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ABSTRACT

This study examined English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) college students' attitudes toward and use of feedback on their written work in an Academic English (AE) course, highlighting two students who used very different strategies regarding feedback in one-to-one teacher-student tutorials. Participants were students enrolled in the AE course within a full-time EFL program. The syllabus was based on individual and group projects. Students had to identify and research a topic, draft, revise, and receive tutor feedback. The study examined students' attitudes toward various types of feedback, whether they changed over time, what points were topicalized in written feedback and one-to-one tutorials, who topicalized them, whether and how feedback changed student writing, and the relation between interaction patterns in the tutorials and change in writing. Data from surveys, student essays, the teacher-student tutorials, and text assessments indicated that the feedback-revision cycle was highly productive, and students' writing improved. One-to-one feedback discussions, especially on student-initiated points, were very successful. There were notable differences between the tutorials with the two case study students. Appended are the AE projects schedule for term 3, 2000, and the survey of AE students' preferences for error correction. (Contains 17 references.) (SM)

FEEDBACK ON WRITING: ATTITUDES AND UPTAKE

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Abstract

This is a study of students' attitudes to and use of feedback on their written work in an EAP course. It includes a case study of two students who use very different strategies with regard to feedback in a tutorial. The 'success' rate of tutorial discussions is also investigated. The authors stress the importance of one-to-one dialogue in the feedback cycle, and the need for dialogue among students and tutor on how feedback can be provided and exploited.

1. Introduction

1.1 General background

The extent to which feedback on writing contributes to the development of language skills has been the subject of competing claims: Truscott (1996) has argued that research evidence fails to support any significant benefits for correction of language form, while Doughty and Williams (1998) cite evidence for the effectiveness of corrective feedback, provided it is clearly focused and the learners already have a firm knowledge of the form in question. In classroom terms, the provision of feedback on writing is widely seen by both students and tutors as a central role of the EAP tutor, and the amount of time devoted to the activity justifies further research into its effectiveness. This exploratory study, undertaken at IALS, University of Edinburgh, focuses on students' attitudes to feedback on writing, and on when, how and to what extent they act on the feedback provided. We will begin with a brief discussion of some background issues.

Given the marked tendency, reported by Hyland (2001), for feedback to be concerned with linguistic form, it is helpful to look at feedback in the light of current interest in 'Focus on Form' (Doughty and Williams, 1998). According to cognitive psychology, learning requires conscious mental effort; 'subliminal' learning bypassing consciousness is not possible (Schmidt, 1990; Robinson, 1995). This implies that learning new form-meaning relationships in language is only possible where learners have opportunities to *notice* them; focus on form (*'FonF'*), it is argued, is essential for second language acquisition to proceed. If learners are not given regular opportunities for attention to be freed from the demands of communicating meaning and directed towards linguistic form, they learn to achieve communicative goals through the fluent deployment of lexicalised interlanguage chunks, but are prevented from the analysis and restructuring of their interlanguage which constitutes L2 development (Skehan, 1998); instead, learners become 'fossilized'.

'Focus on form' does not imply a return to syllabuses based on some predetermined sequence of language segments (structural, functional, lexical, etc.), or 'focus on *forms*' (Long and Crookes, 1993), since it is clear that second language acquisition is not a linear, cumulative process (Rutherford, 1988). While there is mounting evidence for the existence of fixed developmental sequences in the acquisition of L2 grammar, understanding of these is too fragmentary to be translatable into pedagogic sequences, and in any case, it cannot be predicted when a particular form will become learnable for a particular learner (Long and Robinson, 1998). What is advocated is the management of primarily meaning-focused communicative pedagogy to include appropriately timed opportunities for learners' attentional resources to be allocated to language form. Long and Robinson describe the implementation of focus on form as:

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> an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features - by the teacher and/or one or more students - triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production
>
> (Long and Robinson 1998: 23)

Feedback on the written products of meaning-focused classroom tasks could thus be considered a suitable vehicle for delivery of *FonF*.

A second issue is the value of one-to-one dialogue between teacher and student about the individual written feedback given by the teacher. We refer to this event as the "feedback tutorial"; elsewhere in the literature it is often called "conferencing". The question of "metatalk", or talking about language, is relevant here. Swain and Lapkin (2001) describe a study in which pairs of learners collaborated on writing a story; the text was then given to a native speaker to read and reformulate. The researchers look at the learners' discussion, both while writing, and later, while comparing their own stories with the reformulation. One subject said that she remembered the points that had been discussed better than those which had not been discussed. This was borne out by performance in the second (individual) drafts: there were more improvements to the text in areas which had been discussed than in those which had not been.

As Swain and Lapkin point out, this fits in well with the Vygotskyan idea that collective behaviour can lead to individual development. Van Lier explains the point simply:

> At any given point ... there is a range of knowledge and skills which [a] person can only access with someone's assistance.... This material, which one might say is within reach, constitutes the ZPD [Zone of Proximal Development]. Anything outside the circle of proximal development is simply beyond reach and not (yet) available for learning.'
>
> (Van Lier, 1996: 190-191)

It is argued that

> Social interaction, by virtue of its orientation towards mutual engagement and intersubjectivity, is likely to home in on the ZPD and stay within it.
>
> (ibid: 191)

Our own study involves teacher-student (rather than student-student) interaction, but the discussion above is equally relevant. One-to-one discourse may constitute a more favourable context for 'cognitive apprenticeship' than whole-class instruction, partly because students are under less social pressure, and partly because the teacher can adjust feedback to the student's ZPD (Cummings and So, 1996). It would appear, then, that the feedback tutorial is an appropriate framework in which to help the learner through developmental stages (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994). Through dialogue, the teacher has to negotiate the minimum level of guidance the student is ready to make use of.

One further relevant issue here is that of "uptake", i.e. what the learner actually learns, which may be different from what the teacher intended to teach. Slimani (1989) asked learners to record on "uptake charts" the items they felt they had learnt, then analysed lesson transcripts to see where these items had occurred. It seems the tendency was for them to perceive themselves as having learned items occurring in parts of the lesson that dealt with topics selected by the learners rather than by the teachers. In view of this, we incorporated the question of topicalisation - which areas were chosen by the learners for discussion - into our analysis of the feedback tutorials.

Finally, a crucial factor in any discussion of feedback must be the feelings and attitudes of the individual learners. Leki (1991) conducted a survey of learner preferences about feedback, asking questions about the importance of correction in general, and the relative importance of different areas, and how they preferred to be corrected. Out of 100 students, 70 wanted all errors indicated, and only one was satisfied with only having those errors pointed out which impeded communication. Higher numbers rated grammar as very important compared with other areas, yet when it came to questions about what these learners actually did, higher numbers looked more carefully at comments on content and organisation than at comments on linguistic features. The most popular means of correction was underlining and giving a clue. (According to Leki, learners may have perceived this method as a kind of "puzzle".) As for response to feedback, 82% said that they rewrote either the whole text or the sentences containing the errors. Leki concludes that we must either accept learner preferences, or discuss openly with them the research about the effectiveness of correction; she maintains it is "high-handed and disrespectful of our students to simply insist that they trust our preferences".

1.2. Background to this study: the 'Academic English' Course

Our study was carried out at IALS in the 12-week April-June term, 2000. The students we selected as subjects were attending 'Academic English', a 5 hours-per-week option within a full-time EFL programme.

The term's syllabus was based on individual and group projects. Project work, in which the students identify and research a topic, draft, revise and receive tutor feedback on written texts and/or other forms of presentation, has many benefits within a pre-sessional EAP course; in particular:

- simulating the type of 'target tasks' that many EAP students will undertake on their degree programmes;
- providing natural opportunities within a communicative task cycle for *Focus on Form*.

The work in that term comprised three project cycles, each of which included an individual tutorial to discuss tutor feedback given on students' first drafts, following which a revised, final draft was produced (for timetable, see Appendix 1). The first two projects were done collaboratively in groups of two or three, each student being asked to contribute one part (for example, a main section) of the text. The final project was done individually.

There were a total of 12 students in the AE class, most of whom attended for the whole term. The majority were from East Asia, but the group included individual students from the Middle East, North Africa, South America and Southern Europe. Most, though not all, were graduates intending to start postgraduate studies in the UK later in the year.

2. Research Design

2.1 Research questions

1. What are AE students' attitudes to different types of feedback?
2. Do they change over time?
3. Which points are topicalised in written feedback, and in one-to-one tutorials?
4. Who topicalises them – student or tutor?
5. Does their writing show change (between drafts, but also from project to project) as a result of feedback?
6. If so, in which areas?

7. Is there any relation between interaction patterns in one-to-one tutorials and change in writing?

2.2 Methods

We used four different kinds of data for our study.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire adapted from Leki (1991) was administered to investigate students' attitudes to feedback, at the beginning and end of their course (see Appendix 2): their feelings about the importance of errors in general, and about the relative importance of different kinds of errors; how often they looked carefully at comments in different areas, including content and organisation as well as language; how they wanted the teacher to deal with errors; and how they acted on feedback.

The essays

We kept copies of both drafts of the learners' essays, in order to have a record of the feedback given, and the changes made between drafts.

Tutorials

We also recorded the one-to-one teacher-student tutorials, to ascertain what was discussed and who initiated discussion.

Assessment of texts

The first and final drafts of each text were graded (blind) by three different native speakers, yielding six marks in all for each student.

3. Results

So far we have only analysed the results for two students, 'Wendy' and 'Ahmed', chosen because they were from very different backgrounds, linguistically and culturally, and in terms of gender, educational level and experience, and level of English.

Ahmed, a Saudi mature postgraduate in his late twenties, had worked in management and was planning to start a Master's course at a Scottish university in October 2001. He had been at IALS since the previous October, and had made good progress; by the start of the term his proficiency level, measured on the IALS placement test, had reached the equivalent of approximately IELTS band 6.0. He was regarded by tutors as a diligent and successful language student.

Wendy, a Hong Kong Chinese newcomer to IALS, had lived in the UK for 5 years, having recently completed a Mathematics degree at a Scottish university. In view of this, her English was surprisingly poor; her placement score was equivalent to below 4.5 on IELTS. In social interaction with her peers, she deployed very successful communication strategies, but the language she produced in speech and writing was highly inaccurate; she showed all the signs of what Johnson (1996) described as 'early-fossilized pidgins'.

3.1 Attitudes of AE students

In the first instance, we analysed the questionnaires of all ten students starting the AE course in April 2000. The results are not dissimilar to Leki's (1991):

- five thought it very important to minimise errors.
- accurate grammar and vocabulary were rated most highly; only three thought punctuation very important.

- however, a greater number said they "always looked carefully" at marks referring to content and organisation than grammar; Leki also found this mismatch between opinion and reported practice.
- five said they wanted all errors indicated; the rest said either most major errors or just those interfering with communication.
- locating the error and giving a clue was (as in Leki's study) more popular than supplying the correct form; but paradoxically, in Part Four, where they are given sample actual feedback-types to judge, the highest number preferred the correct form to be supplied.

As to whether their attitudes changed over the duration of the course, the findings regarding the two learners we focused on are summarised below:

Table 1: Changes in the students' attitudes to feedback over the course

Wendy	Ahmed
- **more** important than previously to have as few errors as possible (both for self and teacher)	- **more** important than previously to have as few errors as possible (but less so for teacher)
– punctuation increased in importance, to equal other categories	– grammatical errors still most important
– continued to look carefully at all indications of error	– now looked more carefully than before at indications of errors in grammar and spelling
– indications of linguistic error more important than previously	– continued to always look at comments on organisation and ideas
– comments on organisation slightly less important	– his preferred technique was still location of error and clue (preference stronger than previously)
– now more useful to consult teacher than grammar book	
– supplying correct form still preferred technique	

3.2 Which points are topicalized in written feedback, and in one-to-one tutorials?

Written feedback

We identified 50 types of 'points' selected by the tutor for written feedback in the texts written by Ahmed and Wendy. These were grouped into four broad categories:

1) 'Discourse' encompassed more global issues of text structure, and concerns such as plagiarism; this corresponds quite closely to Hyland's (2001)'Academic' category.

2) 'Presentation' included errors of spelling, punctuation and word-processing, and issues of format in references, subheadings, etc.

3) and 4) 'Grammar' and 'Lexis' are perhaps self-explanatory, though the distinction is not straightforward; for example, we decided to include under 'Lexis' (rather than 'Grammar') errors in 'word-grammar' or 'grammatical collocation', where the syntactic form of a sentence is partly determined by the selection of a particular lexical item, and 'closed class' or 'system' words, such as modals and prepositions.

Initiation of tutorial episodes

In analysing the tutorial recordings, we divided the discussion into topical 'episodes', the start of each episode being determined by a change of topic. We coded the episodes according to: the four topical categories above; whether the episode focused on a point in the tutor's written feedback (W) or not (NW); and whether it was initiated by the student or the tutor. The tutor's intention was to let the student 'lead' the conversation; he would respond to their questions rather than direct the discussion, on the assumption that focussing on points selected by students would be more likely to lead to uptake (cf. Slimani, 1989). He did, however, bring up issues not mentioned by the student when he felt a valuable opportunity (to focus on an aspect of form, for example) would otherwise be missed.

There were quite striking differences between the tutorials with Ahmed and those with Wendy.

Ahmed was unusual in the group in the way he used the tutorials. He brought along a fully word-processed intermediate draft which he wanted the tutor to check, having already made revisions in the light of the written feedback.

Table 2: 'Ahmed': Tutorial episodes initiated by student

W = discussion refers to written feedback point

NW = discussion does not refer to written feedback point

Topic	Project 1			Project 2			Project 3			All projects		
	W	NW	Total	W	NW	Total	W	NW	Total	W	NW	Total
DIS	1	0	1	0	1	1	7	0	7	8	1	9
GRA	9	0	9	16	0	16	8	0	8	33	0	33
LEX	3	0	3	5	0	5	4	0	4	12	0	12
PRE	1	0	1	3	1	4	4	1	5	8	2	10
All	14	0	14	24	2	26	23	1	24	61	3	64

Table 3: 'Ahmed': Tutorial episodes initiated by tutor

Topic	Project 1			Project 2			Project 3			All projects		
	W	NW	Total	W	NW	Total	W	NW	Total	W	NW	Total
DIS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRA	2	0	2	0	1	1	2	0	2	4	1	5
LEX	1	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	4
PRE	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	0	2	3	1	4
All	3	3	6	1	1	2	5	0	5	9	4	13

As Tables 2-3 show, his tutorials were characterised by a large number of topical episodes (between 20 and 30 in each), over 80% of which were initiated by Ahmed himself. As the discussion was based on his revisions, almost all of the episodes were in the 'W' category. Ahmed's interest was very clearly centred on issues of linguistic form, particularly the GRA and LEX topical categories. There are more episodes classed as DIS in the third (individual) project, because his first draft had comprised the main body only, (without the Title Page, Introduction, Conclusion, References and other features stipulated in the task instructions), and he had supplied the missing elements in the re-draft he presented at the tutorial.

Ahmed was what teachers would regard as a 'good' student: he approached the task of revising methodically and carefully, and he used the time in a focused, efficient way to elicit feedback on his formal corrections. By the same token, however, his approach arguably reflected a heavily teacher-dependent mode of learning.

Any of several factors – age, gender (the tutor was male), history of English learning, or a combination – may have influenced the very different pattern for Wendy (see Tables 4-5).

Table 4: 'Wendy': Tutorial episodes initiated by student

Topic	Project 1			Project 2			Project 3			All projects		
	W	NW	Total	W	NW	Total	W	NW	Total	W	NW	Total
DIS	1	2	3	2	1	3	0	0	0	3	3	6
GRA	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	3	0	3
LEX	1	0	1	0	0	0	6	0	6	7	0	7
PRE	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
All	2	2	4	2	3	5	10	0	10	14	5	19

Table 5: 'Wendy': Tutorial episodes initiated by tutor

Topic	Project 1			Project 2			Project 3			All projects		
	W	NW	Total	W	NW	Total	W	NW	Total	W	NW	Total
DIS	1	3	4	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	4	6
GRA	2	0	2	1	0	1	3	1	4	6	1	7
LEX	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	4	3	2	5
PRE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
All	4	3	7	1	1	2	6	3	9	11	7	18

Firstly, there is a marked contrast between the figures for Wendy's first two tutorials and for the third; could this reflect a change in attitude?

Her first two tutorials were very short (around 5 minutes; Ahmed's lasted around 30 minutes), and comprised few episodes (ten and seven). The numbers of student-initiated and tutor-initiated episodes were more evenly balanced, suggesting that Wendy was less sure how to exploit the event, or perhaps saw less value in it, or that she lacked confidence in initiating discussion. Interestingly, almost half the questions Wendy did ask were about points unrelated to the tutor's feedback (NW). Perhaps she did not see the written feedback as very relevant to her concerns; the points it focused on may have been in areas she was not 'ready' to address. In contrast to Ahmed's, practically all Wendy's questions in the first two sessions were in the DIS category.

In the third tutorial, however, Wendy's behaviour was quite different. She had more questions, this time all relating to the tutor's feedback, and all in the GRA and LEX areas. If she was learning to be more like Ahmed, was this a good thing? Her shift in interest away from 'higher order' concerns towards lexicogrammar runs counter to the direction that many EAP tutors claim to see as desirable. However, our analysis of the topics focused on by the tutor in feedback and in tutor-initiated tutorial episodes lends support to Hyland's finding (2001) of a mismatch between what EAP writing tutors may say are their priorities (higher-order 'academic' issues) and what they actually give most attention to in practice (grammar and vocabulary). It may be that Wendy is learning to conform to what she perceives to be the values of the classroom.

The apparent change in Wendy's attitudes might also be interpreted as signalling an increased dependence on the tutor, which would be consistent with her questionnaire responses (see Table 1), and seems to represent a movement away from autonomy - in the opposite direction from that which Aljaafreh and Lantolf argue represents cognitive development. Given Wendy's hitherto rather unsuccessful record as a language learner, on the other hand, this apparently newly acquired appreciation of the tutor's potential as a source of information on linguistic form may be encouraging: she may only now be entering a stage at which she is ready to 'notice the gap' (Swain, 1998) between her interlanguage and the TL, when *Focus on Form* will pay off.

An alternative, or additional, explanation for the apparent change in Wendy's approach might be an enhanced sense of personal commitment to the product, as it was an individual rather than a group project.

3.3 Students' Writing: Change over time

All three markers noted improvement, both between the first and final draft of each project (suggesting that learners were taking up feedback effectively vis-à-vis the piece of work in question) and between the first and third projects (suggesting that learners were making progress in their writing during the course of the term).

To examine the learners' responses to feedback in more detail, we coded every instance of feedback in the first draft, and every instance of uptake in the second. These are the possible permutations:

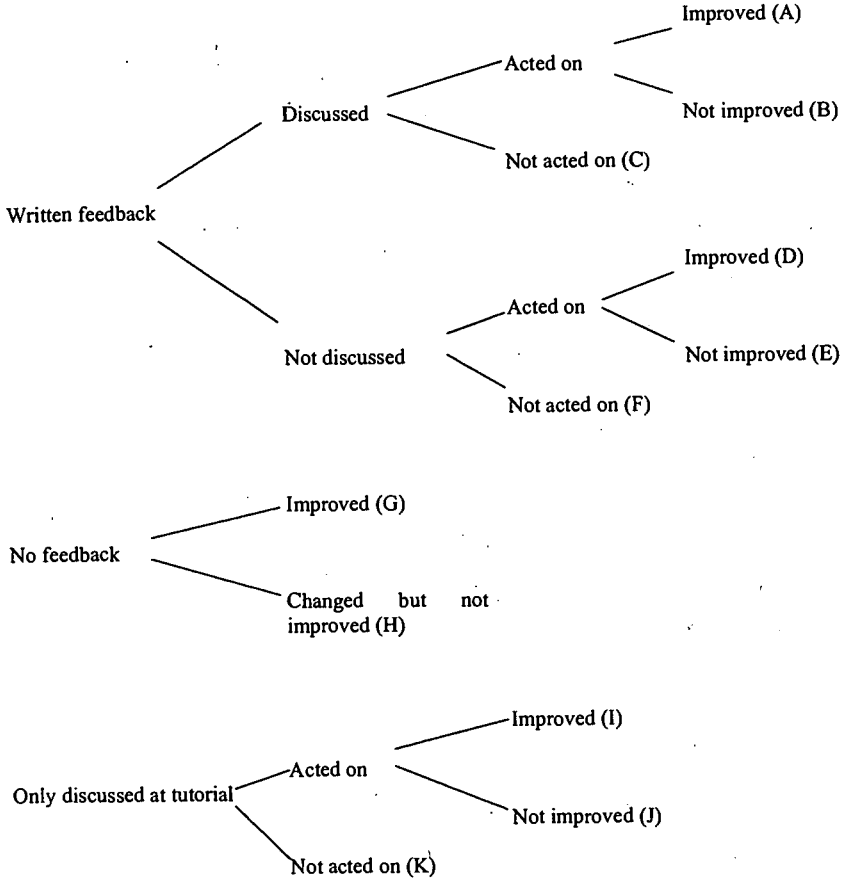

Table 6: Responses to feedback in each of Wendy's and Ahmed's projects

	Number of instances per project % of all responses (% of responses to written feedback)					
Categories of feedback and response	W1	W2	W3	A1	A2	A3
A: written feedback + discussed + improved	**3 7% (9%)**	**3 25% (43%)**	**15 34% (42%)**	**17 81% (89%)**	**21 60% (66%)**	**28 47% (52%)**
B: written feedback + discussed + changed but not improved	2 7% (9%)	1 8% (14%)	1 2% (3%)	0 0% (0%)	2 6% (6%)	1 2% (2%)
C: written feedback + discussed + not changed	1 4% (4%)	0 0% (0%)	0 0% (0%)	0 0% (0%)	0 0% (0%)	0 0% (0%)
D: written feedback + not discussed + improved	**10 36% (43%)**	**2 17% (29%)**	**16 36% (44%)**	**1 5% (5%)**	**7 20% (22%)**	**19 32% (35%)**
E: written feedback + not discussed + changed but not improved	1 4% (4%)	1 8% (14%)	3 7% (8%)	0 0% (0%)	1 3% (3%)	0 0% (0%)
F: written feedback + not discussed + not changed	6 21% (26%)	0 0% (0%)	1 2% (3%)	1 5% (5%)	1 3% (3%)	6 10% (11%)
G: no written feedback + not discussed + improved	**3 11%**	**0 0%**	**2 5%**	**0 0%**	**0 0%**	**4 7%**
H: no written feedback + not discussed + changed + not improved	0 0%	2 17%	3 7%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
I: no written feedback + discussed + improved	**1 7%**	**3 25%**	**2 5%**	**2 10%**	**2 6%**	**1 2%**
J: no written feedback + discussed + changed + not improved	1 4%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 3%	0 0%
K: no written feedback + discussed + not changed	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
(bold = improvement in second draft)						

Looking at Response Type A, it is clear that Ahmed produced considerably more responses of this type than Wendy (see Table 6). However, Wendy's Type A responses did increase in number over the three projects, whereas Ahmed's actually decreased in percentage terms as his ability to act on written feedback alone (Response Type D) increased.

Points raised in the tutorial only, and not mentioned in written feedback (Categories I, J and K), almost always led to improvement.

Table 7: 'Success' rates of tutorial discussions, by initiator

'Ahmed'

	Project 1			Project 2			Project 3		
	+	-	'Success' rate	+	-	'Success' rate	+	-	'Success' rate
'Ahmed'	14	0	100%	22	2	92%	29	2	96%
Tutor	5	0	100%	1	1	50%	5	0	100%

'Wendy'

	Project 1			Project 2			Project 3		
	+	-	'Success' rate	+	-	'Success' rate	+	-	'Success' rate
'Wendy'	2	2	50%	3	1	75%	10	0	100%
Tutor	2	2	50%	2	1	67%	8	1	89%

+ point improved in final draft, following discussion in tutorial

- point not improved in final draft, following discussion in tutorial

The question of who initiated the discussion (tutor or student?) has already been explored in Section 3.2; but we also have to ask whether there is a connection between who initiates the discussion and subsequent changes to the text. The data is very limited; nevertheless, it is suggestive. As Table 7 shows, throughout the course, Ahmed was successful at using the tutorial process to produce improvements in his texts, irrespective of who instigated the discussion. Wendy seemed less so at the outset, yet as she began to take a more active role in initiating discussion, she also started to make

more improvements on the basis of it. Maybe Ahmed, as an "old hand" at IALS, was more able to derive benefit from our methods, while Wendy may have required more time to become acculturated; or perhaps her listening ability improved, enabling her to understand - and act on - her tutor's comments more easily. Or it could be that there was a two-way relationship between increased confidence (allowing her to take the initiative in discussion) and enhanced proficiency (leading to more effective take-up of oral feedback).

A final question to answer here, which was not one of the original research questions, is: how effective is discussion of written feedback versus no discussion? In other words, how valuable is the tutorial? As Table 8 reveals, written feedback alone can be fairly effective, but it appears that a higher proportion of errors are corrected where this is backed up by discussion.

Table 8: 'Success' rates of discussion vs no discussion of written feedback

'Ahmed'

	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3
'Success rate' of discussion of written feedback points: written feedback points improved after discussion (A) / all written feedback points discussed (A+B+C) (%)	17 / 17 (100%)	21 / 23 (91%)	28 / 29 (97%)
'Success rate' of written feedback <u>without</u> discussion: written feedback points improved without discussion (D) / all written feedback points not discussed (D+E+F) (%)	1 / 2 (50%)	7 / 9 (78%)	19 / 25 (76%)

'Wendy'

	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3
'Success rate' of discussion of written feedback points: written feedback points improved after discussion (A) / all written feedback points discussed (A+B+C) (%)	3 / 6 (50%)	3 / 4 (75%)	15 / 16 (94%)
'Success rate' of written feedback <u>without</u> discussion: written feedback points improved without discussion (D) / all written feedback points not discussed (D+E+F) (%)	10 / 17 (59%)	2 / 3 (67%)	16 / 20 (80%)

4. Conclusion

This preliminary study has underlined for us the sheer amount of work that our AE students put into the revision process; a major part of this work necessarily entails giving attention to linguistic form, confirming that the feedback-revision cycle can be a highly productive context for *Focus on Form*. Secondly, the 'success rate' of the discussions, especially on student-initiated points, has reinforced our appreciation of the importance of one-to-one dialogue in the feedback cycle. This echoes Swain and Lapkin's (2001) findings. It has also highlighted the diversity of approach that individual students may take to making use of the tutorial, and the need for dialogue among students and tutor on how feedback can be provided and exploited (cf. Leki, 1991). We believe that an extension of this research on a wider scale would be of value, and that the findings would be illuminated by finding out more about the students' previous experience in learning and using English, and about their attitudes to writing in their L1.

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Appendix 1: AE PROJECTS SCHEDULE, TERM 3, 2000

	Monday	Tuesday	Thursday
WEEK 1 PROJECT 1 (group; common theme)	10/4 Preliminary session **PROJECT 1** (Video?)	11/4 Search for sources *Computer Lab; Internet open*	13/4 Drafting CL *Computer Lab; Internet open*
Week 2 Project 1 (contd.)	17/4 Drafting *Lab*	18/4 *Questionnaire* and discussion on feedback preferences	20/4 Peer feedback; **First draft deadline** *Lab*
Week 3 Project 1 (contd.)	24/4 **Groups prepare oral presentations /** ***T feedback, tutorials*** (gps 1&2) *Lab*	25/4 **Groups prepare oral presentations /** ***T feedback, tutorials*** (gps 3&4) *Lab*	27/4 Group Oral Presentation
Week 4 Project 2 (group; different themes)	1/5 Preliminary session **PROJECT 2** *Computer Lab; Internet open*	2/5 Search for sources *Computer Lab; Internet open*	4/5 Drafting
Week 5 Project 2 (contd.)	8/5 Drafting	9/5 Peer feedback; **First draft deadline**	11/5 Return first draft **T feedback** *tutorials* revision
Week 6 Project 2 (contd.)	15/5 **T feedback** *tutorials* / Prepare oral presentation (Groups)	16/5 ***2nd draft deadline*** Prepare oral presentation	18/5 Group Oral Presentation
Week 7 Project 3 (Individual)	*HALF TERM*	*HALF TERM*	25/5 **START PROJECT 3** Outline; list of sources *Computer Lab; Internet open*
Week 8 Project 3 (contd.)	29/5 Drafting *Computer Lab; Internet open*	30/5 Peer feedback; **First draft deadline**	1/6 Return first draft ***T feedback, tutorials*** Revision
Week 9 Project 3/ Project 4 (Individual)	5/6 Return first draft **T feedback,** *tutorials* / prepare poster pres	6/6 **Submit final draft** Poster presentation	8/6 **START PROJECT 4** Outline; list of sources *Computer Lab; Internet open*
Week 10 Project 4 (contd.)	12/6 Drafting *Computer Lab; Internet open*	13/6 Peer feedback; **First draft deadline** *Lab*	15/6 Return first draft **T feedback,** tutorials revision *Lab*
WEEK 11 Project 4 (contd.)	19/6 Prepare poster presentation	20/6 Submit final draft Poster presentation	22/6 **Return final draft** ***Questionnaire 2***

Appendix 2: SURVEY OF AE STUDENTS' PREFERENCES FOR ERROR CORRECTION

The purpose of this survey is to attempt to find out what types of markings on written work are most useful to students in helping them improve the correctness of their written English. Please be as honest as possible. Please respond to all questions. Thank you for participating.

Name:

First Language:

PART 1

Instructions:

Respond to the questions below by circling the number that comes closest to representing your opinion. If you feel the item is very important, circle #1, like this: -

Example:

very important						**not important at all**
1 (◯)	2	3	4	5	6	7

If you feel the item is ***not*** important at all, circle #7, like this:-

very important						**not important at all**
1	2	3	4	5	6	(7)

If the importance of the item is somewhere in between, indicate that by circling the number between #1 and #7 which best represents your opinion.

1. How important is it to you to have as few errors as possible in your written work in English?

very important						**not important at all**
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. How important do you think it is to your English teachers for you to have as few errors as possible in your written work?

very important						**not important at all**
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. How important is it to *you* for your English teacher to point out your errors in grammatical forms (verb tenses, subject/verb agreements, article use, etc.) in your written work?

very important						not important at all
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. How important is it to *you* for your English teacher to point out your errors in spelling in your written work?

very important						not important at all
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. How important is it to *you* for your English teacher to point out your errors in vocabulary choice in your written work?

very important						not important at all
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. How important is it to *you* for your English teacher to point out your errors in punctuation in your written work?

very important						not important at all
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PART II

Instructions:

Respond to the questions below by circling the number that comes closest to being accurate. Circulate #1 if you do something all the time. Circle #2 if you do it most of the time. Circle #3 if you do it some of the time. Circle #4 if you do it not very often. Circle #5 if you never do it. 'Marks' can mean either words or symbols used by the teacher on your essay. Do not answer according to what you think you ***should*** do, but according to what you actually do.

7. When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the marks indicating errors in grammar?

always	usually	sometimes	not very often	never
1	2	3	4	5

8. When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the marks indicating errors in spelling?

always	usually	sometimes	not very often	never
1	2	3	4	5

9. When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice:

always	usually	sometimes	not very often	never
1	2	3	4	5

10. When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the marks indicating errors in punctuation?

always	usually	sometimes	not very often	never
1	2	3	4	5

11. When your teacher returns a marked essay to you, do you look carefully at the comments on the organisation of your essay?

always	usually	sometimes	not very often	never
1	2	3	4	5

12. When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the comments on the ideas you expressed?

always	usually	sometimes	not very often	never
1	2	3	4	5

PART III

Instructions:

Answer the following questions by putting an **'X'** next to the answer which for you is the ***best*** or most accurate response.

Example:-

Who takes AE at IALS?

_____ Only undergraduates.

_____ Only post-graduate students.

X_____ Both undergraduates and post-graduates.

13. If there were ***many*** errors in a composition, what would you want your English teachers to do?

1. _____ Mark all errors, major and minor.
2. _____ Mark all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones.
3. _____ Mark most of the major errors.
4. _____ Mark only a few of the major errors.
5. _____ Mark all repeated errors that might interfere with communicating your ideas.
6. _____ Mark only errors that might interfere with communicating your ideas.
7. _____ Mark no errors and respond only to the ideas you express.
8. _____ Other (please specify)

14. How do you want your teacher to indicate an error in your written work?

1. _____ The teacher crosses out what is incorrect and writes in the correct word or structure.
2. _____ The teacher shows where the error is and gives a clue about how to correct it.
3. _____ The teacher only shows where the error is.
4. _____ The teacher ignores the errors in English and only pays attention to the ideas expressed.
5. _____ Other (please specify)

15. How carefully do you look at the marks your teacher makes on your written work?

_____ Read every one carefully.

2. _____ Look at some marks more carefully than at others.
3. _____ Mainly pay attention to teacher's comments on the ideas you expressed.

16. If you only look carefully at ***some*** of the marks your English teacher makes on your written work, which ones do you consider most important to look at carefully?

1. _____ Marks indicating errors in grammar.
2. _____ Marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice.
3. _____ Marks indicating errors in punctuation.
4. _____ Marks indicating errors in spelling.

17. Of the marks that your English teacher makes on your compositions which ones do you remember best?

1. _____ Comments on your ideas.
2. _____ Comments on the organisation of the paper.
3. _____ Marks indicating errors in English.

18. If you make an error in English, what helps you the most to understand what you did wrong?

1. _____ Having another foreign student explain the problem.
2. _____ Having your teacher explain the problem.
3. _____ Looking in a grammar book.
4. _____ Having a native speaker (not your teacher) explain the problem

19. If you make an error in English, what helps you the least to understand what you did wrong?

1. _____ Having another foreign student explain the problem.
2. _____ Having your teacher explain the problem.
3. _____ Looking in a grammar book.
4. _____ Having a native speaker (not your teacher) explain the problem.

20. If you make an error you don't know how to correct, where do you usually go for help?

1. _____ To your teacher.
2. _____ To another foreign student friend.
3. _____ To a native speaker friend.
4. _____ To a grammar book.

21. If you turn to one of the sources in #20 for help in correcting your errors, whose advice do you usually remember best?

1. _____ The teacher's advice.
2. _____ The foreign student friend's advice.
3. _____ The native speaker friend's advice.
4. _____ The book's advice.

22. What helps you most to learn from the errors marked on your essay and helps you avoid making that error again?

1. _____ Rewriting the whole essay.
2. _____ Rewriting on another piece of paper just the sentence in which an error appeared.
3. _____ Rewriting near the error only part of the sentence that was wrong.
4. _____ Just reading through the essay carefully without rewriting anything.
5. _____ Nothing because you know you'll probably just forget and make the same errors again no matter what you do.

PART IV

Instructions:

The following sentences all have the same error in English grammar and each sentence has a different possible response to the error which might have been written by a teacher. Look over the different possible responses and rate each response. If you think the mark is a very good way to indicate an error on an essay, circle #1. If you think the mark is a very bad way to indicate an error on an essay, circle #5. If you think the mark is somewhere in between a very good way to mark an essay and a very bad way to mark an essay, circle the number between #1 and #5 that best represents your opinion.

		Very good				Very bad
a.	Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I am very lonely (see section 11a in grammar book)	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I am very lonely.	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I ~~am~~ have been very lonely.	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I am very lonely. (I'm very sorry to hear that. Why don't you come and talk to me about it?)	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I am very lonely. (tense)	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I am very lonely.	1	2	3	4	5

Adapted from Leki (1991)

Final Question:

Have you changed your attitude to feedback during the term? YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

If you answered 'yes', please say in what way:

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
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