

Can Web-Based Corrective Feedback Be Used as Effective Grammar Input Enhancement on EFL Writing?

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Abstract

White, Spada, Lightbown, and Ranta (1991) confirmed that input enhancement can supply crucial negative evidence to help L2 learners 'disconfirm' incorrect generalizations, which cannot be achieved with positive input alone (p. 417-418). In other words, if L2 learners make overgeneralizations of some grammatical features, input enhancement may be used as negative evidence to help them filter out those syntactical or lexical errors. A study was conducted to find out whether web-based corrective feedback can be used as grammatical input enhancement to decrease EFL learners' writing errors. Seventeen low-intermediate sophomores of English major were asked to write a diagnostic essay as a pre-test writing sample to extract major error types that were most common across the group as target errors for investigation. Altogether 15 error types the researcher found from students' pre-test writing sample were the focus of attention in terms of error feedback. These 15 error types were integrated into a grammar website, designed by the researcher, explaining grammatical features of these target errors so that students could access grammatical explanation and example sentences of corrective feedback with just one click. Many incorrect sentence examples (as negative evidence) and their possible correction (as grammatical input enhancement) were also offered on this website. Students were then asked to submit writing assignments in three-week cycle, with a first draft in week 1, teacher's feedback in week 2, and students' revision in week 3. The preliminary report of this research indicated that grammatical input enhancement seemed to only work for two types of errors (i.e., (1) pronoun (2) word form) and were least effective in two other types of errors (i.e., (1) sentence fragments (2) word choice). The other 12 error types were not substantially rectified through repeated grammatical input

enhancement.

Keyword : EFL writing, L2 writing, web-based corrective feedback, grammar input enhancement