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An Investigation from Cambodian University Students' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the perceptions about the effectiveness of oral (OF) and written (WF) feedback on the writing of thirty-seven Cambodian English-major students at the National University of Management (NUM). Questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and student paragraphs were used to collect data from the OF group (N=19) and the WF group (N=18) before and after the two-month treatment. Results indicate that both groups equally delivered higher performance on holistic assessment of writing, although the OF group felt more oriented towards oral feedback than the WF group felt towards written feedback. Whereas the OF group made an improvement in both the micro-aspects (i.e. grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics and spelling) and the macro-aspects (i.e. content and organization), the WF group produced higher quality of writing only in language and organization. The study suggests that student writing improves, regardless of feedback method; that preference in feedback type may not associate with revision quality; that reading be used as a complement to feedback; and that revision quality may correlate with feedback intake which depends on learner-focus and feedback quality.

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Using Oral and Written Feedback to Improve Student Writing: An Investigation from Cambodian University Students' Perspectives

INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Role of Feedback

Since the late 1950s, attitudes towards the role of feedback have changed along with teaching methodologies for effective second language (L2) acquisition. In the late 1950s and 1960s, the Audiolingual Method (ALM), based on behaviorism and structuralism, was very popular in L2 classrooms. Error correction was seen as helping learners to form good habits by giving correct responses instead of making structural mistakes. In the 1970s and 1980s, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), developed from nativism, was commonly practised to equip learners with communicative competence in terms of “function over form” or “comprehensibility over grammaticality”. Formal correction was deemed as interfering with rather than facilitating L2 acquisition. In the early 1990s, the Interaction Approach (IAA) emerged, and it entailed three dimensional phases: learning through input, production of language, and corrective feedback that comes as a result of interaction that arises authentically. Since the mid-1990s, the position of feedback, with the dominance of CLT, has been debated among theorists, researchers, and practitioners in the fields of Second Language Writing (SLW) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Truscott (1996), for example, claimed that corrective feedback should be discarded because it is ineffective and harmful. Ferris (1997), on the other hand, argued that feedback is virtuous as it enables L2 students to revise their own writing and assists them in acquiring correct English.

Because research evidence was scarce in support of feedback, both Truscott (1996) and Ferris (1997) called for further research into questions about the impact of feedback on L2 student writing (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009). Accordingly, a great body of research has been conducted with a look into teacher written feedback: correction strategies (e.g., Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Ferris, 1997; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Lee, 1997; Sugita, 2006), feedback forms (e.g., Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Silver & Lee, 2007; Treglia, 2008), feedback foci (e.g., Ashwell, 2000; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima, 2008; Sheen, Wright, & Moldawa, 2009), students' attitudes toward feedback (e.g., Alamis, 2010; Lee, 2004, 2008a; Saito, 1994; Treglia, 2008; Weaver, 2006), and teacher's beliefs about feedback (e.g., Lee, 2004, 2008b). These studies suggested that feedback plays a pivotal role in helping L2 students improve the quality of their writing. This finding is in line with Vygotskian Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), in which learners need to be provided with scaffolding to be capable of reaching a stage of autonomy and accuracy (Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997). However, many of the studies have design flaws in terms of the small sample sizes or of not having a control group.

Other studies explored the effectiveness of other feedback techniques: oral feedback or teacher-student conferencing (e.g., Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992; Hyland, 2003; Marefat, 2005; Sheen, 2010a, 2010b), peer feedback (e.g., Kamimura, 2006; Rollinson, 2005; Tsui & Ng, 2000), reformulation (e.g., Hyland, 2003; Santos, Lopez-Serrano, & Manchon, 2010), audio-recorded feedback (e.g., Huang, 2000; Jordan, 2004), and computer-mediated commentary (e.g., Ferris, 2003; Hyland, 2003; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). However, most studies failed to examine which feedback mode was more effective in encouraging substantive revision. Even though some were comparative in nature, each study was conducted only with one group of English-as-a-second-language (ESL) learners. As a result, it is difficult to draw a conclusion with regard to the effectiveness of each feedback strategy

when it is applied in a classroom in Kachru's (1985) expanding circle or where English is taught as a foreign language. As Ferris (2003) put it, "What is preferable cannot be equated with what is effective, and what is effective for one student in one setting might be less so in another context" (p. 107).

Given the aforesaid insightful premise, this current quasi-experimental research attempts to compare teacher oral and written feedback in terms of perceptions and efficacy among Cambodian English-major students at the National University of Management (NUM henceforth).

Definition of Terms: Oral Feedback and Written Feedback

According to Rinvoluceri (1994),

the term [*feedback*] originates in biology and refers to the message that comes back to an organism that has acted on its environment. In biology it describes a neutral process, a link in the chain of action and reaction.

(p. 287)

In SLW, *feedback* can be defined as "input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision" (Keh, 1990, p. 294). The teacher suggests changes that will make the text easier for the audience to read, or that help the writer to be more aware of and sensitive to his/her reader. When the writer of any piece of writing understands the perspective of the reader, then that writer is able to see more clearly where points of confusion exist. As Keh (1990) elaborates, "The writer learns where he or she has misled or confused the reader by not supplying enough information, illogical organization, lack of development of ideas, or something like inappropriate word-choice or tense" (p. 295). In this study, feedback is operationalized in terms of oral and written feedback (Berg, Admiraal, & Pilot, 2006; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992; Hyland, 2003; Hyland & Hyland,

2006; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997; Sheen, 2010a, 2010b). Oral feedback (OF) refers to the provision of feedback on errors and weaknesses in content, organization, and language¹ through face-to-face conferencing lasting about five minutes for each student-writer. The teacher gives comments in the forms of questions, imperatives, praise, and suggestions; provides correct forms or structures in faulty sentences; indicates the location of errors; makes recasts; and gives prompts in the forms of elicitation, clarification requests, and repetition of errors. Written feedback (WF) refers to the correction of errors and weaknesses in content, organization, and language through writing. In WF, the teacher makes use of direct² versus indirect³ correction, coded⁴ versus uncoded⁵ feedback, and marginal⁶ versus end⁷ comments, in the forms of corrections, questions, imperatives, praise, and suggestions.

¹ Only in this operationalized part does the term *language* refer to *grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics and spelling*.

² Correct forms are provided above or near the incorrect ones.

³ Correct forms are not provided, but errors are indicated by codes (e.g., *VF* for verb forms, *T* for tense, etc) and by underlining, circling, or/and making with a tally.

⁴ An error is located and is marked by *T* for tense, *VF* for verb form, *WO* for wrong word order, and so on.

⁵ An error is underlined, circled, or/and marked with a tally in the margin for students to think and correct the error on their own.

⁶ Correct forms are provided along the margin of the paper or above/near the incorrect forms.

⁷ Errors and weaknesses are put into groups with overall comments provided.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Written Feedback

A number of studies have been done to examine what should be commented on in L2 student writing for substantive revision. For example, Ellis (1994), reviewing several studies on what effect formal corrections have on language acquisition, concluded that the learners whose errors are corrected improve the accuracy of producing existential structures (i.e. *There is/are*). However, the Ellis-reviewed studies entail only focused feedback, so formal correction may not work if multiple linguistic features are targeted. Kepner (1991), in a comparative study of feedback on content and grammar, found that students who receive content feedback produce writing that has better content than those who receive grammar feedback. She also found that the group of students who received formal feedback did not produce fewer errors than the uncorrected group. In another study, Leki (1991) asked 100 ESL freshmen to complete questionnaires to examine how effective feedback was and how they reacted to the positive and negative comments on both form and content. She found that correcting errors in both form and content is beneficial since good writing is viewed as equated with error-free writing.

Moving a step away from what should be commented on, several studies have been carried out to investigate how errors should be corrected to improve student writing. According to Ellis (1994), formal feedback is helpful to L2 acquisition only if problems are corrected implicitly or only if the errors are induced and then corrected. In a similar vein, Weaver (2006) explored how 44 students perceived written feedback and if the feedback that they received showed a student-centered approach to learning. Through analysis of interviews, questionnaires, and feedback content, she found that teacher comments are useful only if they are specific and clear, give sufficient guidance, focus on positive points, and are related to

assessment criteria. Ferris (1997), examining over 1,600 marginal and end comments written on 110 first drafts by 47 university ESL students, found that marginal comments are more immediate and easier for students to locate errors and revise, whereas end comments can be more useful for writing development since they summarize major problems. Marginal comments are also deemed to be more motivating since the reader is actively engaged with the writer's text (Goldstein, 2004, as cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

In a related vein, much research has focused on whether comment types influence revisions and which types are more, if not the most, effective. For example, Sugita (2006) analyzed 115 revised papers by 75 EFL students at a private university in Japan. He found that imperatives in feedback are more effective than statements and questions. In contrast, Conrad and Goldstein (1990, as cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2006) found that imperatives, declaratives, or questions in feedback were less effective than the type of problem in the feedback. They further explained that problems related with facts and details were successfully revised by 50%, while those dealing with argumentation and analysis were successfully revised only by 10%. Treglia (2008) interviewed two teachers and fourteen students in a community college in the United States to examine how the students reacted to the feedback given by the teachers in the forms of mitigation and unmitigation. This study showed that the students saw both mitigated and directive comments easy to revise, but they liked the feedback in the forms of acknowledgements, suggestions, and choices. Alamis (2010) investigated the reactions and responses of 141 students towards teacher written feedback. Using questionnaires and student essays, Alamis found that praise is superior to criticisms and that content feedback should entail suggestions rather than the three forms: questions, direct corrections, and indirect corrections. However, this study is a result of opinion-based responses, so it may be difficult to conclude that its findings were valid.

Many other researchers have investigated further to find the extent to which teacher written feedback should be made explicit and sufficient in order to encourage comprehension and revision. Enginarlar (1993), for example, used 20-item questionnaires to examine the attitudes of 47 freshmen to coded feedback and brief comments in an English Composition I class. This study revealed that the participants like the two feedback types, seeing review work as a type of co-operative learning in which work and responsibility are shared by students and teachers. Ferris and Roberts (2001) also explored how explicit error feedback should be to help students to self-revise their papers. By analyzing papers written by 72 university ESL students, they found that the treatment groups outdo the control group in relation to self-revision, but the coded feedback group is not statistically different from the uncoded feedback group. Ferris and Roberts also concluded that less explicit feedback seems to facilitate self-revision just as well as corrections coded by error type. Ferris (2003), in her review of three key studies, suggested that comprehensive feedback (i.e. All errors are marked.) is preferable to selective feedback (i.e. Only some errors are marked.) and that indirect correction (i.e. coded and uncoded errors) is more effective than direct correction (i.e. Teachers make corrections for students). Lee (2004) analyzed teacher error correction tasks and used questionnaires to and follow-up interviews with teachers and students to examine their perspectives on error correction practices in a Hong Kong secondary writing classroom. Like Ferris's (2003) reviewed studies, this research showed that comprehensive error feedback encourages substantive revision and that students depend on teachers to correct their errors.

Oral Feedback

The effectiveness of oral feedback for improving student writing is still uncertain (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Several studies have examined teacher-student dialogue, and found that the

success of conferencing depends on how interactive it is. For example, Hyland (2003) claimed that conferencing is fruitful when students are actively involved, asking questions, clarifying meaning, and arguing instead of simply accepting advice. Johnson (1993, as cited in Gulley, 2010) did a qualitative study and concluded that “the question, a tool often used by teachers and tutors during a writing conference, can be ineffective in eliciting a meaningful response from students” (p. 13).

By contrast, Carnicelli (1980, as cited in Gulley, 2010), in his qualitative study among English-major students at the University of New Hampshire, showed that conferencing is preferable to in-class teaching. He also noted that “conference might fail if the teacher does not listen to the student, if the student feels insecure, or if the student does not remember the teacher’s comments” (p. 13). However, this study has a design flaw in terms of not having a control group, so it is hard to conclude if such a preference is a result of conferencing, instruction, or practice. In his response to Carnicelli, Keh (1990), in her article review, pointed out that conferencing fails when teachers take an authoritarian role, dominate the conversation, and pay no attention to what their students ask during the dialogue. She also noted that “teacher-students conferencing” is more effective than “teacher-student conferencing” since the former allows students to learn about ideas and problems from one another.

Moving a step away from the teacher-student interaction, several studies have focused on student-related variables that may affect the substantive revision of student writing. Marefat (2005), for example, examined the perception about the efficacy of oral feedback on the writing of 17 male and female Iranian EFL students. She found that the males could write paragraphs better than the females, whereas the females outperformed the males in essay writing. She concluded that the students can produce pieces of writing with better quality,

regardless of the feedback technique. Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997, as cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2006) investigated how four writing teachers had conferences with lower-ability and higher-ability students. They found that however useful teacher suggestions were for revision, the lower-ability students seemed to use advice more often than their counterparts. The higher-ability students were more self-confident, and they often used teacher suggestions as a base to revise their own writing. However, the findings of these studies are based on small sample sizes, so it is unclear if conferencing strategies and other contextual factors play a part in improving student writing.

In another study, Goldstein and Conrad (1990, as cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2006) noted that the L2 learners having cultural or social inhibitions about engaging informally with teachers are most likely to passively and unreflectively use teacher advice to revise their writing. The co-researchers found that only students negotiating meaning well in conferences were able to perform revision successfully. This finding was similar to that of Williams (2004, as cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2006) in that students were successful in using advice when teacher-suggestions were direct, when students actively engaged in negotiating meaning, and when they took notes of teacher comments, during the dialogues. Williams also added that negotiation is a precondition for revising higher-level texts, although her research suggested that conferencing has greater impact on correcting local errors (as cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2006). However, the findings of all the four studies are based on the small sample sizes, so it is unclear if conferencing strategies and other contextual factors play a part in improving student writing.

In line with the studies grounded in SLW, a number of studies have been done based on SLA to investigate the impacts of indirect and direct corrective feedback, focusing on single linguistic structures. For example, Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006, as cited in Sheen, 2010b)

did an experimental study to examine whether implicit or explicit feedback is more helpful for adult ESL learners in acquiring the regular past tense. They put the students into three groups: the group with implicit recasts, the group with explicit metalinguistic feedback, and the group without any corrective feedback. The findings showed that both implicit and explicit feedback do not have any impact on the immediate post-tests, but the latter is more effective than the former on the delayed post-tests. In another study, Sheen (2007, as cited in Sheen, 2010b) found that explicit corrective feedback is superior to implicit corrective feedback in terms of formal acquisition in both the immediate and delayed post-tests when the former is provided in the form of metalanguage and the latter in the form of recasts.

Several other studies have also been done to compare input-providing feedback in the form of recasts with output-prompting feedback in the forms of elicitation, clarification requests, repetition of error, and metalinguistic clues. Lyster (2004, as cited in Sheen, 2010b) did a study with a group of fifth-grade French learners to examine whether recasts or output-prompting feedback methods encourage more accuracy in using articles agreeing with the gender of nouns. The study revealed that the output-prompting group alone outdid the control group on all eight measures of acquisition. Ammar and Spada (2006, as cited in Sheen, 2010b) investigated if recasts are more effective than prompts in the acquisition of possessive pronouns among six-grade learners in intensive ESL classes. They found that prompts were more helpful only for students with pre-test scores below 50 percent, whereas recasts and prompts together were less effective. However, these studies entailed only focused corrective feedback, meaning that only one linguistic feature was targeted.

Therefore, the results are difficult to generalize since the effects of recasts and prompts might be different if multiple linguistic features are corrected.

Summary

Taken together, much of the research on the virtue of written feedback over student writing discusses what should be commented on (i.e. form vs. content), explains how to deliver feedback effectively (i.e. implicit vs. explicit, coded vs. uncoded, marginal vs. end, comprehensive vs. selective), and examines what feedback form is superior (i.e. imperative, statement, question, mitigation vs. unmitigation, praise vs. criticism). The findings of the studies were vague and controversial owing to varied designs, methods, and contexts, although the studies suggested that written feedback was of great value in substantive revision. With regard to oral feedback, interactive nature (i.e. student-centeredness and engagement) determined the success of conferencing, and student-related variables (i.e. sex, proficiency level, social inhibition) influenced the development of student writing. Several experimental studies showed that explicit feedback is more effective than implicit responses. Output-prompting was more helpful only for higher-ability learners, whereas recasts and prompts were less effective for lower-ability students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As can be seen, to the author's knowledge, no research had been conducted before to explore the comparative effectiveness of oral and written feedback in improving student writing in the context where English is taught as a foreign language. Accordingly, the present study sets out to look for answers to the following two research questions:

1. How do Cambodian English-major students at NUM perceive oral and written feedback?
2. Which feedback strategy, oral or written, is more effective in improving student writing as measured by writing performance?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Thirty-seven students participated in the present study, 19 males and 18 females, with an average age of 22.59 (SD = .62) years. They were English-major students at NUM, and they had been learning English since Grade 7 of Cambodian Secondary Education under the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MoEYS). The subjects were selected from each English class of the university based on their pre-treatment scores on a 150-word paragraph. Nineteen subjects were put into the oral feedback (OF) group, and 18 into the written feedback (WF) group. A control group was excluded from this study for two main reasons. First, it is believed that feedback is an essential element, so to get students to write without feedback would be unfair to them. Second, it is claimed that one of the things that students expect from teachers is feedback, so to deny them feedback would be unethical.

Instruments

The three instruments employed in this study were questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and student paragraphs, all of which were used for data triangulation. The Affective and Effective Responses Feedback (AERF) questionnaire, formulated by the researcher, consists of three sections with a total of 22 items: Section A for demographic data (A1-4), Section B for effective responses (B1-9), and Section C for affective responses (C1-8). A five-point Likert scale (1 = “Strongly Disagree”, 5 = “Strongly Agree”) was utilized for the 17 items in Sections B and C, and several items (B1, B3, B5, B8, C2, C5, and C8) were reverse-ordered to reduce response set bias. A statistical validity analysis showed that AERF was reasonably reliable with a Cronbach’s Alpha value of .853.

The semi-structured interviews, each of which lasted 30-45 minutes, were conducted to collect in-depth data from eight participants with four from each group. The interview protocol consists of fifteen questions, some of which were slightly adjusted to the actual interview constraints so that more authentic, in-depth, and valid data could be obtained from the respondents. Along this line, the questions were arranged in order of difficulty to make the informants feel more comfortable about how they perceived the role and efficacy of the feedback strategy given by the teacher within two months in promoting the quality of their writing.

The student paragraphs were collected before and after the two-month treatment and inter-rated by three well-trained teachers, each with more than four years of experience in teaching writing skills to English-major university students. The scoring was based on the researcher-formulated criteria divided into content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics and spelling, each of which earns equal marks (1 = “Very Poor”, 5 = “Excellent”), with a total score of 25. The reliability of the inter-rated scores employed by the present study was .789 for the pre- and .806 for the post-treatment scores, using Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of internal consistency.

Procedures

Upon receipt of approval letters for this study from the Chair of the Foreign Languages Center (FLC) of NUM and the University Rector, the researcher selected classes for both OF and WF groups and sent out informed consent forms.

There were informational meetings with both groups. It was made clear that this study would not affect their course grades. They would respond to the questionnaires anonymously, and one *Certificate of Recognition* would be given at the end of the treatment to those who achieved an overall score higher than 80 percent to motivate them to write and incorporate

the feedback they had received from one week to another into their revision process. Data collection was conducted as follows.

First, the students wrote a 150-word paragraph about “The Person I Admire in My Life”. The paragraphs were then inter-rated by the three lecturers. Based on the results, the participants were divided into two groups of similar size (OF = 19, WF = 18) and overall equivalent writing competence. An independent-samples t-test revealed that the overall mean score of the OF group was 16.47 (SD = 3.042) and that of the WF group was 16.46 (SD = 3.045).

The treatment was conducted for two months with single-draft feedback provided on each of the three paragraph types taught during this study: narrative, process, and compare-contrast. The topics included “My Happy Story,” “How to Make a Nice Cup of Coffee,” and “Rural Life and City Life.” The feedback on each topic was comprehensive and targeted all aspects of writing: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics and spelling. Various feedback strategies of each commentary mode were employed to ensure that both groups would receive similar treatment condition and that the groups would provide more authentic responses to the research questions. The delivery of feedback was undertaken with specific reference to the operationalized terms from the beginning of this study (Refer to pages 3-4.).

Two days after the two-month study, the participants wrote a 150-word paragraph about one of three topics (i.e. “My Bedroom,” “My House,” or “My Favorite Place”), completed the questionnaires consisting of both closed- and open-ended items, and took part in the in-depth interviews conducted in Khmer language. Finally, the data obtained from the questionnaires and student paragraphs were coded and input into SPSS 19.0 with the utilization of a one-sample t-test, an independent-samples t-test, and a paired-samples t-test for data analysis, using the test value of 3.5 and the significant level of .05. Then, the data from the interviews

was transcribed, checked for accuracy, coded with a short-hand way of describing what was said, analyzed with a deductive approach, and finally reported as part of the research results.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research question 1: How do Cambodian English-major students at NUM perceive oral and written feedback?

An independent-samples *t*-test shows that the OF group was not significantly different from the WF group in both the affective and effective responses at the significant level of .05 (Refer to Appendix 4.1). This non-significance was largely due to the opinion-based responses and the small sample sizes. A one-sample *t*-test was, therefore, employed instead to provide descriptive statistics by comparing the mean scores and standard deviations of the OF group and the WF group with the test value of 3.5 rather than with those of the WF group and the OF group, respectively (i.e. OF group vs. WF group, and vice versa). Table 1 shows that the OF students had highly positive attitudes towards oral feedback in the forms of detailed correction ($M = 4.42, SD = .838, p = .000$), comprehensive suggestion ($M = 4.26, SD = .806, p = .001$), and sincere praise ($M = 4.00, SD = .816, p = .016$), which thus enabled them to write with increased confidence ($M = 4.26, SD = .452, p = .000$). This preference was due to the fact that oral feedback was perceived as the cornerstone of building closer bonds ($M = 4.16, SD = .765, p = .001$) between the student and the teacher who always paid special attention to each other during each dialogue ($M = 4.58, SD = .507, p = .000$). However, no statistical differences were significant in motivation (C5. *It encouraged me to work harder on my revision.*) and sufficiency (C8. *It was helpful enough for my revision.*), the *p*-values of which constituted .137 and .497, respectively.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for affective responses of the OF group

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
C1. It made me feel I had a more personal and human relationship with my teacher.	4.16	.765	3.750	18	.001
C2. I did not feel more confident about my writing. (RO ⁸)	4.26	.452	7.353	18	.000
C3. It gave more details about the errors in my writing.	4.42	.838	4.793	18	.000
C4. It gave more details about how I can improve my writing.	4.26	.806	4.129	18	.001
C5. It discouraged me from working harder on my revision. (RO)	3.84	.958	1.556	18	.137*
C6. Praise was helpful for my revision.	4.00	.816	2.669	18	.016
C7. I got special attention from my teacher.	4.58	.507	9.271	18	.000
C8. It was not helpful enough for my revision. (RO)	3.68	1.157	.694	18	.497*

* $p > .05$ (not significant)

As can be seen in Table 2, WF students preferred written feedback in the forms of comprehensive correction ($M = 4.39$, $SD = .698$, $p = .000$), detailed suggestion ($M = 4.39$, $SD = .608$, $p = .000$), and sincere praise ($M = 4.22$, $SD = .647$, $p = .000$), to make them feel more confident about their writing ($M = 4.00$, $SD = .594$, $p = .002$). A one-sample *t*-test also indicates that statistical differences were significant in the perception of receiving special attention (C7) [$M = 4.22$, $SD = .808$, $p = .001$], but not in relationship (C1) [$M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.037$, $p = .655$], encouragement (C5) [$M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.029$, $p = .055$], and sufficiency (C8) [$M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.138$, $p = .080$]. Taking Tables 1 and 2 together, oral feedback, unlike written feedback, builds closer bonds between the teacher and the student because the former tends to be more interpersonal in terms of reciprocal attention during the dialogue. While written feedback including encouragement and personal, text-specific comments can also strengthen teacher-student relationships, it is not the same experience as face-to-face negotiation and questions.

⁸ RO stands for reverse-ordered.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for affective responses of the WF group

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
C1. It made me feel I had a more personal and human relationship with my teacher.	3.61	1.037	.455	17	.655*
C2. I did not feel more confident about my writing. (RO)	4.00	.594	3.571	17	.002
C3. It gave more details about the errors in my writing.	4.39	.698	5.404	17	.000
C4. It gave more details about how I can improve my writing.	4.39	.608	6.206	17	.000
C5. It discouraged me from working harder on my revision. (RO)	4.00	1.029	2.062	17	.055*
C6. Praise was helpful for my revision.	4.22	.647	4.738	17	.000
C7. I got special attention from my teacher.	4.22	.808	3.790	17	.001
C8. It was not helpful enough for my revision. (RO)	3.00	1.138	-1.87	17	.080*

* $p > .05$ (not significant)

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the perceptions of the OF group about the impact of oral feedback on improving student writing. A one-sample *t*-test was performed with the test value of 3.5 and the *p*-value of .05. The results show that oral feedback was viewed as effective in encouraging substantive revision of organization (B4) [$M = 4.32$, $SD = .671$, $p = .000$], clarity (B1) [$M = 4.05$, $SD = .780$, $p = .006$], content (B5) [$M = 4.00$, $SD = .577$, $p = .001$], and grammar (B2) [$M = 3.95$, $SD = .705$, $p = .013$]. Significantly, oral feedback was also seen as enabling students to use specific linguistic features in conformity to different genres or text-types ($M = 3.95$, $SD = .705$, $p = .013$). Such an improvement was strongly confirmed by the overarching item (B9) [$M = 4.47$, $SD = .697$, $p = .000$], but differences were not statistically significant in lexical choice (B3) [$M = 3.74$, $SD = .733$, $p = .176$], punctuation (B6) [$M = 3.63$, $SD = .831$, $p = .499$], and spelling (B7) [$M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.219$, $p = .926$] prior to and following the two-month treatment.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for effective responses of the OF group

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
B1. I still could not express my ideas more clearly. (RO)	4.05	.780	3.089	18	.006
B2. I made fewer grammatical errors.	3.95	.705	2.766	18	.013
B3. I still could not use vocabulary more appropriately. (RO)	3.74	.733	1.407	18	.176*
B4. I could organize my writing better.	4.32	.671	5.299	18	.000
B5. I still could not write with better content. (RO)	4.00	.577	3.775	18	.001
B6. I made fewer errors with punctuation.	3.63	.831	.690	18	.499*
B7. I made few errors with spelling.	3.53	1.219	.094	18	.926*
B8. I still could not use vocabulary and grammar appropriately for each type of paragraph. (RO)	3.95	.705	2.766	18	.013
B9. I liked it because it helped improve the quality of my writing.	4.47	.697	6.092	18	.000

* $p > .05$ (not significant)

From Table 4, written feedback was perceived as very effective as it resulted in gains in writing competence (B9. *I liked it because it helped improve the quality of my writing.*) [$M = 4.06$, $SD = .802$, $p = .009$], which covered such areas as clarity (B1. *I could express my ideas more clearly.*) [$M = 4.06$, $SD = .416$, $p = .000$], lexical choice (B3. *I could use words more appropriately.*) [$M = 4.06$, $SD = .802$, $p = .009$], organization (B4. *I could organize my writing better.*) [$M = 4.61$, $SD = .502$, $p = .000$], and content (B5. *I could write with better content.*) [$M = 4.33$, $SD = .594$, $p = .000$]. Differences between the pre- and the post-treatments were also very significant in the appropriate use of linguistic features for each type of paragraph ($M = 4.22$, $SD = .548$, $p = .000$), but not in B2 (*I made fewer grammatical errors.*) [$M = 3.83$, $SD = .924$, $p = .144$], B6 (*I made fewer errors with punctuation.*) [$M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.290$, $p = .719$], and B7 (*I made fewer errors with spelling.*) [$M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.043$, $p = .193$].

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for effective responses of the WF group

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
B1. I still could not express my ideas more clearly. (RO)	4.06	.416	5.664	17	.000
B2. I made fewer grammatical errors.	3.83	.924	1.531	17	.144*
B3. I still could not use vocabulary more appropriately. (RO)	4.06	.802	2.938	17	.009
B4. I could organize my writing better.	4.61	.502	9.397	17	.000
B5. I still could not write with better content. (RO)	4.33	.594	5.951	17	.000
B6. I made fewer errors with punctuation.	3.61	1.290	.366	17	.719*
B7. I made few errors with spelling.	3.83	1.043	1.356	17	.193*
B8. I still could not use vocabulary and grammar appropriately for each type of paragraph. (RO)	4.22	.548	5.588	17	.000
B9. I liked it because it helped improve the quality of my writing.	4.06	.802	2.938	17	.009

* $p > .05$ (not significant)

Along with the aforementioned questionnaire, the semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect in-depth data from eight respondents with four from each treatment group, and all the quotes presented in this section were translated from Khmer (mother tongue) into English and double-checked for conceptual accuracy (Refer to Appendices 4.2 and 4.3). The findings showed that equal numbers of the respondents (OF/WF = 4) discussed the ways in which they felt positive about oral and written feedback. Their responses fell into two categories: affective and effective. The affective responses entail the strategies for feedback delivery and the areas on which the learners prefer the commentary to focus. The effective responses include the comprehensibility of the feedback, the role of the responses in building teacher-student relationships, and the effects of the feedback on improving student writing.

Comprehensibility. All the four OF respondents found the feedback mode favorable for comprehension and revision, especially the responses in the forms of corrections (N = 4) and suggestions (N = 2). The effective advantage was explained in the following terms. Either

oral feedback was comprehensive (N = 3) since negotiation and questions tended to be facilitative and immediate, or all the four learners were attentive to what was conveyed to them during and after the dialogues. As with the OF respondents, three of the four WF respondents perceived written feedback as easy to understand and revise, with only one mentioning the comprehensiveness of written feedback. All the four WF respondents pinpointed that they read multiple times the feedback content prior to revision, and that this activity, apart from the comprehensible input (i.e. feedback), may act as a catalyst that enhanced their comprehension.

When I arrived home, I revised my writing by reading my notes and writing. I read the notes two or three times before revising my writing. I could understand around 80-90 percent because I was able to ask you immediately when I didn't understand. I think it was quite detailed because I could revise my writing by using the information.

[OF-SC]

I went home, and I read the feedback for several times (three or four times). I understood it around 80 percent, but I didn't understand well when the mistakes were only underlined. I could revise my writing around 85 percent. The easy point to understand was that you told me what types of mistakes I made. What I found hard to understand was that you just underlined. I didn't know what you wanted me to do and what to revise.

[WF-SA]

Improvement. In the interviews, all the four learners recognized that oral feedback equipped them with increased writing performance. Three of them were more able to write with better content and organization, while half (N = 2) made fewer linguistic errors in the global errors (i.e. sentence structure and lexical choice) and the local ones (i.e. mechanics and spelling). This development was sometimes explained in the following terms. Either they got exposed

to the areas on which the responses focused, or the students, in addition to challenging themselves to think and process the inputs, might have referred to other external sources (i.e. dictionaries, grammar books, and peers) for more helps. Like the OF group, all the four WF respondents mentioned that written feedback not only enabled them to write with increased confidence but also with higher quality, and half of the learners indicated that they made a remarkable improvement in such two essential areas as language and organization.

I don't make many grammar mistakes now, and I can write topic and concluding sentence better. Before, I wrote two sentences for topic sentence, but now I can write it correctly. [OF-SD]

I think my writing is better than before. For example, I know how to write a compare and contrast paragraph, for example, what tenses to use, use of adjective, use of prepositions, and one more is a process paragraph. Before that I didn't know how to write a process. [WF-SC]

This finding is in line with that of Marefat (2005) and Gulley (2010) in that students can produce pieces of writing with improved quality in the micro- to the macro-aspects, regardless of the feedback method (i.e. oral, written, or a combination of the two).

Relationships. All the four learners felt positive about oral feedback in building teacher-student bonds, yet none mentioned the virtue of the feedback technique over gaining special attention from the teacher typically viewed as a “classroom facilitator” or an “interlocutor” rather than as an “authority figure” or a “knowledge provider”. Only one WF respondent indicated the role of WF in making the student feel close to the teacher, even though three of the learners perceived the teacher as paying his attention to delivering good feedback to them. This finding is in conformity with that of Tables 1 and 2 (C1. *It made me feel I had a more personal and human relationship with my teacher.*), revealing that oral feedback was superior

to written feedback in cementing teacher-student relationships, but the two findings (i.e. quantitative vs. qualitative) are contradictory with regard to “teacher attention”. One possible interpretation for the difference here is that oral feedback might be seen largely entailing output-prompting and suggestions, whereas as to written feedback, “teacher attention” might be equated with “the presence of red marks”.

I liked my teacher very much because he was very friendly and helpful. I felt very close to him because we met each other face to face and discussed what was good and what was not good in my writing. I felt that we were like friends sharing ideas and helping each other in correcting mistakes and weaknesses. [OF-SB]

I felt that written feedback made me feel distant from my teachers. It wasn't so friendly if compared to oral feedback. However, I felt more confident in writing after receiving written feedback for two months. I felt that my teacher paid his special attention to my writing, and I felt that he read my paper carefully because of the red marks that I saw on my writing. [WF-SA]

Focused areas. While the OF respondents needed feedback on language (N = 2) and organization (N = 2), the WF learners wanted written feedback to focus on language (N = 3), organization (N = 2), and content (N = 2). The interesting question that arises is why the preference of content feedback was heterogeneous between the two groups. To some extent, the difference can be explained simply by acknowledging the gaps of general and topical knowledge among the WF learners.

I want you to correct my writing in organization the most because it will be difficult for readers to understand my writing if my ideas aren't in the chronological order. [OF-SB]

I think my writing won't be good if there are many errors in grammar and spelling. Actually, they are both important. [...] Although I can use grammar and language well in my writing, it isn't good if my ideas aren't organized properly. [OF-SA]

I wanted you to comment on the content so that I could write with meaning-rich papers, and then on grammar because I didn't know much about grammar. For organization, I think it was unimportant because I could read the models and adapted them. [WF-SB]

I would like you to focus on ideas, then paragraph development, and finally vocabulary and grammar. [WF-SC]

Feedback strategies. While recognizing the necessity of feedback foci in writing development, the OF respondents found sincere praise (N = 4) preferable to suggestions (N = 3) and criticisms (N = 2). The respondents also preferred sentence-to-sentence responses (N = 3) mainly if they were in the forms of imperatives (N = 2) and implicit corrections (N = 2) through locating errors, making recasts, and giving prompts. On the other hand, all the four WF respondents found praise, suggestions, and criticisms equally important for the development of their writing. The learners wanted both end (N = 3) and marginal comments in the forms of direct corrections (N = 2) and indirect corrections (N = 3), and they also felt oriented toward imperatives (N = 3) and questions (N = 2).

As I told, I feel happy when getting praise from you. But I will feel disappointed and reluctant to write more when I know that I have made so many mistakes. [OF-SD]

If you do so, I will feel slightly discouraged to do writing because of my too many mistakes. You had better give me some suggestions whenever necessary if the mistakes aren't critical. [OF-SA]

I think no red marks confused me because I assumed that it was correct. I wanted all my mistakes to be corrected so that I could avoid making the same mistakes in the future. I couldn't correct my mistakes by myself. [WF-SA]

I think praise is important because this makes me happy, and I also know I've improved my writing. This will stimulate me to study harder in order to write a good paragraph. [WF-SD]

Despite having positive attitudes toward the feedback technique, the same respondents also mentioned how negative they felt about the commentary, and their responses were grouped into the strategies for response delivery and the sufficiency of the feedback contribution.

Feedback strategies. Three of the four OF respondents found overall comments playing no role in encouraging substantive revision, and two of them also found oral feedback undesirable when it was delivered in such forms as criticism, statements, and questions. By contrast, the WF interviewees found non-facilitative the feedback in the forms of statements (N = 3) and vague questions (N = 2), and this feedback mode was again viewed as disadvantageous if it was confined only to content (N = 2) and organization (N = 2).

It isn't really efficient because too many criticisms can make me feel less confident in writing. However, constructive criticisms are also good for me. [...] Because the question may imply that I have made mistakes, so I have to recheck my writing. However, if you are always saying my writing is incorrect, I may get disappointed. [OF-SA]

I prefer overall comments because correcting my mistakes isn't redundant. [...] Because when you just tell me the types of mistakes, I can find those mistakes myself, but if you correct those mistakes directly for me, I can't improve my writing at all. The reason is that I just copy all the corrections from you. [OF-SD]

I liked imperatives. But it would be better if you asked questions in the margin and gave suggestions at the end of my writing. This made me think. I found the questions, for example “Is it necessary?”, the most difficult to understand; I felt it was unclear and not specific. [WF-SB]

Sufficiency. The same numbers of the OF and WF respondents (four learners in each group) indicated that none of the feedback modes alone would suffice for the development of student writing, and that the two feedback techniques were proposed to be combined for clarification and addition. This finding is consistent with that of Tables 1 and 2 (C8. *It was not helpful enough for my revision.*).

No, I think it's not enough because I just get a few ideas and suggestions from you. Actually, I need more documents related to my writing and another feedback type, written feedback in particular. Hence, my writing will be much better. [OF-SB]

I don't think so because sometimes I got confused when getting the feedback from you immediately. However, if there are other strategies besides this, it will be better as well. [OF-SD]

It was good, but it wasn't informative enough. I think if I could receive oral feedback, it would be more helpful. Sometimes it was detailed; sometimes not. My teacher didn't tell me what points I made mistakes in. He just told me, “Your paragraph isn't compare and contrast, but narrative.” I didn't know what to do. [WF-SB]

[...] Because written feedback needs more explanation why this is wrong. Written feedback should be followed by oral feedback to attract my attention, and I can ask the teacher questions. [WF-SC]

Research question 2: Which feedback strategy, oral or written, is more effective in improving student writing as measured by writing performance?

Table 5 displays the results of the improvement in overall writing competence and in five specific areas. An independent-samples *t*-test was performed to investigate the significant differences in the scores of the treatment groups at the *p*-value of .05, and this procedure typically assumes equality of variances based on Levene’s test for homogeneity. The results in the pre-treatment for both groups reveal that there were no significant differences between them. The table below also allowed us to assume that at the beginning of the treatment process, both groups started from a similar level, meaning that they were equivalent in terms of writing competence, so the classroom experiment could be undertaken.

Table 5. Pre-treatment mean scores and scores of the WF and OF groups by area

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Content	WF	3.8704	.75351	1.962	109	.052*
	OF	3.6140	.61975			
Organization	WF	3.2593	1.06727	.485	109	.629*
	OF	3.1579	1.13057			
Grammar	WF	3.0000	.84675	-1.203	109	.231*
	OF	3.1754	.68460			
Vocabulary	WF	2.9259	.63992	-1.533	109	.128*
	OF	3.1228	.70888			
Mechanics and Spelling	WF	3.3704	.85332	.012	109	.990*
	OF	3.3684	.83733			
Total	WF	16.4630	3.04503	-.019	109	.985*
	OF	16.4737	3.04200			

* *p* > .05 (not significant)

An independent-samples *t*-test was also utilized to analyze performance differences within the two groups following the treatment period. As Table 6 shows, there were no significant differences in the scores of the two treatment groups with regard to the improvement in content ($p = .975$), organization ($p = .430$), grammar ($p = .668$), vocabulary ($p = .495$), and mechanics and spelling ($p = .169$). This indicates that both groups were equivalent in writing competence and improvement, if any. This finding is similar to that of the interviews in that oral feedback was as effective as written feedback in developing student writing performance and competence. It suggests that the learners made improvement in writing, regardless of feedback technique, and that the internal quality of each feedback mode determines the success of student revision.

Table 6. Post-treatment mean scores and scores of the WF and OF groups by area

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Content	WF	4.0926	.83029	.032	109	.975*
	OF	4.0877	.78560			
Organization	WF	3.9444	.83365	.793	109	.430*
	OF	3.8246	.75882			
Grammar	WF	3.5370	.81757	.430	109	.668*
	OF	3.4737	.73449			
Vocabulary	WF	3.4074	.65929	-.685	109	.495*
	OF	3.4912	.63027			
Mechanics and Spelling	WF	3.5185	1.09442	-1.385	96.918	.169*
	OF	3.7719	.80217			
Total	WF	18.5370	3.52732	-.068	109	.946*
	OF	18.5789	2.97578			

* $p > .05$ (not significant)

A paired-samples *t*-test compared pre- and post-treatment mean scores and standard deviations to investigate whether such an improvement was statistically significant. Table 7 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of the OF group before and after the treatment. A paired-samples *t*-test indicated that the OF group made a significant improvement in all five aspects of writing [$t(56) = -4.50, p = .000, d = -.59$]. The differences in the scores were statistically significant in content [$t(56) = -3.93, p = .000, d = -.51$], organization [$t(56) = -4.04, p = .000, d = -.54$], grammar [$t(56) = -2.67, p = .010, d = -.35$], vocabulary [$t(56) = -3.32, p = .002, d = -.44$], and mechanics and spelling [$t(56) = -3.17, p = .002, d = -.42$]. Oral feedback is a catalyst that enables the students to write with better content, make fewer errors with linguistic features, and use vocabulary and grammar parallel to each type of paragraph.

The fact that richer content was produced by the OF group may be due to two main reasons. First, the students might have done a fair amount of autonomous reading during the treatment with a view of the teacher as an “informed reader” (reading for meaning) rather than as a “critical judge” (reading for accuracy). Second, oral feedback was clear and comprehensive in nature through its convenience and immediacy for negotiation and questions between the teacher and the student during conferences. Hyland (2003) claimed that conferencing succeeds when students are actively involved, asking questions, clarifying meaning, and arguing instead of simply accepting advice.

Table 7. Pre- and post-treatment mean scores and scores of the OF group by area

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pair 1	Content Pre-Test	3.6140	.61975	-3.937	56	.000
	Content Post-Test	4.0877	.78560			
Pair 2	Organization Pre-Test	3.1579	1.13057	-4.046	56	.000
	Organization Post-Test	3.8246	.75882			
Pair 3	Grammar Pre-Test	3.1754	.68460	-2.667	56	.010
	Grammar Post-Test	3.4737	.73449			
Pair 4	Vocabulary Pre-Test	3.1228	.70888	-3.322	56	.002
	Vocabulary Post-Test	3.4912	.63027			
Pair 5	Mechanics and Spelling Pre-Test	3.3684	.83733	-3.170	56	.002
	Mechanics and Spelling Post-Test	3.7719	.80217			
Pair 6	Total Pre-Test	16.4737	3.04200	-4.498	56	.000
	Total Post-Test	18.5789	2.97578			

Table 8 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of the WF group before and after the two-month treatment. A paired-samples *t*-test indicated that written feedback was of great value in encouraging overall substantive revision [$t(53) = -3.60, p = .001, d = -.49$], yet such an improvement was made only in organization [$t(53) = -4.11, p = .000, d = -.56$], grammar [$t(53) = -3.50, p = .001, d = -.47$], and vocabulary [$t(53) = -3.52, p = .001, d = -.48$]. The differences in the scores were not statistically significant in content [$t(53) = -1.81, p = .077, d = -.24$] or mechanics and spelling [$t(53) = -.79, p = .433, d = -.11$]. The reason for the lack of improvement in content can be explained by the briefness and vagueness of the feedback method (WF) which thus encourages the students to see the teacher as a critical judge rather than an informed reader. With content, the student needs to be able to come up with new ideas and/or rethink his or her argument, which is more difficult than correcting a verb tense or rearranging sentences in a paragraph. Errors in mechanics and spelling remain possibly because the students are not attentive enough in writing and proofreading, thus

resulting in typographical errors. This seems to suggest that a process-based approach to teaching writing should be adopted with a focus on proofreading and revision stages to reduce such local errors.

Table 8. Pre- and post-treatment mean scores and scores of the WF group by area

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pair 1	Content Pre-Test	3.8704	.75351	-1.806	53	.077*
	Content Post-Test	4.0926	.83029			
Pair 2	Organization Pre-Test	3.2593	1.06727	-4.107	53	.000
	Organization Post-Test	3.9444	.83365			
Pair 3	Grammar Pre-Test	3.0000	.84675	-3.499	53	.001
	Grammar Post-Test	3.5370	.81757			
Pair 4	Vocabulary Pre-Test	2.9259	.63992	-3.522	53	.001
	Vocabulary Post-Test	3.4074	.65929			
Pair 5	Mechanics and Spelling Pre-Test	3.3704	.85332	-.789	53	.433*
	Mechanics and Spelling Post-Test	3.5185	1.09442			
Pair 6	Total Pre-Test	16.4630	3.04503	-3.601	53	.001
	Total Post-Test	18.5370	3.52732			

* $p > .05$ (not significant)

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purposes of this comparative research were to examine (1) how Cambodian English-major students at NUM perceive oral and written feedback, and (2) which feedback strategy is more effective in improving student writing as measured by writing performance. The findings of the present study are summarized as follows:

Research question 1. The OF group felt more oriented towards oral feedback than the WF group felt towards written feedback. The OF group became closer to the teacher, felt more confident in writing, received comprehensive error-correction, and obtained special attention from the teacher. On the other hand, the WF group performed better than the OF group in organizing ideas clearly, using words appropriately, producing meaning-rich pieces of writing, and using language features parallel to specific genres. This suggests that oral feedback was perceived to be preferable to, but less effective than written feedback.

Research question 2. The improvement of the OF group was not significantly different from that of the WF group. The two groups equally delivered better performance on holistic assessment of writing. Whereas the OF group made an improvement in both the micro-aspects (i.e. grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics and spelling) and the macro-aspects (i.e. content and organization), the WF group produced higher quality of writing only in language and organization. This suggests that the two feedback modes had different roles to play, with written feedback being less well distributed across evaluation criteria than oral feedback in improving all five areas of student writing.

On the whole, this study has shown that students made an improvement in writing, regardless of feedback type, and that there may not be an association between *preference in feedback type* and *revision quality*. As such, it may be imperative that oral and written feedback be combined for greater development in student writing. Written feedback should be followed by oral feedback in order for negotiation and questions between the student and the teacher to be possible and even feasible. However, teachers must balance this practice with their time and energy limitations (Ferris, 2003), and the choice of feedback type should be made with *clear purposes* rather than with reference to *student preferences*.

The present research has also suggested that reading (both intensive and extensive) be integrated into second language (L2) writing classes to provide students with both topical and general knowledge. Feedback alone, no matter how effective, may not suffice to enable students to produce writing that has better content since the development of schemata is a long-term process that entails cumulative exposure to a sufficient amount of input in different genres or text-types within a relatively long time frame. The input should include both pedagogical and authentic texts which need to be of proximity to the individual learner's proficiency level and which, most importantly, challenge the students to process the internal information.

Finally, this research has suggested that the quality of *revision* may correlate with *feedback intake*, which depends on *student focus* and *feedback quality*. The delivery of feedback, whether oral or written, must be made comprehensive, comprehensible, inoffensive, and meaningful to student-writers. In a similar vein, students should always be alert and actively engaged when interacting with the teacher-reader and with the feedback provided. The success of incorporating feedback into revision largely depends on feedback strategies, which need to be varied or mixed, and on the internal quality of each feedback mode. This means

that the feedback must be delivered with caution and adequate scaffolding, and that autonomous learning through consulting useful learning resources (e.g., grammar books, dictionaries, etc.) needs to be inculcated as an additive process of the feedback mode.

LIMITATIONS

Even though the above findings are useful and insightful, the researcher acknowledges the limitations of the study, such as the small sample sizes and the relatively short duration of treatment. This study also has a design flaw in terms of not having a control group, thereby posing the question about the influence of other contextual factors: instructional methods, writing practices, and/or teaching-learning materials. Given these limitations, caution must be taken in interpreting the results of this study, and further studies are needed to cross-check these findings.

AUTHOR NOTE

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APPENDIX 1

AERF: WRITTEN FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Demographic Data

A1. Sex: Male Female

A2. Age: _____ years old

A3. How long have you learned English? _____ years

A4. What do you think your current level of English is?

Elementary Pre-intermediate Intermediate Upper-intermediate Advanced

Section B: Effective Responses

Direction: The purpose of this questionnaire is to examine your perceptions about effectiveness of written feedback given by your teacher about strengths and weaknesses in your writing. This is NOT a test, so there is no right or wrong answer to each of the questions. Please answer by circling the number [1, 2, 3, 4 or 5] that you think the most applicable to you.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
B1. After receiving written feedback, I still could not express my ideas more clearly.	1	2	3	4	5

B2. After receiving written feedback, I could write with fewer grammatical errors.	1	2	3	4	5
B3. After receiving written feedback, I still could not use vocabulary more appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5
B4. After receiving written feedback, I could organize my writing in a better way.	1	2	3	4	5
B5. After receiving written feedback, I still could not write with better content.	1	2	3	4	5
B6. After receiving written feedback, I made fewer errors with punctuation.	1	2	3	4	5
B7. After receiving written feedback, I made fewer errors with spelling.	1	2	3	4	5
B8. After receiving written feedback, I still could not use vocabulary and grammar appropriately for each type of paragraphs.	1	2	3	4	5
B9. I liked written feedback because it helped improve the quality of my writing.	1	2	3	4	5

Section C: Affective Responses

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
C1. Written feedback made me feel I had a more personal and human relationship with my teacher.	1	2	3	4	5

C2. After receiving written feedback, I felt less confident about my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
C3. Written feedback gave more detail about the errors in my paper.	1	2	3	4	5
C4. Written feedback gave more detail about how I can improve my paper.	1	2	3	4	5
C5. Written feedback discouraged me from working very hard on my revision.	1	2	3	4	5
C6. In written feedback, praise was helpful for my revision.	1	2	3	4	5
C7. Written feedback made me feel like I received special attention from my teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
C8. Written feedback alone was not helpful enough for my revision.	1	2	3	4	5

If your answer in [C8] is “Strongly Disagree” or “Disagree”, please choose the feedback form(s) you want to see integrated with Written Feedback. You can choose more than one.

face-to-face oral feedback

recorded oral feedback (sent to you through email, a cassette, CD, etc.)

Explain: _____

Great thanks for your cooperation!

APPENDIX 2

AERF: ORAL FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Demographic Data

A1. Sex: Male Female

A2. Age: _____ years old

A3. How long have you learned English? _____ years

A4. What do you think your current level of English is?

Elementary Pre-intermediate Intermediate Upper-intermediate Advanced

Section B: Effective Responses

Direction: The purpose of this questionnaire is to examine your perceptions about effectiveness of oral feedback given by your teacher about strengths and weaknesses in your writing. This is NOT a test, so there is no right or wrong answer to each of the questions. Please answer by circling the number [1, 2, 3, 4 or 5] that you think the most applicable to you.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
B1. After receiving oral feedback, I still could not express my ideas more clearly.	1	2	3	4	5

B2. After receiving oral feedback, I could write with fewer grammatical errors.	1	2	3	4	5
B3. After receiving oral feedback, I still could not use vocabulary more appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5
B4. After receiving oral feedback, I could organize my writing in a better way.	1	2	3	4	5
B5. After receiving oral feedback, I still could not write with better content.	1	2	3	4	5
B6. After receiving oral feedback, I made fewer errors with punctuation.	1	2	3	4	5
B7. After receiving oral feedback, I made fewer errors with spelling.	1	2	3	4	5
B8. After receiving oral feedback, I still could not use vocabulary and grammar appropriately for each type of paragraphs.	1	2	3	4	5
B9. I liked oral feedback because it helped improve the quality of my writing.	1	2	3	4	5

Section C: Affective Responses

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
C1. Oral feedback made me feel I had a more personal and human relationship with my teacher.	1	2	3	4	5

C2. After receiving oral feedback, I felt less confident about my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
C3. Oral feedback gave more detail about the errors in my paper.	1	2	3	4	5
C4. Oral feedback gave more detail about how I can improve my paper.	1	2	3	4	5
C5. Oral feedback discouraged me from working very hard on my revision.	1	2	3	4	5
C6. In oral feedback, praise was helpful for my revision.	1	2	3	4	5
C7. Oral feedback made me feel like I received special attention from my teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
C8. Oral feedback alone was not helpful enough for my revision.	1	2	3	4	5

If your answer in [C8] is “Strongly Disagree” or “Disagree”, please choose the feedback form(s) you want to see integrated with Oral Feedback. You can choose more than one.

written feedback

recorded oral feedback (sent to you through email, a cassette, CD, etc.)

Explain: _____

Great thanks for your cooperation!

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Did you receive written feedback (WF) or oral feedback (OF)?
2. How much did WF/OF help you to revise your paper?
3. What type of information did you get from WF/OF?
4. Do you think that “praise” was important in WF/OF? Why? Did you get any? Do you want to see praise all the time?
5. Do you think that “criticism/correction” was important in WF/OF? Why? Did you get any? Do you want to see “criticism/correction” all the time?
6. Do you think that “suggestion” was important in WF/OF? Why? Did you get any? Do you want to see “suggestion” all the time?
7. How did you use WF/OF to revise your writing? How many times did you read through WF/OF?
8. What form of WF/OF did you pay most attention to? Statements, questions, or imperatives? Which was the most helpful for your revision?
9. **(a)** What type of WF did you pay most attention to? Marginal, End, Direct vs. Indirect (Coded/Uncoded)? Which did you prefer? Which was the most helpful for your revision?
(b) What type of OF did you pay most attention to? From one sentence to another, Overall comments at the end, Implicit (i.e. Giving correct forms) vs. Explicit (Locating errors, Recasting, Prompting). Which was the most helpful for your revision?
10. What you want WF/OF to focus on? Content, Organization, or Language (Vocabulary, Grammar, Mechanics, and Spelling)? Which did you improve the most? Why?

11. How do you feel about WF/OF? Did you like WF/OF? Why? What did you like about WF/OF?
12. Do you think WF/OF alone was enough for your revision? Why? Why not?
13. What difficulties did you have when receiving WF/OF?
14. After receiving WF/OF for two months, how do feel about your writing now?
15. After receiving WF/OF for two months, how do you feel about your ability to revise your writing?

APPENDIX 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Independent Samples T-Test

Group Statistics

	Treatment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
B1. I still could not express my ideas more clearly. (RO)	Written Feedback	18	4.06	.416	.098
	Oral Feedback	19	4.05	.780	.179
B2. I made fewer grammatical errors.	Written Feedback	18	3.83	.924	.218
	Oral Feedback	19	3.95	.705	.162
B3. I still could not use words more appropriately. (RO)	Written Feedback	18	4.06	.802	.189
	Oral Feedback	19	3.74	.733	.168
B4. I could organize my writing better.	Written Feedback	18	4.61	.502	.118
	Oral Feedback	19	4.32	.671	.154
B5. I still could not write with better content. (RO)	Written Feedback	18	4.33	.594	.140
	Oral Feedback	19	4.00	.577	.132
B6. I made fewer errors with punctuation.	Written Feedback	18	3.61	1.290	.304
	Oral Feedback	19	3.63	.831	.191
B7. I made few errors with spelling.	Written Feedback	18	3.83	1.043	.246
	Oral Feedback	19	3.53	1.219	.280
B8. I still could not use vocabulary and grammar appropriately for each type of paragraph. (RO)	Written Feedback	18	4.22	.548	.129
	Oral Feedback	19	3.95	.705	.162
B9. I liked it because it helped improve the quality of my writing.	Written Feedback	18	4.06	.802	.189
	Oral Feedback	19	4.47	.697	.160
C1. It made me feel I had a more personal and human relationship with my teacher.	Written Feedback	18	3.61	1.037	.244
	Oral Feedback	19	4.16	.765	.175
C2. I did not feel more confident about my writing. (RO)	Written Feedback	18	4.00	.594	.140
	Oral Feedback	19	4.26	.452	.104
C3. It gave more details about the errors in my writing.	Written Feedback	18	4.39	.698	.164
	Oral Feedback	19	4.42	.838	.192
C4. It gave more details about how I can improve my writing.	Written Feedback	18	4.39	.608	.143
	Oral Feedback	19	4.26	.806	.185
C5. It discouraged me from working harder on my revision. (RO)	Written Feedback	18	4.00	1.029	.243
	Oral Feedback	19	3.84	.958	.220
C6. Praise was helpful for my revision.	Written Feedback	18	4.22	.647	.152
	Oral Feedback	19	4.00	.816	.187
C7. I got special attention from my teacher.	Written Feedback	18	4.22	.808	.191
	Oral Feedback	19	4.58	.507	.116
C8. It was not helpful enough for my revision. (RO)	Written Feedback	18	3.00	1.138	.268
	Oral Feedback	19	3.68	1.157	.265

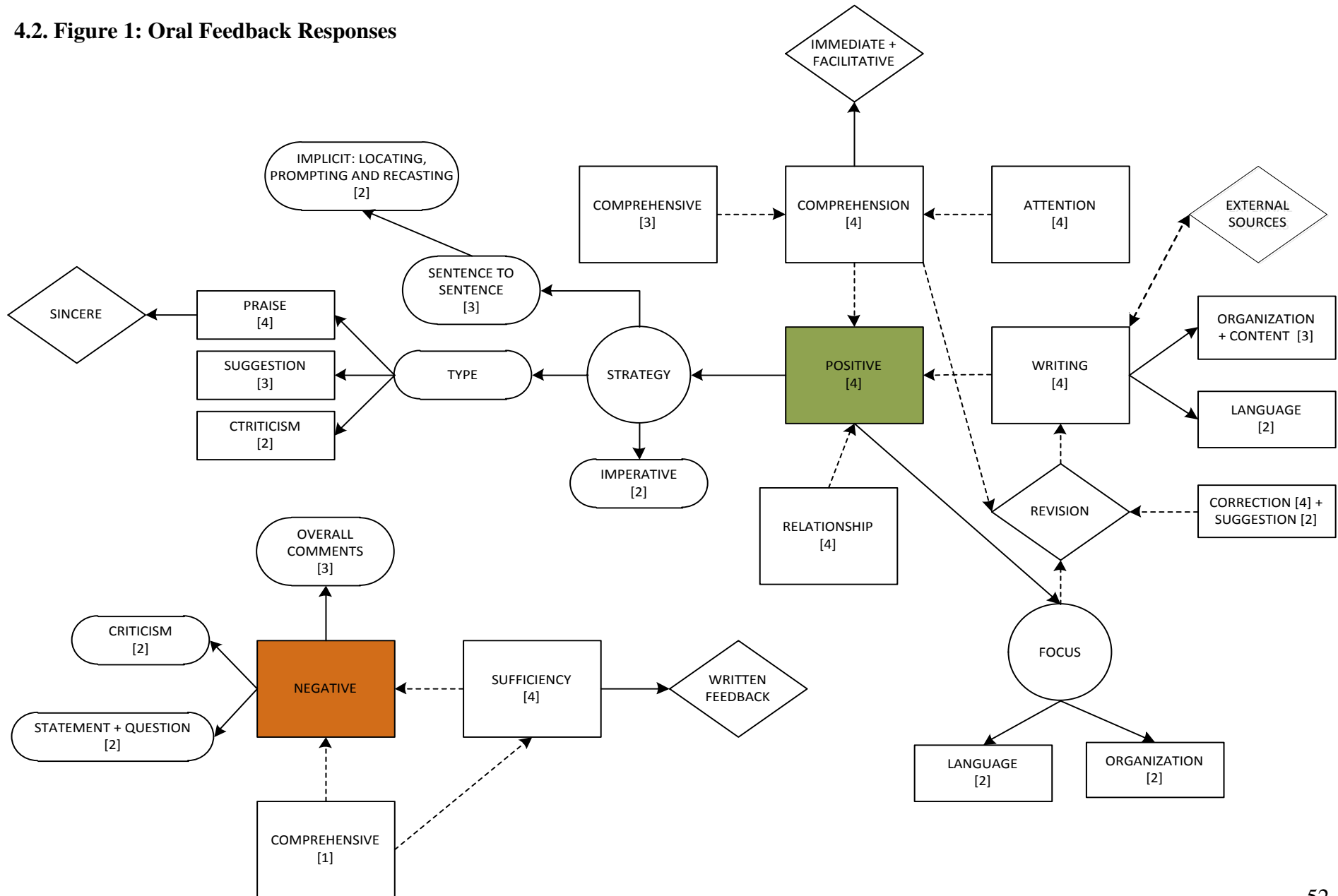
Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
B1. I still could not express my ideas more clearly. (RO)	Equal variances assumed	7.753	.009	.014	35	.989	.003	.207	-.418	.424
	Equal variances not assumed			.014	27.789	.989	.003	.204	-.415	.421
B2. I made fewer grammatical errors.	Equal variances assumed	1.015	.321	-.424	35	.674	-.114	.269	-.661	.433
	Equal variances not assumed			-.420	31.799	.677	-.114	.271	-.667	.439
B3. I still could not use words more appropriately. (RO)	Equal variances assumed	.072	.790	1.262	35	.215	.319	.253	-.194	.831
	Equal variances not assumed			1.259	34.280	.217	.319	.253	-.196	.833
B4. I could organize my writing better.	Equal variances assumed	1.639	.209	1.509	35	.140	.295	.196	-.102	.693
	Equal variances not assumed			1.521	33.249	.138	.295	.194	-.099	.690
B5. I still could not write with better content. (RO)	Equal variances assumed	2.525	.121	1.731	35	.092	.333	.193	-.058	.724
	Equal variances not assumed			1.729	34.754	.093	.333	.193	-.058	.725
B6. I made fewer errors with punctuation.	Equal variances assumed	4.910	.033	-.058	35	.954	-.020	.355	-.741	.700
	Equal variances not assumed			-.057	28.789	.955	-.020	.359	-.755	.714

B7. I made few errors with spelling.	Equal variances assumed	1.144	.292	.821	35	.417	.307	.374	-.452	1.066
	Equal variances not assumed			.825	34.658	.415	.307	.372	-.449	1.063
B8. I still could not use vocabulary and grammar appropriately for each type of paragraph. (RO)	Equal variances assumed	.033	.858	1.318	35	.196	.275	.208	-.148	.698
	Equal variances not assumed			1.328	33.753	.193	.275	.207	-.146	.696
B9. I liked it because it helped improve the quality of my writing.	Equal variances assumed	.303	.586	-1.695	35	.099	-.418	.247	-.919	.083
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.689	33.714	.101	-.418	.248	-.921	.085
C1. It made me feel I had a more personal and human relationship with my teacher.	Equal variances assumed	2.126	.154	-1.832	35	.075	-.547	.298	-1.153	.059
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.817	31.208	.079	-.547	.301	-1.160	.067
C2. I did not feel more confident about my writing. (RO)	Equal variances assumed	.199	.658	-1.521	35	.137	-.263	.173	-.614	.088
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.510	31.758	.141	-.263	.174	-.618	.092
C3. It gave more details about the errors in my writing.	Equal variances assumed	.201	.657	-.127	35	.900	-.032	.254	-.548	.484
	Equal variances not assumed			-.127	34.454	.900	-.032	.253	-.546	.482
C4. It gave more details about how I can improve my writing.	Equal variances assumed	.362	.551	.534	35	.597	.126	.236	-.353	.604
	Equal variances not assumed			.538	33.368	.594	.126	.234	-.350	.601

C5. It discouraged me from working harder on my revision. (RO)	Equal variances assumed	.000	.988	.483	35	.632	.158	.327	-.505	.821
	Equal variances not assumed			.482	34.448	.633	.158	.327	-.507	.823
C6. Praise was helpful for my revision.	Equal variances assumed	.002	.963	.914	35	.367	.222	.243	-.271	.716
	Equal variances not assumed			.920	33.964	.364	.222	.242	-.269	.713
C7. I got special attention from my teacher.	Equal variances assumed	.961	.334	-1.617	35	.115	-.357	.221	-.805	.091
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.598	28.324	.121	-.357	.223	-.814	.100
C8. It was not helpful enough for my revision. (RO)	Equal variances assumed	.292	.592	-1.812	35	.079	-.684	.378	-1.451	.082
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.813	34.948	.078	-.684	.377	-1.450	.082

4.2. Figure 1: Oral Feedback Responses



4.3. Figure 2: Written Feedback Responses

