarks, and a third for comparison purposes. The outcomes of a text summary and truth value judgement test indicated a benefit for learners receiving direct feedback compared to those receiving no feedback, although it provided no conclusive proof supporting the advantage of providing metalinguistic information. Moreover, participants with higher grammatical sensitivity and metalinguistic knowledge showed a greater propensity to attain improvements in the direct feedback-only group.

In 2016, Gurzynski-Weiss conducted an investigation into the moment-to-moment feedback decisions made by 32 instructors in response to learner errors during natural, university-level Spanish foreign language lessons. Three instruments, including a questionnaire, lesson recordings, and stimulated recalls were used in the study. The findings indicated that educators' decisions about in-class feedback derive from ordered, systematic cognitive processes. He stated that instructors who reflect on learner errors indicate that contextual factors (e.g., error type), learner characteristics (e.g., perceived student ability), and instructor attributes (e.g., research background) influenced their decisions regarding the provision of feedback, as well as the type and timing of such feedback. Some other

instructors asserted that they had automatized their feedback processes and ceased reflecting on learner errors. All instructors indicated that their personal attributes, especially their native language, teaching experience, and training in second language acquisition, influence the corrective feedback they deliver.

Li, Zhu, and Ellis (2016) examined the comparative effects of immediate versus delayed corrective feedback on teaching English past passive construction, a topic with which learners had limited prior familiarity. In a Chinese middle school, 120 EFL students were arbitrarily assigned to the conditions of immediate feedback, delayed feedback, task-only, and control. The students were located in four complete classrooms. During a two-hour treatment session, the three experimental groups completed two dictogloss (narrative) tasks in groups. Subsequently, they each took turns presenting the narrative to the class during a reporting phase. Corrective feedback was administered to the two feedback groups in the form of a prompt, which was followed by recasts of utterances that included errors in their use of the target structure. The feedback was either immediate or delayed. The corrective feedback did not have any impact on the scores of the elicited imitation test. However, both the immediate and delayed feedback resulted in improvements on the grammaticality judgement test. Nevertheless, the immediate feedback had a slight advantage over the delayed feedback. The immediate feedback condition demonstrated an advantage in that learners progressively employed the feedback to form new passive past sentences, a phenomenon that was not observed in the delayed feedback condition. These findings suggest that the feedback solely facilitated the development of declarative/explicit knowledge.

Shintani and Aubrey (2016) added to the existing body of knowledge on written corrective feedback (CF) by examining the effects of CF timing on learning grammar. It particularly investigated how synchronous and asynchronous CF differed in how accurately the unreal conditional structure was used. Participants included 68 intermediate Japanese students studying English at university. Two writing assignments were performed in Google Docs by students from a synchronous CF group (SCF), an asynchronous CF group (ACF), and a comparison group. The following differences were made to the focused direct CF given to the two experimental groups: The ACF group received feedback following the tasks, while synchronous feedback on grammatical errors was given to the SCF group during the tasks. Considering the feedback given, the participants made revisions to their texts. The writing tasks were performed by the comparison group without any feedback. A series of tasks involving the reconstruction of three texts that was completed as pre-, immediate post-, and delayed posttests were used to measure how accurately the target feature was being used. The results demonstrated that, in contrast to the comparison group, both experimental groups had significant improvements from the pretest to the two posttests. Although only the SCF group outperformed the comparison group on the delayed posttest, overall effect sizes for the posttests showed that SCF was more successful in increasing learners' accuracy.

Working memory capacity (WMC), the extent to which learners can profit from recasts and metalinguistic feedback, and the relative effectiveness of recasts over metalinguistic feedback upon learning the English that-trace filter were investigated by Goo (2012). Fifty-four Korean English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students from six intact university classes completed two first language (L1) working memory (WM) span tasks

(reading span and operation span tasks) across two experimental groups (recasts and metalinguistic feedback) and one control group. In two treatment sessions, the experimental groups participated in two information gap activities, necessitating the formulation of enquiries that adhered to the that-trace filter, and received feedback in the form of recasts or metalinguistic feedback on their erroneous utterances. The dependent measures in both the pretest and the immediate posttest were a written production test and a grammar judgment test. The results indicated that recasts were equally efficient as metalinguistic feedback in promoting the acquisition of the target construction. It is asserted that the efficacy of recasts may stem from the obstruction of modified output opportunities, which were intentionally structured in the study to prevent modified output from serving as a confounding variable. Additionally, individual differences in WMC were found to be a significant predictor and, hence, a mediator of the effects of recasts on the acquisition of that-trace filter; however, metalinguistic feedback was not found to be a mediator of these effects. It was suggested that executive attention or attention control, seen as a vital element of working memory capacity, influences the perception of recasts, but not the perception of metalinguistic feedback.

Sato and Lyster (2012) conducted a quasi-experimental study to teach learners how to provide corrective feedback (CF) during peer interactions and to investigate the impact of peer interaction and CF on second language (L2) development. In total, 167 English students at the university level participated in the four treatment conditions that were developed. One group was instructed on delivering prompts, while the other was trained on providing recasts. The third set of participants engaged in solely peer-to-peer communication, while the other set served as the control

group. The accuracy and fluency of the two corrective feedback groups, as shown by their unpruned and pruned speech rates, increased after a semester of intervention. The peer interaction group surpassed the control group in terms of fluency. They concluded that the ability to monitor both their own language production and that of their interlocutors was enhanced, and it also enabled learners to proceduralize CF, which was facilitated by peer interaction, providing opportunities for frequent production practice.

Goo and Mackey (2013) did an in-depth examination of recast over the studies done in a period of 20 years to demonstrate the methodological and interpretive problems of a number of the previous research studies. It was proposed that presenting an argument against recasts lacks both persuasiveness and utility in progressing the field. Embracing more triangulated methodologies and employing diverse and robust research designs appear crucial for investigating all forms of corrective feedback, thereby enhancing our comprehension of its role in second language acquisition.

Lyster and Ranta (2013) critiqued Goo and Mackey's study by identifying multiple explicit design flaws in research studies comparing the effects of various types of corrective feedback (CF). Furthermore, they argued that SLA researchers need to cease comparing recasts with other forms of corrective feedback, as they represent fundamentally distinct phenomena.

In an empirical study, Coyle and Larios (2014) investigated the effects of two types of feedback—error correction and model texts—on EFL learners' reported noticing and written output. Three collaborative writing tasks, which included (a) the spontaneous identification of linguistic issues

during the writing process, (b) the comparison of their texts with the provided feedback, and (c) the revision of their original output, were completed by 23 pairs with the same level of proficiency. The results indicated that children initially noticed and subsequently integrated lexical features into their output. Nevertheless, the improved linguistic acceptability and comprehensibility of their revised texts were indicative of the advantage they had in error correction over text models. The error correction condition was associated with a greater awareness of grammar during the comparison stage, which was subsequently observed in the revisions of the learners.

Lee and Lyster (2016b) conducted an experimental classroom study to examine the impact of corrective feedback on instructed L2 speech perception. Thirty-two young adult Korean learners of English were separated into two groups: an instruction-only group and an instruction plus corrective feedback group that received the pertinent feedback. The groups achieved comparable accuracy on the pretest; however, the instruction plus CF group surpassed the instruction-only group in both the immediate and delayed posttests, as well as on new words.

Finally, Hartshorn, Evans, Merrill, Sudweeks, Strong-Krause, and Anderson (2010) described an instructional strategy they devised, drawing upon the knowledge acquired from practical experience, scholarly research, and theoretical frameworks to improve students' accuracy. This instructional methodology was designated as dynamic WCF. A test of the methodology's efficiency was administered to juxtapose one group employing the traditional process-oriented approach to writing instruction with another utilizing the dynamic WCF approach. The findings indicated a significant enhancement in writing accuracy, whereas rhetorical competence, writing fluency, and

writing complexity remained largely unchanged by the dynamic WCF pedagogy.

4. Discussion

Following the content analysis of 36 studies published on CF during the time-span of seven years from 2010 to 2016, fifteen studies were found to have their primary focus on WCF. The present review yielded four key themes in the area of written corrective feedback conceptualization. The themes were the multidimensionality of written corrective feedback, effectiveness of direct and indirect written corrective feedback, written languaging, and negotiability of written corrective feedback. These themes are explored below.

4.1 Multidimensionality of written corrective feedback

Analyzing the content of the articles, it was revealed that written corrective feedback (WCF) is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon in interactional dynamics between the teacher and the learner. It became evident that many factors influence WCF in the context of classrooms. These factors were the teacher's pedagogic practice, the content of discourse, the classroom environment, and peers. To justify this finding, it is argued that WCF is rooted in the diversity of emerging factors in the process of teaching and learning. As Lee et al. (2016) state, WCF depends on teachers' professional practice in translating their theoretical knowledge into effective practice in feedback innovation. In line with Lee et al (2016), Evans et al. (2010) argue that a number of contextual variables (the learner, the situation, and the instructional methodology) might affect L2 writing accuracy. Vásquez and Harvey (2010) also argued that the perspectives and thoughts of the teacher

play a major role in giving WCF. Based on the content analysis, it could be argued that WCF emerges from the interplay of diverse variables and factors in the classroom.

4.2 Effectiveness of direct and indirect written corrective feedback

This theme explains the effectiveness of direct and indirect types of feedback in WCF. Par et al. (2016) contended that in case of indirect feedback, attention must be focused on the implicit errors, type of error, and treatment. They argued that WCF is a dynamic issue and it is vital to take the individual learner factors, such as the nature and length of their prior L2-learning experience into account. Beuningen et al. (2012) pointed out that both direct and indirect comprehensive CF resulted in improved accuracy. Shintani et.al (2014) and Stefanou and Revesz (2015) also contributed to our understanding that direct and indirect types of feedback boost syntactical knowledge base and metalinguistic awareness. Therefore, in case of linguistic knowledge improvement, attention could be turned to the deployment of both direct and indirect types of feedback.

4.3 Written languaging

This theme pertains to the process by which learners employ language to reflect on their language use. This finding may be substantiated by the work of Suzuki (2012), which demonstrated that written languaging facilitated learners in effectively rectifying errors during immediate revision. Suzuki (2012) suggested that allowing learners to language or reflect on their growing linguistic knowledge during the process of L2 acquisition facilitated L2 learning and development. It was indicated that the application of grammar-based written languaging enhanced accuracy (Suzuki, 2012). From

the perspective of cognitive psychology, written languaging can function as memory encoding and act as external memory. When students compose their understanding of instructional materials during problem-solving activities, such as reading, they endeavor to comprehend the content and internalize it by rephrasing it in their own terminology. Through the process of written languaging, learners make inferences regarding the content and refine their prior interpretations, leading to a more profound engagement with the material. Consequently, the impact of written languaging on learning can be elucidated through the lens of processing levels (Craik & Lockhart, 1972). The process of engaging in written languaging can promote the internal encoding of information, thereby enhancing future performance. Therefore, it was observed that WCF relies on written language, as it serves as an external repository of knowledge when students engage with the material generated through written languaging. The act of written languaging serves not merely as a means of external storage, particularly when integrated with oral languaging, but also alleviates the burdens placed on working memory (Baddeley, 2003), thereby facilitating a range of cognitive processes such as comprehension, inference, and the refinement of mental models.

4.4 Negotiability of written corrective feedback

This theme highlighted the negotiable nature of WCF. Thouësny (2011) posits that the interaction between students and the provider of the WCF is characterized by a degree of negotiation "in the sense that learners can accept or ignore the assistance" (p. 63). The WCF was inherently interactive, as it included feedback intended not only to rationalize the assigned grade for a specific piece of writing but also to assist learners in enhancing their future performance. Consequently, a positive student response to this form of support is anticipated. Goo (2012) and Sato and Lyster (2012) reached the

conclusion that teachers can deploy their knowledge to unearth the mismatch that exists among peers in the process of feedback submission. This mismatch is probable because, in some cases, while giving feedback, peers try to impose their authority to each other, which might result in their rejection of the provided feedback (Ranjbar & Ghonsooly, 2017). Teachers must enable learners to modify output opportunities to prevent confounding situations in error correction. Such negotiability is argued to improve learners' metalinguistic knowledge construction. Therefore, it could be safe to say that WCF is negotiable with regard to production practice, proceduralization, and modified peer interaction (Sato & Lyster, 2012).

5. Conclusion and Implications

The present qualitative meta-synthetic study examined 36 research articles published about corrective feedback (from which 15 articles were about WCF) with its focus on written corrective feedback, its efficiency, and its role in L2 research. Thorough qualitative content analysis revealed four key themes: the multidimensionality of written corrective feedback, effectiveness of direct and indirect written corrective feedback, written languaging, and negotiability of written corrective feedback. In relation to the multifaceted aspect of WCF, it was argued that WCF is situation-specific and context-based. Diverse variables such as the teacher, content of discourse, pedagogical activities, and peers affect the dynamicity of WCF. Beliefs, error types, thoughts, and uptake were also emerging factors in conceptualizing WCF. Considering the second theme, i.e., effectiveness of direct and indirect written corrective feedback, we found that both direct and indirect types of WCF have their roles in offering feedback. Their effectiveness was ascribed to the nature of error, type of error, treatment length, and prior L2 experience.

In case of grammatical knowledge improvement, it is thus necessary to pay close attention to direct and indirect types of feedback. In relation to written language, it was found that written languaging helped the learners successfully correct the errors during immediate revision. Moreover, it was discovered that written languaging helps learners successfully correct the errors during immediate revision and improve accuracy. Finally, it was found that WCF is negotiable especially when it contributes to modifying output, facilitating proceduralization, and repeated production practice. Research on the effectiveness of written corrective feedback also demands systematic experimental studies for different working languages. It is, therefore, recommended that future experimental studies be set to explore how written corrective feedback can enhance English as foreign language students' different language skills.

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