

**EFFICACY OF WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION
MARKING ON GRADE 11 LEARNERS LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN SELECTED
SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF KASAMA DISTRICT OF ZAMBIA**

BY

STEVEN CHIMPUNGA BANDA

**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Applied Linguistics**

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Lusaka

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DECLARATION

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Date:

APPROVAL

The University of Zambia approves the dissertation of Steven Chimpunga Banda as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Applied Linguistics.

Examiner 1: Signature: Date:

Examiner 2: Signature: Date:

Examiner 3: Signature: Date:

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) on whether or not it helped language acquisition in Second language (L2) teaching among grade elevens. The study sought to: establish the familiarity of both teachers and learners with WCF; establish the nature of WCF teachers to composition written tasks; find out challenges involved in providing WCF among both teachers and learners and to ultimately, determine the efficacy of written corrective to composition marking. Four secondary schools were sampled in a single district. Grade Eleven (11) learners were used to assess their perceptions towards written corrective feedback. Twenty (20) learners were picked from each school and made a sample of eighty (80). Five (5) teachers were picked from each school making a sample of twenty (20). The total sample was 100 for both teachers and learners. Various research instruments were used for both teachers and learners. These included: A test, interviews guides, survey questionnaires and document review guides. The findings showed that both teachers and learners were familiar with written corrective feedback. 70% of learners had difficulties to interpret indirect corrective feedback which also appeared to have been the most exploited type with 80% of teachers utilizing it. The study of found out that both teachers and learners faced challenges from the point of you of interpreting written corrective feedback and providing written corrective feedback by learners and teachers respectively. On determining the efficacy, the findings showed that learners needed to have been subjected to clear corrective feedback. This entails that teachers needed to provide comprehensible written corrective feedback. The study concluded that, written corrective feedback was familiar among teachers and learners and that teachers as well as learners had unique perceptions about the practice and appreciated it differently. The study drew two major recommendations. First, a teacher needs to use corrective feedback which learners are familiar with and can interpret with ease. Second, a culture of encouraging learners to attend to their errors must be up held among teachers of English language. This can be utilized as a scaffolding tool to help learners appreciate written corrective feedback.

***Key words:* Efficacy, proficiency, Second language, written corrective feedback**

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DEDICATION

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my heavenly father God almighty for the unending blessings and my academic favours. In a special way, I would like to also dedicate this study to all the hard working teachers of English language, in particular those in the sampled schools of Kasama district for their time rendered during the course of my research. I feel this is the right time you may interact with the findings of this study. Hopefully, they may inform you on how to effectively utilize written corrective feedback in order to benefit you and your learners in the pedagogy of Second language teaching/learning.

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ACRONYMS/ ABBREVIATIONS

DEBS District Education Board Secretary

ESL English as a Second language

ECZ Examination Council of Zambia

FDG Focus Discussion Group.

EFL: English a first language

ESL: English as a Second Language

L2: Second Language

MOGE: Ministry of General Education

SL: Second language

WCF: Written Corrective Feedback

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Written Corrective Feedback (CF) – The use of symbols or written notes against an identified error in a written work as a signal to correct a structure

Efficacy – the importance, relevancy or purpose of corrective feedback as used in marking written composition

Error – Is a grammatical or vocabulary expression that is used off the formal rule of a language by an individual due to wrong orientation and generalizations.

Error Code (Symbol) – An error symbol or Code are varying signs that could contain alphabetical letters or a punctuation signs which in itself is capable of identifying a structural form that is amiss in a context.

Explicit feedback – is the feedback type that corrects the error on behalf of the learner by ways of writing a correct version of a structure on top or below the error point.

Implicit feedback – is the feedback that does not give a clue to a learner but only identifies the error spot with a mark then the learner should look up for the implied misused rule from the grammar sources.

Mistake – Is an occasional, inconsistent slip in one's grammar utterance which cannot be attributed to bad learning as an individual is able to correct oneself after a slip.

Proficiency – Ability to use English language correctly and fluently

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Overview

This chapter gives the background to the study. It also presents the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the objectives and research questions. It explains the limitations of the study. It also explains some key words used in carrying out the research. This chapter further presents both the theoretical and conceptual frameworks which guided this study.

1.1 Background

Teaching of Second Language is about fulfilling the four skills of language: listening, speaking, reading and writing Chishimba, P.C (2009). In this regard, constant assessment becomes the step into assisting a learner attain performance competency in the skills. In Zambia, assessment in schools has long been implemented and the idea of Continuous Assessment, where schools conduct formative assessments prior to the summative assessment, is now a policy. According to The Ministry of Education (2005:5), Continuous Assessment (CA) is defined as, “an on-going, diagnostic, classroom-based process that uses a variety of assessment tools to measure learner performance”. The educational reforms’ recommended that continuous assessment be introduced as an integral part of the examinations results (Educational Reforms, 1977).

In Zambia, the introduction of an Outcome Based Curriculum in 2001 and the demand for more comprehensive assessment systems that impact positively on learning achievement, has prompted educational policy to re-affirm the importance of School Based Continuous Assessment in enhancing education quality (Ministry of Education, 2005).

The School-based Continuous Assessment in Zambia is on an ongoing basis. However, these assessments require feedback for a learner to ascertain his/her level of competence. Usually, assessments become critical in learning subjects like English language especially that it is taught as a Second language. Therefore, constant assessment becomes imperative to help learners improve their proficiency. This is why the role of feedback in most theories of second language

(L2) learning and language pedagogy is taken seriously. In both structural and communicative approaches to language teaching, feedback is viewed as a means of fostering learner motivation and ensuring linguistic accuracy which is a goal of Second Language learning (Swain, 1985). This is quite accurate with the fact that, there are many factors for which errors are committed by learners which demand constant feedback. Borg (2003) assessed that, in general, English Language has a number of colloquialisms and conversational expressions that are inappropriate for formal written English inclusive of Short Message Service (SMS) but acceptable in informal use of the language. However, for purposes of the study only the inappropriate use of these expressions and the occurrence of errors were the point of reference of the study for the provision of written corrective feedback.

In language teaching, the types of language components that have been noticed to demand constant feedback are integrative language components: compositions, reading comprehension, cloze tests, dictation and tests of oral communication. Oller (1979:37) attests that, "Whereas discrete items attempt to test knowledge of language one bit at a time, integrative tests attempt to assess a learner's capacity to use many bits of language at the same time, and while exercising several presumed components of a grammatical system, and perhaps more than one of the traditionally-recognized skills or aspects of skills". In Zambia, Composition writing is one of the key components in teaching English language apart from summary comprehension and structure as it covers about 40% of the Grade 12 final aggregate marks for English language written as English Paper One. Sometimes, it is referred to as academic writing or formal writing. To this effect, The Ministry of General Education English Senior Syllabus (2013) considers basic writing skills as being a key factor in composition writing ultimately.

The point to note in language teaching and learning is that, whatever technique used in language teaching, feedback, including correction whether implicit or explicit, should be approached in a way that it is in itself a rich content of linguistic input into the learner being scaffolded, (Swain 1997). If feedback is supposed to help students in language acquisition, it should be comprehensible, relevant, and clear. Thus, Alexandra and Francisco (2013) in their investigations of teachers' attitude towards providing corrective feedback to learner written composition reported that:

Every time teachers attend to students' lexical, grammatical and syntactical problems, they remark that error-oriented feedback is one of the most time-consuming and exhausting aspects of their job. They take great pains to mark every single error in students' texts only to find that the same errors reappear the next time.

From the statement above, it confirms that some teachers are de-motivated to give corrective feedback for special reasons. As noted it is either they rarely have time for corrections or they have failed to find lasting ways of offering written corrective feedback that may help learners avoid common errors. Swain (1985) contends that, teachers should consider giving corrective feedback to students until at a point that the learner will not need to continue to obtain comprehensible feedback input in writing. If feedback is meant to help language learning, it should focus on conventions that are learnable and portable (ibid). All in all, comprehensive written corrective feedback and feedback conventions such as error codes which are economic in indicating errors need to be utilized in written assessments as error markers to aid learner own error correction, (Brown, 1978).

This notwithstanding, the Zambian Revised Senior Secondary School English language Syllabus (2013), in its general objectives on writing skills provides that, by the end of grade twelve, learners should have acquired quality formal and meaningful writing skills. The goal of teaching writing skills in Zambian schools is to make learners acquire the skill for use in their advancement of educational attainment in tertiary institutions as well as in their daily communicative interactions (ibid, 2013). However, the Examinations Council of Zambia seems to notice challenges in composition writing by grade 12s during their final examinations. ECZ Examiners Reports, (2013; 2014; 2015; 2016) show that some grade twelves still have challenges in meaningful composition writing tasks especially on the content part of the use of grammar. This implies that, the picture of performance in composition writing as reported by ECZ (2013;2014; 2015; 2016), does not seem to fulfill the objective of the English Language Revised Secondary Syllabus (2013) which requires that a learner should acquire the necessary writing skills by the end of grade twelve. However, the table below gives a tabulation of performance in

English language Paper One (Composition writing) in the period from 2013 – 2016 consecutively.

Table 1: The table below represents the candidature performance of Grade 12 in English language Paper-1 composition writing from 2013-2016

YEAR	SUBJECT	CANDIDATES	MEAN SCORE%	MAX MARK	HIGHEST MARK	LOWEST MARK	ABSENT
2013	ENG P1	118, 945	32.0	40	32	0	2, 530
2014	ENG P1	119, 635	32.5	40	34	0	2, 435
2015	ENG P1	120, 165	32.8	40	34	0	2, 190
2016	ENG P1	121, 095	33.0	40	33	0	2, 075

(Adopted from ECZ Examiners Reports 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016)

From the tabulations on the table above from Examinations Council of Zambia, it was therefore, inevitable to conclude that a study was almost immediately needed on written corrective feedback given in English composition tasks by teachers of English language in order to establish how learners were guided on the appropriate use of grammar through written corrective feedback.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As bemoaned by ECZ (2013; 2014; 2015; 2016) on the average performance of learners during the national examinations of the consecutive years as above despite teachers teaching composition skills successfully, the study sought to establish how teachers utilized written corrective feedback which through research has been found to possess an equally similar ability of inputting rules of grammar at the point of error correction. Therefore, this study was interested in asking the question: What was the efficacy of teacher’s written corrective feedback in English composition writing assessment to grade 11’s?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish the efficacy of composition writing assessment corrective feedback which grade 11 teachers of English language gave to learners through marking written composition tasks.

1.4 Objectives

The Objectives of the study were to:

1. To investigate the familiarity of both teachers and learners with written corrective feedback: error codes as feedback markers
2. To ascertain the nature of corrective feedback teachers give to composition writing tasks
3. To establish teachers and learners challenges with written corrective feedback to composition writing tasks.
4. To establish the efficacy of written corrective feedback in composition writing tasks.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How familiar are teachers and learners with error codes as feedback markers?
2. What is the nature of written corrective feedback teachers give to composition writing tasks?
3. What challenges do teachers and learners face with written corrective feedback to composition writing tasks?
4. What is the efficacy of written corrective feedback in composition writing tasks?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the findings of this study are first of all informing in the teaching of English language as a Second Language (L2). To teacher educators and practicing teachers of English language, it was hoped that they may consider corrective feedback in composition marking to be as important as teaching a new topic in English language. This might help them utilize grammar rule explanation even at the point of giving corrective feedback to learners.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

1.7.1 The Output Hypothesis

Merrill Swain (1985) developed a Hypothesis that she claimed, supported Second Language learning through the output effect of language through a feedback effect. Swain counter reacted to Stephen Krashen's (1982) Comprehensive Input Hypothesis which held that, language learning is only possible through a comprehensive input of meaningful structures. However,

Swain (1985) contended that, L2 learning was not only possible through the Input mechanism but also, through the errors produced at the Output level, which when queried by a third party may act as a comprehensive Input once the speaker or writer makes sense with the new structure being corrected with. To this argument, Swain proposed five hypotheses in support of the Output effect through which she strongly held that L2 can be learnt. However, for the sake of corrective feedback in line with this study, the second hypothesis called ‘Hypothesis-testing’ was used as the relevant one to this study. The following are the overall, five basic functions of output in L2 acquisition which were suggested by Swain (1985):

1. The first function was the *noticing function*, also referred to as the *consciousness-raising role*. Swain explained that when producing utterances a sort of a monitor identifies a gap and need for a rephrase. In other words, language production involves the use of previously met language items in ways that they have not been used before.
2. Secondly, she noticed a *hypothesis-testing* function of output. She observed that the learner’s language production is confirmed or modified on the basis of the learner’s interaction and the feedback (written or oral) that he or she receives in an attempt to convey meaning. A fruitful negotiation may lead to a semantic or morphosyntactic modification of output. When feedback is unavailable, the learner checks his or her hypothesis on the basis of the internalized knowledge that he or she possesses about the language.
3. The third function of output that she discerned was a *metalinguistic one*. Metalanguage is used by learners when they collaboratively try to solve linguistic problems and, as a result, extend these learners’ knowledge about the forms and rules of a language. Swain said this involves a lot of talk about language which contributes to language learning.
4. Fourthly, Swain saw output as having a function in the *development of fluency*. She argued that the production of output promotes automatization of language use. Through frequent target language production learners can gain fluency and confidence in L2 use.
5. The fifth function of output, as seen by Swain, was that it enabled learners to move from *a semantic to a syntactic use of language*. Language use gets learners to move from a stage of comprehension (semantic) to a stage of paying attention to linguistic form/s (syntactic). For example, the learner noticing that his or her utterance has not been understood by the interlocutor reformulates it to comply with target language standards.

In relation to this study it was then concluded that, issues of corrective feedback were best approached through the manipulation of the *hypothesis testing function* of language. Swain (1985), contended that, error correction should be most operative to the hypothesis testing function for she suggested that learners experiment as they produce (write or speak) language, seeking confirmation for their hypotheses. This clearly implies that, the kind of written corrective feedback which teachers indicate in the learner's corpus needed to be comprehensively understandable by learners in order to avoid mismatches on the implied meaning of the written corrective feedback.

Thus, this study wished to position itself in line with the Hypothesis Testing, in trying to investigate the efficacies of the written corrective feedback that teachers of English used in marking written compositions of grade elevens in a bit to help them correct their own errors and learn new meaningful structures; grammar. As Swain (1985) holds, Output is as important as Comprehensive Input in L2 learning, hence the study's inquiry.

1.8 Conceptual framework

The study wished to conceptualize the research topic by employing the concept of '*Scaffolding*' by Lev Vygotsky from his 1978 'Social Cultural Theory'. In relation to this study which wished to investigate the efficacy of English composition assessment corrective feedback to grade eleven learners, the researcher considered that since the concept of scaffolding aimed at shaping a novice or a child to perfect what they seemed not to comprehend accurately on their own, the use of assessment corrective feedback was equally perceived in the similar manner of helping to scaffold a learner to avoid committing unnecessary errors in their quest to improve their written grammar. Thus, the idea of the concept of the Zone of Proximal development as an extension of scaffolding was brought in the focus as a tool of measuring the improvement of learner competency as well as importance of feedback in the case of the study we then referred to it as 'the efficacy of written corrective feedback'.

In this study the learners ability to correct own errors using corrective feedback depended on their familiarity with written corrective feedback, the nature of written corrective feedback type which their teacher used as well as ascertaining challenges surrounding the provision of written

corrective feedback. In conceptualizing this study, it was expected that, when these dependent variables are investigated, then efficacy of written corrective feedback was to be determined.

Figure 1 below is a diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework as thought out by the researcher.

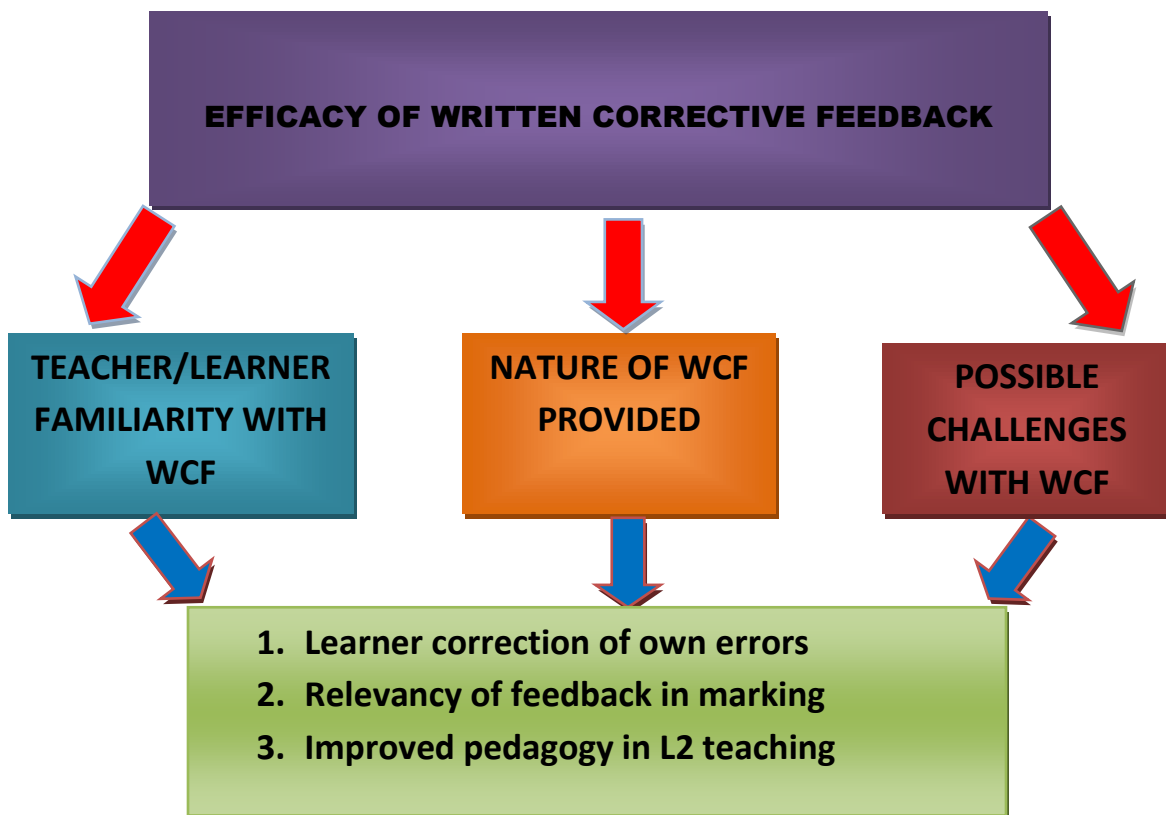


Figure 1: Conceptual framework model

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

This study was confined to Kasama District of Northern Province of Zambia, in selected secondary schools only. The participants were drawn within the sampled schools. Kasama was selected as a research site because it is one of the areas around Zambia where most learners possess challenges in vocabulary presentation in English language due to mother tongue influence. This notwithstanding, the case of poor performance in English language composition examinations is a general concern across the country, hence Kasama.

1.10 Limitations of the study

In as much as feedback in written language was a wide study area, this study was limited to one aspect of ‘written corrective feedback’. Therefore, other forms of feedback like ‘oral’ do not apply to this study. Furthermore, because the study was conducted in one district: Kasama, results of this study are not to be generalized to other parts of the country as findings in the sampled schools might have unique orientation to the written corrective feedback type provided in other schools.

1.10 Organization of Dissertation

This chapter gives an introduction and background to this study. The background brings out the gaps which this study intends to fill up. The purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the objectives, research questions, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, limitations, delimitations and a summary of the chapter are presented in chapter one. Chapter two presents review of related literature which covers the historical perspective of written corrective feedback, the types of written corrective feedback as postulated by Ellis (2009) and then it presents related studies to the current study which brought out relevant gaps for the incoming study. Chapter three discusses the methodology that was used in this study and of course the research design which guided this study. Chapter four presents the findings of the study while chapter 5 presented the discussions of the findings of the study. Lastly, conclusions and recommendations of the study are made in chapter six. Other necessary research instruments for this study and ethical clearance protocols were appended just after the references.

1.11. Summary

The chapter presented the introductory part of the study. Among the things presented include: the background, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions. The chapter also presented the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that informed and guided the study. Operational definition section has also been presented. The next chapter presents the review of related literature on the title under study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Overview

This chapter reviews related literature on the subject of efficacy of written corrective feedback in English language composition writing. Kombo and Tromp (2002:62), define Literature Review as, “an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers”. In this regard, this chapter puts the study into perspective by starting with the historical theoretical view point of corrective feedback in language teaching, it then looks at the later pedagogical acceptance of corrective feedback in language teaching though under critical debates and finally it reviews literature on corrective feedback at a contemporary perspective. The perceived gaps from the studies conducted and reviewed mirror what the study focused on.

2.1 Earliest views on effects of written Corrective feedback on Second language teaching

The magnitude of written corrective feedback research is inspired by its significant theoretical and pedagogical implications for Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research and instruction (Bitchener and Ferris 2012; Ellis 2010; Ferris 2010). Theoretically, succeeding Second Language Acquisition theories have posed varying points of views on the role of error correction in language acquisition/teaching. However, Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) comes as a testing means of these competing theories.

Initially, Cook (1988) posited that Noam Chomsky’s Universal Grammar tended to reject the role of corrective feedback in facilitating language acquisition claiming that Language Acquisition is a natural activity not aided (Schwartz 1993). Prior to this were the Direct Method and later the Audio lingual methods which both claimed that error corrective feedback led to bad habit of language learning leading to rejection of the practice. However, later theories of language learning such as those of the Cognitive Interactionist theories such as Interaction hypothesis (Long 1991) and the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt 1994) contended that error correction assists acquisition thereby, helping learners establish form meaning mappings.

Truscott (1996) rolled out the debate to which he strongly argued against the use of corrective feedback in language teaching. He published an essay that seriously questioned the significance of grammar corrective feedback. It was responded to by Ferris (1999) and Truscott (1999) once more, and the debate is still unsettled. Truscott (1996) limited his research to grammar feedback (which still is somewhat vague as a concept) and with a line of evidence, despite his acknowledgement of feedback as an “institution”, he went on to claim that such corrective feedback is not only unnecessary for students’ writing skills proficiency but it was also harmful and sets the student back rather than contributing to successful learning. Truscott claimed that teachers’ response to students’ grammatical errors is unclear, ambiguous and often incorrect. He insisted that the time and effort that teachers put into corrective feedback could and should be put into other more fruitful features of language acquisition. The strength in Truscott’s article was based on its ability to make most of the researchers in the field of applied linguistics awakened; to realize that research on corrective feedback thus far was insufficient and that ample investigation was needed.

However, in Ferris’ response to Truscott, a counter argument was made to most of Truscott’s findings, due to the seemingly poor research materials and the inconclusive interpretations he presents (Ferris 1999). Ferris recognized Truscott’s evidence for his argument to be bias, “premature and overly strong” (1999:2) but agreed with his statement that no single form of feedback could be utilized to cover all different types of errors. Ferris called for further research in the area of corrective feedback as well as a plea for restraint not jumping into conclusions until further reliable research had been presented. Ferris additionally, makes a vital contribution to the research on corrective feedback, by first of all qualifying the place of Corrective Feedback in language teaching and above all introducing the concepts of “treatable” and “untreatable” errors, a differentiation between rule-governed errors and errors without clear rules and thus pointed out that the former was much easier to correct than the latter. With this thought, she recognized the problem stated by Truscott, but not in affirmation to abandon all grammatical corrective feedback. She suggested that teachers take time to be more attentive, versatile and thorough in their corrections as corrective feedback had subtle or more than the ability to help learners attain proficiency in their use of a language under instruction.

Going forward Second Language writing researchers are only concerned with whether or not Written Corrective Feedback is able to assist L2 learners improve the overall effectiveness of their writing (Ferris, 2010).

2.2 Corrective Feedback and its evidence based effectiveness

From the era of Truscott and Ferris trying to co-exist under their paradox, doors of research under this field of corrective feedback opened, with more and more researchers showing their interest to establish further the efficacy of written corrective feedback in a formal learning set up as it was overwhelmingly perceived and strengthened by the arguments of Ferris when she contended that, providing corrective feedback on student's writing was perhaps, the most effective widely used method for responding to student writing (Ferris, 2003). Therefore, the importance of corrective feedback could not be over emphasized in L2 teaching. This relates to the current study which opted to verify how corrective feedback was utilized in Zambian schools and see whether or not it impacted positively on the learners' acquisition of grammar rules at the point of corrective feedback.

Among the specific things Corrective Feedback has been found to do is that, it shifts learners' attention to the location or nature of an error. Many studies with related designs have common findings that written Corrective Feedback improves grammatical accuracy in future writings, (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Ellis, Sheen, 2007). These studies have also included perceptions of teachers who too acknowledged that providing written error correction encourages students to read more in order to help them become better writers (Corpuz, 2011). According to Long (1991) error correction is provided to focus students' attention on grammatically accurate forms within the context of performing a communicative task. Ortega (2009) equally argues in the affirmative when he contends that, there are several positive implications regarding error correction instruction in second language (L2) classes. Firstly, by providing error correction, students are able to pay attention to the existence of new features of the second language. Secondly, error correction may help students to discover the limitations of their second language communication abilities with their given second language resources. Therefore, it cannot be better said than put in the words of Merrill Swain when she posited that, error correction could function as a "noticing facilitator" that directs the attention of second

language students not only towards error, but also to new features of the target language Swain (1985).

However, the vital approach to the conclusion of this debate is not by employing sophisticated methodological designs but essentially by furthering inquiry on the impact of written corrective feedback. This should be done to both the teacher and the learner and should be focused on how they both view it. Furthermore, inquiry needs to be instituted on how practical monitoring measures can be applied to make written corrective feedback a strong part of the pedagogy of language teaching. An absence of this point of view in the written corrective feedback literature must be considered problematic. This is because it makes it fundamentally impossible to draw any conclusions from the published findings on this matter.

2.3 Types of Written Corrective Feedback

In wanting to put this field of written corrective feedback into perspective, Ellis (2009) established an inventory of possible types of corrective feedback discovered at that time through document analyses by establishing what teachers commonly used as written corrective feedback in their students written work and seven types were generated.

2.3.1. Direct Corrective Feedback (DCF)

Direct CF as its name suggested, was a direct way of inserting either a missing word or crossing out the error and provide the correct form directly in the text or in the margin/at the end, no further division is made (Ellis, 2009). Direct CF was found to be explicit in two ways: it identifies the error in some way, such as underlining or circling, and it provides the correct form making the linguistic feature explicit to be noticed.

2.3.2 Indirect Corrective Feedback (ICF)

Unlike Direct CF, Indirect CF is when the teacher indicates and locates the problem only. The teacher does not provide the learner with the correct form. He/she leaves the correction to be made by the learner. This type of CF can take several forms, such as circling, underlining, and/or coding (Ellis, 2006). Indirect corrective feedback could also be used with indication only, then only indicating in the margin that one or more errors have occurred

2.3.3 Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback

This is when the teacher provides some kind of meta-linguistic clue “as to the nature of the error” (Ellis 2009:98). Ellis makes a division between (a) use of error code, placed in the margin, and (b) brief grammatical descriptions of errors that have been numbered in the text and then explained at the end. *Error Codes* were placed under Metalinguistic corrective feedback as they represent a full language concept once the particular code is known by meaning (Ellis 2009).

2.3.4. Unfocused Corrective Feedback

This is a corrective feedback type given when the feedback is extensive, focusing on all features in each hand-in Ellis (2009).

2.3.5. Focused Corrective Feedback

This is a feedback type which is usually concerned with only one or two features at a time. Ellis (2009) suggests that, in L2 acquisition, unfocused corrective feedback may be the most efficient in the long run, despite focused corrective feedback supplying more examples of corrections to the same type of error.

2.3.6. Electronic Feedback

Explained by Ellis (2009), as when the teacher provides a hyperlink to correct usage of grammar in an electronically submitted document.

2.3.7. Reformulation

Ellis (2009) describes this final form of feedback as consisting of a native’s reformulation of the student’s text so as to make the text as native-like as possible while keeping the content intact.

Table 2: The table below shows Written Corrective Feedback Types (Ellis, 2009:98)

Corrective Feedback (CF) Type	Description	Studies
<i>Direct CF</i>	The teacher provides the student with the correct form.	e.g. Lalande (1982) and Robb et al. (1986).
<i>Indirect CF</i>	The teacher indicates that an	

	error exists but does not provide the correction.	
a. Indicating + locating the error	This takes the form of underlining and use of cursors to show omissions in the student's text.	Various studies have employed indirect correction of this kind (e.g. Ferris and Roberts 2001; Chandler 2003).
b. Indication only	This takes the form of an indication in the margin that an error or errors have taken place in a line of text.	Fewer studies have employed this method (e.g. Robb et al. 1986).
<i>Metalinguistic CF</i>		
a. Use of error code	The teacher provides some kind of metalinguistic clue as to the nature of the error. Teacher writes codes in the margin (e.g. ww=wrong word; art = article).	Various studies have examined the effects of using error codes (e.g. Lalande 1982; Ferris and Roberts 2001; Chandler 2003).
b. Brief grammatical descriptions	Teacher numbers errors in text and writes a grammatical description for each numbered error at the bottom of the text.	Sheen (2007) compared the effects of direct CF and direct CF with meta- linguistic CF.
<i>The focus of the feedback</i>		
	This concerns whether the teacher attempts to correct all (or most) of the students' errors or selects one or two specific types of errors to	Most studies have investigated unfocused CF (e.g. Chandler 2003; Ferris 2006). Sheen (2007), drawing on traditions in SLA studies of CF,

<p>a. Unfocused CF</p> <p>b. Focused CF</p>	<p>correct. This distinction can be applied to each of the above options.</p> <p>Unfocused CF is extensive.</p> <p>Focused CF is intensive.</p>	<p>investigated focused CF.</p>
<p><i>Electronic feedback</i></p>	<p>The teacher indicates an error and provides a hyperlink to a concordance file that provides examples of correct usage.</p>	<p>Milton (2006).</p>
<p><i>Reformulation</i></p>	<p>This consists of a native speaker's reworking of the students' entire text to make the language seem as native-like as possible while keeping the content of the original intact.</p>	<p>Sachs and Polio (2007) compared the effects of direct correction and reformulation on students' revisions of their text.</p>

Adopted from Ellis (2009) list of nine types of Written Corrective Feedback

2.4 Studies on Corrective Feedback using Error Codes (metalinguistic CF)

For Ellis (2009:100), "Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback involves providing learners with some form of explicit comment or use of codes about the nature of the errors they have made". But it is defined by Lyster and Ranta (1997) as comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the learner's utterance. As proposed by Ellis (2009), the most common form of explicit comment is the use of error codes which consist of abbreviated labels for different kinds of errors placed over the location of the error in the text or in the margin. According to Bitchener et al. (2005), coded feedback points to the exact location of an error, and the type of error involved is indicated with a code (for example, 'FT' means an error in the use or future tense). Hyland (1998) points that error correction codes allow language teachers to

provide implicit feedback and reduce negative and disheartening effects of indicating writing errors without reducing the effects of error correction.

In another form, the exact location of the error may or may not be shown. If shown, the student has to work out the correction needed from the clue provided; if not shown, the student needs to first locate the error and then work out the correction. This category has two classes as follows:

1. Using error codes, i.e. abbreviated labels for different kinds of errors placed over the location of the error in the text or in the margin, e.g., art = article, prep = preposition, sp = spelling, ww = wrong word, t = tense, etc.,
2. Brief grammatical explanations of the errors, i.e. teacher numbers errors in text and writes a grammatical description for each numbered error at the end of the text. It is time-consuming and calls for the teacher to be able to write clear and accurate explanations for a variety of errors.

It is therefore, important to discover the grammatical knowledge held by the students before error codes are introduced. It must be ensured that both the teacher and the students use the same metalanguage and have the same understanding about the meaning of grammatical terms before they can communicate successfully through the codes (Hyland 1998).

While there is a growing body of literature on the different Written Corrective Feedback types, the metalinguistic types have limitedly been addressed in the literature. However, due to their potential effect on writing development, they were among the subject of this study. Following this trend, the present study intended singularly to isolate error codes for the purpose of investigating their effectiveness as a corrective feedback technique used in writing classes.

A study by Farhana Ferdouse (2001) looked at *“Learning from Mistakes: Using Correction Code to Improve Student’s writing Skill in English Composition Class”*. Ferdouse was mainly interested in error code use for corrective feedback. His general objective was to investigate the importance of common understanding about grammatical knowledge. Since the use of error codes is based on the assumption that the students know the grammatical terms and understand the concepts associated with the grammatical terms used in the correction code before error codes are introduced (Lee 1997), it was found that, students in this study succeeded in correcting

their errors because they were taught grammatical terms and rules in their secondary schools. The results of this study and free discussion with the students supported the views of Allwright (1975) and Long (1977) and confirmed previous research findings by (Mamtello 1997) that error codes are useful in error correction feedback. This study confirms overruled the submission by Lee (1997) on the matter of error codes when he stated that, students failed to correct errors not because they lacked grammatical knowledge but because they could not detect the errors. They can correct more errors when direct clues are provided just like the students sampled for the study exhibited knowledge of error codes. However, this study informed the current one to effectively assess the familiarity of the use of error codes among local teachers and learners especially that the findings of the reviewed study are positive about the effectiveness of error code use in providing written corrective feedback to learners in grade eleven among many other forms of written Corrective Feedback.

Sampson (2012) conducted a small-scale study to examine the effects of un-coded correction feedback (writing the correct forms above each error), and coded annotations, (writing symbols that encourage learners to self-correct). The data included written work of Colombian university-level EFL learners. According to the results, both coded annotations and un-coded correction were proved as helpful in recognizing and correcting errors in their current and subsequent written works, with coded feedback being more effective. The increased cognitive engagement and social interaction was the potential influence that the coded feedback afforded to exhibit among the learners.

Ferris and Roberts (2001) studied ESL students from a U.S. university. The participants were placed in three groups, two groups receiving corrective feedback either on a type of error or on a location, and one group with no feedback. According to the findings, the two feedback groups significantly outperformed the no feedback group (control) on the self-editing task and error codes helped learners to self-edit their writing but no more so than indirect feedback. However, no significant differences were observed between the two experimental groups. This as well has confirmed the positive effect of error codes as corrective feedback techniques.

There are not many studies researched on this topic of error codes as many are subsumed under the umbrella concept of Metalinguistic corrective feedback which swallows error codes. However, because the use of error codes is commonly practiced than mere metalinguistic techniques in local schools when marking compositions, the interest to isolate them from metalinguistic corrective feedback was heightened so as to ascertain its effect on the writing progress of learners in Grade eleven in selected schools.

2.5 Studies on the Nature of Written Corrective Feedback in L2 learning

Providing effective written feedback is one of the most important tasks for English writing teachers (Hyland, 1998). The inventory of types of corrective feedback presented by Ellis (2009) is a clear guide to help a researcher in having a focused study on a particular type of corrective feedback or having a particular way of responding to the subject itself of corrective feedback. This keeps guiding teachers and researchers to be particular when looking at corrective feedback. Therefore, the nature of feedback which asks the question, “what type of corrective feedback is really at play?” Remains vital especially that feedback is given to guide and direct a learner to a particular spot in order to make them correct their errors.

There is evidence that the explicitness of written feedback may play a role in the success of student endeavours. Goldstein, (2006) states that, students may not attempt to self correct their work when teachers feedback lacks clarity or, when they revise, they may revise it unsuccessfully. In the same thought of argument a study by, Conrad and Goldstein (1999) found that students often had difficulty to react to comments that did not explicitly state that a revision was needed. As a result, students either did not attempt to revise their text or, if they did, they revised it unsuccessfully.

Similar findings are shown in the studies conducted by Ferris and Roberts (2001). In their study involving 72 university ESL students, whose main objective was to investigate the nature of corrective feedback on student ability to self correct their work, in their results, it was found that the clarity of teacher written feedback and the nature of errors to be corrected in students’ text helped students in revising their texts successfully.

Another study was conducted in the United States of America by Nagata and Swisher (1995) that involved 32 university students who were studying Japanese as a foreign language within the United States of America public schools. The study investigated the effectiveness of intelligent computer based written corrective feedback which Ellis called ‘Electronic Feedback’, which was accompanied with explicit corrective feedback about the nature of students’ errors in the form of metalinguistic rules. The findings of the study were that feedback provision with metalinguistic explanations was more effective in improving grammatical proficiency than traditional computer based corrective feedback alone. Even if the current study had nothing to do with computer based corrective feedback, the study reviewed helped the researcher to appreciate the various nature in which corrective feedback was presented and how it affected learners in correcting their work thereby remaining relevant in informing the current study. This information therefore, helped guide the current study to investigate the nature of corrective feedback used in compositions by teachers and how students respond to them.

Bitchener’s (2008) conducted a study in New Zealand to 75 low intermediate ESL students by examining the effects of focused written corrective feedback on the use of indefinite article “a” and definite article “the”. It was an experimental study with control and experimental groups. The study employed two types of corrective feedback modes. These were; written direct corrective feedback and No-feedback treatment. His study found that the improvement of students in the groups receiving written focused corrective feedback out shined students who did not receive any feedback at all. However, in as much as Bitchener’s study focused on a specific grammatical aspect (articles) in a clear delimited manner on intermediate language learners, it was an eye opener to further inquire from grade eleven (11) learners whom in a Zambian context are above Inter-mid as a result being a suitable sample to assess how the nature of corrective feedback they received affected their writing skills knowing that the Zambian Secondary English Syllabus expects learners to have acquired proficiency in language use by the end of Grade 12 hence the gap.

This notwithstanding, Bitchener’s study yielded similar results with the study conducted by Sheen (2007) on the use of English articles by 91 adult ESL community college students in the United States of America with two treatment groups (direct correction only, direct metalinguistic

correction groups, and a control group). The findings of her study indicated that students in the treatment groups who received focused corrective feedback performed better than those in the control group.

Furthermore, a study was conducted in Saudi Arabia in an Arabic Speaking country which was to look at “*The teachers’ error correction strategies on students writing, 7th grade*”. This study was collaboratively conducted by Alexandra Rivera Suarez and Francisco Salazar (2013). The study fostered a hypothesis which held that, ‘teachers of English language use feedback in teaching writing tasks’. This was a hypothesis which was carried with them into the field to ascertain the nature of feedback which teachers used in written assessments for learners.

The study utilized methods of qualitative study which came out more as a perceptive study for both teacher preferences and learner preferences of feedback techniques. The findings showed that, teachers had a selective way of giving feedback at Grade 7 level. This partially was influenced by the age and level of proficiency which made teachers give direct feedback as a way of scaffolding learners and mostly only on selected errors. However, because the target population was Grade 7 learners such exceptions of preference for learners might be condoned. Thus, in a sharp contrast the current study targeted the eleventh (11) graders whom it assumed had been exposed to corrective feedback for a long time and was to be a reliable group to investigate from the nature of corrective feedback which teachers used on them.

Guenette (2007:52) argued that, “students have to notice the feedback and be given ample opportunities to apply the corrections”. However, On a more critical thought, some students may succeed in noticing corrections even if they are not required to revise their writing this contention might be right or wrong however, because the current study targeted language learners above the intermediate stage (Grade 11 in this regard) in establishing their views on the nature of CF which they found effective and helpful in their use of language in writing.

2.6 Studies on the Challenges of Written Corrective Feedback

Practices such as providing corrective feedback being a pedagogical task always has their side of challenges and the need to investigate grows when the intended results seem not to come forth

Ferris (1998). Both teacher and students/learners need to be investigated whether or not they find the practice and its techniques effective.

How teachers correct second language (L2) students' writing is a topic that has attracted enormous interest from researchers and teachers alike. However, as a recent review of feedback on L2 students' writing Hyland and Hyland (2006) makes it clear that, despite all the research there are still no clear answers to the questions researchers have addressed. Hyland and Hyland observed that: While feedback is a central aspect of L2 writing programs across the world, the research literature has not been equivocally positive about its role in L2 development, and teachers often in a sense are not making use of its full potential, thus appearing as a general challenge in itself.

Alexandra and Francisco (2013) in their investigations of teachers' attitude towards providing corrective feedback to learner written composition reported that:

Every time teachers attend to students' lexical, grammatical and syntactical problems, they remark that error-oriented feedback is one of the most time-consuming and exhausting aspects of their job. They take great pains to mark every single error in students' texts only to find that the same errors reappear the next time.

In as much as this statement might hold, it can only be confirmed or disconfirmed through comprehensive research as there seem to be special reasons behind this reality. Thus the current study utilized such remarks as ground to institute an inquiry on challenges of providing written corrective feedback. This is strengthened through Guenette (2007) proposition when she pointed out that one of the reasons for the uncertainty lies in the failure to design corrective feedback studies that systematically investigate different types of written corrective feedback and control for external variables that are likely to impact on how effective the corrective feedback is. Clearly, this observable gap by Guenette was among the objectives which the current study endeavored to investigate from among teachers as practitioners of corrective feedback by getting qualitative views on this practical matter.

One of the research findings which the language learner/student faced as challenges during written corrective feedback suggests that comments on students' tasks are frequently written in language that makes sense to the lecturer/teacher but which is not accessible to the students/learners. Inevitably, if this is the case, feedback will remain a one way transmission from the lecturer/teacher which will have little to do with the students' subsequent proficiency. For example, in the study by Duncan (2007:273) he refers to the injunction of a lecturer to a student to "use a more academic style", a comment which lecturers obviously understood, but which students in the study reported as difficult to interpret. Other common phrases that the students in this study found difficult to interpret and act upon included:

1. Deepen analysis of key issues
2. Sharpen critique
3. Identify and develop implications
4. Link theory and practice (Duncan, 2007:274).

Some of these problems could be curbed by pre -assessment practice on and discussion of past exemplars and associated criteria. Such pre-assessment orientation and preparation triggers the dialogue around assessment, and creates the ground for setting up a shared understanding of feedback terminology. Additionally, such a conversational process implies that there is a huge sharing of power between the assessors and assessed and an environment that is quite conducive for students' familiarity to written corrective feedback.

Another challenge to teachers on whether or not written Corrective Feedback might be furthered in pedagogy is the ability to respond to a concern raised by Truscott (1996) when he pointed out that, Corrective Feedback helps students to correct their errors in second drafts, he wondered whether they are able to use them in new pieces of writing. It then becomes paramount to investigate through a sort of action research as a teacher on whether or not learners have personal experience of having improved in their use of a grammar component which they once had challenges with through the aid of Corrective Feedback but there seem not to have been studies in this regard to help a teacher in gaining confidence in the use of Corrective Feedback.

Chandler (2003) noted that ‘what seems to be a crucial factor is having the students do something with the error correction besides simply receiving it’. Students may simply be given back their corrected texts (and then simply ignore the corrections) or they may be required to pay close attention to them. In the Chandler study, the no-revision group was simply handed back their corrected writing. It is possible, however, that if they had been asked to carefully examine the corrections, and they would have shown similar improvements in accuracy to the group that revised following the written corrective feedback. Clearly, corrections can only work if writers notice and process them. Thus, Fazio’s (2001) study of primary-level children is a reminder that some learners often fail to attend to linguistic corrections.

The other challenge with Written Corrective Feedback comes in when codes are used in indirect feedback. Teachers are encouraged to use consistent coded feedback that is supported by systematic grammar instruction as codes in feedback provision can be confusing for both teachers and students (Ferris, 2002). Also this possible challenge was addressed in the current study which stood as the first research objective; to find out whether or not teachers were familiar with error codes.

The other challenge raised in many studies on Corrective Feedback is when feedback is focused on “praise, rewards and punishment” (Hattie & Timperley, 2007:84). Hattie and Timperley (2007) also noted that feedback is more effective when it addresses achievable goals and when it does not carry “high threats to self-esteem” (ibid 2007:86). This highlight was a strong contention in the current study which among its objectives was to find out what type of corrective feedback teachers used in the books of learners and whether or not learners appreciated such corrective feedback remarks; this was indeed critical and contentious.

2.7 Studies on the Efficacy (rationale) of written corrective Feedback

Efficacy in this context refers to the ultimate role of written corrective feedback in Second language learning and teaching. Ellis et al. (2008) pointed out that at least a somewhat focused approach to Written Corrective Feedback should be one that follows cognitive theories of second language (L2) acquisition by helping students focus attention. Such an approach seems most useful if priority areas can be identified based on learners' output or developmental readiness.

Just as Swain (1985) strongly posited that attention at output is as good as that during input in Second Language teaching. This statement strengthens the arguments on efficacy of Corrective feedback as it constantly acts as a noticing facilitator which in turn justifies the importance of corrective feedback.

This notwithstanding, the Interaction Hypothesis, advanced by Long (1996), construed the process of language acquisition as an interaction between internal and external factors. Whereas internal factors may be the language learning mechanism, external factors could be input either in the form of positive evidence (about what is acceptable in the target language) or negative evidence (about what is unacceptable in the target language). It has been pointed out that exposure to positive evidence alone is insufficient for language learning and that learners need negative evidence (e.g., corrective feedback) to produce modified output.

Among the few studies that have looked at corrective feedback's efficacy other than the perspective of experimental studies, is the study on meta-analysis of written corrective feedback studies which aimed at generating the common views and findings on the matter. Eunyoung Kang and Zhaohongtan (2015) conducted a study looking at the efficacy of written corrective feedback in improving L2 written Accuracy: A meta-analysis.

This study aimed at archiving the following research questions:

1. Is written corrective feedback generally effective for improving L2 written accuracy?
2. If so, which type of written corrective feedback is more effective?
3. What factors mitigate the efficacy of written corrective feedback?

The study was strategically delimited in terms of the period in which data to be used for the study was to be marked. Also the researchers consulted a range of corpus in a procedural manner. Above all the study was purely quantitative. The study had to undergo a screening process of literature (studies) reviewed. The periods under focus for literature to be accepted or considered were studies published in 1980 or later pursuant to a process adopted in previous meta-analysis, while the cutoff date was set at December, 2013. The findings showed that, teachers used a variety of Corrective Feedback techniques which ranged from focused to unfocused, metalinguistic (error codes) as well as reformulation as explained by Ellis (2000). The striking common result which helped answer the research questions of the study showed

that, the gravity of the effectiveness was relative to the competency of an individual learner and in some instance certain Corrective Feedback types were found helpful by the majority of learners and they managed to correct their works in the second submission. This answered Truscott's (1996) concern on whether or not corrective feedback helped students to correct own works in subsequent writings and proved that it did. Thus this study was quite informative to the current study which also sampled a corpus of learners to ascertain and appreciate the types of written corrective feedback which teachers provided to their writing.

Nicol (2008), citing Lunsford (1997) suggested that feedback can be helpful to students when it is framed in terms of the impact of the writing on the reader. This could also enhance self-regulation skills because it enables students to gradually move away from monologue to conceptualize a reader and direct their writing to a conversation type. This thought largely inspired the current study which ultimately wished to find out where corrective feedback was placed in second language teaching and learning in the Zambian situation.

Another study by Sheen (2007) explained the efficacy of the direct approach through Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1995; 2001). Schmidt argues that learning does not happen without noticing. Students should first notice the target features before they can learn them. Triggering noticing can easier be achieved through direct Corrective Feedback than indirect Corrective Feedback due to its explicitness. Whether this was tenable or not, also the fact that level of a learner had a higher indicative factor in determining this contention. Thus the current study in its quest to determine efficacy of Corrective Feedback had to take care of factors of level and picked on a more neutral level (Grade 11) which was believed to give all types of corrective feedback an equal chance to be assessed and determine which would yield the efficacy.

Damir Budimlic (2012) carried out a Document Analysis study, where he looked at "*Written Feedback in English: Teachers' Practices and Cognition*". The data in this study consisted of written feedback collected from teachers at an upper secondary school. The main objective of the study was to examine the nature of written corrective feedback teachers provided to help their pupils further. In the review of teachers feedback methods Budimlic was to confirm the assertion that, 'Effective feedback is feedback that enhances pupils' learning and that in order to enhance

learning feedback should contain information related to the following questions: “Where am I going?”; “How am I going?”; “Where to next?” The answers to these questions provide *feed up*, *feedback* and *feed forward*. The three questions must be connected in order to result in pupils’ greater achievement. The feedback texts were analyzed according to Kronholm-Cederberg’s Response Triangle, divided into global and local text levels, and the terms defined above (feed up, feedback and feed forward). Eight semi-standardized interviews were also conducted in order to examine teachers’ assessment practices and cognition.

In the findings of Budimlic study, it was noted that in terms of the three questions mentioned above, most responses contained clear information about *feedback* and *feed forward*; however, there was a lack of *feed up* (goals/efficacy) in most of the written feedback texts which were sampled. This is unfortunate since feed up must be clear in order for pupils to develop further and increase their learning (Bruton, 2009; Evans et al., 2010; Ferris, 2010) thus, leaving a significant gap which the current study answered through objective number four which intended to establish the efficacy of corrective feedback which teachers provided as corrective feedback.

The notable knowledge gap realized from the studies reviewed is that the process of verification on whether or not written corrective feedback was effective was treated as an experimental activity. Learner input was passive from the point of view of their perception. Thus from these studies, there is little information on whether or not grade 11’s were conversant with most written corrective feedback types teachers used in marking their work and how much written corrective feedback had helped them acquire proficiency in the use of English language. Thus, the current study wished to find out from learners their perceptions about corrective feedback and use document analysis to establish whether or not they find teacher given written corrective feedback to be comprehensible enough to be responded to. According to the researcher this was one of the ways that could achieve the efficacy of written corrective feedback.

Summary

The chapter progressed as follows; it firstly put the discussion in perspective by discussing the earliest views on effects of written Corrective feedback on Second language teaching. The chapter then discussed Corrective Feedback and its evidence based effectiveness. Then the types

of Written Corrective Feedback were discussed as established by Ellis (1999). Studies on Corrective Feedback using Error Codes (metalinguistic CF) were then reviewed and critiqued. This was followed by a review of studies on Nature of Written Corrective Feedback in L2 learning which teachers provided. Studies on the Challenges of Written Corrective Feedback followed. Then immediately, a review on the Efficacy (rationale) of written corrective Feedback equally was discussed as the final immerging theme. The next chapter presents the Methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter discusses the methodology that was used in the study. It presents the research design, target population, sample size, the sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis procedure as well as ethical issues that were considered before the research was undertaken and even after the study. Chilisa and Preece (2005) posit that methodology is a broad term involving all strategies that describe how, when and where data is to be collected and analyzed.

3.1 Research Design

Orodho (2003) defines a research design as the scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems. It constitutes the blue print for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. This study used the Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design. Creswell (2014) posits that Convergent parallel mixed methods design is a form of mixed methods design in which the researcher merges quantitative and qualitative data collected at the same time in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem during the interpretation of the overall results. The figure below shows a Model of a Convergent Parallel Mix Methods Design.

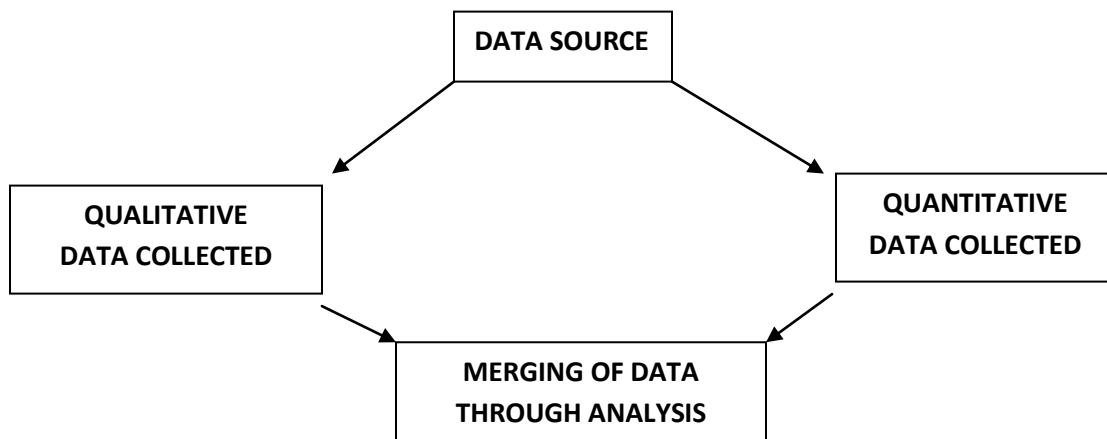


Figure 2: Model of a Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design Adopted from Creswell (2014) Designs

3.2 Justification for using a Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design

This study has some justifications for using a mixed design. The researcher aimed at reducing the weakness of other data collecting instruments by complementing with other instruments. It is imperative to gather more than one kind of data for a study like this one. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007:115), “Many sources of data are better in a study than a single source because multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding. Many scholars have observed that, the ability to use many sources of data helps to avoid reliance on any inadequate source of information, thereby, resulting in lesser chances of either researcher or participant bias (Yin, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). With this design, the researcher was able to collect data using a number of instruments. These included interview guides to interview teachers of English language in selected secondary schools, a test on error codes written by both sampled teachers and Grade 11 learners. Another instrument used was a teacher questionnaire. A Grade 11 learners’ document analysis table was used to analyse written composition corrective feedback types provided by teachers in pupils exercise books and also field notes. All these instruments showed a nature of the mixed approach to the inquiry of the research topic.

3.3 Population of study

Bryman (1988) defines population as the universe of units from which the sample is drawn. The participants who made a population for this study were teachers of English language and learners (Grades 11) in all the secondary schools of Kasama district.

3.4 Sample Size, Categories of participants and sampling procedure

Sampling refers to methods of gathering information from a number of chosen people randomly or purposefully (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). A sample also refers to the number of participants selected to constitute a desired sample.

3.4.1 Sample Size

In this study the sample size of learners was eighty (80) Grade 11 learners drawn from the four sampled secondary schools. That is twenty (20) per school. While the number of teachers of English language sampled was twenty (20) that is, five teachers from each sampled school. In total the sample size of all participants was 100.

3.4.2: Categories of participants from the study sample

Table 3: The table below provides a full sample category of the participants of this study

Categories of participants	Sampling Technique	Number
Sampled schools	Simple random	Four government secondary schools, (all simple randomly sampled).
Grade 11 learners	Simple random	The total number of learners was 80. 20 learners came from each of the four schools.
Gender Distribution of Grade 11 learners	Purposive	59 males and 21 females
Teachers of English language.	Purposive	The total number of teachers was 20. 5 teachers were sampled from each school
Gender for teachers of English	Purposive	8 males and 12 females
TOTAL SAMPLE		100 respondents

3.4.3 Sampling procedure

3.4.3.1 Sampling of schools

The secondary schools within Kasama were sampled through a simple-random procedure. They all had an equal probability of being picked as study sites by virtue of such schools having senior secondary learners.

3.4.3.2. Sampling of learners and their composition exercise books for document analysis

The learners who were used in the study were simple randomly sampled so that the results to be produced may give a representative picture about the learners' knowledge of Error Codes in sampled classrooms. In addition, a total of ten Grade 11 learners' marked composition exercise

books per school were also randomly picked and used in document analysis. This meant that a total of 40 exercise books were sampled randomly from the four schools which were sampled.

3.4.3.3 Sampling of teachers

The teachers in the sampled schools were purposively sampled among those organized by their Heads of department according to the criteria proposed by the researcher. This was done through requesting the Heads of Department for Literature and Languages to propose those teachers who had been teaching English language to senior grades for more than five years and those who had been markers of English language Paper One for the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) National Examinations. This was thought of as something that was likely to avoid confounding variables and make the sampled teachers to share their rich experience on composition writing assessment feedback in this area, hence purposively sampled.

3.5 Research collection instruments

The following instruments were used in this research to collect data from teachers and learners;

3.5.1 Focus Group Discussion Guide for learners

In order to capture views and perceptions of learners on the research matter, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide was prepared to specifically answer research question number three on the challenges faced in self correcting own errors when ever teachers indicated them in their written tasks.

3.5.2 Semi-structured interview guide for teachers

In order to capture the perceptions of teachers of English language on the research matter, short field notes of interviews were taken. In order to back up the short written notes, the researcher used a digital voice recorder in order to capture every other relevant information which might have been missed during note taking or could have been missed by the researcher.

3.5.3 Survey questionnaire for teachers

A set of questionnaires were used for teachers who had been teaching Grade 11 learners English language composition writing for five years and above. This research instrument had closed

ended questions in order to capture the intended specific views from teachers on their perceptions on the use of written corrective feedback in learner's composition tasks in line with objective numbers two and three which specifically wanted to ascertain the nature of corrective feedback teachers gave.

3.5.4 Document analysis guide for learners' exercise books

A document analysis guide was used in form of a table whose format was adopted from Ellis (2009) types of corrective feedback. This was so in order to analyse the nature and type of written corrective feedback which teachers used in learners' marked composition tasks in their exercise books.

3.5.5 Competence test for learners on error code identification

This test was standardized by the use of conventional error codes by picking from the many error codes in existence in the error codes inventory. However, for the purposes of competence testing; the researcher used error codes that represented mostly the Word classes. In the case of Grade 11's it was presumed that by that grade (Grade 11) they would have been taught all Word classes by their teachers of English language as basics of grammar.

All of the above discussed research instruments were used to validate results in the process of complementing each other and to fulfill triangulation.

3.6 Validity and reliability of instruments of the study

According to Krishna (1993), Validity may be defined as the ability of a scale or tool to measure what it is supposed to measure. It can also be defined as the accuracy and truth of the data and findings that are produced. Validity has to do with the effectiveness (or successes) of an instrument in measuring the specific property it intends to measure (Nalaila and Nsabila, 2013). To ensure validity of instruments, a pilot study was conducted from one government school in Kitwe. This pilot study gave good insight to the researcher to make needed changes to make the instruments reliable. By so doing, the valid instrument also ensured reliability of findings. After that, the researcher worked with the supervisor in order to make corrections for both learners and teachers' piloted instruments. There was an observation that some questions in the questionnaire

and interview guides were not clear enough to the respondents so piloting made it easier to modify them so as to make them clearer, reliable and valid.

3.7 Data collection Procedures

The study collected both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from the field using the already listed instruments. Grade 11 learners and teachers of English in the selected schools provided primary data through interviews, document analysis and questionnaires which contained closed ended questions were used.

The teachers were interviewed and their views were recorded by the researcher on a voice recorder for further analysis and transcription.

A test on Error codes identification was also administered to Grade 11 learners in order that a true reflection of how pupils understood error codes was to be ascertained. The nature of the test was in such a way that, Section ‘A’ required learners to explain the meaning of the codes provided, while Section ‘B’ required that learners use an error code to describe the nature of an error each sentence had.

Lastly, document review was conducted through checking learners’ exercise books to see whether or not written corrective feedback was given.

3.8 Data analysis procedure

The Error code test for Grade 11 learners was marked by the researcher. After that, the researcher did a detailed analysis of the marked scripts. By so doing, the researcher was able to compile a list of error codes that Grade 11 pupils were familiar with in ascending order of their common knowledge, from the most common to the least. This analysis was to examine the learners’ common knowledge of certain error codes in the test and compare to those in their composition exercise books which their teachers provided as written corrective feedback.

The remaining data from teacher questionnaires were analyzed statistically to generate frequencies and percentages in order to measure the degree to which types of written corrective feedback were used by teachers of English language during marking of learners’ composition exercises.

In order to analyse teachers' perception on the general practice of giving written corrective feedback to learners' tasks, as recorded using a tape recorder their responses were grouped according to emerging themes. Then in order to determine the common responses and convictions of teacher responses on the particular question, a formulae was devised where a number of respondents with a common response was divided by the total number of sampled teachers which was 20 and multiplied by 100% and a percentage was generated to represent a population with such a view on the matter. This was proposed as the total number of teachers used in the study were below the minimum number that qualifies a quantitative data analyses being 30. So for the sake of presenting data in percentage form the above stated formula was devised.

To analyse the type of written corrective feedback which teachers of English language provided in learners' composition exercise books, a document analysis table was used to guide the researcher. The contents of the table which was used to analyse Grade 11 learners exercise books were adopted from Ellis (2009) template for Types of Corrective Feedback which describes in detail the types of corrective feedback: direct, indirect, focused, unfocused, metalinguistic (error codes), computer generated. This table took care of this activity in order to have a clear focus on what was important to be observed pertaining to written corrective feedback provision in learners exercise books.

3.8 Ethical consideration

The researcher endeavored to uphold utmost privacy on the rights of respondents. To this effect, consent was sought from the ethics committee of the University of Zambia. Also permission was requested from the relevant officials from the Ministry of Education at district level (DEBS) and then finally, from the school head teachers where the study was conducted. Furthermore, consent was sought from the participants who were informed in advance about the contents of the questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions which were used to collect information for academic purposes. All the Grade 11 learners engaged in this research were given consent letters in order that they get the instructions of the entire research activity and later on participate voluntarily in the research. The confidentiality on the school names was upheld by giving sampled schools alphabetic letters to avoid any speculation whatsoever. Since the sampled schools were four in number they were labeled schools A, B, C and D. For the teachers who

were interviewed as well as learners, for their identification purposes, pseudo-alphabetic names of their schools were used as tags of evidence. All the necessary authorization such as documents, letters of permission to conduct a study from The University of Zambia and for the districts where the research was done from were appended. For data collection instruments, and picture captions for marked composition exercise books reference may be sought from the addendum in the appendices and in chapter four respectively.

Summary

This chapter has provided information on the methodology which this research used. The research applied a Convergent Parallel Mixed Method study design. The study population, study sample, sampling techniques, research instruments, validity and reliability, data collection and analysis procedures and ethical consideration were among the main sub-themes covered in the methodology chapter. The next chapter presents the findings of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter presents the research findings in thematic forms generated from the common responses of participants. The chapter starts by presenting findings on the teachers' and learners' knowledge on the use of written corrective feedback: in particular error codes. It further presents findings on the nature of written corrective feedback teacher provided. It also presents data on the challenges faced by teachers and learners with written corrective feedback. The chapter further shows the results of an error code identification test written by learners and ends with the presentation of findings on the efficacy of written corrective feedback. The findings of this research were guided by the following research questions:

1. Are teachers and learners familiar with written corrective feedback: error codes as feedback markers?
2. What is the nature of corrective feedback teachers give to composition writing tasks?
3. What are the challenges faced in providing written corrective feedback?
4. What is the efficacy of written corrective feedback in composition writing tasks?

4.1 Teachers and learners familiarity of written corrective feedback: Error codes as feedback markers

4.1.1 Teachers' knowledge of written corrective feedback; Error Codes

The study targeted 20 teachers as its participants; however, from the results it shows that there were 35% (7 teachers) were very conversant with error codes. 30% (6 teachers) of respondents said they were above average and were using error codes in their marking. 25% (5 teachers) had average knowledge on error codes interpretation. While 10% (2 teachers) were those who were below average and rarely used the error codes.

The figure below shows teachers' knowledge of error codes rated with the scale: below average, average, above average and very well

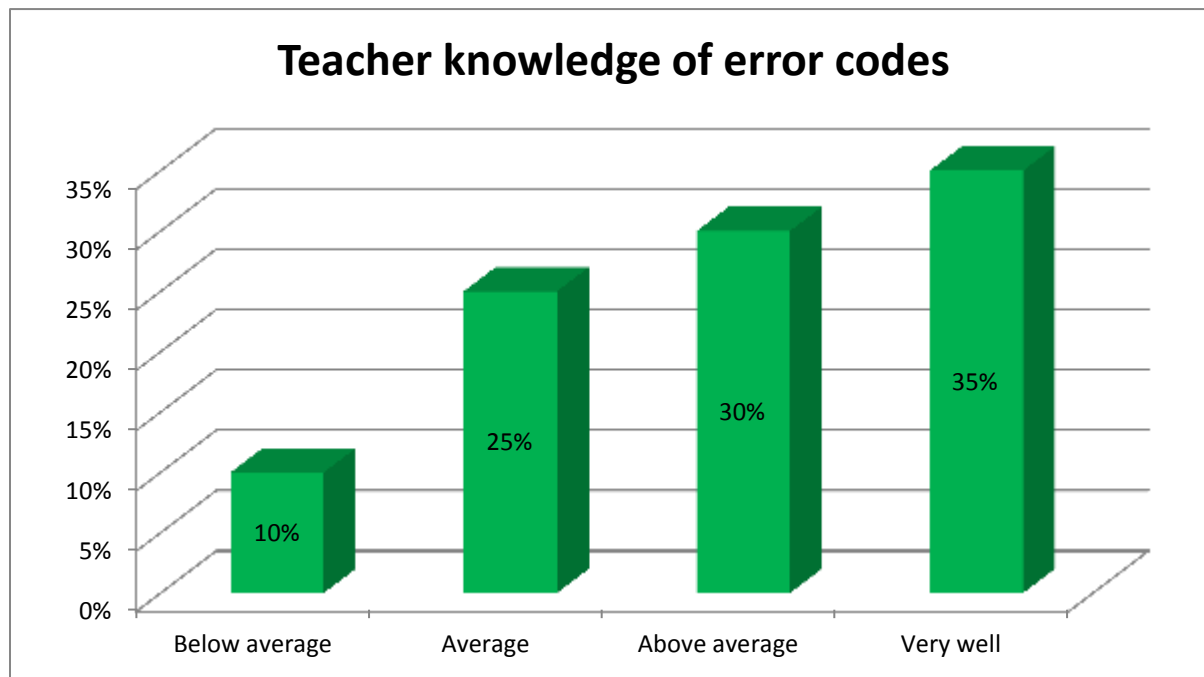


Figure 3:

Source: Field data, (2017)

At school 'A' one teacher of English language said that as teachers they had good knowledge of error codes and that even guidelines for the use of error codes were there in their department and it took one to revise them often for one to be confident in the use, he added saying:

*Teachers ourselves have the knowledge of the error codes
but we do not seem to revise them and use them confidently.*

Another teacher at school B who was part of the 35% of respondents who used error codes very well attributed his knowledge of error codes to being a maker of English Language paper One for Grade 12 National Examination. He said:

*I have come to master the error codes due to my
involvement in the marking of national examinations for*

*Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) English Paper 1,
where the use of error codes is a trend.*

Some teachers during interviews openly told the researcher that the period of stay in the system has an effect on the ability for one to use error codes during marking with or without difficulty. One teacher from school B was quick to point out the following:

*My knowledge of error code use is quite on the average for
a simple reason that I am not older than 5 years in the
service, hence average.*

From the responses of targeted participants (teachers) it was clear that, the knowledge of error codes was not common among teachers of English language in the targeted schools. Teachers within the same department at a same school had varying confidence and knowledge levels concerning the use of error codes.

4.1.2 Learners' knowledge of error codes

*Table 4: The table below shows marks of learners obtained in an error symbol description test.
Section A*

No.	Out of 80 learners	Identified Error code	Percentage%
1.	80	SP	100%
2.	10	WW	13%
3.	64	VB	80%
4.	40	Prep	50%
5.	20	Art	25%
6.	36	N	45%
7.	54	ADV	65%
8.	48	?	60%
9.	36	P	45%
10.	28	T	35%

Source: Field data, (2017)

Table 4 has findings which were for the research question number one (1) which aimed at asking whether or not, learners were familiar with error codes which their teachers of English language used when marking their composition tasks. This set of information was collected through the administration of a test to eighty (80) learners. Table 5 shows results for the 80 learners who were randomly sampled to sit for a test to identify a few selected and common error codes which teachers used. These common error codes were identified from the learners' marked books for composition. However, 100% of respondents were conversant with the error code which was coded 'SP' representing a written spelling error. 60% of respondents showed knowledge of the error code coded '?' which represented unclear writing. However, error codes which seemed challenging for learners included 'WW' for wrong Word, 'T' for wrong tense, 'Art' wrong article and 'VB' for wrong Verb.

One boy from School C during a focus group discussion confirmed that not all symbols were explained to them by their teacher. He pointed out some error codes which were commonly used by his teacher. He said that some error codes had become traditional in appearing in his composition book and that learners mastered only those common codes. He explained saying:

The common error symbols which we are familiar with are those our teacher commonly use when marking our composition books which include: SP, T, N, VB, ? (Spelling, Tense, Noun, Verb, Not clear, respectively). However, most of the time teachers only underline and circle the errors and make a general comment.

From this particular test, it was evident that learners had challenges in demonstrating knowledge of the error codes without a context.

4.1.3 Learner identification of sentence errors with an appropriate error code

Table 5: The table below explains an identified error using an error symbol in a context.

Section B of the test

No.	Sentence	Expected Code	Error	Learner Knowledge	Pass Percentage%
-----	----------	------------------	-------	----------------------	---------------------

1.	Today am feeling <i>gooder</i> than I felt yesterday.	WW (wrong word)	5	13%
2.	John is tall <i>although</i> he plays basketball.	WW (wrong word)	10	25%
3.	My younger sister cried for <i>a</i> apple which she saw in the fruit basket.	Art (Article)	12	30%
4.	The Medical Doctor of our local hospital is <i>dr</i> Chinedu from Nigeria.	C (Capitalization)	30	75%
5.	This is John's mother, isn't she.	P (Punctuation)	14	35%
6.	Last week I <i>have</i> been to Johannesburg before I proceeded to Harare.	T (Wrong tense)	10	25%
7.	Kindly pass me <i>that</i> books over there	WW (Wrong Word)	10	25%
8.	Mary walks <i>slow</i> .	Adv (wrong Adverb)	25	63%
9.	It's not good to laugh <i>of</i> your friends when they fail an assessment.	Prep (Preposition)	21	53%
10.	My <i>freind</i> is here to pick me up	SP (wrong spelling)	40	100%

Source: Field data, (2017)

Table 5 indicates the learners' ability to identify the sentence errors with an appropriate error code as used by their teachers in identifying their errors when marking their composition tasks.

From the table above, 100% of the test takers showed knowledge of the spelling error code coded as 'SP' in sentence number 10 and were able to identify the spelling error in the sentence correctly on the word '*friend*' which read as '*freind*'. 75% of test takers were able to identify the error of Capitalization on the title of the word '*Doctor*' in sentence number 4 which was written

in its short form '*dr*' and were able to identify the error with a correct error code coded as 'C'. 53% were on point to identify a prepositional error in sentence number 9.

The inability to perform well on error identification using an error code may be explained by what a girl from School D said during the focus group discussion when she said:

Some teachers only underlined errors without clearly explaining what the error was about, if they would use error codes then it is those they use every time which are common to us.

However, during a Focus Group Discussion some learners from School C admitted having had been explained to the meaning of most error codes by their teacher. One girl confessed saying:

In fact these error codes in the first test paper are familiar to me, in fact even to my other class members. I remember our teacher once explaining them to us when we were in grade ten (10). They are not new to us. I don't know about other classes whether or not their teachers explained to them as well.

4.2 Nature of written corrective feedback teachers provided

4.2.1 Teachers dominant corrective feedback marking style for learners' composition tasks

Teachers were asked to indicate only one dominant corrective feedback type of marking which they used almost often when marking learners' composition exercises for the sake of establishing the preferred corrective feedback marking type.

The figure below shows teachers dominant corrective feedback marking style for learners' composition tasks.

This information was picked during the data collection time. The information was collected through various research instruments including, interviews, questionnaires and document review. Refer below to see the frequently used corrective feedback markers by teachers.

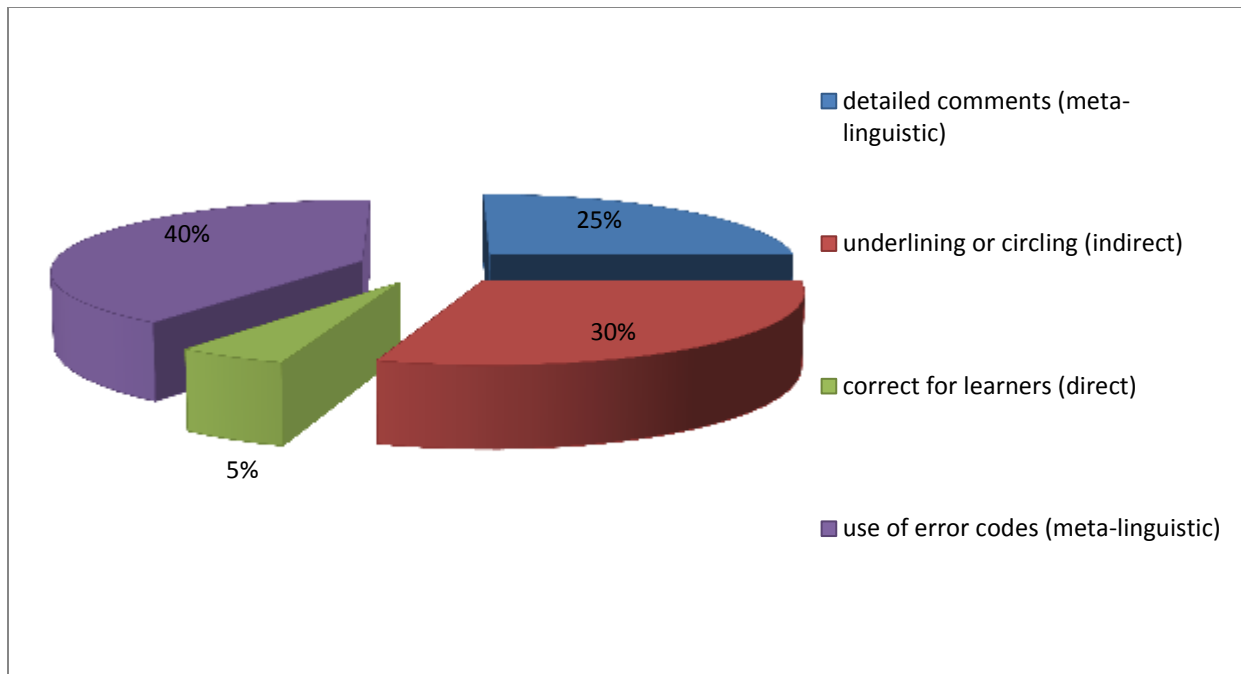


Figure 4

Source: Field data, (2017)

Figure 5 shows that there were 40% (8 teachers) who indicated that their preferred marking style was the use of error codes. 30% (6 teachers) indicated that they preferred underlining and circling as an option for marking. While 25% (5 teachers) stated that putting of detailed comments in the learners' written composition was their preferred marking style. Lastly 5% (1 teacher) said he preferred direct corrective feedback by indicating the correct forms of language structure on behalf of the learner.

One participant was quick to mention that:

The use of error codes is a common trend even when marking ECZ final examinations we use them, except as teachers, I think we forget that when we give feedback to the learners it has to be corrected by the learners themselves. Instead we use codes as a way of marking fast with less or no realization that learners would have to make their own corrections.

4.2.2 Findings from a statement in Likert scale question: Teachers' views on determinants of corrective feedback type on a learner identified written errors

Teachers were asked to rank a statement on how much the level of competency of a learner in the use of English language determined the type of corrective feedback they gave to their written compositions using a five point Likert scale and the results were as shown in Table 5

Table 6: The table below reveals teachers' views on determinants of corrective feedback type in a learner's written composition

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage%
<i>'Teachers provided corrective feedback to learners depending on the proficiency level of a learner's use of the English language'</i>	Strongly agree	15	75
	Agree	2	10
	Strongly disagree	1	5
	Disagree	2	10
	Neither disagree nor agree	0	0
	TOTAL	20	100%

4.2.3 Nature of written corrective feedback teachers provided which were found in learners' composition exercise books

Document review was another instrument used by the researcher to inquire physically the nature of the written corrective feedback teachers of English language provided to their learners. Besides teachers expressing their favourite forms of corrective feedback in the questionnaires, it was imperative that a document review be conducted to triangulate the data given. In order to carry out an effective review, the researcher used the Ellis (2009) inventory template of forms of written corrective feedback available so as to determine whether or not certain forms of corrective feedback given by teachers were classified and known. Therefore, from the 40 composition exercise books sampled from the four (4) schools written corrective feedback forms were counted and scaled from the most popular to the least popular in terms of use by teachers.

Each of the type of written corrective feedback was counted according to the number of times it appeared in each and every sampled composition exercise book for pupils in order to determine its frequency of usage.

Table 7: The table below shows written corrective feedback types and their common use by teachers of English language in sampled schools. This information was collected from document review. Learners’ composition writing exercises were sampled by the researcher to access this information.

SCHOOL	SCHOOL 'A'	SCHOOL 'B'	SCHOOL 'C'	SCHOOL 'D'	TOTAL
Direct CF	20	31	45	40	136
Indirect CF	40	60	63	57	220
Meta-linguistics:					
Error code	17	24	11	18	70
Brief grammatical description	28	42	29	30	129
The focus of the feedback					
Focused	2	0	0	0	2
Unfocused	3	5	5	5	18
Reformulation	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Teachers’ emotional and shouting comments</i>					
	3	8	5	8	24

Adopted from Ellis (2009) inventory of written corrective feedback types

Source: Field data, (2017)

From the table above it was found out that, most teachers provided indirect written corrective feedback to their learners. Indirect feedback was the most popular type of corrective feedback found in the sampled exercise books of learners. Direct feedback followed in terms of popularity. Some teachers would merely write on behalf of their learners the correct form of the error committed. This was found in most marked scripts.

Third in popularity as a teacher's preferred written corrective feedback type was the Meta-linguistic: brief grammatical notes. This was provided especially when a teacher realized that a pupil was unable to construct a sentence well.

Error codes also appeared to have been used but not as extensive as the earlier mentioned types. Mostly error codes were used on single grammar misapplication such as spelling errors, tense, omission codes of an omitted letter. While, where it was to do with a construction of a sentence or phrase, often time's teachers would use brief grammar notes.

Reformulation was not common at all. While the focused corrective feedback being a special case was only found in two exercise books where the teacher was not interested in anything but in the pupil's ability to write an extensive essay and express ideas fully. However, most of the exercise books had corrective feedback which was unfocused. It looked at many errors that were made by the learners.

Lastly, the other notable informative feedback type which the researcher noticed in the learners' exercise books was what he called '*Teachers emotional and shouting comments*'. This became somewhat recurring in some sampled exercise books. These were comments put underneath the written composition where the teacher decided to attack a learner with written harsh comments. This often was the case especially when a learner performed poorly in the usage of the English language and a teacher felt such a learner was un-teachable. In that case teachers decided to lash at pupils perhaps as a way of making them concentrate on the use of the language.

The following figures to be presented below shows the type of corrective feedback teachers gave to their learners during the marking of composition written exercises. The captions of the figures below were taken during data collection. The information was given by the authority of the various Heads of Department for Languages in the sampled schools. The information is as accurate as found in the exercise books of the learners.

The Figure below is a caption from a document reviewed during findings of a learner composition exercise marked with brief grammatical comments

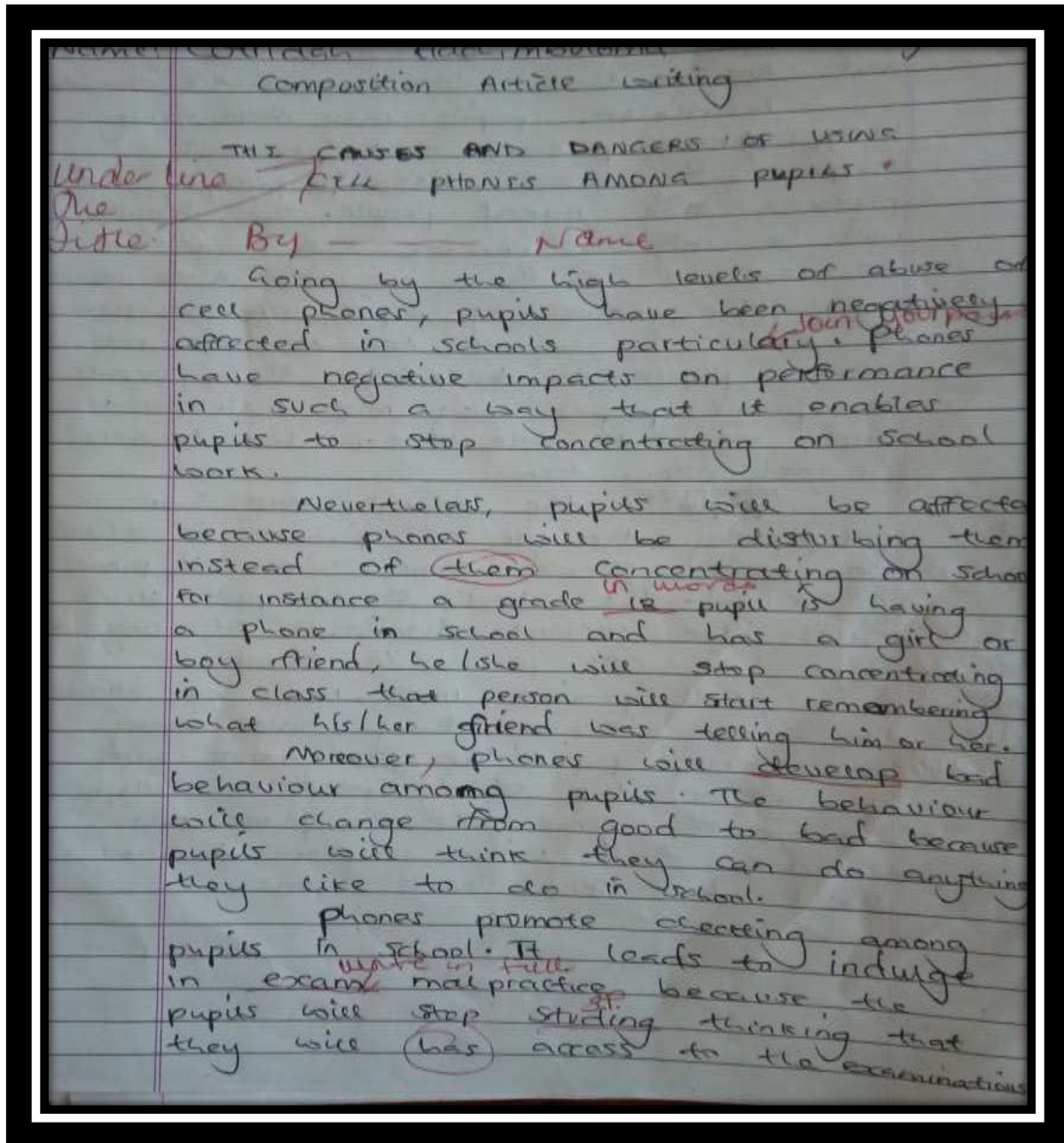


Figure 5 (a)

Source: Field data, (2017)

The Figure below is a caption from a document reviewed during findings of a learner composition exercise marked with indirect corrective feedback

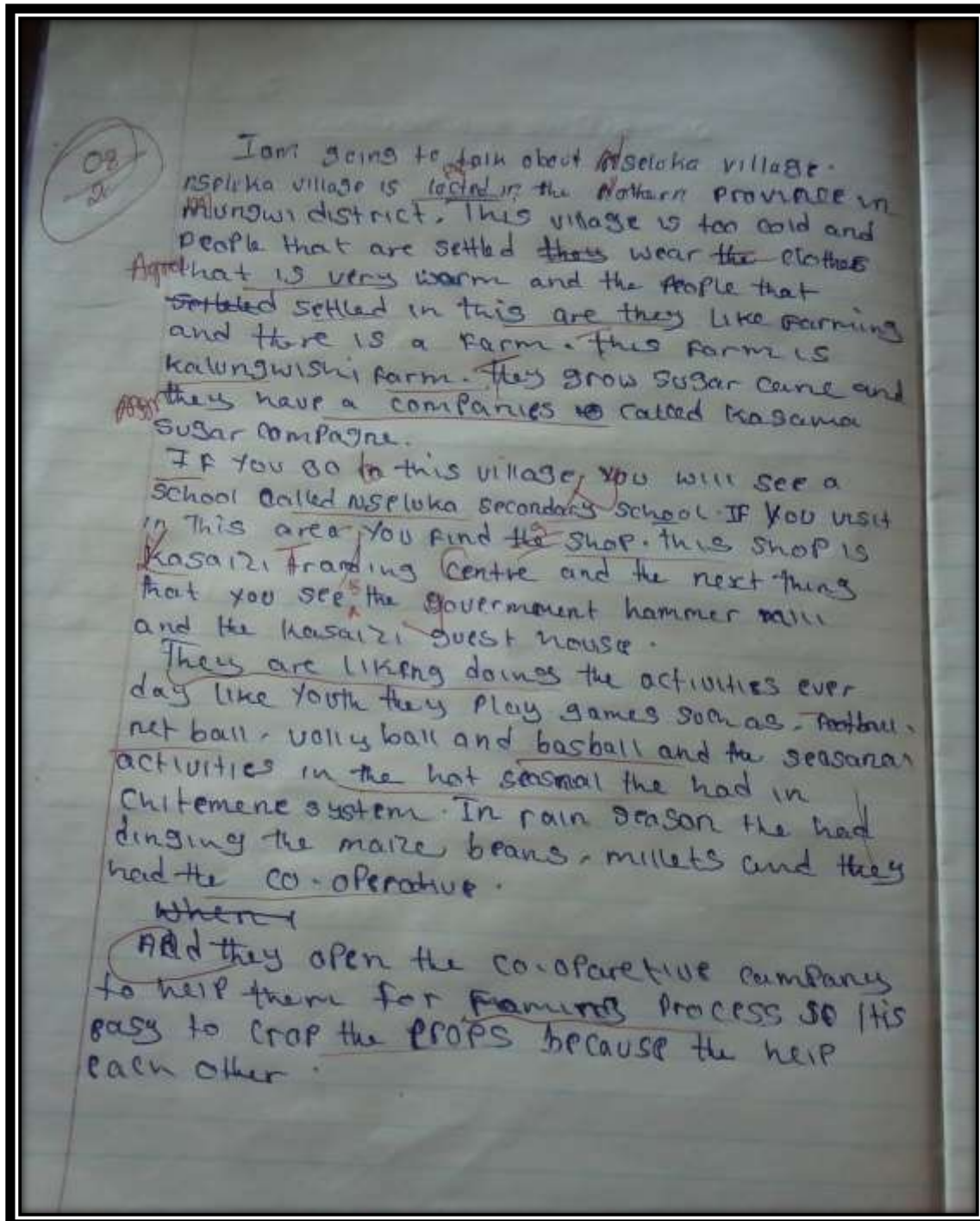


Figure 5 (b):

Source: Field data, (2017)

The Figure below is a caption from a document reviewed during findings of a learner composition exercise marked with Direct, Indirect and Metalinguistic corrective feedback

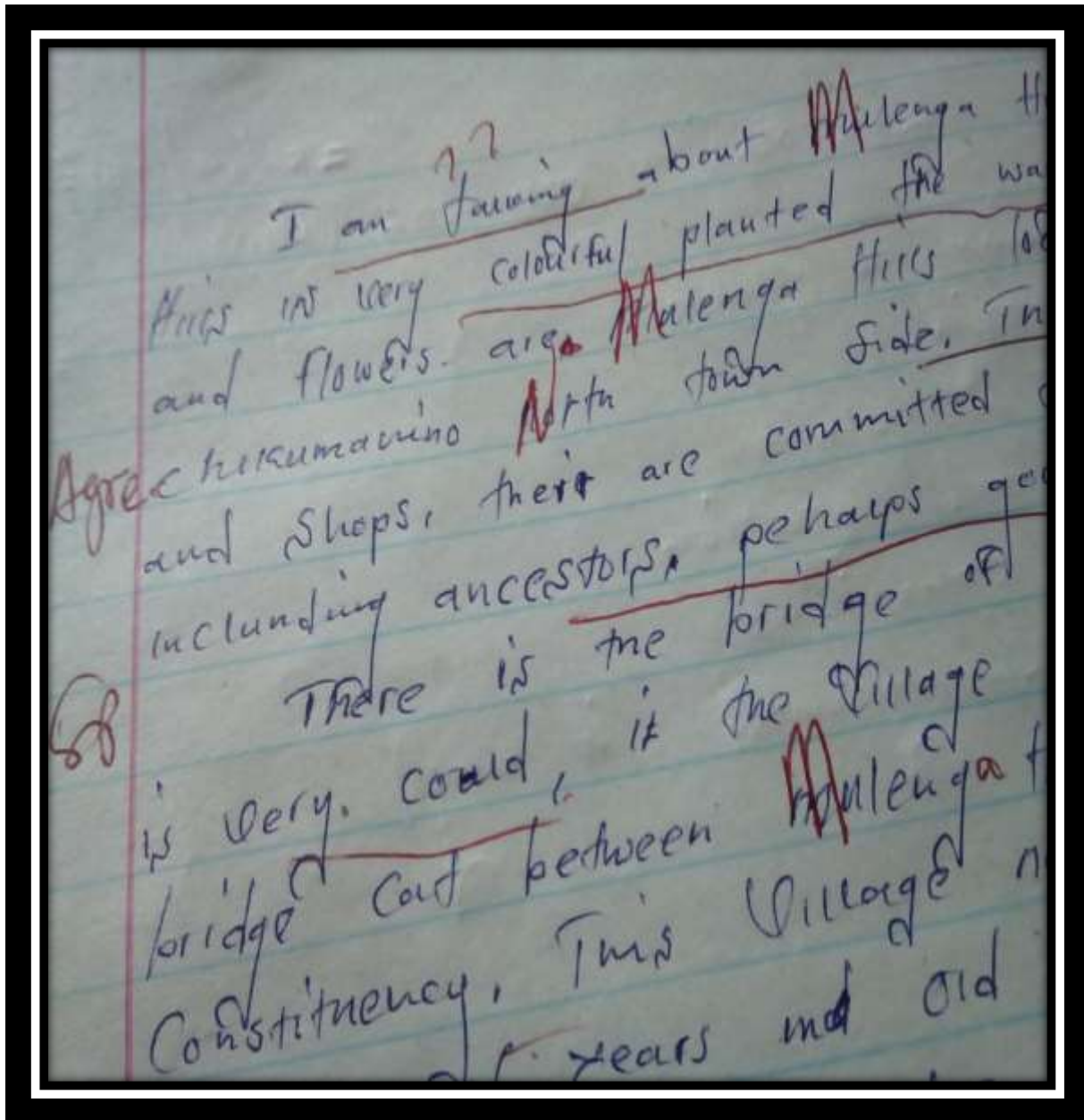


Figure 5 (c)

Source: Field data, (2017)

The Figure below is a caption from a document reviewed during findings of a learner composition exercise marked with Meta-linguistic corrective feedback (error codes and brief grammar comments)

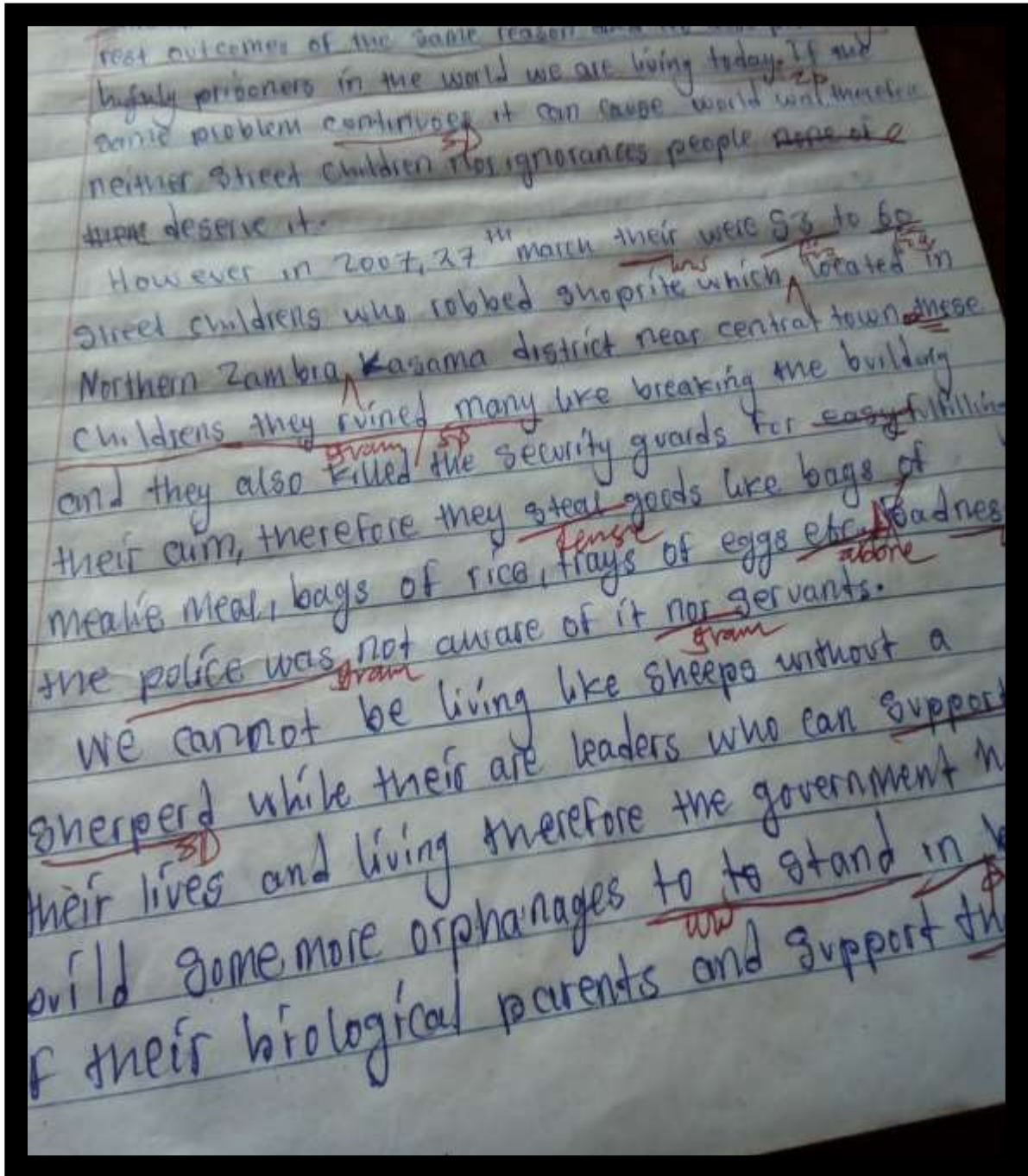


Figure 5 (d)

Source: Field data, (2017)

The Figure below is a Caption from a document reviewed during findings of a learner composition exercise marked with Focused corrective feedback type

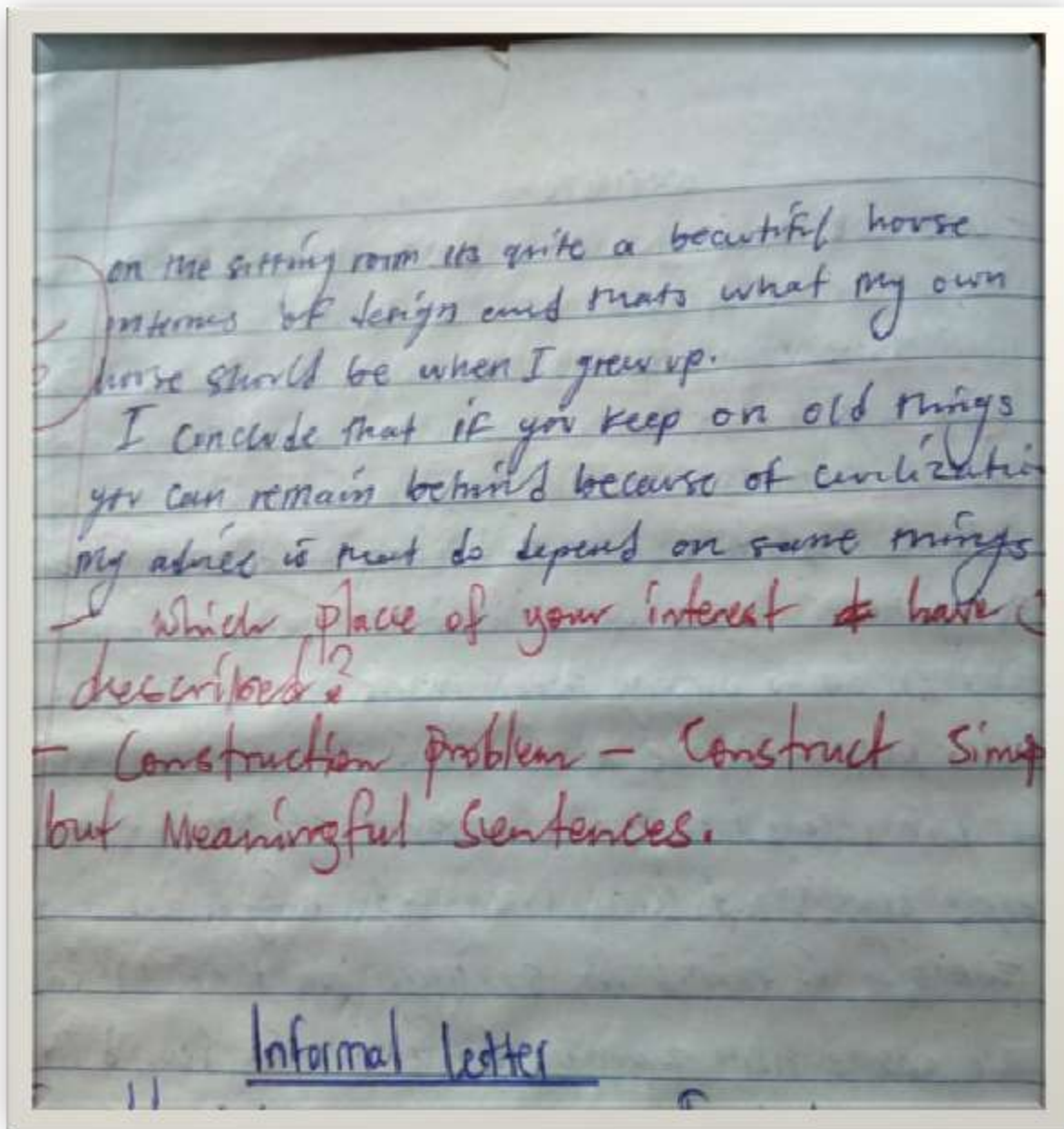


Figure 5 (e): Caption of a learner marked composition exercise with a Focused corrective feedback type. The teacher was interested in one aspect and it is clear that the pupil did not bring out what was of interest to them.

Source: Field data, (2017)

The Figure below is a caption from a document reviewed during findings of a learner composition exercise marked with a Focused corrective feedback type

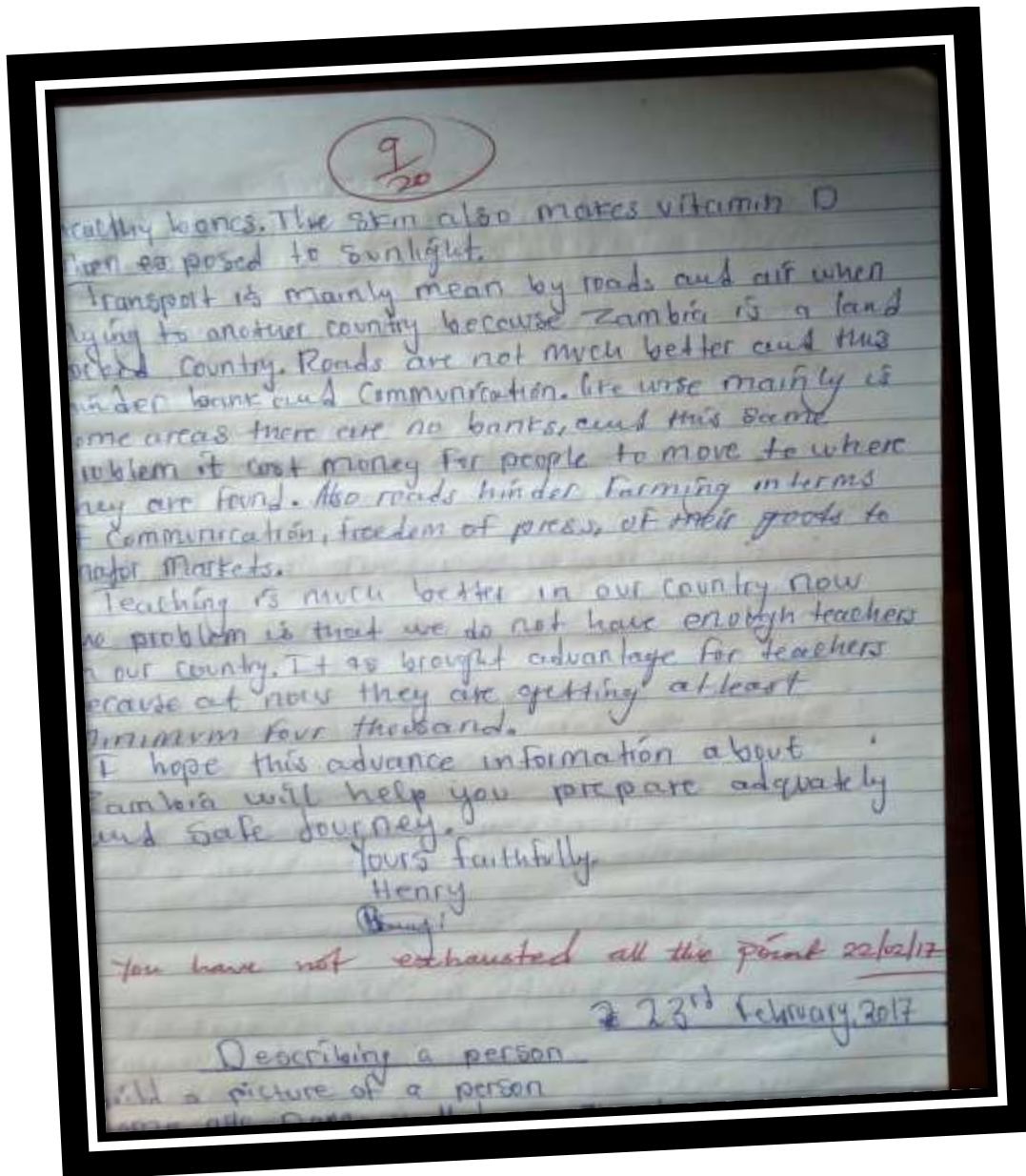


Figure 5 (f): Here the teacher was only interested in seeing the pupil bring out all the necessary points. The teacher did not care to look at aspects like; sentence construction, grammar application even when the composition exhibited many grammar faults. The teacher even awarded the script 9 out of 20.

Source: field data, (2017)

4.2.4 Nature of written corrective feedback that motivated learners to attend to their own committed written errors.

Table 8: The table below represents aspects that made learners attend to their errors. These were: a failing grade comment, teachers' clear and motivating comments, and teachers' emphasis

No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage %
1,	Obtaining a failing mark	50	63%
2.	Teachers' clear and motivating comment	20	25%
3.	Teachers' emphasis	10	13%
	TOTAL	80	100%

Table 8 contains responses for the third (3) research question of the study which wanted to find out the challenges faced by learners in attending to their teachers' written corrective feedback in their written works. It was found that 63% of the respondents (learners) revealed that, what motivated them mostly to attend to their errors was often when they got a failing mark other than that, they would not attend to their errors. A failing mark helped pupils to attend to their errors so that they improve next time around. While 25% of respondents said that they only attended to their errors depending on how clear their teacher's comment was on their work. Some pupils added that a motivating and encouraging overall comment which a teacher made in their composition books had the ability to make them attend to their errors. Then 13% out of the rest mentioned that they only attended to their errors when their teacher emphasized to them that they should attend to their identified errors.

A female learner from School A said;

A failing grade was the number one motivator of us pupils to attend to our committed errors. For example when my friend gets a higher mark, let's say above the passing mark, then I get below her, I will be forced to re-do my work and even consult my teacher so that next time I also perform better or even above the pass mark.

In addition to this, two respondents from two different schools seemed to share a common thought on what motivated them to attend to their errors almost immediately. This is what one girl from School D said:

The teachers' clear and motivating comment also helps us attend to our errors committed. Pupils love to be treated with attention and so the kinds of comments which are motivating really make us work on our errors than those which are harsh.

On a different point of view some learner made mention that, teacher's emphasis to pupils to attend to their errors motivated them to make corrections. A boy from school C shared with the group that in his class where they were over 70 a few teachers would care to emphasize writing of certain exercises and notes which to him appeared as an uncaring attitude towards the learners' academic work. However, every time his teacher of English asked them to attend to their errors and re-submit their written composition he was motivated to do so. This is what he shared:

Most of the times pupils tell when a teacher is concerned about their academic performance. I do appreciate and feel motivated to attend to my errors in composition when our teacher emphasize to us to make corrections and re-submit our books. To me that is a sign of a serious teacher.

4.3 Challenges with written corrective feedback faced by both teachers and learners

4.3.1 The figure below contains factors that were considered by teachers as their sole challenges in giving written corrective feedback to learners writing tasks

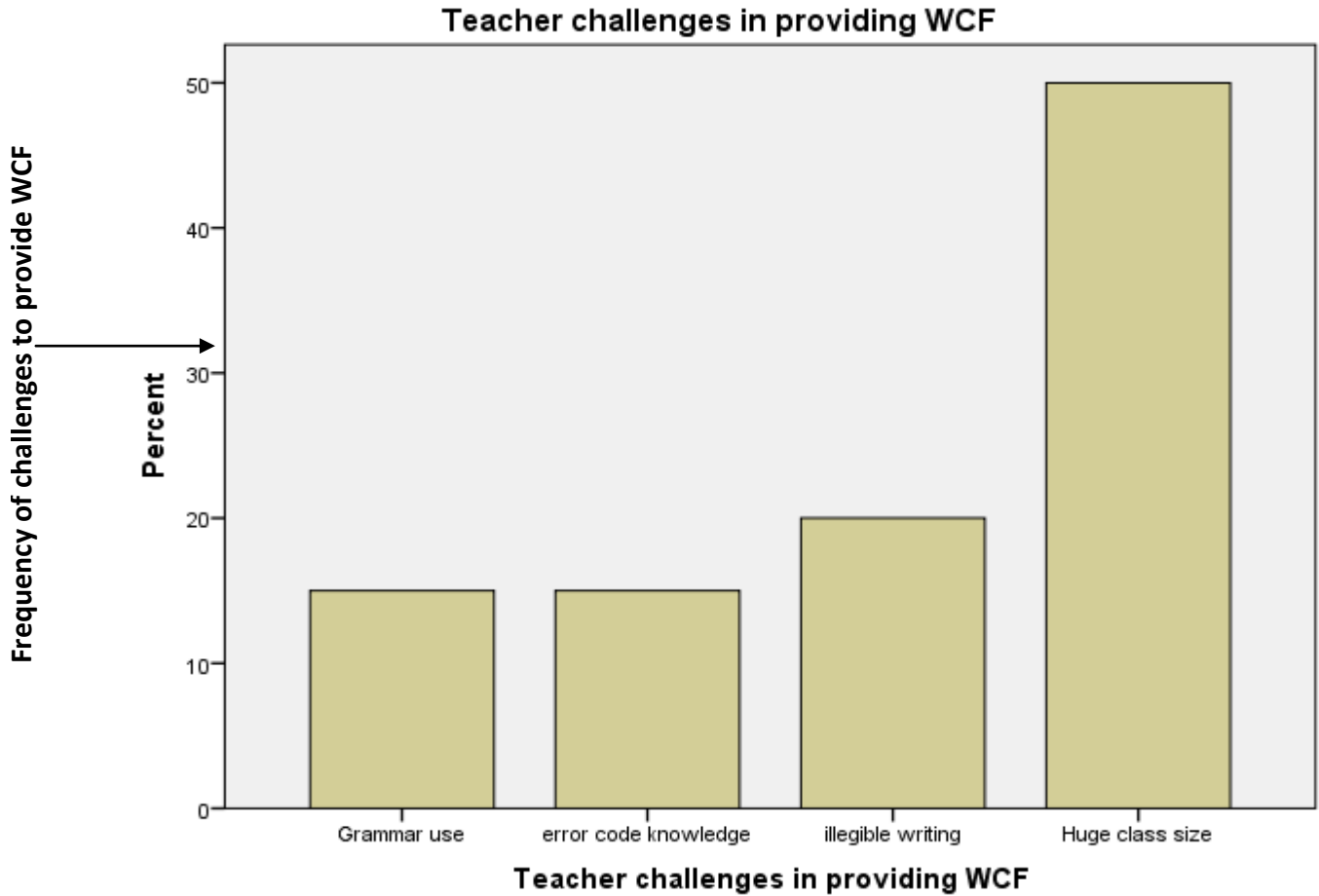


Figure 6: Bar chart showing teacher challenges with written corrective feedback provision

Source: Field data (2018)

The information presented in Figure 7 was for the third question of the study which aimed at investigating challenges if any which teachers of English language faced when giving corrective feedback during marking of composition tasks for learners. The information presented on the table was collected through interviews as it was viewed that wider views might be collected using this technique. 50% (10 teachers) indicated that huge class size was a major challenge when giving corrective feedback. 20% (4 teachers) were categorical of how a poor handwriting may deter a teacher from giving corrective feedback let alone read through the learner's written

work carefully. 15% (3 teachers) pointed at grammar misapplication: spelling errors, run-on sentences, concord, agreement, as a challenge in giving written corrective feedback and the other 15% (3 teachers) alluded to learners' lack of knowledge of interpreting error codes as a challenge in itself.

One teacher of English language at School C explained the following on the seemingly major challenge he faces when it comes to giving of written corrective feedback to the learners' written composition. He said:

At this school a minimum number of learners in a single Grade 11 class is 78. This entails that for me to successfully mark the learners composition tasks I need to start while they are still in class so that the load lessens. If I decide to wait for everyone to finish and carry the books with me to the department, then challenges of good feedback come in as I can only mark fast to beat the deadline and give learners back their books.

Another teacher at the same school stated:

Having a class of over 60 learners, becomes a challenge to re-mark learners' books when you ask them to re-write their errors in their compositions and re-submit.

Another teacher from School D also cited the issue of over population as a case that also hamper negatively on teachers who might want to give attention to willing learners. He said:

Some pupils are willing to follow you as a teacher for help but we are only de-motivated with the amount of work we have especially of marking their exercise books and a number of learners. This becomes a challenge to help even those who would follow you for help.

Another interesting response given by a teacher from School C was regarding failure by learners to interpret error codes when used to mark their composition tasks. She said:

I find it easy and fast to mark composition tasks using error codes, however, while error codes are convenient to use when marking composition tasks the case is different with the learners who do not seem to show understanding and let alone fail to correct their own written work. This largely gives me a challenge to mark composition tasks using detailed comments which in turn end up consuming much time just to ensure that learners make sense with their errors committed.

With the responses availed, it was discovered that teachers have challenges in the giving of written corrective feedback in composition tasks. Various areas of attention were highlighted and respective reasons given as how such were viewed as challenges.

4.3.2 The figure below represents findings that were considered by learners as challenges in attending to written corrective feedback provided by their teachers

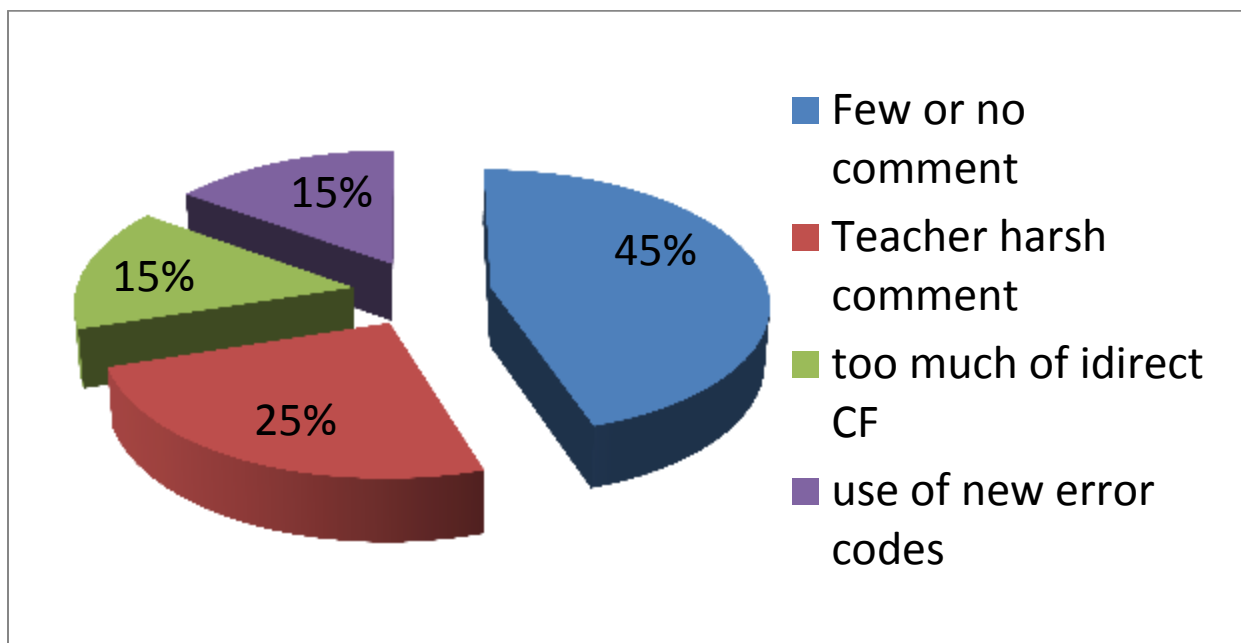


Figure 7: Pie chart indicating challenges faced by learners in attending to written corrective feedback.

Source: Field data 2018

A wide range of views came from learners during focus group discussions. They pin pointed at issues they considered as challenges faced that prevented them from attending to their errors. Table 8 indicates how learners classified their challenges. From the total of 80 participants 36 who learners who represented 45% of participants considered few or no comments at all in their written and graded compositions to have a great challenge to correct their work. While 25% of participants said that, teacher hash comments had a propensity to demoralize a learner from re-doing their compositions tasks because. They had no reservation on such feedback saying that they contributed a lot to learners' poor performance. 15% of some participants considered indirect feedback as another type of corrective feedback that never helped them correct their own errors. The other 15% of participants were strongly against error code use in marking composition tasks citing that they never gave clear interpretive information.

A girl from school B shared with the researcher how lack of a comment in a marked composition exercise book can distract a learner from attending to a lowly graded composition. She stated as follows:

If there is one thing that discourages us pupils to make corrections to our compositions is when a teacher just puts a single comment or no any comment but they give you a low mark, may be six out of 20. This leaves you without an idea why you have been given such a low mark.

This point received many additional comments from learners who also seemed to have had issues with such situations. This is what another learner presented her concern:

In fact in my case my composition exercises have little comments and yet the marks I am usually given are too low. I have tried to consult my teacher why I am ever given low marks when there are few comments appearing but I am always told never to complain but re-do my compositions so this frustrates me a lot and sometimes I don't even re-write.

A learner from School C pointed out a different issue that; sometimes teachers contribute to learner's failure to attend to their own committed errors when he said:

Some marking styles of some teachers are un-motivating. Some would not necessarily follow to spot your error but they would mark according to your handwriting and make comments merely on whether or not you write clearly.

On a similar concern yet in another school at School A, learners placed the blame on their teachers as being the ones who highly contribute to making them avoid making corrections. They said that, in the first place some teachers used hash and attacking language in learners' exercise books. This is what one boy openly shared during a focus group discussion as a sample of comments which his teacher of English language often commented in his and his friend's books. He said:

Some teachers use hash comments, like: don't be dull, be serious, this is rubbish. They end up frustrating us and we just pack our books without making any correction.

Learners complained even on error codes. They took error codes to be used by lazy teachers. Learners at School A did not understand why their teacher would always use error codes when he did not explain to them what they mean. They said that only a few error codes were familiar to them like 'sp' which some knew even before going to school A. One boy made a statement which was more like an advice to teachers who use error codes before explaining to learners what they stand for. This is what he said:

It is so surprising for a teacher to use a language which he understands alone and expect you to understand. This is what my teacher of English do. He likes using symbols and signs throughout our compositions and too much red ink of symbols and yet he doesn't explain what they mean to us. So how can you make corrections even you sir if that happened to you? There is no way. So some teachers in short they don't care when marking.

Those presented were the key emerging comments from learners about the factors that distracted them to attend to their error identified by their teachers.

4.4 The efficacy of written corrective feedback

4.4.1 Teacher learnt lessons on Written Corrective Feedback

Teachers also had an input in this view with regards corrective feedback. A teacher from school D mentioned during interviews that written corrective feedback was among the many remedies available to help learners improve their use of English language in writing. She added that, despite the crowds of learners in our government schools, this was not a substantive reason teachers needed to advance in the name of avoiding to give corrective feedback if only they appreciated the positive impact written corrective feedback had on writing improvements. She was quick to say,

It was better for a teacher to divide learners into smaller manageable groups which could allow feedback to be encouraged and attend to learners. This really helped my department as teachers of Languages have been advised to attend to learners' written errors and ensure that learners make corrections and re-submit their work for re-marking.

According to the teacher, she testified how this policy saw an improvement among the learners in their writing skills using English language.

Additionally, at school A the languages department had a policy to which once composition exercise books for learners are marked and given back to learners, it was the duty of the HOD of languages department to summon composition exercise books from learners at random to see whether or not clear and comprehensive marking is done. Then for every unmarked exercise book a responsible teacher teaching that learner with an unmarked exercise book was called by the HOD to exculpate oneself. This is what one teacher at this school said:

As a department, it is now a policy to mark composition exercises for learners regardless of the class size and give books back to learners on time for them to appreciate the feedback. This has made teachers and learners to appreciate written corrective

feedback thereby, assisting learners to pay attention to their own errors and improve gradually.

4.4.2 Learner learnt lessons on written corrective feedback

The question on the efficacy of written corrective feedback was the fourth and final one of the research. With the efficacy, the researcher wished to find out the ultimate positive effect which written corrective feedback resulted on learner improvement in the usage of the English language in writing activities. To this effect, learners were asked to give individual personal accounts on how much the use of written corrective feedback has helped them improve in their writing skills. A learner from School D said:

I personally have benefited from the comments my teacher puts in my composition. I remember a comment which I was given in my composition; my teacher corrected on my behalf the wrong use of the phrase which is usually quoted as 'birds of the same feather', to its correct form written as 'birds of a feather'. Since then I have been using that phrase correctly according to my teacher's correction.

A learner from School A explained that learners are always ready to learn as long as the instructions are coming from a teacher. This girl said that, if teachers could create extra time for learners especially slow learners and explain certain things which they do not understand, they could appreciate corrective feedback, than a situation whereby they are all treated like the best performers and yet they still commit the same errors in their compositions. She said:

If only our teachers could identify weaker learners and find time for them, they may get encouraged to attend to their errors and feel motivated to make corrections.

Another interesting comment was said by a boy from School D during focus group discussion. He explained that learners love composition writing. However, he was quick to state that all what learners look for at the end of the day is a feedback that will encourage them to work even

harder or some sort of praise to their effort. He cited an example that had a potential of letting learners down when he said:

We love composition but our teacher should not only base their marking on our handwriting but look closely at our grammar use and comment on them. Unlike you receive a composition exercise book with comments such as poor hand writing, improve your writing and the rest is ignored that is not good.

However, when the same boy was asked to share with the other learners in the same focus group discussion with regards how much he has benefitted from corrective feedback he noted the following. He said:

Corrective feedback has given me a culture of consulting meanings of new words that I meet even on social media like; 'slay' and 'I know right' so that I do not use them without a proper understanding of their context of use. So when I meet new words, I look up their meaning in a dictionary.

Different views and personal lessons learnt from corrective feedback were shared by different learners freely. In School A, learners talked a lot about having the edge of looking forward to the type of comments that would come alongside a particular final mark in their composition exercise. One girl said:

From the time my teacher started making comments in my composition exercise book, I have reached a point whereby when my teacher uses a comment, underlines or circles any word or sentence in my composition and I don't seem to figure out what it requires me to do, I do follow my teacher to ask for the meaning of the red ink and what I should do to my work because I want to know and avoid it in future.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study from the lenses of learners and teachers. Their verbatim and quantitative results have been presented as well. In the next chapter these emerging results are discussed in the light of the theory used and literature consulted as well as reference to other studies and policies on the similar topic.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter presents the discussions based on the research field findings of this study. The discussion is presented in thematic form according to the research objectives. The discussion is linked to existing literature for validity's sake. Mostly, the discussions either confirm or disqualify earlier findings and claims of other scholars on similar matters. Some of which could have already been mentioned under the literature review section. The 'Output Theory' by Merrill Swain (1985) which was used in informing this study is still pivotal in this chapter. It does so by making theory relevant and informing and providing direction in interpreting knowledge.

The following four research objectives guided the study and the discussion of findings:

- i) To investigate the familiarity of both teachers and learners with written corrective feedback: error codes as feedback markers
- ii) To ascertain the nature of written corrective feedback teachers gave to composition writing tasks
- iii) To establish the challenges faced with written corrective feedback faced by both teachers and learners
- iv) To establish the efficacy of written corrective feedback in composition marking

The findings have been discussed using themes which emerged from research objectives listed above. These objectives gave a frame to this study through which field findings were sought and has now shaped the direction of discussion of the findings. The earlier policies and studies which were done from various parts of the world provided empirical evidence and validated findings of this study in this discussion chapter.

5.1 To find out the familiarity of both teachers and learners with written corrective feedback: error codes as feedback markers

The first objective was to find out the familiarity of both teachers and pupils in written corrective feedback. The findings were organized in groups of teachers and pupils.

5.1.1 The teachers' familiarity with written corrective feedback

The findings of the study on teachers' familiarity with written corrective feedback showed that the majority out of 20 sampled teachers for the study were much familiar with the different types of written corrective feedback and were using them to give corrective feedback. The data presented in chapter four showed that over 80% (over 16 teachers) of teachers were familiar with written corrective feedback and demonstrated knowledge of various types of written corrective feedback as proposed by Ellis (2009). Teachers also explained their sources of knowledge on the use of written corrective feedback. Some said that they learnt how to give written corrective feedback from the marking of English Language Paper 1 (composition) national examinations for Grade 12 and the everyday marking of composition tasks of their pupils in schools. However, very few teachers were found not to understand certain types of written corrective feedback especially error codes. According to the data presented, one teacher from school B openly said that his knowledge of error code use as corrective feedback technique was quite on the average for a simple reason that he was not older than 5 years in the teaching service. This implied that, error codes were not taught to them during their training in the Teaching Institutions they went to. Therefore, to such teachers error codes are things to know only when one is a practicing teacher and only after having worked for quite a good number of years in the teaching service.

Additional results from the documents (marked pupils' composition exercise books) which were reviewed showed that out of the 40 sampled composition exercise books of pupils, many of them had written corrective feedback endorsed by teachers. This was evident enough that teachers were familiar with this practice of written corrective feedback. No sampled exercise book lacked a feedback comment or symbol denoting correction. They all had varying types of written corrective feedback.

The findings above were in congruent with the provisions of the Revised Senior English Language Syllabus (2013). The goal of teaching writing skills in Zambian schools is to make

learners acquire the skill for use in their advancement of educational attainment in tertiary institutions as well as in their daily communicative interactions (Revised senior English language Syllabus 2013). What this means is that, even institutions of teacher training which abided by the syllabus tend to train their teachers in skills that would be useful in teaching writing including written corrective feedback efficacy as they join the teaching service. That explains why most teachers were found to be familiar with written corrective feedback.

5.1.2 Learners' familiarity with written corrective feedback

The data collected on the learners' familiarity with written corrective feedback were indicating that learners were aware and familiar with written corrective feedback. The learners admitted that their teachers used written corrective feedback when marking their composition exercises. However, the results of the test taken by learners on error codes revealed two observable things besides showing that they exhibited knowledge of error codes.

Table 2 in Chapter Four shows error codes which learners were purely familiar with without the help of a context. This was in section A of a test. The results indicated that over 80% of learners were familiar with the symbol 'sp'. While symbols for noun, 'N', tense 'T', punctuation, 'P' and preposition, 'Prep' were averagely familiar to them. There were some contradicting aspects about the learners' performance in the two sections of a test: sections A and B. What was contradicting of the two was that, learners seemed to have performed well in section 'B' in explaining and identifying errors using appropriate error codes due to the help of a context. While in section 'A', learners had challenges to explain error codes without the help of any context. This implied that by virtue of learners noticing an error in a context it automatically helped them figure out the error type and the code eventually.

Table 5 of Chapter Four indicates that, learners showed knowledge of interpretation of the type of an error committed when they were asked through a context. The other notable point is that learners performed well in explaining the error code which their teachers used almost traditionally. This implied that teachers were not using some of the error codes consistently when marking composition tasks thereby confirming why the learners did not demonstrate extensive knowledge on error codes especially when indirect corrective feedback was used.

Furthermore, learners' familiarity with the written corrective feedback was also shown during the focus group discussion. Some learners from School A admitted that, their teacher had explained to them the meaning of some error codes used in marking their composition exercises. This implied that, some learners were aware of the purpose of written corrective feedback indicated in their books by their teachers of English language.

The results of this study confirm the findings of Duncan (2007) who concluded that, for an effective corrective feedback to be realized, both the trainer and the trainee should share a common knowledge of the phrasing and interpretation of written corrective feedback. This point came out so strongly from the pupils during the focus group discussions. Learners were quick to mention certain instances when they could fail to rewrite their written works. They attributed that to a lack of clear written corrective feedback which was non communicative to them.

The implication of this is that, with the continued exposure to written corrective feedback which was unfamiliar to learners, they were likely to develop a negative attitude to this important practice which is very much appreciated by learners. These findings on the familiarity of written corrective feedback can be summed up through the Noticing Hypothesis of Schmidt's (1995) who contended that, learning does not happen without noticing. Students should first notice the target features before they can learn them. Triggering noticing can easier be achieved through direct corrective feedback. This implies that, when pupils are not privy to the corrective feedback types then they would not appreciate the practice of corrective feedback itself. This is in tandem with the Hypothesis Testing function propagated by Swain (1985), from the 'Output Theory' when she posited that, when pupils use language, they sort of test what they think they know and have acquired, with a belief that a positive feedback will come forth in form of re-enforcement. It is this feedback which pupils look out for in the form of comments as well as an expected mark depending with a medium (spoken or written) they are using language. Learners always tend to rush to see the overall mark and comment so that they know how they performed in the use of their acquired new grammar and vocabulary. However, once the overall comment or mark does not seem clear to them they tend to ignore and pack their exercise books.

5.2 To identify the nature of written corrective feedback teachers gave to composition writing tasks for learners.

The results on the identified types of written corrective feedback showed that teachers used almost all the types of written corrective feedback as prescribed by Ellis (2009). Findings obtained from teachers' questionnaires showed that teachers preferred varying written corrective feedback types. Table 7 in Chapter Four under presentation of findings showed that, out of the 20 participants (teachers), it was found that 40% (8 teachers) indicated that they preferred using meta-linguistic: error codes to mark their pupil's composition tasks. Then 30% (6 teachers) indicated that they preferred Indirect corrective feedback; by underlining and circling. 25% (5 teachers) stated that the use of metalinguistic detailed grammatical comments was their preferred technique for giving written corrective feedback while 5% (1 teacher) indicated that they preferred direct corrective feedback.

However, the responses presented in the questionnaires by the sampled teachers seemed to have had a slight difference with regards the corrective feedback teachers used which was found in the learners composition exercise books which were obtained for document analysis. The document analysis conducted showed a subtle difference. Table 9 of Chapter Four shows the written corrective feedback type which were found in learners composition exercise books and the schools that utilized them. The data which were collected indicated that, most teachers used the indirect corrective feedback. In terms of frequency of use as appeared in the sampled exercise books this type of corrective feedback was found to have been used 220 times in all the sampled exercise books. This was the highest number of times used. This was followed closely in terms of frequency of use by direct written corrective feedback with one hundred and thirty-six (136) appearances in the sampled learners' exercise books. Then brief grammatical description; a metalinguistic type appeared as the third frequently used corrective feedback type. It appeared one hundred and twenty-nine (129) times in the sampled exercise books. Error codes followed fourth with seventy (70) appearances under whose bottom sat 'teachers' emotional and shouting comments', followed by unfocused corrective feedback and the least being focused corrective feedback with the frequency of 24, 18 and 2 respectively. However, because triangulation of data was the main purpose of using various research instruments, it was later appreciated that the best way to investigate teachers' teaching of certain elements to the learners was through verifying

with the exercise books of their learners. There was a slight difference in terms of information inflow from the questionnaires and the information revealed from document analysis. However, what seemed authentic were the data extracted from the document review. This was so because it merely exposed what was prevailing at the time of investigation as opposed to a wish which teachers might have been looking forward to as responded in the questionnaires.

It was also found out from the questionnaire results that some teachers gave corrective feedback in accordance with the level of language proficiency of a learner. This came out clearly through a statement in the questionnaire which was based on a Likert five point scale. The statement was in the affirmative; *'teachers provide corrective feedback to learners depending on the knowledge level of the use of the English language'*. To this statement, 75% (15 teachers) strongly agreed, 10% (2 teachers) agreed. The other 10% (2 teachers) disagreed though without any justification. While 5% (1 teacher) strongly disagreed for unknown reasons either. In relation to the findings, both through interviews and document review, the data were consistent to indicate that, indeed teachers were motivated differently when indicating corrective feedback types in their learners' exercise books. This is consistent with (Ferris, 2003b), when he suggested that teachers should provide feedback for students on a variety of writing problems and focus on specific issues depending on the need of individual students. Strength on this matter is also provided by the Output theory used in this study by Swain (1985) when she contended that, teachers should consider giving corrective feedback to students until at a point that the learner will not need to continue to obtain comprehensible corrective feedback input in writing. This implies that a teacher needs to be tactful and versatile in the use corrective feedback types in the learners' written work by understanding the learner's level of use of the language and the ability to correct their own written work with a guided corrective feedback type.

5.2.1 The nature of written corrective feedback that motivated learners to attend to their own committed written errors.

Various instruments were designed to probe learners to give responses to what type of written corrective feedback gave them impetus to attend to their own committed errors. Like Chandler (2003) observed, what seemed to be a crucial factor was having the students do something with the error correction besides simply receiving it. In this study, learners demonstrated that, it was not enough for teachers to merely make comments or indicate corrective feedback, but also

learners own personal attitude towards the final mark obtained in a composition exercise had far reaching consequences on the ultimate response from a learner. Table 10 of Chapter Four contains an open ended question which was in the interview guide for learners. The question was aimed at finding out what particular things would make a learner attend to the identified errors. Little was the depth of the question realized as it brought out three main emerging themes which shaped the direction of responses. These included: A failing mark obtained, teachers' clear and motivating comment as well as Teachers' emphasis on making correction. Out of 80 respondents, 63% of them revealed that, what motivated them mostly to attend to their errors was often getting of a failing mark in a composition task. Other than that, they would not attend to their errors. 25% of respondents said that they only attended to their errors depending on how clear their teacher's comment was on their written work. Some pupils added that a motivating and encouraging overall comment which a teacher made in their composition exercise books had the ability to make them attend to their errors with an uplifted spirit because of the motivating nature of the comment. Then 13% out of the rest mentioned that they only attended to their errors when their teacher emphasized to them the need to attend to their identified errors. In addition to this, two respondents from two different schools seemed to share a common thought on what motivated them to attend to their errors almost immediately.

On a different point of view some learners made mention that, teacher's emphasis to them to attend to their errors motivated them to make corrections. A boy from school C shared with the group that in his class where they were over 70 a few of their subject teachers would care to emphasis to learners on writing of certain exercises and notes. To him and his fellow classmates this appeared as an uncaring attitude teachers demonstrated towards the learners' academic work. However, every time his teacher of English language asked them to attend to their errors and re-submit their corrected written composition he was motivated to do so.

The findings of the document review and of the structured interviews for the learners were consistent and revealed similar results thereby strengthening the purpose of triangulation.

The implication of learners' preferences with regards factors that motivated them to attend to their own committed errors is that the process of corrective feedback if not carefully looked at by teachers might be taken as a mere formality exercise or a fulfillment of the field of practice. These views by learners defeat the findings of Long (1991) who contended that, error correction

is provided to focus students' attention on grammatically accurate forms within the context of performing a communicative task. However, the responses of pupils in this regard, indicate that, error correction is optional especially when one gets a better mark than the other competing friend or when a pupil performs above average. This might be due to teachers' failure to explain or show pupils that even at the point of error correction, learning of a language was possible to take place. Just like the theory used in this study holds. Swain (1983) posited that, comprehensive input is as good as the output (hypothesis testing) as they all strive to emphasis accuracy and proficiency. With the unending debates on the efficacy of written corrective feedback, the learners' preference need not be neglected in subsequent studies under corrective feedback if the efficacy of written corrective feedback is to be viewed in totality.

5.3 To establish challenges with written corrective feedback for both teachers and learners

Knowing that the challenges might be wide and diverse, the study employed structured interviews to accommodate as many views as possible.

5.3.1 Teacher challenges with written corrective feedback

Table 11 of Chapter Four shows the emerging themes pertaining to popular challenges that overwhelmed teachers in the provision of written corrective feedback. This was all to respond to the objective number 3 of the study which aimed at investigating challenges if any which teachers of English language faced when giving corrective feedback during the marking of composition tasks for their learners. The emerging themes were four. These were; huge class size, Grammar misapplication, Error code misunderstanding as well as illegible handwriting. These emerging themes made the highlights of the interview session when discussing the challenges. Out of the 20 participants, 50% (10 teachers) strongly indicated that their major challenge in providing written corrective feedback was the huge class size which they taught and made marking of written compositions a challenge. 20% (2 teachers) were categorical on how a poor handwriting might first of all distract a teacher from giving corrective feedback let alone read through the learner's written work clearly. 15% (3 teachers) sighted grammar misapplication: to be specific, spelling errors, run-on sentences, concord, agreement and many others as a striking challenge they faced which demanded a lot of time and patience to read through a single written composition task and provide corrective feedback. 15% (3 teachers)

alluded to learners' lack of knowledge of interpreting error codes as a challenge in itself which gave them great pains regardless of the number of times the teachers used error codes to mark learners' composition exercise books.

Some teachers were on record justifying their huge class sizes as what made them find challenges in their provision of corrective feedback. One teacher of English language at School C explained to the interviewer on how his class of 78 learners gave him a tough time to provide corrective feedback. He had to start marking exercise books while the learners were still in class to avoid the piled up load.

Another interesting response given by a teacher from the same school was regarding failure by learners to interpret error codes when used to mark their composition tasks. To the teacher the use of error codes was a faster way to provide corrective feedback but the challenge was his learner's inability to interpret them and re-write their work. To him it was a major drawback as he wished to avoid at all cost to avoid the use of detailed direct grammar comments which he believed it ended up consuming much of time just to ensure that learners made sense with their errors committed.

However, given the picture and the reasons advanced by teachers as their primary challenges faced in the provision of corrective feedback, first of all it should be noted that it can only be the very teacher to find alternative lasting solutions to these problems by either conducting action research on possible ways to navigate the perceived challenges or by appreciating the role of corrective feedback in language teaching and orient learners to the meaning of error codes and other types of written corrective feedback. A good confirmation of the challenge on error codes are the findings in the literature by (Ferris, 2002) who noted that, teachers are encouraged to use consistent coded feedback that is supported by systematic grammar instruction as codes in feedback provision can be confusing for both teachers and students. These being the bottom lines, teachers will endure amidst these sited challenges knowing for sure that they will see positive results in due course of providing corrective feedback. Out of the emerging themes on challenges, only the aspect of teacher pupil-ratio might be beyond the teachers control due to enrolment government policy issues which are usually administrative decrees but the rest of the sited challenges are within the management of a teacher who should understand the efficacy of written corrective feedback.

5.3.2 Learner challenges in attending to written corrective feedback

In order to collect data for this inquiry, various research techniques were explored for triangulation of data. One of the research instrument administered to probe views from learners was the use of Focus Group Discussion guide. Learners gave out views that they considered as challenges in attending to written corrective feedback provided in their exercise books by their teachers. Table 12 of Chapter Four Indicates challenges faced by learners in attending to teachers' written corrective feedback. Among the many popular emerging themes included: Teacher hash comments, single or no comment at all, too much of indirect corrective feedback as well as new and not easy to figure out error codes. It must be stated that, under this inquiry some pupils expressed bitterness with the approach their teachers had towards corrective feedback. It was noted that, the most common stumbling block to the learners was the hash comments teachers wrote in their composition exercise books. This was the number one challenge. For example one boy from School D shared some sample of comments which his teacher of English language often commented in his and his friend's books. Comments like: *don't be dull, be serious, this is rubbish*. The boy bitterly complained that such comments ended up frustrating them and could have no any other reasons of attending to their errors but just pack their exercise books without making any correction.

The responses of the learners confirm the findings of Hattie and Timperley (2007) who noted that, feedback is more effective when it addresses achievable goals and when it does not carry high threats to self-esteem. The implication of hash comments in this regard is that teachers would end up labelling a pupil and if such a pupil has low self esteem he/she was definitely going to begin hating the teacher and subsequently lose interest in the subject. Just like this study conceptualized corrective feedback as a scaffolding process as postulated by Vygotsky (1978), the hash comments by teachers are at loggerheads with the conceptual framework which guided this study.

Furthermore, the other point that learners considered as a challenge in attending to their errors was the use of indirect corrective feedback. learners complained bitterly that the underlining of faulty areas as well as the circling of the identified error points was not helping them either as they still remained as blank as ever before without any clue on the correct form. These learners' views were found to be consistent with the findings of Goldstein (2006) who found that, students

may not attempt to self correct their work when teachers' corrective feedback lacks clarity or if revised, learners were to revise it unsuccessfully. This notwithstanding, a serious contestation over the idea of clear and none clear corrective feedback builds up when Bitchener, (2008) presented an argument as follows:

While direct corrective feedback refers to how feedback draws learners' attention to the location or nature of an error, on the other hand indirect feedback, in which the teacher marks the location of an error for students to then self-correct, is argued to promote deeper cognitive engagement (pushing learners to engage in hypothesis testing) as opposed to direct feedback, in which the teacher makes corrections supplying the correct form for students.

Bitchener's resolute affirmation to indirect corrective feedback might hold because some studies found that as teachers provide direct corrective feedback on many aspects of student writing, there is a tendency for student writers to value this feedback and pay attention to teacher feedback on all aspects of their writing without applying themselves to correct for themselves (Ferris, 2003b; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994). That is why theories of language learning such as those of the cognitive Interactionist theories such as Interaction hypothesis by (Long 1991) and the Noticing Hypothesis by (Schmidt 1994) contended that error correction through interaction assists acquisition thereby, helping learners to establish form meaning mapping on their own. With these competing findings, it still goes back to a teacher on how to handle matters of corrective feedback with conscious so that learners find help in the types of corrective feedback teacher's use when marking their composition exercises.

The other notable finding from the pupils that was taken as a challenge in attending to teachers marked errors, was what pupils termed as 'new and not easy to figure out error codes'. Lee (1997) in his study found that, students failed to correct errors not because they lacked grammatical knowledge but because they could not detect the errors with the codes or clues used by their teachers. This literature confirms the point of view of pupils who found error codes which were new to them as being a challenge to help them attend to their identified errors. The implication of this is that, the teachers who did not adopt a consistent common type of corrective

feedback familiar to their learners; especially error codes were the cause of this negative perception which pupils have towards error corrective feedback.

5.4 To establish the efficacy of written corrective feedback in composition marking

Findings under efficacy of written corrective feedback were presented with evidence of the positive impact which corrective feedback had on either a learner or the pedagogy process in the endeavours of teaching English language through writing. The efficacy of written corrective feedback endeavoured to reveal what the pioneer of corrective feedback Truscott longed to see to be able to rescind his decision of rejecting the efficacy of corrective feedback. Truscott (1996) acknowledged that, corrective feedback helped students to correct their errors in second draft; however, he wondered whether or not the students were able to use the acquired knowledge in formulating grammatical sentences in new subsequent pieces of writing. To this effect, learners were asked to give individual personal accounts on how much the use of written corrective feedback had helped them improve in their writing skills, while teachers of English language were also asked to share their perceived positive effects of written corrective feedback in the pedagogy of second language teaching.

5.4.1 Efficacy of written corrective feedback through the lenses of a teacher

Written corrective feedback is no stranger to the teachers of English language in being used as a technique for language teaching. Teachers from sampled schools indicated strongly that written corrective feedback helped them work around issues of grammar correction. This is in itself a confirmation that through the lens of a teacher, the efficacy of written corrective feedback is positive to second language teaching.

Realizing that written corrective feedback had a place in second language teaching, issues of huge class size as alluded to being a stumbling block, it was interesting to see other teachers devising mechanism of working around the huge population issue and maintain the practice of written corrective feedback. What was impressive to note from the teachers was their self revealing of how much written corrective feedback has helped improve learners' use of grammar.

Furthermore, the issue of some schools making corrective feedback a policy justifies the efficacy of written corrective feedback. Measures being put in place by such schools are a mirror of a positive impact a practice in the pedagogy process.

A lot of success stories which are even measurable came out from teachers through interviews as well as through document reviews that indeed, written corrective feedback was provided by teachers and responded to by learners. This was good because in written corrective feedback context, errors are a target for learners to pay attention than ignoring. These findings are in line with the Interaction Hypothesis, advanced by Long (1996), who pointed out that exposure to positive evidence alone is insufficient for language learning and that learners need negative evidence as well (e.g., corrective feedback) to produce modified output. This is in congruence with the theory that guided this study by Swain (1985) that seeks to appreciate language learning at the point of output thereby, justifying the need to constantly provide written corrective feedback with a view of yielding positive results.

Various teacher responses ranging from Likert five point scale questions, including their responses from open ended questions and interviews all revealed that the majority of teachers perceived the efficacy of written corrective feedback as being positive in English language teaching/learning process.

5.4.2. Efficacy of written corrective feedback through the lenses of a learner

The views of the learners in this regard pertaining to the correct use of statements, phrases and construction of sentences in a communicative exchange are in conformity with the findings on the efficacy of corrective feedback as advanced by various scholars. Nicol (2008) cited in Lunsford (1997), suggesting that, feedback can be helpful to students when it is framed in terms of the impact of the writing on the reader. This could also enhance self-regulation skills because it enables students to gradually move away from monologue to conceptualize a reader and direct their writing to a conversation type. If this approach was taken by most teachers to explain to their learners the overall purpose of written corrective feedback, this would indeed suspend all negative thoughts surrounding corrective feedback and be replaced by the right mind set and the right consistent corrective feedback type adopted.

In line with the theory that informed this study, the Hypothesis testing by Swain (1985), puts records straight when it postulates that, when learners presents their ideas in written form, they do so with an imaginative mind of communicating with another person. However, because they are under instruction in classrooms they hope that, their teacher would correct errors for them so that, as they write using their very ideas using their teachers' corrected forms they would be using correct forms and meanings confidently. Thus, the theory encourages learners to practice and test out the vocabulary they have learnt through authentic situations before their teacher so that once their hypothesis are tested and qualified, they would become confident users of the language being taught.

Results obtained from learners through interviews, documents review and test administered showed that corrective feedback merely lacked zeal from the part of teachers as learners were already aware and expectant of it from their teachers.

The researcher realized that in the discussion of various findings above, there were many reasons that motivated learners to attend to their errors after their teacher marked their work. The motivation which initially was expected to come from their teacher by explaining the purpose and importance of attending to errors, instead learners had their own sources of motivation as their basis for the efficacy of corrective feedback which according to their responses isn't supposed to be the case. The findings have proved that, both the learners and some teachers in the targeted schools have not yet realized the gravity of the importance of corrective feedback in the learning process of second language. Mostly their approach to Written Corrective Feedback was casually undertaken.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the major findings of the study. Efficacy of written corrective feedback was discussed under the four (4) objectives: the familiarity of written corrective feedback, the nature of written corrective feedback, the challenges of written corrective feedback and the efficacy of written corrective feedback was discussed in the light of the ultimate goal of the entire subject of corrective feedback, its consequences on a pupil and on the pedagogy process. The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This last chapter consists of the main conclusion that has been drawn from this research. Based on the main findings of this study, recommendations are drawn and it also proposes avenues for further study.

6.1 Conclusion

The study anchored on finding out how corrective feedback was conducted in composition writing in secondary schools among Grade 11's and whether or not learners had a shared view with teachers on its importance in Second language (L2) teaching/learning process. This was hoped to later ascertain the efficacy of written corrective feedback in composition writing. The following are the main findings.

Firstly, it can be concluded that, both teachers and learners were familiar with the practice of corrective feedback as observed in the test administered to learners, document review as well as interview schedules.

The study revealed that from the various types of written corrective feedback as prescribed by Ellis (2009), the following were noted: some teachers over utilized some types, while under utilizing others. This to learners had a negative effect especially where teachers used those corrective feedback types which were less informative (indirect) as well as those that attacked the learners self esteem. The conclusion reached at was that, teachers did not use corrective feedback in accordance with the level of a learner's competency of language use but gave uniform corrective feedback which in turn appeared to others to have been abstract and attacking without realizing its consequence.

It was also found out that some teachers took corrective feedback for granted in some instances due to large classes and other reasons best known to them. It was revealed that the practice was conducted casually as a fulfillment of the teaching/assessment process. It was concluded that, this in itself distanced learners from seeing relevancy in this practice.

The study further revealed that learners also developed their own reasons pertaining to attending to their written errors as indicated by their teachers. As found out learners could only correct their work when they got a lower mark or when their teacher emphasized the need to correct their work or when a fair comment was used by the teacher to mark their compositions. This largely concluded that, there was lack of common knowledge shared between teachers and learners on the importance of corrective feedback in the learning of English language.

To this effect, there was a general conclusion that the efficacy of written corrective feedback was far from being realized as long as teachers and learners continued treading on separate paths in this process of corrective feedback. However, only in fewer cases were some learners found to appreciate corrective feedback and how much it impacted on their acquisition of proficiency in the use of English language.

6.2 Recommendations

In view of the observations made in this study, the following recommendations are made so as to help achieve the efficacy of written corrective feedback among learners through composition corrective feedback marking.

1. Teachers of English language should aim at providing clear and direct corrective feedback to the right learners. This can be done by having records of learner proficiency profile by level. This would in turn help address the challenge of class size which acts as a deterrent to the provision of written corrective feedback to writing tasks. This mechanism would encourage teachers to give direct corrective feedback to slow learners and probably meet them one on one for help. While, the intermediate users (learners) may be given indirect corrective feedback as well as error codes (metalinguistic) to attend to their own errors. As alluded to in the discussion chapter, this is what Goldstein (2006) found out to be something some teachers paid less attention to and yet if practiced had a potential of yielding positive results on learning proficiency of each particular learner in class regardless of one's level of proficiency.
2. Schools through teachers of English language should develop a culture of encouraging learners to attend to their written errors when given to self correct their work and be

active in writing activities. This may spill over into secondary schools encouraging active clubs like: writing club or Press club. These clubs assist learners to be actively involved in the activities of writing articles, news pieces and reports. These might be checked or proof read by the editor (club patrons/matrons). This tends to encourage correct use of vocabulary and grammar in the writing/building up of ideas and sentences.

3. Teachers should adopt the practice of utilizing Focused Corrective Feedback type in order that they ascertain whether or not their learners are indeed demonstrating understanding or competency in the use of certain English structures which they are made to correct. These structures might be focused on at Grade 10 and 11 levels and teachers consistently offer corrective feedback on those elements so much that when those learners reach Grade 12 a reference of improvement can be derived and justified. However, this has been a contestable argument fostered by Truscott (1996) on whether or not written corrective feedback had the ability to make a learner use the corrected structure in their first draft and use it in their future writing piece of work correctly. This is what might assist measure the efficacy of written corrective feedback on a longitudinal basis.

6.3 Proposed areas for further study

The efficacy of written corrective feedback is an inconclusive research matter world over in the field of applied linguistics. The area can still be subjected to inquiry in many perspectives of the available knowledge gap and more so since there are few studies that have been done on the Zambian front on this topic. The current study focused on setting ground in Zambia through the following objective: To find out the familiarity of both teachers and learners with written corrective feedback, the nature of written corrective feedback given, challenges faced and determine the initial position on the efficacy of corrective feedback in composition marking to Grade 11 learners. From this background, therefore, language enthusiasts of written corrective feedback may pursue further studies under the following topics as guided below:

1. Conduct a comparative study on written corrective feedback successes and failures between government schools and private schools.

2. Investigate teachers' locally generated written corrective feedback types and their effectiveness on learner correction of own errors and subsequently, acquisition of second language proficiency.
3. Investigate how teacher training institutions prepare trainee teachers of English language to conduct written corrective feedback to composition writing tasks.
4. Establish teacher indicators of determining learner improvement in the use of English language structures which they once had challenges to use proficiently before but have improved as a result of written corrective feedback,

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide for Teachers of English language

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Dear Respondents

I am a Postgraduate student at the University of Zambia pursuing a master of education degree in Applied Linguistics. I am conducting a research on “*The Efficacy of English composition assessment feedback to grade 11 learners*”. Kindly feel free, open and honest in your responses as well all answers you give will be treated confidential.

1. ARE TEACHERS FAMILIAR WITH ERROR CODES AS FEEDBACK MARKERS?

- i. How conversant are you in the use of error codes as mechanics for marking compositions?

2. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF FEEDBACK TEACHERS GIVE TO COMPOSITION WRITING TASKS?

- i. What type of corrective feedback markers do you use in composition marking?

3. WHAT CHALLENGES DO TACHERS FACE IN PROVIDING FEEDBACK ON COMPOSITION WRITING TASKS?

- i. How often do you give assessment in composition to your learners?
- ii. How do you mark the composition tasks for your learners?
- iii. How do you find the process of marking composition assessments for your learners?
- iv. What challenges do you face when giving written corrective feedback?

4. DO LEARNERS COMPREHEND THE WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN THEIR COMPOSITION?

- i. Do your learners comprehend error codes when you use them to mark their composition tasks?

5. WHAT IS THE EFFICACY OF FEEDBACK ON COMPOSITION WRITING TASKS?

- i. How do your learners respond to the corrective feedback which you indicate in their composition tasks when you give them back their written work?
- ii. What measures do you put in place to ensure that your learners correct their written work when they are given back their marked composition assessments?

Thank you for your responses

Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Grade 11 learners

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR LEARNERS

FOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS NUMBER: TWO, FOUR AND FIVE

Nature, Comprehensible and Efficacy of corrective Feedback to Learners

I would like to have a discussion with you on the written corrective feedback which your teachers use when marking your composition assessments.

1. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF FEEDBACK TEACHERS GIVE TO COMPOSITION WRITING TASKS?

- i. How do your teachers write the corrective feedback in your compositions?
- ii. What type of corrective feedback specifically, does your teacher use when marking your composition?

2. DO LEARNERS COMPREHEND THE WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN THEIR COMPOSITIONS?

- i. What do you understand by the terms; ‘error’ and ‘mistake’?
- ii. Do you ever find challenges in comprehending the type of corrective feedback which your teachers use in marking your compositions?
- iii. How do you go about making corrections when your teacher indicates corrective feedback in your composition?

3. WHAT IS THE EFFICAY OF FEEDBACK ON COMPOSITION WRITING TASKS?

- i. What do you think is the purpose of teacher’s written feedback in your compositions?
- ii. What is your opinion about how teachers should indicate corrective feedback in your written work?
- iii. In what way have the written corrective feedback which your teacher use in your written compositions helped you in your use of grammar in composition writing?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSES

Appendix C: Questionnaire for Teachers of English Language

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION

Survey Questionnaire for Teachers of English language on Written Corrective Feedback

in written composition exercise marking

The current survey is intended to get information about written corrective feedback which teachers of English language use when marking written compositions for grade 11 learners. This survey questionnaire is hoped to help contribute to the efficacy of written corrective feedback in Second Language teaching. The data obtained will be confidential and the findings will be presented in a general way.

I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Use a tick (✓) to indicate your response where appropriate

1.1 Gender

Male

Female

1.2. Age

20-25

26-30

30-35

35 +

II. ACADEMIC ASPECTS

Use a tick (✓) to indicate your response where appropriate

2.1. How long have you served in the teaching service to date?

A. 1 – 5 years

B. 5 – 10 years

C. 10 – 15 years

D. 16 – 25years

Other, please specify:

2.2. Have you been taught before how to give written corrective feedback to composition exercise?

Yes

No

2.3. If your answer is “Yes” in question 2.2, please mention the nature of written corrective feedback you have been trained to offer?

2.4. Have you participated in any of Examinations Council of Zambia English Paper One composition marking activities?

Yes

No

2.4.1. If the answer is ‘yes’ to question ‘2.4’, how much has your experience of marking composition examinations helped you in classroom marking of composition exercises for your learners?

III CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK PROCESSES

3.1. When do you appropriately correct your students’ written work?

A. At the end of the activity in private alone,

B. During the activity,

C. After the activity while in class,

D. In private with student(s)

3.2. How often do you correct your learners' writings?

- A. Never
- B. Almost never
- C. Sometimes
- D. Frequently
- C. Always

Please indicate a reason for your option _____

3.3. What nature of written corrective feedback do you use to correct your learners writing?

- A. Using error correction codes
- B. Provide detailed comments
- C. Underlining and encircling
- D. Explicit error correction

If a combination of the techniques mentioned above (Please, specify):

3.4. Do you sometimes use some learners to mark their friend's compositions?

- Yes No

3.5. Do your learners manage to correct their own work if you ask them to make corrections?

- Yes No

3.6. Do your learners manage to comprehend all your corrective feedback types you use when marking their composition tasks?

Yes

No

3.7. What are some of the challenges, if any, you face when providing written corrective feedback?

A. Illegible handwriting

B. Huge class size

C. Poor grammar

D. Non comprehension of error codes

Others specify

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSES

Appendix D: Grade 11 learners' English Error Code Identification Test

LEARNERS TEST

FOR RESEARCH QUESTION NUMBER FOUR

Do learners comprehend the written (error codes) corrective feedback in their compositions?

Section: A

20 marks

Instruction:

Describe explicitly the meaning of the Error Codes (symbols) below which are commonly used in the marking of composition writing assessments with integrated language skills.

1. SP
2. WW.....
3. VB.....
4. Prep.....
5. Art.....
6. N.....
7. ADV.....
8. ?
9. P
10. T

Section: B

20 marks

Instruction: Use an Error Code (symbol) to identify the underlined error in the sentences below.

1. Today I am feeling gooder than I felt yesterday.
2. John is tall although he plays basketball.
3. My younger sister cried for a apple which she saw in the fruit basket.
4. The Medical Officer of our local hospital is dr.Chinedu from Nigeria.
5. This is John's mother, isn't she₂.
6. Last week I have been to Johannesburg.
7. Kindly pass me that books over there.
8. Mary walks slow.
9. It's not good to laugh of your friends when they fail an assessment.
10. My freind is here to pick me up.

Appendix E: Document Review Guide for Marked Composition Exercise Books

Written corrective feedback types template (Ellis, 2009:98)

Corrective Feedback (CF) Type	Description	Little comments on the manner and frequency of use in the marked composition exercise
<i>Direct CF</i>	The teacher provides the student with the correct form.	
<p><i>Indirect CF</i></p> <p>c. Indicating + locating the error</p> <p>d. Indication only</p>	<p>The teacher indicates that an error exists but does not provide the correction.</p> <p>This takes the form of underlining and use of cursors to show omissions in the student's text.</p> <p>This takes the form of an indication in the margin that an error or errors have taken place in a line of text.</p>	
<p><i>Metalinguistic CF</i></p> <p>c. Use of error code</p>	<p>The teacher provides some kind of metalinguistic clue as to the nature of the error.</p> <p>Teacher writes codes in the margin (e.g. ww=wrong word; art = article).</p>	

Appendix F: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

The University of Zambia

Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies

Dear Respondents,

This serves to give you an understanding of the purpose of this research and procedures that will be followed. You are being asked to sign this form to indicate that you have agreed to participate in this research.

Purpose: you are invited to participate in a research study on the Efficacy of English Composition writing assessment Feedback to grade 11 learners. The information generated from your participation will assist in establishing the efficacy of written corrective feedback used by teachers in marking written composition to grade eleven learners. I am conducting this research in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education in Applied Linguistics from the University of Zambia.

Participant Selection: You were selected as a possible participant because of your experience in English Language teaching in various components of the subject which utilize assessment as a process of inquiry and giving of feedback.

Explanation of Procedure: If you voluntarily decide to participate, you be asked questions during focus group discussions. Focus group interviews will be recorded using a digital voice recorder. Participation in this exercise is voluntary. You are free to decline to participate in this exercise.

Discomfort or Risks: All Data collected from this research is treated with utmost confidentiality. Be assured that names will remain anonymous and untraceable in this research. The rights of participants are protected and respected. Participants are assured that they shall suffer no harm as a result of participating in this exercise. Participants are free to ask for clarification at any point of the exercise and to inform the researcher if they feel uncomfortable about any procedure in the research.

Declaration of Consent: I have read and fully understood this document. I therefore, agree to participate in this exercise.

Signature of Respondent _____ **Date** _____