Analysis of Teacher Feedback on EFL Learners' Written Production

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Diplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti i njemačkog jezika i književnosti

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Analysis of teacher feedback on EFL learner's written production

Diplomski rad

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Summary

This paper explores the usage of several types of teacher written corrective feedback, as well as their relationship to different types of learner errors and grades. Is consists of two main parts: theoretical and research part. The theoretical part is concerned with the definition of written corrective feedback, writing in EFL classrooms and error correction related to feedback. Research in the field is also presented. The second part of the paper deals with research conducted on teacher feedback on EFL learners' written production. The analysis includes a hundred graded high school learners' essays, teacher feedback, related errors and grades.

Sažetak

Ovaj rad istražuje korištenje nekoliko vrsta nastavnikove pisane povratne informacije kao i njihov odnos prema različitim vrstama učeničkih grešaka te ocjena. Sastoji se od dva dijela: teorijskog i istraživačkog. Teorijski se dio bavi objašnjenjem pisane popravne povratne informacije, pisanja u nastavi engleskoga jezika i ispravljanja pogrešaka vezanih uz povratnu informaciju. Također, prikazana su istraživanja provedena u ovome području. Drugi se dio rada bavi istraživanjem provedenim na temu nastavnikove povratne informacije o pisanoj proizvodnji učenika engleskog jezika. Analiza obuhvaća 100 ocijenjenih srednjoškolskih učenikovih eseja, nastavnikovu povratnu informaciju, greške učenika te ocjene.

Key words: feedback, written production, error correction, teaching English as a foreign language.

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1. Introduction

This paper focuses on teacher feedback on English as a foreign language (hereafter EFL) learners' written production. Second language acquisition (hereafter SLA) is a complex process, and teachers' role is of great importance. Apart from shaping the learning process on a syllabus and classroom organization level, they influence learners' language development through more direct methods, such as provision of different types of written corrective feedback. These methods are recognized as essential in the language acquisition process.

Teacher corrective feedback is defined as a means of providing information about learners' errors, be it in form of correction, comment or mere location of the error. When used appropriately, feedback is created as a means of helping students understand where exactly in their learning development certain problems exist. Also, these corrective strategies can support learners' writing process as well as help build their confidence as writers. Moreover, there are more than one type of written corrective feedback, each distinct in form and purpose. When it comes to the efficacy of these methods, some researchers claim that there are potential harmful effects of corrective feedback as it is often ineffective due to teachers' lack of the skills to analyze and explain learners' problems by means of feedback, as well as the learners' lack of skills to understand it. Other researchers (e.g. Ferris, 2011) maintain that teacher feedback has a vital and beneficial role in learners' language development, and that students value feedback on their errors, and believe it to be helpful. Furthermore, different types of feedback are usually provided by teachers in combination with error correction of learners' written production. As writing in ELF classrooms serves multiple purposes for learners as well as teachers, it has a significant role in language acquisition, especially because it gives teachers the opportunity to provide feedback.

The purpose of research in this paper is to gain insight into the use and significance of feedback in high school EFL classrooms in Croatia. Starting off with three key hypotheses related to teacher feedback, the analysis of a hundred corrected English learner essays provided a lot of information about the usage of several types of written corrective feedback, as well as its relationship to different types of errors and grades.

2. What is feedback?

When providing feedback, teachers help shape the learning process by guiding learners towards the right learning direction. It is safe to say that the role of feedback in the process of language learning and instruction has been marked as fairly vital. Feedback has been long described as essential and one of the purposes of systematic instructional design which improves evaluation process. It provides learners with information about their correctness that can be used to modify their performance as well as stored into their short-term and long-term memory. This way the mistakes can be seen as a natural, and what is very important, a useful part of the language learning process as they promote learning by making it clear what needs to be improved (Purnawarman, 2011).

Correction and assessment are two main components of feedback. In assessment, teacher informs the learners about the quality of their production. In other words, they convey the information about how well or badly they did in performing particular tasks. Fair examples of that would be percentages, grades or comments such as the expression "excellent". When it comes to correction, on the other hand, the teacher conveys specific information related to various aspects of learner's performance, such as giving explanation as to which components the learners should improve as well as suggesting alternatives to their work (Ur, 1991).

The comments given during the developmental learning process can be either positive (making it clear that the learner's work is correct) or negative when relating the message that something is incorrect. There is another difference between comments given during the stages of learners' written production development and those given to the already finished work. Grades and marks which depend on the quality of learner's knowledge use, and are based on the previously set criteria in the marking scale are more direct, and can cause greater motivation or disappointment among the learners (Harmer, 2007). Moreover, as Ur (1991) argues, even though teachers are sometimes urged not to be judgmental when providing feedback, if it is to be meaningful, some kind of judgment must be involved.

2.1. Role of feedback in SLA

Second language acquisition is a complex process in which both the teacher and the learner have their separate functions. When focusing on the learning process, the analysis of learner's production makes the process, quality and stages of the knowledge acquisition more visible, thus making it possible for the teacher to direct the learners better towards the highest

level of success in their endeavors. Feedback, therefore, has an important role in SLA (Corder, 1974). According to Ferris (2003), both SLA and L2 writing research suggest that, when given enough time to revise, learners attend better to feedback they receive and benefit from it.

As Krashen (1981, as cited in Van Beuningen, 2010) states, corrective feedback does not have a meaningful role in L2 acquisition, and its effect is limited to simple features. Therefore, it targets only one type of errors. However, he maintains that it could be valuable in the process of enabling learners to monitor their L2 production. Even though there is plenty of evidence explaining why corrective feedback can be considered to facilitate SLA, some researchers, e.g. Truscott (1996, as cited in Van Beuningen, 2010) rely on practical and theoretical arguments, and consider it to be fairly unnecessary, ineffective, or perhaps harmful. He suggests that teachers lack the capacities to provide adequate and consistent feedback, and learners lack ability and willingness to use it effectively. Furthermore, the current arguments against feedback on learners' errors rest on the fact that it overlooks important insights from second language acquisition theory and some researches even claim that corrective feedback can be detrimental to the second language acquisition process.

When related to the process of teaching in general, feedback, be it spoken or written, is considered to be information given by teacher on learners' production which complements the performance of the given task. The purpose is usually to improve the learner's way of presenting the knowledge he or she possesses. Such response can have many different forms, from commenting the learner's activity or process verbally or next to a piece of written production to giving percentages and grades or making a facial expression. Furthermore, when teachers give out grades and percentages to the learners without returning their work or providing comments they receive only the assessment. They then, as it happens in most cases, are only made aware of their mistakes. What happens more rarely is that teachers comment what the learners did right and wrong without providing the assessment (Ur, 1991).

2.2. Written feedback

According to Purnawarman (2011), feedback is considered to be an important part in instructional design of writing tasks, and a significant element in major learning theories. Teachers provide feedback on learners' writing in order to support their writing process as well as help build their confidence as writers. Learners, when producing writing, gain much help from writing practices and revisions on their works which aid their language development and they often rely on feedback gained either from a teacher or a peer as it acts as an instruction to what

needs or does not need improving. Furthermore, even though many studies had set as their goal the examination of the effectiveness of corrective feedback on learners' writing, the general results in this particular field are still fairly inconclusive. However, most researchers found that it is helpful and effective when it comes to improving the learner's writing skills.

Feedback in writing can stimulate explicit knowledge of student writers, the knowledge of language rules that students can articulate, and provides reasons that certain rules should be applied. Learners who do receive feedback usually use their language pre-knowledge as well as previously learned rules about writing. Furthermore, feedback may increase writer's attention regarding the topic. It draws their attention to those aspects of writing that need remediation thus learning how to improve their performance (Purnawarman, 2011). Dynamic written corrective feedback, named this way because of its interactive and continuous nature, is an instructional approach which draws on principles of L2 acquisition to facilitate improved written linguistic accuracy (Evans et al., 2011).

There are many differences between oral and written corrective feedback. While oral feedback takes place during the interaction, and immediately after the error or mistake has been made by the speaker, the written feedback is delayed, and it imposes less of a cognitive stress on writer's memory. In addition, written corrective feedback has some pedagogical differences. While dealing with writing, teachers strive to improve learners' skills related to organization and content thus focusing on overall quality of written production. In this case, the accuracy is of less importance. In contrast, when providing oral corrective feedback, teachers usually pay a lot of attention to their faulty utterances (Sheen, 2007).

2.3. Types of written corrective feedback

The methods of applying written feedback vary as it can take many different forms, as shown in Table 1. To take an example, the feedback can be related to the explicitness, focus, as well as the person who provides it. The more explicit the feedback, the easier it will be for learner writers to follow these suggestions in order to correct errors successfully. The provision of this type of feedback requires a great amount of time, and includes repetition until being fully functional. Explicit corrective feedback is characterized by not only indicating the errors but also providing explicit explanation or negative evidence in the form of comments. This type of information is considered by some to raise the learners' metalinguistic consciousness by providing an explanation of a rule or feature as well as examples of correct usage. One of the forms of this type of feedback is explicit correction in which teacher response indicates incorrect

features and provides the correct alternative. The implicit feedback, on the other hand, is usually provided in form of a recast or teacher reformulation (Purnawarman, 2011).

The learners are also sometimes involved in the correction process. When teacher corrects learners' written production by indicating an error without providing the correct form, (underline, a circle, a code, a mark, or a highlight on the error), and asks the students to correct the error themselves), the learners should determine the context of the error and are expected to realize what they did wrong and correct it on their own. The indirect uncoded feedback is, therefore, a mere indication of an error without providing the correct form. The indirect coded feedback, on the other hand, locates the learner written error by a code. This strategy is said to increase the learners' attention, and push them toward the process of problem-solving which is considered to be greatly beneficial for long term learning. The direct corrective feedback strategy, on the other hand, takes place when the error is indicated and the corresponding correct form is provided. Some common ways of giving this type of feedback are marking the incorrect figure and inserting the correct or missing one. Both, direct and indirect types of feedback, as well as their combinations, are typically used by teachers. Indirect feedback is sometimes regarded as more beneficial (Purnawarman, 2011).

According to Ferris (as cited in Sheen, 2007), the indirect error correction which indicates errors with no additional provision of correct form has more purpose than the direct type of feedback as it engages the learners into dealing with the correct forms on their own. Direct corrective feedback may enable learners to remember the correct form immediately, and the indirect one could be not as successful as the teachers may hope as learners do not know if their own corrections are actually accurate.

The unfocused feedback, as Table 1 illustrates, is a correction strategy which involves correction of all errors in a piece of learner's written production. The focused type, in contrast, can target some specific linguistic features only, such as common grammatical errors like articles or prepositions, but the others are left uncorrected, i.e. those which are outside of the targeted domain. When it comes to the effectiveness of unfocused feedback, some researchers claim that there are theoretical reasons for focused feedback to be more beneficial when it comes to development of accuracy. The learners are apparently more likely to utilize corrections when they target specific features (Van Beuningen, 2010).

Table 1: Types of feedback and their description

Type of teacher feedback	Short description of feedback strategy
Explicit	Error indication and explanation in form of comment, information or question
Implicit	Recast or teacher reformulation of parts of learner's writing
Direct	Error indication and provision of correction
Indirect coded	Error indication by a correction code without correction
Indirect uncoded	Simple error indication without correction
Focused	Correction of particular types of errors
Unfocused	Correction of all errors

2.4. Correct ways of giving corrective feedback

The feedback given on written production depends on the type of the writing task as well as the teacher's assessment goal. It should be related to the content, organization and style of the writing piece. When giving feedback teachers should pay attention to one or two features of the writing that which be improved, and try to identify patterns of errors, rather than all of them (Peterson, 2010).

When responding to the given draft or product, teachers define it in terms of quality and success in completing the initial task, and give further suggestions on how it can be improved. Although this kind of feedback takes up a lot of time, it is considered to be very useful to the learner because, after correcting and reformulation, i.e. making the necessary changes to the original piece of writing, the learner not only notices what is wrong, but also practices the ways of correcting it. After giving feedback learners are to put this information to use and make the necessary changes to their work thus responding to the given comments. Only when they do so, is feedback considered to be a part of the learning and developing process. It is thus important to have the learners use it to their own advantage, as only then it is a complete and meaningful action (Harmer, 2007). Furthermore, written feedback will not be as beneficial if not fully understood by the learners. They should be able to explain its interpretation. To illustrate, when codes are used in indirect feedback, they should be supported by systematic grammar instruction

as it could otherwise be confusing for both teachers and learners (Ferris, 2002, as cited in Purnawarman, 2011). Comprehensive error correction can be exhausting and overwhelming for both teachers, and that is why some suggest that feedback in general should be focusing on limited significant structures which are more productive than correcting all errors.

According to Ur (1991) teachers should correct mistakes in learner's written work in a way that it does not leave the appearance that these are the main basis for evaluating. As a solution to this issue, Ur suggests that the mistakes should be corrected within the body of the text, and the comments should be provided at the end as a way of giving feedback on organization and content.

When it comes to the timing of feedback, it is of greatest value to the learners when given at the beginning, middle as well as at the end of the writing process as then they can use it to revise and improve their writing when and if necessary. Teacher feedback more often than not takes the form of written comments on their final graded work. Received at the end of the writing process, these comments may not have such an impact on learners' writing development as teachers initially intended because the learners usually believe that they have finished their work when they hand it in for a grade. However, when it is given while learners are still in the process of writing, feedback is considered to be more successful, as they are more likely to utilize it. It is, therefore, important that written feedback has a meaningful influence on their writing development, as teachers spend a lot of time providing it (Ur, 1991).

Teacher feedback given to learners producing written tasks should be both criterion-based and reader-based. The criterion-based type of feedback serves as an indicator as to how well the learner's piece of writing meets the criteria related to scoring rubrics. It has to do with the features such as the appropriateness of given information, level of detail, as well as the learner's point of view represented in the writing. Apart from that, it deals with learner's organization of ideas, and use of writing language as these demonstrate the clarity of communication. In addition, this kind of feedback is considered to be very useful in events when the assessment criteria has been previously explained because then the learners have a clear understanding of the task expectations. Reader-based feedback, on the other hand, reflects teacher's experience during the review of the learner's piece of writing. It marks the visualized images, and words or phrases which produced an emotional impact on the teacher. It is important to identify positive features of writing as learners appreciate receiving praise which aids their confidence in writing as well as their motivation to write.

There are many principles when it comes to providing written feedback, as shown in Table 2. In order to be most effective, written feedback has to be meaningful, timely, constant,

and manageable. It is timely when received soon after writing, and constant when provided to the learners at regular and frequent intervals. In order for written corrective feedback to be manageable, teachers need to have enough time to do it efficiently, and students have to process, and apply the feedback they receive. Too much feedback could also undermine that all. In the process of applying written corrective feedback, teachers must be very clear about what students need to do in order to revise and correct their errors as this way they can successfully assist their learners. This occurs with provision of meaningful information related to the location of the error, type of error, and suggestions on how to correct it. When used this way, the feedback is created as a means of helping students understand where exactly in their learning development certain problems exist. Moreover, written feedback should be suggestive so that the learners have autonomy to decide whether or not to use the feedback when performing writing, and they may experience a greater need to improve their writing. When given in the form of instructions or criticism, the feedback itself may not sufficiently motivate the learners to improve their work. It should also make clear which areas the writer may revise in order to make the general meaning clearer (Evans et al., 2011).

Table 2: Guiding principles of written teacher comments (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005:190)

Guiding principles of written teacher commentary	
1.	The teacher is not the only respondent.
2.	Written commentary is not the only option.
3.	Teachers do not need to respond to every single problem on every single student draft.
4.	Feedback should focus on the issues presented by an individual student and his or her paper, not on rigid prescriptions.
5.	Teachers should take care to avoid "appropriating", or taking over, a students' text. Final decisions about content or revisions should be left in the control of the writer.
6.	Teachers should provide both encouragement and constructive criticism through their feedback.
7.	Teachers should treat their students as individuals and consider their written feedback as part of an ongoing conversation between themselves and each student.

As presented in the literature, the two major features of written corrective feedback which are considered to be a part of the traditional practice as well as co-dependent are grades and written comments. According to some, the separation of summative and formative assessment

may allow students to handle the received feedback more effectively as this way the feedback can influence the future learning process (Edlin, 2011).

2.5. Research on efficacy of corrective feedback

2.5.1. Positive sides of corrective feedback

Research in the field of SLA related to corrective feedback has been mainly concerned with learners' oral production. When it comes to recent studies conducted in the field of corrective feedback, some evaluated the effectiveness of focused corrective feedback, the others examined the effects of comprehensive or unfocused correction, and the third compared the efficacy of focused and unfocused corrective feedback methods (Van Beuningen, 2010).

According to a large number of research studies which focus on different types of feedback, as well as their effect on learners' writing, there is evidence that feedback has a vital role in the writing process. Some researchers referred to feedback as being more effective if more feedback is received on the writing performance as the learners have a better understanding of what they need to do to in order to produce a successful piece of writing. It can modify the way the learners think or act in order to produce their work while focusing their attention on the sole purpose of writing. It can also provide performance assessment (Purnawarman, 2011). According to Ferris (2003), the way in which teacher comments are provided affects learners' reactions to it and its effects on short-term and long-term improvement in writing.

A study by Younghee Sheen (2007) on the effect of focused written corrective feedback and language aptitude on EFL learner's acquisition of articles examined the effect of two types of feedback as well as the consequences of language analytic ability. According to the results of this study aimed at specific linguistic features, the provided feedback succeeded in improving learners' accuracy. The metalinguistic feedback was proven useful together with the learners' high language analytic ability.

According to some, form-focused feedback, when accompanied by classroom instruction, can be quite effective. To take an example, Master (1995, as cited in Hyland, 2003) suggests that indirect feedback techniques, such as locating the type of error and asking students to correct it themselves, may be helpful for untreatable errors in some cases. The quality of learner revision after receiving feedback was also examined which resulted in a suggestion that feedback on error can improve students' writing in the short term. Furthermore, when it comes to learners' productive engagement with the feedback on form, it is used mostly in the immediate revisions.

Some language errors may be corrected through feedback which leaves the learners highly motivated and capable of developing their own strategies for using feedback. This may have an effect on their language development (Hyland, 2003).

2.5.2. Potential harmful effects of corrective feedback

Early L2 writing research argued against feedback focused on grammar correction, with an attitude that it is both unhelpful and discouraging (e.g. Hendericksen, 1978, as cited in Hyland, 2003). According to Truscott (1996, as cited in Hyland, 2003), language correction is often ineffective due to teachers' lack of the skills to analyze and explain learners' problems by means of feedback, while the learners lack the skills to understand it. In addition, research on learner attitudes towards feedback resulted in the conclusion that many want errors in their writing to be corrected and may be frustrated if this does not happen (Hyland, 2003). She suggested that feedback in the form of grammatical error correction is not effective or useful, and that it has no positive effect on improving learners' writing as it is harmful. She, therefore, argues that it should be avoided or abandoned. On the other hand, Ferris (1999, as cited in Purnawarman, 2011) believes that research on feedback should continue until it is proven as such. Furthermore, corrective feedback was predicted by Krashen and Truscott to have no value when it comes to the development of grammatical competence. According to Truscott, this method cannot affect the rules of grammatical errors, and it could only pose as benefit for errors. He also maintains that lexical errors belong to the most correctible L2 features as they are somewhat discrete. There are several significant claims created by various researches which state that corrective feedback should be considered counterproductive. The time and energy spent on dealing with corrections (both by teachers and students) could be used more efficiently on some other activities. Furthermore, it could lead to learner anxiety caused by the fear of committing the same errors in the future. As a result, the learners could try to perform a simplified, rather than improved writing (Van Beuningen, 2010).

Many of the studies concerned with written corrective feedback lacked the control group which did not receive the corrective feedback. In the studies which did have a comparison or a control group the differences between them were not statistically significant. The control group typically received another kind of feedback related to linguistic accuracy which, as a result, made the related effects fairly difficult to isolate. It is, therefore, safe to say that the lack of a true control group presents a major limitation in these studies (Sheen, 2007).

3. Error correction in learner written production

Different types of feedback are usually provided by teachers in combination with error correction. Feedback types such as indirect and direct serve the purpose of locating the errors, or in case of the latter, correcting them by providing the correct alternative. This, however, is not always so. For example, if the learner made no errors or mistakes in his or her written production for teacher to correct, feedback can be provided in form of a comment which simply praises the quality of the learner's work.

3.1. Error correction and analysis

When it comes to learner's written production, one of the most useful factors to analyze are different types of errors the learner commits during different stages of language development. The correct sentences show what the learner knows but they do not reveal what the learner still has not acquired. The errors, however, are necessary and useful because they provide an insight into the strategies the learner uses while operating with rules of the new language. Through errors the rules developed at any given stage of learning can be monitored. This way, these can be seen as not only mere obstacles in learner's development, but as indicators of what the learner should work on in order to make the language acquisition easier and more successful. They are meaningful both to the teacher or provider of feedback, and learners as they help shape their further development.

Although the errors are frequently managed in a way that they should be avoided as much as possible, they do hold a certain importance not only for the learner's success in SLA but also for the entire language learning process in general. One of the reasons for identifying errors in learner's written production is to determine their source within the learner's knowledge as well as their cause. Interpreting their significance in a proper way and time is crucial for gaining more insight into the framework of learner's knowledge, e.g. appropriate acquisition of rules.

Perhaps in a perfect learning environment, the error would not be committed because of the perfect teaching techniques. However, when they do occur it is not simply a sign of an inadequate teaching method but of something much more meaningful. The errors, when dealt with after their occurrence by means of teacher corrective feedback, act as guidelines for learner's future course of development. This way, a thorough identification of the errors, i.e. teacher's greater attention to these, can lead to better understanding of the teaching and learning process with the emphasis on learning (Corder, 1974).

3.2. Ways of correcting errors

When it comes to the sole correction of learners' written products, teachers often use correction codes for indication of errors and mistakes. Being short and neat, they appear less formidable to the learner's eye, as shown in Table 3. These are sometimes a part of the body of the text or are placed on the margin. It is safe to say that every teacher has her or his own method of correction.

Table 3: Correction symbols (Harmer, 2007: 149)

Symbol	Meaning	Example error
S	A spelling error	The asnwer is obvious
WO	A mistake in word order	I like very much it
G	A grammar mistake	I am going to buy some furnitures.
T	Wrong verb tense	I have seen him yesterday.
C	Concord mistake (e.g. the subject and verb agreement)	People is angry.
	Something has been left out.	He told  that he was sorry.
WW	Wrong word	I am interested on jazz music.
{}	Something is not necessary.	He was not {too} strong enough.
?M	The meaning is unclear.	That is a very excited photograph.
P	A punctuation mistake.	DO you like london.
F/I	Too formal or informal	Hi Mr Franklin, Thank you for your letter…

Other ways of correcting are putting ticks when something is correct, underlining when there is a problem with the learner's output or even adding comments at the end of the work explaining what was right and wrong or even giving some advice on how to improve something, that is, instructions for future writing (Harmer, 2007). Apart from that, teachers sometimes elicit the improvements form the learners. According to Ur (1991), the process of correcting should include a response on what the learners did and did not do correctly as well as the answer as to why. No matter which ways of correcting are used, the learners can improve their work and hence their knowledge only when they are able to recognize and identify their own mistakes. It

is, therefore, crucial that they understand and are familiar with these correction methods (Harmer, 2007).

3.3. Types of errors

There is also a difference in the types of errors the learner commits. The systematic errors show just how much of the language is appropriately acquired as they reveal gaps in learners' interlanguage system. Through them the teacher can see which competences the learner has adopted at which stage of development (transitional competence). The learners cannot correct them, and, therefore, require an explanation in form of teacher feedback.

The unsystematic errors, also known as slips of the tongue or the pen, on the other hand, provide no display of learner's repository of knowledge, but are usually marked as simple mistakes because the learner is immediately aware of them, and thus able to correct them right away. They are caused by the factors unrelated to the rules previously acquired, but have to do with circumstantial performance. These are, however, caused by various physical and psychological conditions, such as current emotional (fear) and physical state (tiredness), and they arise due to performance failures such as memory limitations (Corder, 1974). Learners, on occasion, make attempts or mistakes when trying to relate some kind of a meaning but are unable because they do not yet possess the necessary knowledge (Edge, 1989).

Some errors are caused by the learner strategies developed by learners during the process of language acquisition, and the others are the result of interference from learner's first language or mother tongue, something which is considered to be a major source of difficulty while acquiring the second language. Having the knowledge of another language often interferes with the learning of another, and this could lead to making errors in the field of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. These reflect the transitional as well as final competence and level of learner's second language knowledge. Developmental errors are a part of the interlanguage, and learners make them during different stages of language development. These errors are of course a natural part of the language acquisition process.

These types of errors can be further divided into over-generalization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules and false concepts hypothesized. With over-generalization, e.g. omitting the parts such as third person - (e)s, which, when used in context, carry no lexical meaning, the learner acts in a way of making the appliance of rules simpler. Thus by using the previous experience related to the target language, learner makes a separate and more convenient structure of language which is not correct (Richards, 1974). Over-

generalization later loses its effect as the learners gain a better understanding of the second language.

Sometimes the rules are being applied to inappropriate contexts, e.g. *she made them to do it*. Here, the restrictions referred to the use of *make* are ignored. Such errors related to rule restrictions are usually caused by analogy (e.g. the misuse of prepositions) or rote learning of rules. Learner sometimes fails to comprehend the distinctions in the target language caused by inappropriate learning of the second language rules, such as using the present continuous as a narrative tense or using the form "is" in all present tense sentences, even when it does not belong, e.g. *she is walks home from school* (Richards, 1974).

There is another difference between global and local, as well as treatable and untreatable errors. Global errors are the ones which may lead to communication breakdown by getting in the way of comprehensibility of the utterance. The local errors, such as morphological errors, on the other hand, do not affect the message meaning. Moreover, the non-idiomatic or idiosyncratic errors are considered by Ferris (1999, as cited in Van Beuningen, 2010) to be untreatable (e.g. lexical errors), unlike those in patterned and rule-governed features, which could more successfully be dealt via corrective feedback.

4. Writing in EFL

Written work servers as an excellent evidence of learner's current progress. It provides many purposes for the learners as well as teachers, especially in the early stages of foreign language acquisition. For one, practicing different forms of writing enables the learners to create different learning styles, and when they are exposed to more than one medium, the learning process is likely to be more successful (Byrne, 1979). Apart from that, learners can also benefit a lot from the written feedback as they have more time to deal with it.

4.1. Aspects of writing related to feedback

The purpose of writing in the second language classroom can be twofold. One of the important aspects is that learners convey a particular message while expressing their own opinions, ideas and attitudes. The other one is, however, the learners' focus on form, such as acceptable grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation (Ur, 1991). Teachers use different types of feedback when dealing with both aspects.

Language teaching can be seen as forming a system of communication rather than a mere study. Writing is used not only to transform but also to build new knowledge. This ability is, therefore, of great importance to the learners throughout the world. That being said, it is also important to note that the evaluators of this type of production have a great role in making decisions about the potential future students and employees. Their feedback, hence, plays a great role in shaping learners language development. This role encompasses a great deal of work as there are many possible writing purposes, genres and styles but also the subjectivity which takes place during the assessment process (Weigle, 2002).

It is often used as a means of testing what and how much the learners have learned. When writing is used as an end in itself the main objective of activity is writing itself. The learners practice particular written forms at specific sentence or word level, such as spelling and punctuation. At a different, or "macro" level they practice their skills related to organization and content. They learn and practice using their own words while expressing themselves with a particular audience and purpose for writing in mind.

As writing in a second language tends to be more difficult than first-language writing because of the need to focus on the form or language rather than the content and organization, the feedback provided by teachers is usually focused on specific features of learner written production. Second-language writers generally need to plan and revise for content less when

trying to write fluently and accurately. As the capacity of working memory is limited, they use their cognitive resources much more than the writers of the first language. Because of the limited language proficiency, the cognitive processes, mostly text interpretation and generation, could be more difficult for the second-language writers. Lack of proper instruction understanding as well as poor reading comprehension may have a bad effect on one's writing task completion ability.

There are many types of written production, form retelling a story to writing a letter of recommendation, and the writing needs of second-language learners vary in term of cognitive and communicative function. These are to be kept in mind if one is to develop adequate writing tests and provide meaningful and helpful written feedback during the assessment process. According to Weigle (2002), these can be categorized in two major groups, cognitive processing and dominant purpose. When it comes to the purposes for writing, these can be to learn, transfer ideas and emotion, to inform, entertain or even to keep in touch. Also, the audience plays a significant role in the writing process. In any case, learning to write involves much more that simply learning the grammar and vocabulary of the language. Provision of timely teacher feedback focused on features important for learner's further development makes the process easier and more meaningful.

4.2. Role of the teacher in providing feedback

Teachers, when using feedback, help learners develop their ability to reach their learning goals. Some suggest at least four teacher roles in providing written feedback to learners: a reader or respondent, a writing teacher or guide, a grammarian, and an evaluator or judge. Teachers respond to the content and they may show agreement about an idea or content of the text. They may provide positive feedback such as *you made a good point* or *I agree with you* without giving any suggestion or correction. As guides, they show concern about certain points or confusing and illogical ideas in students' text. They also write comments or corrective feedback with reference to grammatical mistakes and relevant grammatical rules. As evaluators, they have a position in classroom whose main role is to evaluate the quality of students' writing as an end product and grade students' it based on their evaluation (Purnawarman, 2011).

According to Black and William (1998, as cited in Harmer, 2007), formative assessment or feedback on learners' work possibly has more effect on their achievement than any other factor in the learning process, and is of great importance when it comes to teaching being effective. This way, given feedback should always be adequate when it comes to learners themselves as well as the activities at hand.

With creative writing the teacher acts as a motivator, making sure the conditions are just right so that the learners can easily come to their own ideas for writing, and encouraging them to put as much effort in their piece of writing as they can. The teacher also supplies learners with the necessary information and language thus being available to help when the learner needs advice, examples or suggestions. When the piece of writing is finished, the feedback provided by the teacher acts as guidelines for future writing (Harmer, 2007).

Instead of leaving the learners to work out the potential problems on their own, which could eventually turn out quite unsuccessful, the teachers provide the necessary help in an adequate manner by providing feedback even during the process of learner language production. By giving further instructions, explanations or the needed expressions in a way that it encourages the learners, the activity is bound to be more meaningful and successful.

Although not much is known about methods the individuals use when composing a text, most agree that it is not a spontaneous or easy procedure. This process usually requires a conscious mental effort and activity as writers create the parts of the text on their own and then combine them in most meaningful ways. Teachers, therefore, give learners instructions during different phases of their production in form of feedback. As a source for further writing, the writers go through or re-read, revise, draft or make notes to the already written parts in order to gain material for further writing. Writers also sometimes produce more than one version of a text before completing the final piece or writing, and teachers sometimes go through those leaving comments when necessary before allowing learners to finish their task (Byrne, 1979).

In order to understand the difficulties which may appear during teacher feedback provision, many differences between giving feedback to learner written and spoken performance have been established. One of the involving facts is that the feedback received during writing is fairly different from the one gained during the process of speaking. The feedback the speaker receives can be verbal as the listener talks back and acknowledges that what is heard. It can be in the form of a simple murmur or even comments. This way the speaker is immediately made aware of the listener's reactions. The received feedback can, in this case, also be non-verbal. This, however, involves listener's reactions such as facial expressions. Writing, on the other hand, is considered to be "the whole of the relevant activity" (Byrne, 1979: 2) as the writers create the context along the process itself. There are no interactions between the two communicators as one of the challenges the writers usually face is the absence of an appropriate addressee. The writers usually try to predict the reader's reactions and include them into the writing composition and sustain the whole process of production while getting the meaning across by means of linguistic elements alone. What is also specific for writing is that the writer

can make changes to the piece of writing until it is perfected and expresses the meaning in the best and most appropriate way. Similarly, teacher or the reader can deal with the text in particular ways, and pay attention to specific features (Byrne, 1979).

4.3. Testing the writing skills

As the learner's written production is expected to relay their knowledge of the language so as to check the learner's progress in a particular stage of language acquisition, these are usually more guided by already set criteria. Apart from providing information about the learner progress, tests also serve as a means of indicating what they should change in order to reach certain proficiency level. Feedback, therefore, plays an important role in the writing skills testing process (Weigle, 2002).

A score in the writing assessment is seen as the result of the interaction between the test and the examinee, but also the written production, the rater and the rating scale. The rating scales are used for assessing the learners' implicit or explicit production and they guide the teacher feedback, as its provision depends on the rating criteria. As shown in Table 4, the rating scales include detailed descriptors which help the teachers focus on specific kind of feedback provided in the learner written production.

Table 4: Rating scale for English writing tests

(http://dokumenti.ncvvo.hr/Ispitni_katalozi_10-11/Obvezni/IK-eng.pdf)

Points	**Task completion**	**Coherencand Cohesion**	**Vocabulary**	**Grammar**
5	-All parts of the prompt fairly equally developed--Main ideas well supported.	-Clear flow of the ideas. -Effective use of paragrtaphing and cohesive devices.	-Wide range for the task. -Inaccuracies in usage/form/spelling occur but do no impede easy understanding.	-Wide range for the task. -Inaccuracies in usage/form occur but do not impede easy understanding.
4	-All parts of the prompt developed but unequally. -Main ideas generally well supported.	-Generally clear flow ideas -Good use of paragraphing and cohesive devices.	-Good range for the task. -Inaccuracies in usage/form/spelling sometimes impede easy understanding.	-Good range for the task -Inaccuracies in usage/form sometimes impede easy understanding.
3	-One part of the prompt not developed -Main ideas sufficiently supported./ Not all main ideas relevant.	-Flow of ideas sometimes unclear. -Limited use of paragraphing or cohesive devices.	-Sufficient range of the task -Inaccuracies in usage/form/spelling sometimes cause difficulty in understanding	-Generaly uses simple structures. -Inaccuracies in usage/form sometimes cause difficulty in understanding.
2	-Two parts of the prompt not developed./the essay is largely irrelevant. -Main ideas insufficiently supported.	-Flow of the ideas frequently unclear. -Inadequate use of paragraphing or cohesive devices.	-Range is inadequate for the task. -Inaccuracies in usage/form/spelling frequently cause difficulty in understanding.	-Relies on simple structures -Inaccuracies in usage/form frequently cause difficulty understanding.
1	-Insufficient prompt development./ The essay is irrelevant. -No clear main idea. -Generaly uninstelligible.	-Flow of ideas cannot be followed. -Generaly unintelligible.	-Range is severely restricted. -Inaccuracies in usage/form/spelling generally prevent understanding.	-Range is severely restricted. -Inaccuracies in usage/form generally not understanding.
0	The script is unintelligible or has less than 50 words			

The development of the scale and the descriptors for each scale level, as illustrated in Table 4, are very important when it comes to the validity of the assessment, as well as the type and quantity of teacher feedback. There are three main distinguished types of rating scales: primary trait scales, holistic scales, analytic scales, and recently the fourth type of scale has been recognized, named a multiple-trait scale. The first mentioned three types are marked by two distinctive features. These are the tendency of the scale to be specific to a single writing task or a number of tasks, and whether a single or more scores are appointed to each script. The primary trait scale is used specifically for one task, and holistic as well as analytic scales are used for multiple tasks. In addition, although they are used for a larger-scale assessment, the timed writing tests are of little value to classroom writing assessment. While learners' timed written production has an important role in writing assessment, a single piece of written production produced under time limit is insufficient because it shows the teachers very little of what the learners are able to produce with writing in the real-world situations (Weigle, 2002).

When it comes to assessing the learners work and progress, as well as providing feedback, it can be done by the other learners or by teachers, the latter being of more importance for this particular research. Teacher can assess explicitly by praising which can further lead to motivating the learner or implicitly by making no comment related to the learner's error. These depend on many classroom factors and are combined throughout the class because "praise or blame will have little positive effect - indeed it will be negatively received - but a combination of appropriate praise together with helpful suggestions about how to improve in the future will have a much greater chance of contributing to student improvement" (Harmer, 2007: 139). Some of the ways of assessing learners' work are comments, grades and reports.

Another difference can be made between formative and summative assessment. The summative assessment, used with the entrance exams or the tests at the end of the year, usually takes place at the end on a teaching cycle and it is used to sum up the knowledge. The formative assessment, on the other hand, happens during different stages of progression, and has more to do with teacher's feedback which aims to improve the learners' use of knowledge. It serves as an indication of what is right and wrong. The results of this type of assessment can in many ways change the teacher's approach as well, i.e. focus and emphasis during the lessons. Therefore, the products of formative assessment aid the learners as well as teachers and present them with "opportunities which will be wasted if the work is immediately put away, rather than being used as a vehicle for development" (Harmer, 2007: 139).

5. Analysis of teacher feedback on EFL learners' written production

5.1. Aim

The aim of this paper is to analyze teachers' feedback on EFL learners' written production. The purpose of the research is to gain insight into the use and significance of feedback in high school EFL classrooms in Croatia. The hypotheses are: 1) teachers mostly use direct feedback when correcting learners' written production and 2) the weaker the learner's writing, the more feedback it receives. Direct feedback is hypothesized to be used more frequently because it is a correction strategy which indicates the error and provides the correct form. The explicit feedback, on the other hand, is thought to be used far less frequently, as it takes up a lot of teachers' time and effort in order to provide comments. Usually, learners' essays which meet the task requirements contain little errors and are therefore given a higher grade. By the same token, such cases require less feedback. In contrast, the learners' writings containing many errors receive more corrections, as well as comments and information related to those errors. In this case, the feedback serves as an explanation to what the learners did wrong during their writing process, and which features of their language knowledge are still not sufficiently acquired.

The analysis encompasses types and quantity of teacher feedback, as well as types of errors corrected by feedback. The research at hand is aimed at the following research questions:

Which type of teacher feedback is used the most?

Which errors are corrected by different types of feedback?

What is the relationship between grades and provided teacher feedback?

All of the research questions are, therefore, related to teacher feedback on learners' written production. The relationships taken into account in this paper are those between written production and feedback, errors and ways of correcting errors, grades and quantity of feedback, as well as types of corrective feedback and types of errors.

5.2. Corpus

The analysis encompasses a total of one hundred pieces of learner writing from five different EFL classes which were, at the time of writing, taught by five different language teachers who also corrected the work. The analyzed essays are related to different topics, as shown in Table 5, but are all written under similar conditions and requirements. The learners

were to write an essay in English of about 250 words including discussion and learners' own opinion about the topic at hand, such as shown in Appendix 6. All of the essays were written approximately at the same time, i.e. in September and December of 2010. Learners had to write an essay title on their own, as well as organize their writing into introduction, main part and conclusion. They were handwritten by learners and graded by their teachers according to the assessment and evaluation criteria of learner written production (see Table 4). The learner written production was organized into five different categories or groups according to different teacher, i.e. different topics the essays were written on. Therefore, a different approach to error correction and provision of corrective feedback was expected. Teachers assessed the essays based on the following four categories: task completion, coherence and cohesion, vocabulary and grammar. Learners were, therefore, expected to write their essays keeping in mind the form and length of their production, topic at hand, usage of various linking words as well as spelling and correct grammatical knowledge. In addition to teacher feedback and learner errors, final essay grades were also taken into account.

Table 5: Number of essays and topics according to five different groups of learners

Essay categories	Number of essays	Essay topics
Teacher 1	20	Beauty and happiness Technology and entertainment Education and jobs
Teacher 2	20	Chukotka
Teacher 3	20	Advantages and disadvantages of using Facebook Education at home Celebrities as role models Convenience of modern technology
Teacher 4	20	Mobile phones in class Advantages and disadvantages of using the Internet Testing cosmetic products and drugs on animals Students choosing their own school subjects
Teacher 5	20	The role of family Advantages and disadvantages of technological advancement
Total: 5	**100**	**14**

5.3. Procedure

5.3.1. Data collection

The essays were written during regular English classes as part of learners' preparation for the official school leaving exam. They were graded by their regular teachers who then made them available to a university professor for research purposes. There was, therefore, no contact between the author of this paper and learners or their teachers.

The received material was closely examined, and categorized according to year, grade, learner group or class as well as the following research criteria: the essays which could be taken into account had to be graded, appropriately corrected so that the teacher feedback is recognizable, and the learner and teacher handwriting had to be readable. After being categorized

in this manner, the essays which met the necessary criteria were further categorized by teacher groups for further analysis. This way the feedback from five different teachers and classes was included into this research.

5.3.2. Data analysis

In every essay, five types of teacher corrective written feedback and four types of errors were tracked and marked according to their definition. Among the analyzed types of feedback were explicit, implicit, direct, indirect coded and indirect uncoded teacher feedback. The analyzed types of errors were task completion, cohesion and coherence, vocabulary and grammar. These were listed by the teacher next to their separate corresponding grades in most essays. As each feedback item related to one type of the errors, this was also noted. This way information was gathered about the quantity and types of feedback used, but also about types of errors these referred to in each essay. Additionally, grades (1-5) from all essays were taken into account so that the relationship between them and the other two criteria could be established. The types of teacher feedback, errors as well as grades found in each learner essay were listed, transformed into percentage and compared. First, this procedure was done separately with five groups of twenty essays, and then the data as a whole were analyzed.

6. Results

In this part of the paper results are presented and discussed following the order of research questions. The first part deals with the use of different types and frequency of teacher feedback and the relationship between them. The five teacher groups are also handled separately in order to provide a better insight into style differences of feedback utilization. The second part covers the analysis of relationship between feedback and errors, and in the third part, the relationship between teacher feedback and grades is presented.

6.1. Teacher feedback

The first research question was related to the type of teacher feedback which was used the most by teachers in correcting the learner errors in their essays. The analysis discovered that teachers used many correction strategies, as shown in Table 6, and that direct written feedback was used the most, such as in example 3.

Table 6: Examples and short description of teacher feedback used in the analyzed essays

	Type of feedback	**Examples**	**Short description**
1	**Explicit**	*This is not the topic.*	Comment
2	**Implicit**	Croatian school program is consist of seventeen subjects. *Croatian curriculum consists of seventeen school subjects.*	Reformulation
3	**Direct**	~~speeded~~ *fast*	Provision of correction
4	**Indirect coded**	WW (wrong word)	Codes without correction
5	**Indirect uncoded**	In one hand…	Indication without correction

In all of the essays teachers used focused corrective feedback, as they corrected specific types of errors (task completion, coherence and cohesion, vocabulary and grammar). The implicit strategy of error correction or teacher recasts of pieces of learner writing, such as in Appendix 2, appeared the least. Only 10 out of hundred analyzed essays contained this type of

feedback which makes it the strategy teachers did not use often. Direct method of error correction, as example 3 illustrates, on the other hand, appeared in 86 essays. According to this finding, learners mostly received direct correction of their errors, and did not have to search for correct alternatives on their own. This type of feedback is therefore considered to be the most popular choice when it comes to error indication as well as the necessary treatment.

Explicit type of teacher feedback appeared in 68 essays in form of comments, such as in Appendix 1, information, as well as in a form of a question mostly related to the meaning which the writer did not successfully convey. As Figure 1 illustrates, the explicit, implicit, direct and indirect feedback strategies were all used in different amount throughout the hundred analyzed essays.

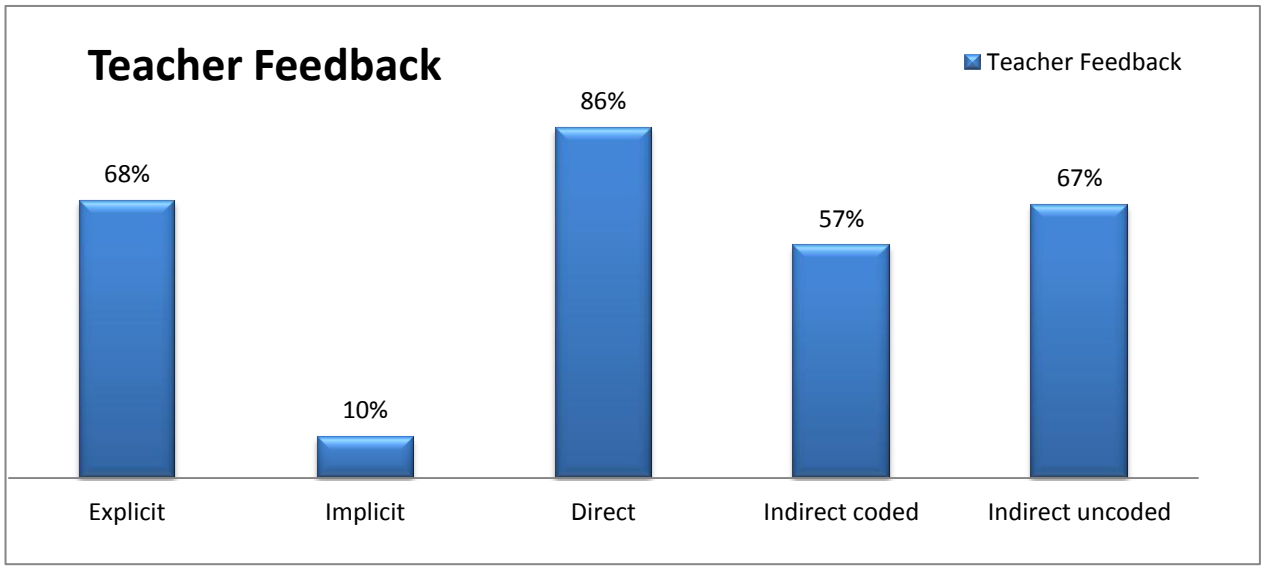


Figure 1: Different types of feedback used in learner essays

As the essays were analyzed according to five different teacher groups, the further results are organized accordingly. As expected, each teacher used feedback types differently. To illustrate, the indirect coded feedback appeared in form of symbols such as brackets in most of the groups, and in the others in form of abbreviations (WW) or as a combination of the two.

In the first teacher group of 20 analyzed essays the teacher feedback, that is, all of the researched types of feedback, appeared 63 times. Among those, the indirect uncoded feedback or simple error indication, such as in Appendix 5, was found on most occasions as it appeared in 18 out of 20 essays. It appeared in form of underlining, crossing, and circling, as in all the other groups. Together with the direct strategy of providing the correct alternative, this type of feedback is typical for this particular group.

Coded feedback, such as in example 4 in Table 6, was found in half of the essays. It appeared in form of brackets, question marks, numbers (for wrong word order), and codes for indention, as well as missing words. Explicit comments appeared in form of comments in 10 of the analyzed essays, and in form of information in only eight of them. Also, it was found in the body of the writings as well as at the end. The implicit feedback, illustrated by example 2 in Table 6, as opposed to direct and indirect uncoded, was used in only two essays, which makes this feedback strategy the least used of all in this group, as Figure 1 shows.

In the second teacher group the teacher feedback was found more than in any other group as it appeared 70 times. This teacher used mostly explicative comments to handle learners' errors, as well as correction codes, such as in example 4 in Table 6. The explanations appeared in form of comments in all of the essays, as well as in form of information and question in eight of them. They appeared in the body and at the end of learner writings. The coded teacher feedback was found in form of abbreviations, such as SP (spelling), WW (wrong word), PREP (preposition), WF (word formation), WM (wrong meaning), WO (word order) as well as question marks, brackets and codes for indention, missing words and transitions. These types of codes were used only in this group but proved to be efficient as it was very clear which type of error they stood for. This type of coded feedback was used the most by this teacher, and in all the other groups it appeared in only 10 to five essays. The implicit strategy of correction, was, however, used in only one essay in this group. This type of feedback was rarely found in all the other groups as well. Direct error correction (example 3 in Table 6) was used in only half of the essays of this group.

The analysis of the third group of essays showed that this teacher used different types of corrective feedback only 41 times in a total of 20 essays. However, this group of essays contained examples of four implicit feedback strategies, as shown in Appendix 2, which is the highest number in all groups of essays. The indirect coded feedback was used in from of brackets, numbers and links between words. Furthermore, the teacher used direct method of error correction in all of the essays, which makes this type of feedback once again highly used and typical. What is also particular about this group is that the teacher provided explicit explanation in only one learner essay, in form of information in the body of the essay. This type of feedback was used far more frequently by the other four teachers.

The fourth teacher group of 20 essays proved to be an excellent source of data because 58 instances of various types of teacher feedback were marked in a total of 20 essays. Most of the learners in this group received teacher feedback in form of error indication as well as correction, such as in example 3 in Table 6. This type of feedback was therefore used the most in this group

as well. Most of them also received explicit explanation of their errors as well as style of writing, as Figure 2 illustrates. This feedback appeared in form of comments in 13 essays, in form of information in four of them, and in form of question in seven of them. Also, it appeared in the middle and end of the essays. Moreover, the codes used for correction in these essays were abbreviations such as WWO (wrong word order) as well as brackets, word links and codes for spacing.

In the final twenty corrected essays the teacher used a corrective feedback method 55 times. Similarly to the previous two groups, the direct strategy of error indication and correction was used the most frequently in this group. The uncoded feedback or mere error indication, as Appendix 5 illustrates, was used the least, and the implicit correction method or teacher recasts were not used at all. Learners in this group, who wrote about beauty, technology and education, mostly received already corrected alternatives to their errors as well as explicit feedback which made them aware of their lack of competence in various language skills, as well as deficiencies in task completion. This feedback was found in form of comments in 11 essays, as information in four of them, and questions in three. They also appeared in the body and the end of the essays. Furthermore, the codes used by this teacher are fairly different from the ones used by the teacher in the second group of essays. These learners received mostly brackets, numbers, question marks and codes indicating that something has been left out, and are, therefore, either grammatically incorrect or incoherent.

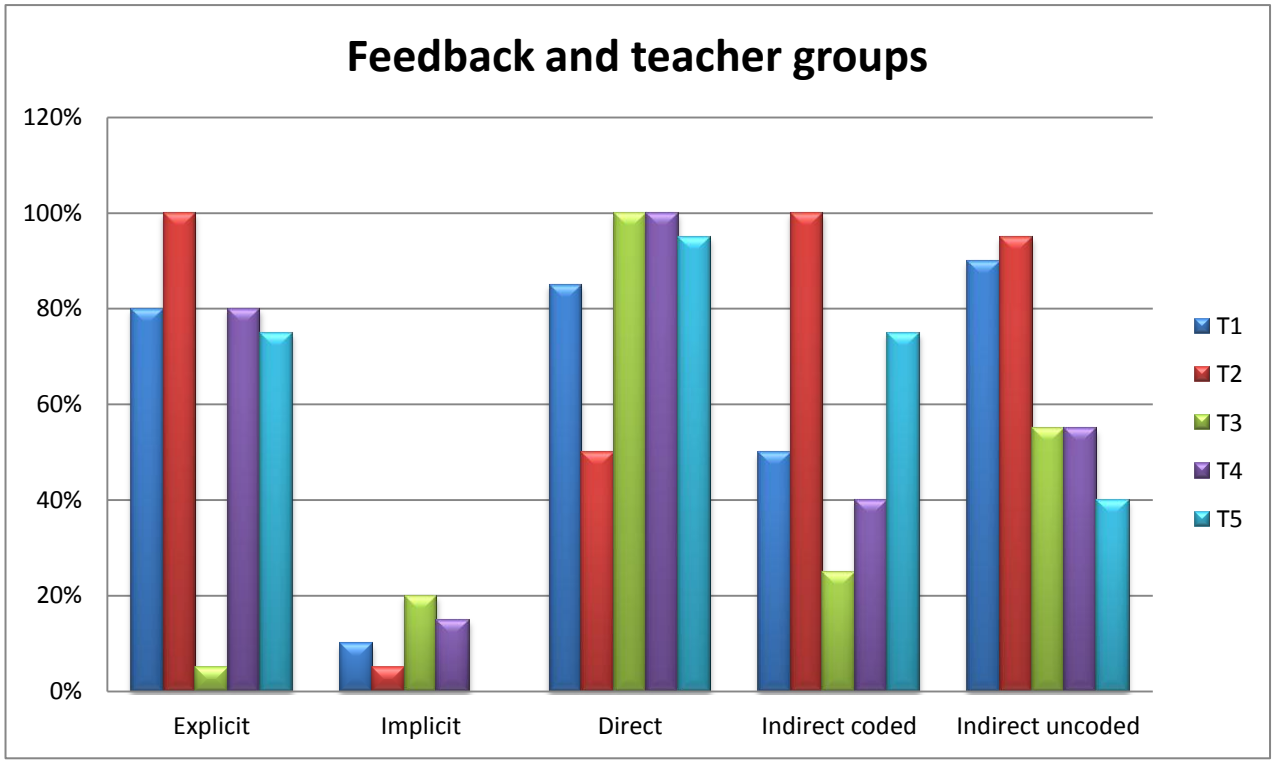


Figure 2: Different types of feedback used by five teachers

6.2. Teacher feedback and error correction

In the analyzed pieces of learner writings teachers corrected grammar, vocabulary, task completion, as well as coherence and cohesion, as Table 7 illustrates. They corrected them by using five types of feedback (explicit, implicit, direct, indirect coded and indirect uncoded) incorporating them into the writings or including them in a form of additional comments at the end of essays. They also used different colors to emphasize their corrective feedback. Every teacher used focused feedback as they corrected particular types of errors as opposed to focusing on all of them. When it comes to the relationship between feedback and error types, the analysis made it apparent that some feedback methods were used more often to correct particular error types.

Table 7: Types of learner errors with examples and corrected versions

	Type of learner error	Example of error	Error correction
1	**Task completion**	Lack of appropriate introduction, main part or conclusion; not enough words; not holding on to the topic; lack of appropriate title or personal opinion	Comment, information or question, e.g.:*Conclusion too short! Do not mention disadvantages in the advantages paragraph! What is your opinion?*
2	**Cohesion and coherence**	*First of all, sports teach a person to interact with a person, act as a team. Furthermore, sports are an excellent physical exercise. Sports involve competition which involves winning and losing.*	*First of all, sports teach a person to interact with another person to act as a team. Secondly, sports are an excellent physical exercise which is important because sports involve competition which involves winning and losing.*
3	**Vocabulary**	*Peopels in some point of their life, from age 13 to age 18, tray to become mini copy's of their favorit celebrity.*	*People in some point of their life, from age 13 to age 18, try to become mini copies of their favorite celebrity.*
4	**Grammar**	*Some children doesn't go to school.*	*Some children do not go to school.*

The explicit method was used mostly to correct issues related to task completion as it was used this way in half of the analyzed essays. The errors which were corrected the least by means of this method were related to learners' vocabulary knowledge, as the Figure 3 illustrates. It was used mostly in form of comments in altogether 54 essays out of 100, such as in examples in Table 8.

Table 8: Types, quantity and examples of explicit corrective strategy in all essays

Type of explicit feedback	Quantity (number of essays)	Examples
Comments	54 (79.41%)	*Too long.* *There are better ways to introduce arguments.*
Information	29 (42.64%)	*Use passive here.* *Conclusion shouldn't be as long as the body paragraphs together.*
Question	21 (30.88%)	*Why?* *What will you write about?*

The implicit correction strategy was, however, used far less frequently and mostly to correct learners' grammatical and vocabulary errors. Used in form of teacher recasts, this feedback provided the learners with some other alternatives to their written segments especially in terms of cohesion and coherence. In most cases, the teacher re-wrote a sentence or parts of the sentence in the body of an essay, directly above the incorrect or incoherent part, such as in Appendix 2. As Figure 3 illustrates, this type of feedback was not used in any of the analyzed essays to correct or comment on the task completion.

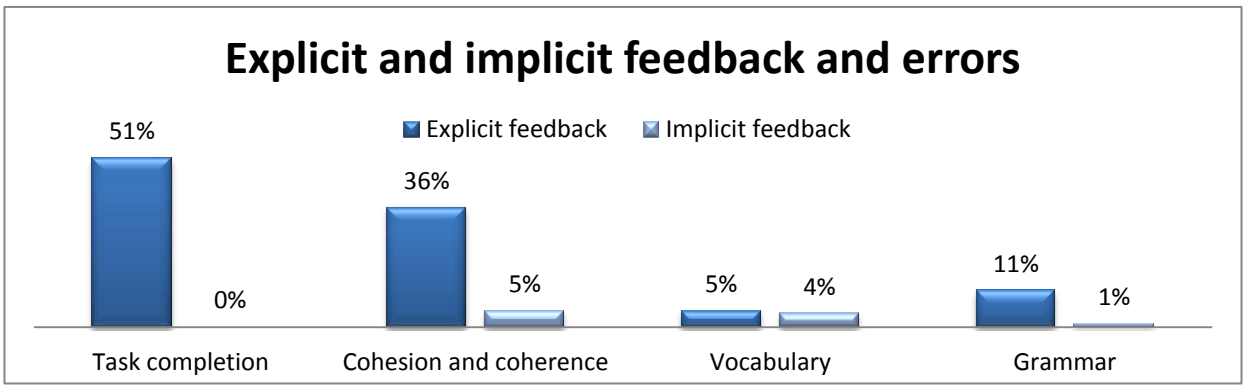


Figure 3: Explicit vs. implicit feedback and types of errors

Error indication and provision of correction, or direct teacher corrective feedback, appeared, as mentioned above, in 86 essays out of hundred analyzed which makes it the most frequently used type of feedback. The correction found in learner written production usually

appeared immediately next to the error. It was used frequently to correct errors related to grammar and vocabulary. In 84.88% of all learner essays where direct feedback appeared, it corrected vocabulary, that is, in 73% of all analyzed essays. This type of feedback was not, however, used to handle task completion, as the Figure 4 shows.

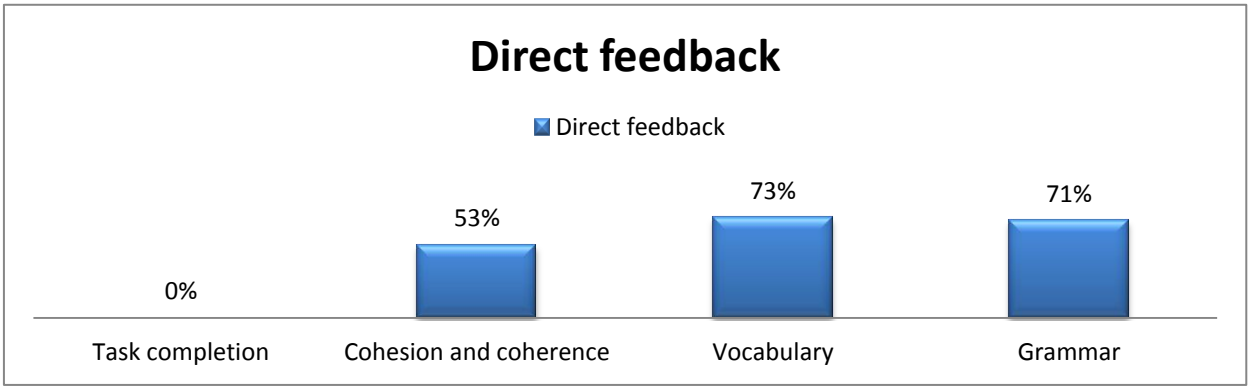


Figure 4: Direct feedback and types of errors

The indirect coded feedback strategy was found in a far fewer number of essays, but still, it appeared in more than half of them. The correction codes such as brackets and abbreviations were used mostly to correct vocabulary as 55.35% of all coded feedback were used for this purpose. Task completion was barely handled using this particular feedback method, i.e. 10.71% out of 56 coded items.

Underlining, circling, and other examples of indirect uncoded feedback method were used in 66 out of hundred analyzed pieces of learner written production. Most of these, i.e. as many as 63.63% of all uncoded feedback, were used to correct errors related to cohesion and coherence. In only three written items teachers used this method to handle learners' task completion, as Figure 5 illustrates.

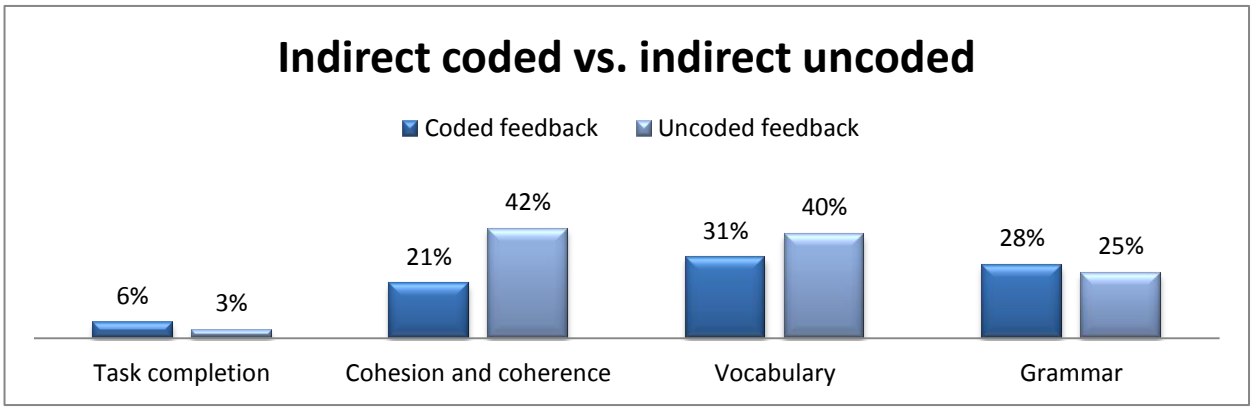


Figure 5: Indirect coded vs. indirect uncoded feedback and types of errors

6.3. Teacher feedback and grades

The following part of the paper deals with the relationship between grades and provided teacher feedback. This relationship is presented in a way which demonstrates which grades were mostly assigned to the essays that mostly contained a particular feedback type. When it comes to the way the teachers provided grades, it was presented in only some essays but in a similar manner by all teachers. The teachers first assigned grades to each of the requirement area (i.e. task completion, coherence and cohesion, vocabulary and grammar) separately and then produced a final grade according to the sum of all four grades. To illustrate, if two of the grades were a three, one a four and the last one a five, the final grade was a four, because the sum of these grades is 15 and according to a grading table, 15 points out of 20, or 75%, meant that the learner essay was given a grade four. Learners received grades form the lowest to the highest, and most of them received a grade four (see Figure 6).

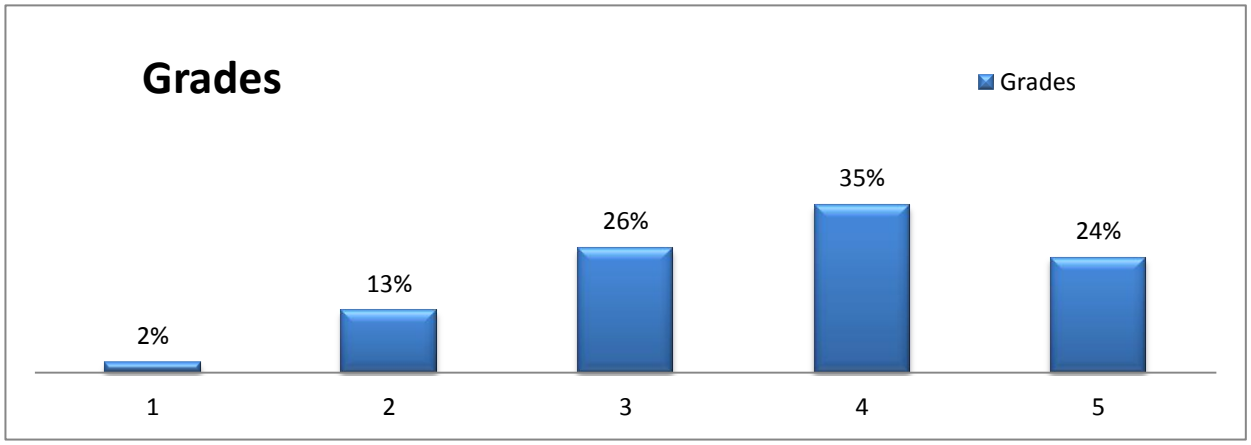


Figure 6: Distribution of essay grades

Essays which were given a grade four received most of the teacher written feedback. The ones with the lowest grade, on the other hand, received the smallest amount. There were only two pieces of learner writing which were given this grade, and this is an insufficient amount to make more detailed and reliable conclusions. However, in the two essays which did receive this grade, there was also the use of direct, indirect and explicit feedback. The uncoded correction strategy, on the other hand, was found in only one of them.

The number of essays which were given a grade 2 was much higher, that is, as a total of 13 pieces out of hundred analyzed writings. Furthermore, out of these 13 essays most received explicit type of feedback in different forms (comments, information and questions). None, on the

other hand, received implicit feedback (Table 9). Here it is important to note, that the number of essays which received implicit feedback was, as stated before, quite small as it appeared in only ten out of hundred analyzed essay items.

Out of 26 learner writings with grade 3, 21 also received direct teacher feedback consisting of error indication as well as correction. Moreover, the implicit feedback was found in only two of them. As Table 9 illustrates, these particular essays received all types of feedback, but in different amounts.

The direct type of teacher feedback appeared mostly in the learner essays which teachers graded with a 4. These pieces of learner writing were also found in greatest amount, as there were 35. Moreover, like in the previous case, all types of feedback were used in these essays. Finally, there were 24 essays which received the highest grade (5). Since all of them received direct strategy of correction this feedback type was used the most frequently. Furthermore, in five cases the implicit method of error correction appeared (see Table 9).

The most frequently used type of feedback used mostly in the essays which were graded with a five, four and three was direct feedback. As there were few pieces of learner production which received the lowest grade, it is difficult to make a conclusion about the relationship between feedback and their amount found in the essays with the lowest grade. The indirect feedback method was used mostly in the essays graded with a four: 31.57% of all essays which contained this type of feedback were given this grade. The other types of feedback, indirect coded, direct coded as well as explicit correction strategy also appeared mostly in these essays. The implicit strategy was used mostly in the essays which received the highest grade, as Table 9 illustrates.

Table 9: The relationship between the number of essays which contained different types of feedback and grades

Number of essays which contained different grades and types of feedback

Grade	Explicit	Implicit	Direct	Indirect coded	Indirect uncoded
1	2	0	2	2	1
2	12	0	7	11	10
3	18	2	21	14	17
4	25	3	32	18	25
5	11	5	24	12	14
Total:	**68**	**10**	**86**	**57**	**67**

7. Discussion

Three out of five teachers in this study used mostly direct feedback to correct learners' errors. According to this result, direct written feedback is used the most by teachers. This answers the first research question and confirms the hypothesis. This type of correction is practical because the learners receive not only the indication that something is incorrect but also the correction. As some researchers argue, this method is far more beneficial than the others because learners generally want their errors to be corrected right away, and are frustrated if this does not happen. Also, there is a risk that they will not correct the errors correctly on their own or even correct them at all. The other frequently used methods were explicit and indirect uncoded feedback. The explicit feedback was found in a lot more essays than initially expected. Teacher's explanations in form of comments, information or questions related to learners' written work provide a better insight in the parts of the knowledge or task completion which need to be worked on. However, as researchers state, this type of strategy takes up a lot of teacher's time and demands a lot of effort, and sometimes the learners do not even bother to utilize it. Teachers want their feedback to be as useful to learners' further language development as possible.

The findings furthermore suggest that a lot of the errors are merely marked by some form of indication such as underlining. This method of correction is meaningful only when learners are able to understand it, i.e. it has no use if the learner does not understand what he or she did wrong. That being said, when dealing with the errors which are only indicated, the learners have to make an effort to correct them on their own, thus having a greater chance of learning something new or repairing the flaws in their previous knowledge.

The coded feedback appeared mostly as simple brackets but also in form of abbreviations, such as WWO for wrong word order. Just like with the indirect uncoded feedback, this feedback has no purpose if it is not clear which errors it indicates. The abbreviations, thus, seem a far better choice as they are highly indicative of types of errors they correct. They are easy to understand, and the learners probably have no problem understanding and correcting them either, especially if the teacher explained the codes before the test itself. The implicit feedback was used the least which means that error indication and immediate correction are considered by teachers to be a more practical method of providing feedback, and that teachers use sentence reformulation only when it is absolutely necessary.

Each teacher used their feedback strategies differently. They used different correction codes, and some preferred one feedback method, while the others used all of them in similar

amounts. This means that each teacher has his or her own strategy of error correction and feedback provision.

When it comes to the second research question, written feedback was used to correct four types of errors. Some types of feedback were, however, used more in order to correct particular types of errors than the others. According to the related results, explicit feedback is used on most occasions to correct and comment on learners' task completion as well as coherence and cohesion. This finding stands to reason as these areas cannot successfully be corrected by a mere underlining or a code. This kind of correction would probably confuse the learner or even serve no purpose at all. Explicit comments, questions and information, on the other hand, provide a reason for correction, as well as a solution to the problem, and they are used the least when correcting vocabulary.

As the results show, direct feedback is used to cover all types of errors, except for task completion. As discussed above, this type of feedback probably would not serve its purpose in correcting such errors, much like the indirect methods. Direct correction was, however, highly used by teachers to correct vocabulary and grammar errors. This means that teachers are not likely to rely on learners to correct such errors on their own probably because of their importance in the second language development process, and the fact that when failing to acquire some aspect of language properly, it is difficult to move on to a more complex level. Furthermore, coded and uncoded feedback methods were also used to correct all types of errors. According to these findings, codes are used mostly to handle vocabulary, and almost never are they related to task completion. The simple error indication, such as circling, is, on the other hand, mostly used to correct cohesion and coherence. This means that learners are usually forced to figure out on their own why some parts of their writing make no sense or are difficult to comprehend.

Most of the learners' essays received a grade four, and, contrary to initial hypothesis, these also received most of teacher written feedback. According to the amount of received feedback, the essays are ordered in the following manner: essays with a four, with a three, with the highest grade, with a two, and finally the essays with the lowest grade which received the least amount of feedback. Teachers most likely believed that there was no need or purpose to provide much feedback in those writings, as they were very poorly written. It does not, therefore, necessarily mean that essays which are given lower grades also receive more feedback. Moreover, the limitation of this study is a small quantity of analyzed essays. Much more items would provide a more accurate insight into relationships between types of feedback and errors, as well as grades.

8. Conclusion

Teacher corrective feedback is used as an error correction strategy, as well as a means of providing learners with information necessary to their further language development. Teachers provide it in different forms aiming at meaningful correction. It should focus on the learners' immediate needs demonstrated by their specific errors. When provided in an adequate manner, i.e. in the appropriate time and in a manner understandable to the learners, these correction strategies can be seen as a very useful and helpful teaching tool. Although some researchers point out its harmful effects, written teacher feedback is still praised by many as a strategy of helping learners get a better insight into those areas of language development which still need to be worked on. Feedback given on written production depends on the type of the writing task as well as the teacher's assessment goal. In evaluating learners' extensive written work, teachers show more interest in the content, and use different strategies depending on the phase of learner's production. There are many principles when it comes to providing written feedback and different types of feedback are usually provided by teachers in combination with error correction. As the results of this study show, teachers use different feedback strategies differently, that is, each has his or her own style in correcting errors and commenting on them. According to the results of the analysis, the most frequent feedback strategy is direct written feedback. Contrary to the initial hypothesis, essays with lower grades do not receive more teacher feedback. Moreover, explicit feedback is used on most occasions to correct and comment on learner's task completion as well as coherence and cohesion, whereas direct feedback was used mostly to cover all types of errors, except for task completion. The other types are used only occasionally in all essays covering all types of errors in similar amounts.

Although direct teacher feedback was proved to be the most opted choice by teachers, a greater diversity of feedback types in teacher's correction style can certainly provide learners with clearer and more meaningful information about their work. Instead of indirect method of correction, teacher reformulation could be used in order to present the learners with alternatives which not only correct but also enrich their knowledge. Apart from that, as the results of the study show, certain types of feedback are used in combination with particular types of errors. Direct and indirect types of feedback are not adequate choices when it comes to correcting task completion, and an explicit method cannot sufficiently be used to handle vocabulary and grammar errors. Provision of some types certainly takes up less of an effort and time than others but when various types of feedback are used properly, this information is considered to be helpful and productive.

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Appendix 1: Types of explicit feedback found in the essays

	Explicit feedback
1	A bit more linking verbs and introduction and conclusion should be of approximately the same length.
2	That belongs to disadvantages!
3	Give more examples! There are better ways to introduce the arguments, this is unclear.
4	This is not the topic.
5	Your opinion belongs to the conclusion.
6	Be careful with spelling and use formal language.
7	Expand the body paragraphs to make the arguments more transparent.
8	Use passive here.
9	Why?
10	What are the additional advantages?

Appendix 2: Types of implicit feedback found in the essays

	Implicit feedback	
	Errors	**Correction through feedback**
1	Is that always like that?	Has it always been like that?
2	..it can cost you.	…it can have serious consequences.
3	They are making young teenagers addicted to go on it by daily base.	…making young teenagers addicted on them on a daily base.
4	Only older people goes one to other to coffee.	Only older people visit each other.
5	They could be taken picture any time.	A photo of them could be taken.
6	At any time they could be called by people from work.	They have to be available to people from work.

Appendix 3: Types of direct feedback found in the essays

	Direct feedback
	usage
1	We must pay attention on young children and their use ~~of~~ Facebook.
	Disadvantage age
2	Disad~~v~~entige of Facebook is there is no ~~years~~ limitation.
	to chat
3	Many young people don't go in a café or in the park chating with friends.
	through
4	…who will guide you throw life
	offten
5	They offenly don't pick the right person.
	enables
6	It ables us to do…
	their
7	…a day without there phones.
	don't
8	Some children doesn't go to school.
	Secondly teach
9	As second their parent can't learn them everything.
10	Chukotka is a remote territory of Russia.

Appendix 4: Types of indirect coded feedback found in the essays

Indirect coded feedback

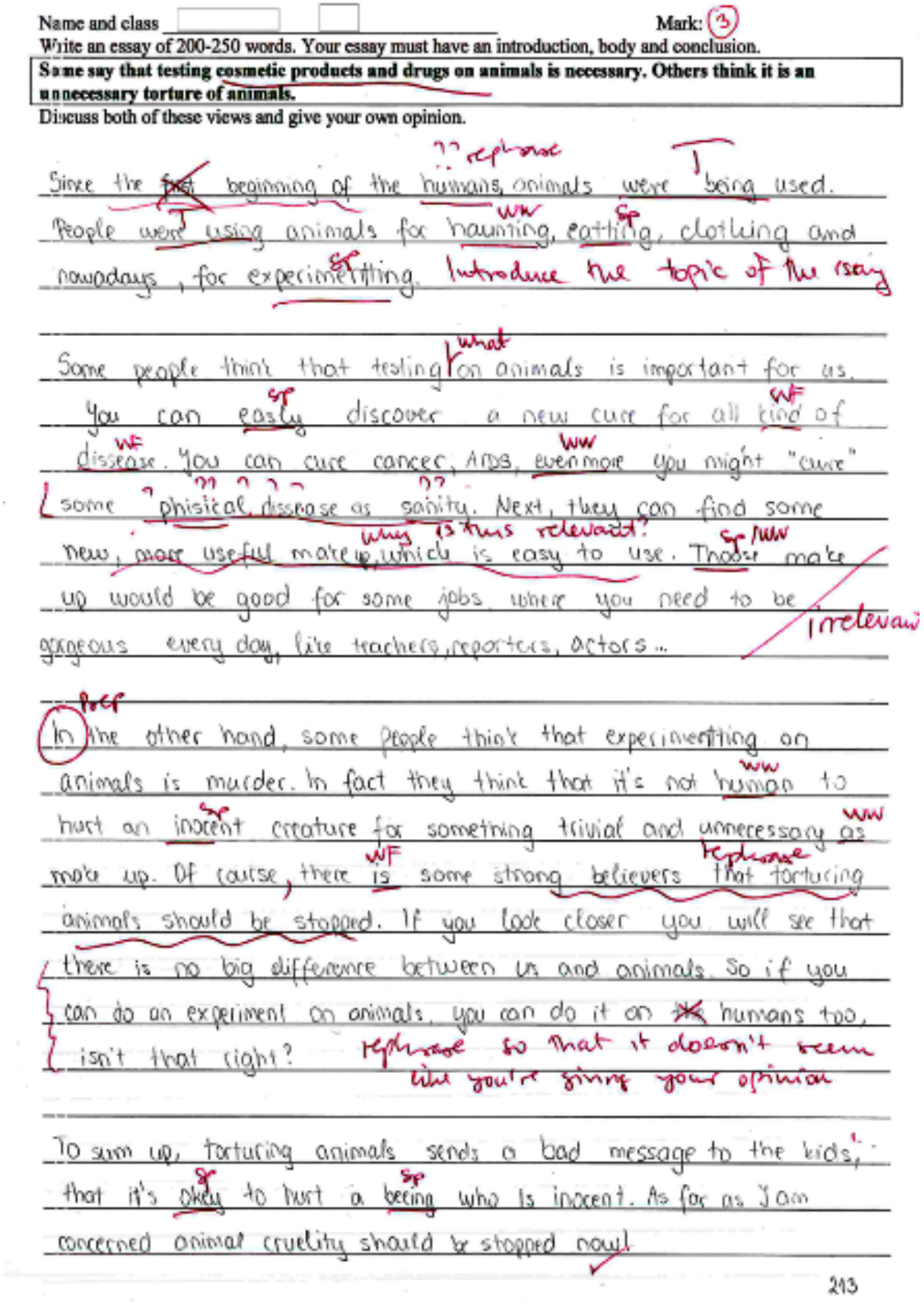
	2 1 3
1	Probably, it has
	WF
2	breethed
	WW
3	It is better to make tests on animals….
	Sp
4	This theeme is…
	WF Prep
5	They are interesting about…
	WM Sp
6	The subject you want to study is wrong choise.
	4 1 2 3
7	Consequently being a celebrity…
	WW WW
8	Their main knowledge would be smale.
	WO
9	…and that could be not good for…
	Prep
10	When you are not so good in languages…

Appendix 5: Types of indirect uncoded feedback found in the essays

Indirect uncoded feedback

1	matterial
2	Crisis here, crisis there, the lack of money, the lack of will.
3	We can start with closing out schools.
4	It is unlike anything mankind has seen during it's rather brief existence on this planet.
5	…makes our life ~~more~~ simpler.
6	So, we can be 100% sure that family has the biggest role of all.
7	Family used to be important in society.
8	stayes
9	More over
10	It damages us bit by a bit.

Appendix 6: Corrected learners' essays



Name and class _____ Mark: 3

Write an essay of 200-250 words. Your essay must have an introduction, body and conclusion.

Some say that testing cosmetic products and drugs on animals is necessary. Others think it is an unnecessary torture of animals.

Discuss both of these views and give your own opinion.

Since the ~~first~~ beginning of the humans, animals were being used. People were using animals for haunting, eatting, clotling and nowadays, for experimetting. Introduce the topic of the essay

Some people think that testing on animals is important for us. You can easly discover a new cure for all kind of disease. You can cure cancer, AIDS, evenmore you might "cure" some phisical dissease as sanity. Next, they can find some new, more useful make up, which is easy to use. Those make up would be good for some jobs where you need to be gorgeous every day, like teachers, reporters, actors... irrelevant

In the other hand, some people think that experimetting on animals is murder. In fact they think that it's not human to hurt an incocent creature for something trivial and unnecessary as make up. Of cause, there is some strong believers that torturing animals should be stopped. If you look closer you will see that there is no big difference between us and animals. So if you can do an experiment on animals, you can do it on ~~the~~ humans too, isn't that right? rephrase so that it doesn't seem like you're giving your opinion

To sum up, torturing animals sends a bad message to the kids, that it's okey to hurt a beeing who is incocent. As far as I am concerned animal cruelity should be stopped now!

213

If I could, I wouldn't live in Chukotka

To begin with, Chukotka is a remote territory of Russia. It lies behind the International Dateline where yesterday collides with today. Spring and summer last a mere eight weeks and the rest of the year it's winter. Furthmore the average temperature is -30°C and it can be lower. Conditions in Chukotka are cruel but living there has some positives sides too. 59

First of all, Chukotka is rich in gold, oil and gas which brought Roman Abramovich to Chukotka. Secondly, people don't use freezers so they put meat out, and it also too cold for crime. They have hospitals, dental clinic, primary school and supermarket thanks to Roman Abramovich. 48

Too short!!

Every plus side has a minus side. The most important disadvantage is that Chukotka is isolated from the world and that's why Chukotka is underdeveloped. Secondly, Chukotka don't have any gardens or woodland so inhabitants can't grow fruits, vegetables or flowers. Also they can't have pools or do outdoor sports! There are always chilly winds blowing, that can blow people away, the temperatures are very low and they make life difficult there. 76

As far as I am concerned, life in Chukotka is hard and cruel because of the weather and I feel that although Chukotka is rich with gold, oil and gas, it's not worth the suffering of living there. My opinion is that Chukotka is still an underdeveloped and unattractive place to live in despite all the money Roman Abramovich invested in it. 60

243

Form 3-4
CC - 5
Gram 3-4
Voc. 5

razred

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17.12.2010.
datum

Should students be allowed to choose the subjects they want to study? (3)

Croatian school program curriculum consist of seventeen subjects. Every subject has its criteria and to be more specific, every subject is obligated. Usually, school starts at 7 o'clock in the morning and it finishes at 1 or 2 o'clock in the afternoon, what means seven subjects per day. Now write what you'll be writing about (the title) irrelevant!

Choosing the subjects we want to study has many advantages. This way, students are getting the opportunity to study something they are interested in from the very first start. On the other hand, the chances to be a good, or even better, to be an exelent student are getting bigger, because you don't have to study seven different subjects every single day. ??

In spite of having many advantages, choosing the subjects we want to study has its disadvantages, too. In that way, our general knowledge is getting smaller, to be more specific - we don't know it at all, because we only learn things we want to know, and to be honest, we don't read and get interested in things we are not interested in. Also, there is always a possibility to change our interests. So, if we already have chosen our subjects and interests, we've also choosed our career, so we no! we! you must be objective

might end up with working something we don't like.

In conclusion, by learning only the subjects we want to learn, we are getting chances to have more spare time and better grades. On the other hand, our general knowledge in that way slowly disappears. In my opinion, I think that the best solution is having 10 subjects: 5 subject that we like and 5 subject that we're obligated.

In my opinion = I think

You don't mention this in your arguments. In conclusion you have to sum up the arguments from paragraphs 2 & 3 but you MUSTN'T introduce new arguments in the conclusion.

Write only the relevant things! In the introduction you need to state what you will write about – the topic of your essay (which is actually the title). Your sentences are too long and contain irrelevant information. If you just separate 5 clauses using a 'comma' it sounds like spoken language. This essay has to be written using a formal language. Be careful with linking words ('on the other hand' is used for contrasting!) and try not to repeat the same ones all the time ('because').

In order to avoid these mistakes, make notes of the arguments 'for' and 'against'. It will help you organise your paragraphs and help your focus.

grupa

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18. 11. 2010.
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(3)

1

Beautiful people are happier

Most (of) people think that (the) beautiful people are much (more) happier than (the) others (one). Also beauty is determined by society, others' opinions or how people look like

Firstly, beautiful people are happier because they have a lot(s) of friends. Their(s) friends consider(s) them beautiful so they are happy because of that. Secondly, some beautiful people are warm and nice to others so they are loved. People love when they are treated good or nice.

On the other hand there is also some disadvantages about of beautiful people being happy. Beautiful people can be mean to others. For instance, beautiful people can be selfcentered or arogant. They think if they are beautiful they can do anything they want. Because of that they might stay alone. What is more, their beauty can be ruined in car crash or something else.

In my opinion I don't think that all beautiful people are very happy. They can be used or hurt. I think that is not everything in beauty. Finaly people who are beautiful, inside and outside can be really happy.

not mentioned in the above arguments

TC: 3
CC: 5
G: 3
V: 4
15/20

(3)