



香港教育大學

The Education University
of Hong Kong

A Project entitled

***The Relative Effects of Focused and Unfocused Direct Written Corrective Feedback on the
Accurate Use of English Articles in Hong Kong Primary ESL Context***

Submitted by

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submitted to The Education University of Hong Kong

for the degree of *Bachelor of Education (Honours) (English Language)*

in *May 2018*



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Declaration

I, *Cheung Vanessa Kristia*, declare that this research report represents my own work under the supervision of *The Relative Effects of Focused and Unfocused Direct Written Corrective Feedback on the Accurate Use of English Articles in Hong Kong Primary ESL Context* and *Dr YU, Baohua*, and that it has not been submitted previously for examination to any tertiary institution.

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18th May 2018

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*The Relative Effects of Focused and Unfocused Direct Written Corrective Feedback on the
Accurate Use of English Articles in Hong Kong Primary ESL Context*

Abstract

This research report presents the findings of a study that investigated (1) the effects of written corrective feedback (CF) on Hong Kong primary learners' use of English indefinite and definite articles in terms of first and second mention; and (2) whether there are differences in the effects of focused and unfocused direct written corrective feedback on the same target structure in an English as a second language (ESL) context. Seventeen Primary five students formed a control group ($N = 5$) and two experimental groups: focused CF group ($N = 6$) and unfocused CF group ($N = 6$). In form of a pre-test–immediate post-test–delayed post-tests design, all three groups wrote narrative stories, completed error correction tests and an exit questionnaire. The focused group received corrections exclusively on article errors while the unfocused group received corrections on all kinds of errors. All groups gained improvements in both tests, showing the significant main effect of time. These two types of CF were equally effective. Overall, the results suggested that CF is of high value to language acquisition and reinforces teachers' current practice of providing CF.

Keywords: Written corrective feedback; Error correction; Focused and unfocused feedback

1. Introduction

Written error correction feedback (CF), a response to errors made in second language learners' writings, is intended for either correcting inaccuracy or providing information about the locations and causes of errors (Bitchener & Storch, 2016). In the field of English language education, different opinions about the effectiveness of CF have been present. The points of view are divided as to whether CF is beneficial to language acquisition and which specific type of CF has the best effect in an English as a second language (ESL) context (e.g. Kepner, 1991; Bitchener, 2008). Regarding the first question, on one hand, some researchers (e.g. Truscott, 1996) made claims about the ineffectiveness - even the harm of CF to language learning. Truscott (1996) urged for the abandonment of CF due to insufficient persuasive research findings that prove the effectiveness of CF. On the other hand, other researchers (e.g. Ellis, Sheen, Murakami and Takashima, 2008; Sheen, 2007) concluded counter-arguments about the low validity of the research findings because of some design or implementation flaws. They retained confidence on the value of CF in enhancing grammatical accuracy.

The controversy becomes more serious over the effectiveness of various types of CF (e.g. focused and unfocused, direct and indirect, metalinguistic CF) (Ellis, 2009). Since Ferris (1999) proposed that researchers shift the attention to the effective types of CF, focused and unfocused CF received less attention relatively. Some written CF studies (e.g. Bitchener, 2008; Sheen, Wright & Moldawa, 2009) have demonstrated that focused CF is a contributory factor in grammatical accuracy in second language writings. Nevertheless, Sheen (2007) indicated some limitations on the methodology of past research (e.g. the unclear distinction between CF types as in Fazio, 2001). The absence of unambiguous compelling evidence of the effectiveness of CF leads to invalid conclusions.

In Hong Kong, scanty attention has been drawn on either the general effects of CF or the effects of specific types. Drawing on the study of Ellis et al. (2008), this research aims to investigate the effects of general CF and the relative effects of focused and unfocused CF on the accurate use of English articles in Hong Kong primary ESL context. After a critical literature review that analyzes and evaluates previous literature, this paper will address the methodology and the research findings. Relevant discussion which provides pedagogical implications on teachers' feedback practice will be made after the analysis.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews written CF literature in two aspects: the general effects of CF and the relative effects of unfocused and focused direct CF on grammatical accuracy.

2.1. Research evidence on the general effects of CF

Truscott (1996) and Ferris (1999) are the prominent opponent and advocate on the issue of CF respectively. Before Truscott's (1996) objection against the use of CF in language learning, there were already early studies (e.g. Kepner, 1991; Sheppard, 1992) that claimed the ineffectiveness of CF on improving accuracy. For instance, the Kepner (1991) study of Spanish learners made a comparison between error corrections and content comments in an American university. Participants' journal entries were collected and analyzed across the 12-week period. The findings showed that CF failed to lead to significant improvements in grammatical accuracy, which contributed to Kepner's conclusion that grammatical CF had low value. Nevertheless, it was criticized by Ferris (2003) for the absence of a control group and a pre-test. The study neither indicated the treatment groups' initial level of accuracy nor the calculation of improvements so its results were invalid. After Truscott (1996) suggested CF abandonment, Ferris (1999) disputed it and argued that CF could be facilitative as long as they were clear and consistent. Truscott

(1999) then judged Ferris for making the contention without evidence support. In 2007, Truscott critiqued other research and summarized that CF had little harm on students' writing accuracy. Until recent years, other researchers (e.g. Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Shintani & Ellis, 2013) investigated and reported accuracy improvements along with CF implementation. Yet, some of them lacked a control group too so their results were not valid enough. In short, the previous research had some design flaws and therefore could not contribute to strong and valid conclusions on the general effects of CF.

2.2. Research evidence on the relative effects of unfocused and focused direct CF

Unfocused and focused direct CF differ in the types of error being corrected. The former refers to a comprehensive and extensive approach in which teachers correct all the errors regardless of the types in learners' writings. The later corresponds to opting for a particular type of errors to be corrected and ignoring other errors. Focused CF is believed to be more effective than unfocused CF on the basis of cognitive theories that put emphasis on the importance of attention and understanding for language acquisition (Schmidt, 1994; Ellis, 2005). Learners may find it easier to recognize the target error types and hence construct understanding of the correction needed. In comparison with the general CF and other types of CF, unfocused and focused CF were rarely investigated in a pair– there were solely two studies. Ellis et al. (2008) reported equal effectiveness of both CF types on Japanese learners. Sheen et al. (2009) reported that focused CF had greater effectiveness. However, the researchers admitted chaos in CF provision as well as unclear distinction between the two types of CF so their results had low validity too.

3. Research Questions

After a critical review on previous studies, a few research gaps were identified and were to be filled in this study. First, all the available research focused on secondary, tertiary and adult learners, but not primary learners (e.g. Bitchener, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008). Second, none of the previous studies were conducted in Hong Kong, i.e. the issue had not yet been explored in the territory. Third, focused and unfocused CF were examined in very little research compared with other types of CF. As a result, this research was designed to bridge these gaps through addressing the two research questions below:

- i) What are the effects of written corrective feedback on Hong Kong primary learners' use of English indefinite and definite articles to express first and second mention?
- ii) Are there differences in the effects of focused and unfocused direct written corrective feedback on Hong Kong primary learners' accurate use of English articles to express first and second mention?

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design involving two experimental groups- focused CF ($N = 6$), unfocused CF ($N = 6$) and a control group ($N = 5$). All groups completed a pre-test, an immediate post-test and two delayed post-tests in which they wrote narrative writings based on picture stories. Furthermore, all three groups completed an error correction test before and immediately after the treatment. The target structure of the study was the two functional uses of indefinite articles 'a/an' and definite article 'the' for initial referent and anaphoric mention respectively. The focused CF group received direct written CF on the target structure exclusively. The unfocused CF group received direct written CF on all linguistic errors including articles. The

control group received no feedback. Quantitative data of participants' accuracy scores were collected, compared and analyzed. By the end of the research, all participants finished an exit questionnaire which required reflection on the tests.

4.2. Context and participants

In a pull-out group context, the study was conducted in a Hong Kong primary school with 17 Primary 5 students, who were selected through opportunistic sampling. Due to ethical considerations, prior permission was sought from the participants' parents and school while all participants were remained anonymous. The participants have had English learning experiences for eight years in kindergartens and the primary school. They had 8 English lessons of 35 minutes every week. They were divided into three cluster groups randomly.

4.3. Target structure

Drawing on Ellis et al. (2008), which investigated the two functional uses of English article system- indefinite articles 'a/an' for first mention and definite article 'the' for subsequent mention, this study chose the same target structure. Other functional uses of these two articles such as the use of definite articles before superlatives were not targeted. Below are grammatical and ungrammatical instances of the target structure:

A grammatical example:

'There is *a* dog. *The* dog is drinking some water.'

(The indefinite article 'a' is applied before 'dog' for initial referent. The definite article 'the' is applied before 'dog' for second mention.)

An ungrammatical example:

‘There is *the* dog. *The* dog is drinking some water.’

(An indefinite article ‘a’ is required before ‘dog’ for first mention in the first sentence.)

Several reasons contributed to the choice of target structure. First, the high frequency of the two functional article uses lays a foundation for reliable analysis of the participants’ accuracy level. Sinclair (1991) indicated that both *a* and *the* belong to the top five in the English word frequency list. They are very likely to have obligatory occasions in the written narrative context. Second, participants’ intermediate article acquisition level conduces the possible effectiveness of CF. On one hand, Young (1996) indicated that primary 5 participants will already have started to acquire articles, however with some learning difficulties. They were expected to use the target structure with some errors while CF is likely to have higher effectiveness in helping learners to make improvements on structures that they currently acquire than those that are entirely new to them (Ellis et al., 2008). On the other hand, participants’ first language is likely to cause negative language transfer (Odlin, 1989). The participants were expected to have Chinese as their mother tongue, which does not have an article system. Considering the above factors, the two functional use of articles are an appropriate choice of target structure.

4.4. Treatment

The study was spread over 8 weeks during the researcher’s Field Experience programme. The schedule of the entire study is shown in Table 1. There were four narrative writing sessions. There was a one-week gap between the pre-test and the immediate post-test and a two-week interval between each post-test. In each session, all three groups did narrative writings based on

the same picture story. Only the focused and unfocused groups received CF from the researcher on every piece of writing. To prevent existence of confounding variable, the researcher guaranteed that their writings would never determine their school grades (Guénette, 2007).

Table 1: Schedule of the study

Week	Activity	Groups		
		Focused CF (<i>N</i> = 6)	Unfocused CF (<i>N</i> = 6)	Control (<i>N</i> = 5)
1	Error correction pre-test	✓	✓	✓
2	Narrative writing pre-test	✓	✓	✓
3	Feedback on narrative writing pre-test	✓	✓	
	Narrative writing immediate post-test	✓	✓	✓
5	Feedback on narrative writing immediate post-test	✓	✓	
	Narrative writing delayed post-test 1	✓	✓	✓
7	Feedback on narrative writing delayed post-test 1	✓	✓	
	Narrative writing delayed post-test 2	✓	✓	✓
8	Error correction post-test	✓	✓	✓
	Exit questionnaire	✓	✓	✓

Below were the procedures of the treatment:

1. Researcher distributed the writings of last session to the participants and instructed them to spend five to ten minutes on the errors and CF carefully (applicable to the experimental groups). Neither comments nor explanations were further provided. Nor were the participants asked to do corrections.
2. Researcher showed a picture story in the PowerPoint and supplied with word prompts.

3. Researcher and participants did an open discussion about the picture story so as to help them understand it.
4. Participants asked questions about either the picture content or word prompts for clarification. Researcher put down further key words on the blackboard if necessary.
5. Participants wrote their own narrative writings individually within twenty to thirty minutes.
6. Researcher collected the written stories and gave CF according to the correction guidelines.

Through communication with the English teachers of the participants, it was agreed that explicit instruction would not be provided between the tests. However, the possibility of participants receiving additional input such as instruction by after-class tutors could not be excluded.

4.5. Written CF correction guidelines for experimental groups

4.5.1. Direct unfocused CF

The researcher corrected all kinds of errors including but not limited to article errors. They were marked and corrected directly on the original writings. In the example below, the researcher added an indefinite article ‘a’ before ‘dog’ for initial referent in the first sentence. In the second sentence, the researcher crossed out the plural verb-to-be ‘are’ and added a singular verb ‘is’ before ‘dog’ due to subject verb agreement.

<i>a</i>	<i>is</i>	
<i>There is ^ dog. The dog are drinking some water.</i>		

4.5.2. *Direct focused CF*

The correction guidelines were similar as for direct unfocused CF but only article errors were corrected. For example, the plural verb ‘are’ were not indicated or corrected although it was misused here.

a

There is ^ dog. The dog are drinking some water.

4.6. *Instrument*

Three types of instruments were used in this study: narrative writing tests, error correction tests as well as an exit questionnaire.

4.6.1. *Narrative writing tests*

Building the research on the Ellis et al. study (2008), Byrne’s (1967) four picture compositions were used as shown in Appendix 1. Each composition comprised four sequential pictures which were described with coherence. Participants were instructed to write at least eighty words. In order to preclude misunderstanding and insufficient knowledge of the pictures from being confounding variables, some word prompts were provided as aids. The picture compositions were chosen for several reasons. First, they consisted of a number of people and objects and thus created contexts in which the target structure was needed for references. Second, narrative text type was one of the target genres in Key Stage 1 so the participants were expected to have thorough understanding on the text structure and format (CDC, 2004).

4.6.2. *Error correction tests*

The tests were developed on the basis of that in Sheen (2007). Samples are shown in Appendix 2. It contained 16 questions, each containing two related statements. One of the

statements was underlined to indicate that it contained an error. The participants were to identify and correct the error by re-writing it within twenty to thirty minutes. Four distractors such as subject verb agreement and personal adjectives were randomly distributed in the 16 questions. Therefore, only the remaining 12 items were target questions to be analyzed.

4.6.3. Exit questionnaire

A short questionnaire that consisted of a multiple choice question and an open-ended question about learners' reflection on the tests was completed immediately after the error correction post-test. It was to examine whether the participants had noticed the focus of the study- articles. It can be found in Appendix 3.

4.7. Scoring and data analysis

In order to investigate the relativity between the effects of directed focused and unfocused CF, scores for both narrative writing tests and error correction tests were calculated.

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was a key software used for data analysis. Through obligatory occasion analysis (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005), the accuracy scores of narrative writing tests were obtained. The researcher identified the obligatory uses of the target structure in each test, which divided into the number of correct uses. They were expressed as percentage proportions. They were analyzed by a one-way ANOVA as well as a mixed ANOVA followed by Tukey's post-hoc tests.

The accuracy scores of error correction tests were calculated on an individual item basis. One point was given to each correctly answered questions that contained article errors. As the distractor items were neglected so 12 was the maximum score. In addition to the analysis method in writing tests, the scores also underwent a paired sample t-test.










The exit questionnaire was analyzed by finding whether the participants were aware of the purpose of the study was grammar or articles. The responses were processed as percentage proportions.

5. Findings

5.1. Narrative writing tests

Table 2 below presents the means and standard deviations for the pre-test, immediate post-test, delayed post-test 1 and delayed post-test 2 for participants in each of the three groups. The mean scores stand for the mean percentage accuracy in obligatory occasions. Both the focused group and the control group increased the accuracy of their use of articles to express first mention and anaphoric reference from pre-test to delayed post-test 2. However, after the unfocused group's accuracy slightly declined from immediate post-test to delayed post-test 1, it gained in accuracy between delayed post-test 1 and delayed post-test 2. This pattern of results is shown clearly in Fig. 1.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the narrative writing tests

Groups	Pre-test		Immediate post-test		Delayed post-test 1		Delayed post-test 2	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Unfocused (<i>N</i> = 6)	0.65	0.14	0.74 	0.15	0.73 	0.26	0.79 	0.18
Focused (<i>N</i> = 6)	0.67	0.18	0.69 	0.13	0.70 	0.14	0.83 	0.13
Control (<i>N</i> = 5)	0.57	0.19	0.64 	0.24	0.72 	0.22	0.75 	0.26

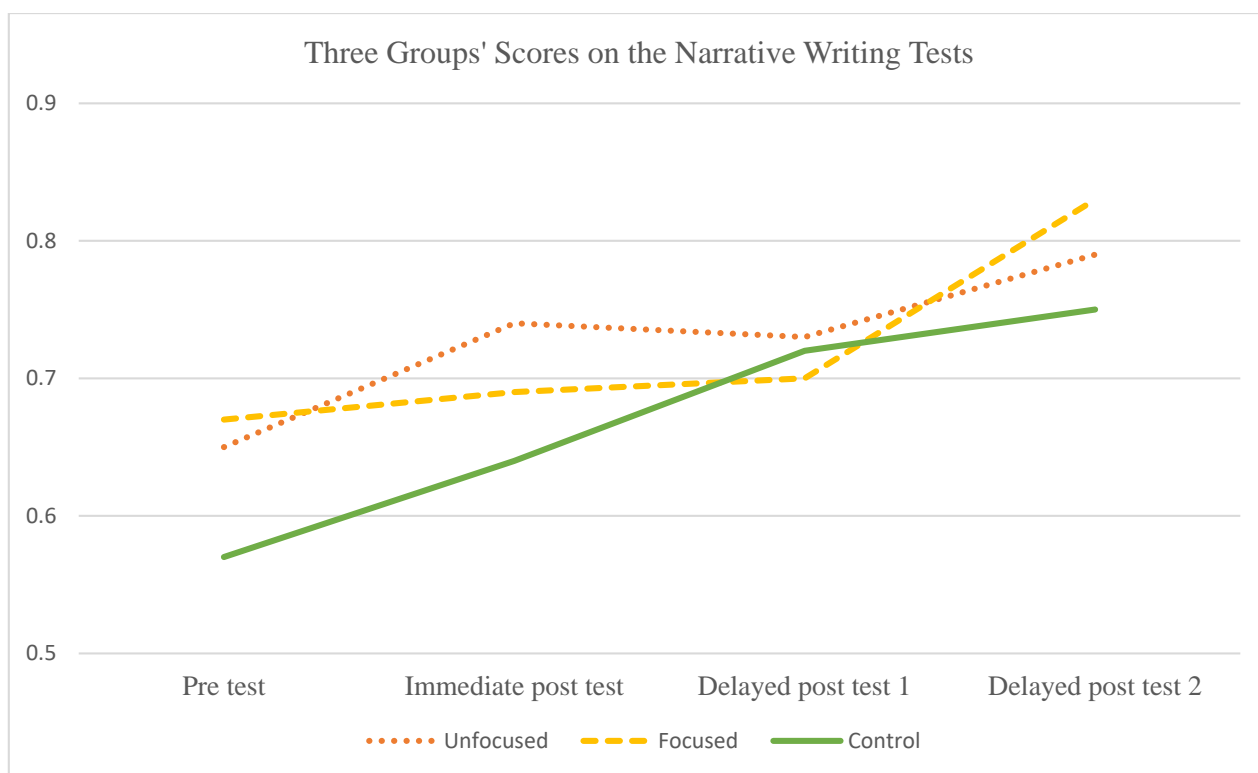


Fig. 1. Three groups' scores on the narrative writing tests

In order to compare the test scores of the three treatment groups, a series of ANOVA were computed. On one hand, a one-way ANOVA was performed and indicated no statistically significant group differences in the pre-test among the three groups, $F(2, 14) = .56, p = .586$. On the other hand, a mixed-design ANOVA, also known as a split-plot ANOVA, was performed with test scores as a dependent variable and with time (pre-test, immediate post-test, delayed post-test 1 and delayed post-test 2) and written corrective feedback type as independent variables. Among the two independent variables, time was a within-subjects factor while feedback type was a between-subjects factor. Table 3 shows the results of the analysis.

Table 3: Mixed ANOVA analysis for the narrative writing tests

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	ηp^2
<i>Between subjects</i>				
WCF type	2	.23	.80	.032
<i>Within subjects</i>				
Time	3	5.91	< .05	.59
Time \times WCF type	6	.52	.80	.11

As shown in table 3, the mixed-design ANOVA revealed that there was no interaction effect between time and written corrective feedback type. It leads to easier interpretation of main effects. There were no statistically significant differences between the effectiveness of the written corrective feedback types either. Nevertheless, the ANOVA revealed a statistically significant effect for time, with all treatment groups performing statistically significantly stronger on the post-tests, $F(3, 12) = 5.65$, $p < .05$, $\eta p^2 = .59$. In light of the findings, Tukey's post-hoc pairwise comparisons were computed to isolate where the significant difference lay among the four levels of time (with an alpha level of .05). The analyses revealed that there were statistically significant differences between pre-test and delayed post-test 2 ($p < .05$), which shows that the groups manifested significant longitudinal gains among the four tests.

5.2. Error correction tests

The same 17 students as for the narrative writing tests were included in this analysis. Table 4 shows the means and standard deviations for the error correction tests. The mean scores indicate the mean accuracy out of 12 questions in each test. Fig. 2 provides a visual presentation of the

means for the two testing periods for each group. All three groups increased their scores from pre-test to post-test. In order to investigate whether the observed improvements were indeed significant in each group, a paired sample t-test was conducted. As can be seen in Table 5, all treatment groups' scores were significantly higher in the error correction post-test ($p < .05$, $p = .001$).

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for the error correction tests

Groups	Error correction pre-test		Error correction post-test	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Unfocused ($N = 6$)	5.33	3.27	9.50 ↑	2.17
Focused ($N = 6$)	3.67	3.08	8.33 ↑	3.08
Control ($N = 5$)	2.00	2.00	8.60 ↑	2.89

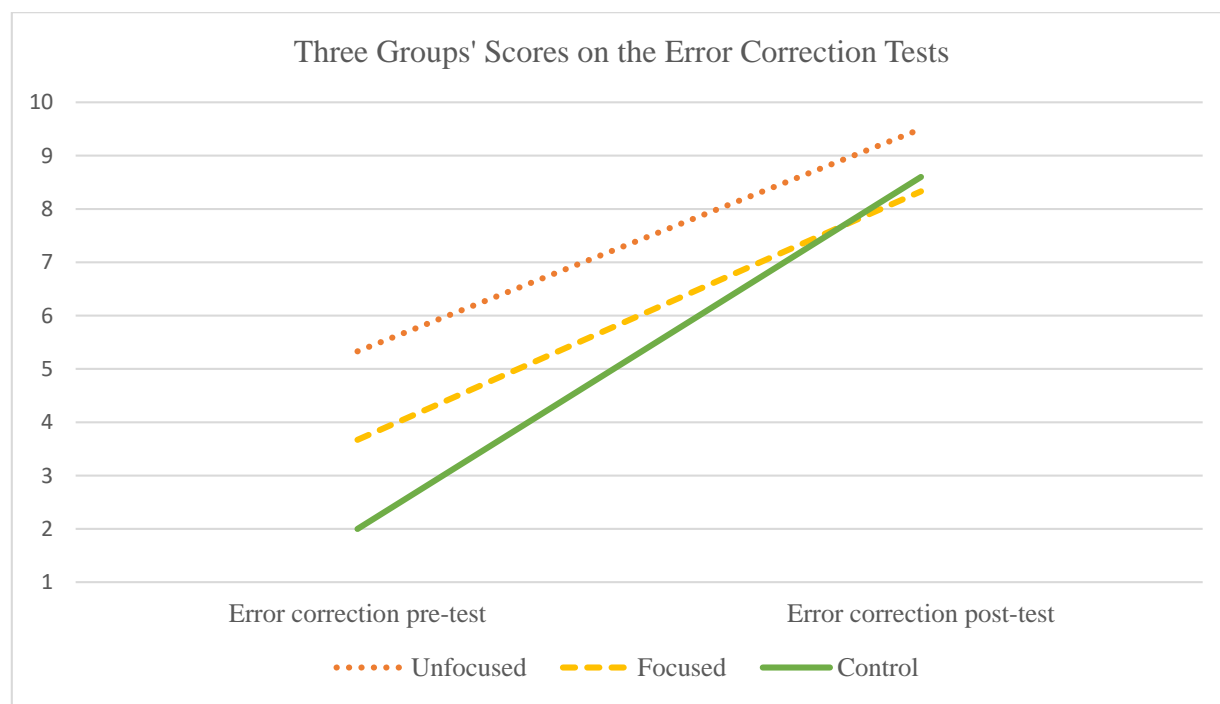


Figure 2: Three groups' scores on the error correction tests

Table 5: Paired sample *t*-test on error correction tests gain scores

Groups	Mean gain scores	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Unfocused (<i>N</i> = 6)	4.17	3.43	-2.98	5	< .05
Focused (<i>N</i> = 6)	4.67	1.97	-5.81	5	< .05
Control (<i>N</i> = 5)	6.60	1.67	-8.82	4	= .001

Similar to the results in narrative writing tests, a one-way ANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences between the treatment groups in pre-test, $F(2, 14) = 1.82$, $p = .20$. Therefore, a mixed-design ANOVA was conducted. Table 6 shows the results of the analysis. The ANOVA showed that there was neither interaction effect between time and corrective feedback type nor statistically significant differences between the feedback types' effectiveness. Yet, the ANOVA revealed that there was a statistically significant effect for time ($p < .001$) indicating that the groups manifested significant longitudinal gains.

Table 6: Mixed ANOVA analysis for the error correction tests

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
<i>Between subjects</i>				
WCF type	2	1.036	.381	.129
<i>Within subjects</i>				
Time	1	69.964	<.001	.833
Time × WCF type	2	1.377	.285	.164

5.3. Exit questionnaire

Upon completion of the delayed post-test 2, participants were given an exit questionnaire which was related to their awareness of the focus of the research. The responses were tabulated and presented in Table 7. In both question 1 and 2, participants in the focused group were more likely to recognize the focus of the study, i.e. grammar specifically articles, compared with those in either the unfocused or control groups. Some of them could specifically mention articles in the open-ended question about their reflections on the tests and wrote:

I think ‘a’ and ‘the’ are very important. Use ‘a’ in the first mention. Use ‘the’ in the second, third and fourth mention.

Table 7: The results of the exit questionnaire

Groups	1) Now that you have completed all tests, what do you think they were all about? (A multiple choice question)				2) What do you think you learned from the tests? (An open ended question)		
	Writing	Grammar	General	Vocabulary	Articles	Grammar	Others
Unfocused ($N = 6$)	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%	44%	56%
Focused ($N = 6$)	33%	67%	0%	0%	36%	36%	27%
Control ($N = 5$)	60%	20%	0%	20%	0%	29%	71%

6. Discussion

6.1. *The findings*

6.1.1. *The effect of written CF*

The first research question investigated what effects CF had on Hong Kong primary learners' accuracy of the use of English indefinite and definite articles to express first and second mention. The results of both the narrative writing tests and the error correction tests indicated that CF helped the participants to manifest long-term gains in articles use accuracy. Regardless of the corrective feedback types, both experimental groups had improved accuracy immediately after they had received CF in the pre-test. They were also able to retain the accuracy gains over the 8 weeks.

The findings are similar to those reported in Ellis et al (2008), on which this research was based. However, the findings of this study contradict with some previous studies (e.g. Kepner, 1991; Semke, 1984; Sheppard, 1992; Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986) which reported evidence against the effectiveness of CF. These studies had design flaws that might affect the validity of results. The study by Semke (1984) of German learners had several methodological issues. First, it included a fallible control group that received comments on writing content, which led to doubts about whether it could be regarded as a valid control group. Second, different measurement criteria were utilized for the experimental groups and the control group. The absence of measurement unity became a confounding variable that obscured the issue. Third, participants were given grades as incentives for writings. Ferris (2003, 2004), Robb et al. (1986) and Sheppard (1992) failed to include a valid control group, a pre-test and clear distinction between CF types. In the current study, none of these flaws existed. Apart from having a control group that received no feedback, there was also a pre-test for initial level of accuracy measurement, which was compared with participants' final accuracy level. The CF distinction

and accuracy measurement criteria were clear and consistent while no incentives were given to motivate participants to become more accurate.

6.1.2. The differential effect of written CF

The second research question concerned whether there were differences between the effects of focused and unfocused direct written corrective feedback. The results showed that statistically significant differences were absent between the focused and unfocused CF groups in either test. Both groups demonstrated equal effectiveness while the focused group were more aware of the purpose of the study.

The findings differ from those of Sheen et al. (2009), who claimed that the focused group outperformed the unfocused group. One possible explanation is that these two studies had participants of different cognitive processing abilities and language abilities. This study focused on primary learners while that of Sheen et al. (2009) chose adult students in which some were master holders who wished to pursue doctoral programmes. According to the Gass (1997) framework about the stages in cognitive processing of CF, input has to be comprehended before transforming into intake. Learners' second language proficiency level is a pivotal factor that determines whether they have comprehension of the input. It is likely that the primary participants in this study were at a lower proficiency level than the adults so the effectiveness of the two types of CF was less significant.

The question about which specific type of CF leads to greater language accuracy remains as a critical one in the field of English language education. Teachers are to put these two types of CF into consideration in the process of helping students' language acquisition. Working in a tight schedule, teachers may find focusing exclusively on one type of error a luxury. Therefore, further research is needed to help teachers decide the appropriate CF provided to students.

6.2.Limitations

Despite the fact that this study contributed to the research questions and tackled some design issues of previous studies, a few limitations can be recognized. First, the small sample scope hindered the generalization of results. Since only one researcher engaged in this undergraduate small-scaled study, the available resources were limited. The 17 participants were only employed in one school, which means the results could not be generalized due to possible variables that could have introduced bias to the study, for example, students' proficiency levels. To minimize the possible bias, the participants were chosen in the elite class and the remaining classes.

Second, the research period was relatively short compared with previous studies (e.g. Bitchener & Knoch, 2010). While the study of Bitchener and Knoch (2010) was conducted across a 10-month period, this study was completed within 8 weeks because of the researcher's Field Experience programme. This limitation obstructed the time available for a longitudinal study that measures whether the effectiveness can retain over time. To address this limitation, this study included one more delayed post-test to collect as much data as possible.

6.3.Pedagogical implications

This study reported that written CF helps learners obtain long-term gains in accuracy in article uses without significant differences between the effectiveness of focused and unfocused CF. It is suggested that teachers keep the current practice and provide consistent and clear CF to students persistently. Receiving CF allows students to gain alertness, orientation as well as detection on the target structure, which are the foundation of acquisition (Gass, 1997). Teachers may put students' second language level into consideration when deciding the types of CF. Focused CF may be more effective in senior primary thanks to better cognitive processing abilities and language abilities.

7. Conclusions

Overall, the findings of this study lend empirical support to Ferris's (1999) claim that CF has its value and should be a consistent practice in English teaching and learning. However, focused and unfocused CF appear to have equal effectiveness. It was found that learners' second language proficiency level may be a factor that contributes to the relative effects. In terms of further research, some individual and contextual factors can be taken into consideration. Future researchers can investigate the extent to which these factors such as age and second language proficiency level may influence learners' response to and processing of CF.

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9. Appendixes

Appendix 1: Narrative writing tests based on Byrne's (1967) picture compositions

Pre-test

Look at these four pictures carefully. Start from A to D. Write about 80 words to describe the story. You may use the words to help you.

A

B

C

D

thief

steal

shout

stick





-stumble on
-fall down

catch

thank

The comic strip consists of four panels labeled A, B, C, and D. Panel A shows a thief in a dark jacket and hat stealing a bag from a man sitting on a bench. Panel B shows the thief running away with the bag, and the man shouting. Panel C shows the thief stumbling and falling down, dropping the bag. Panel D shows a policeman catching the thief, and the man thanking him.

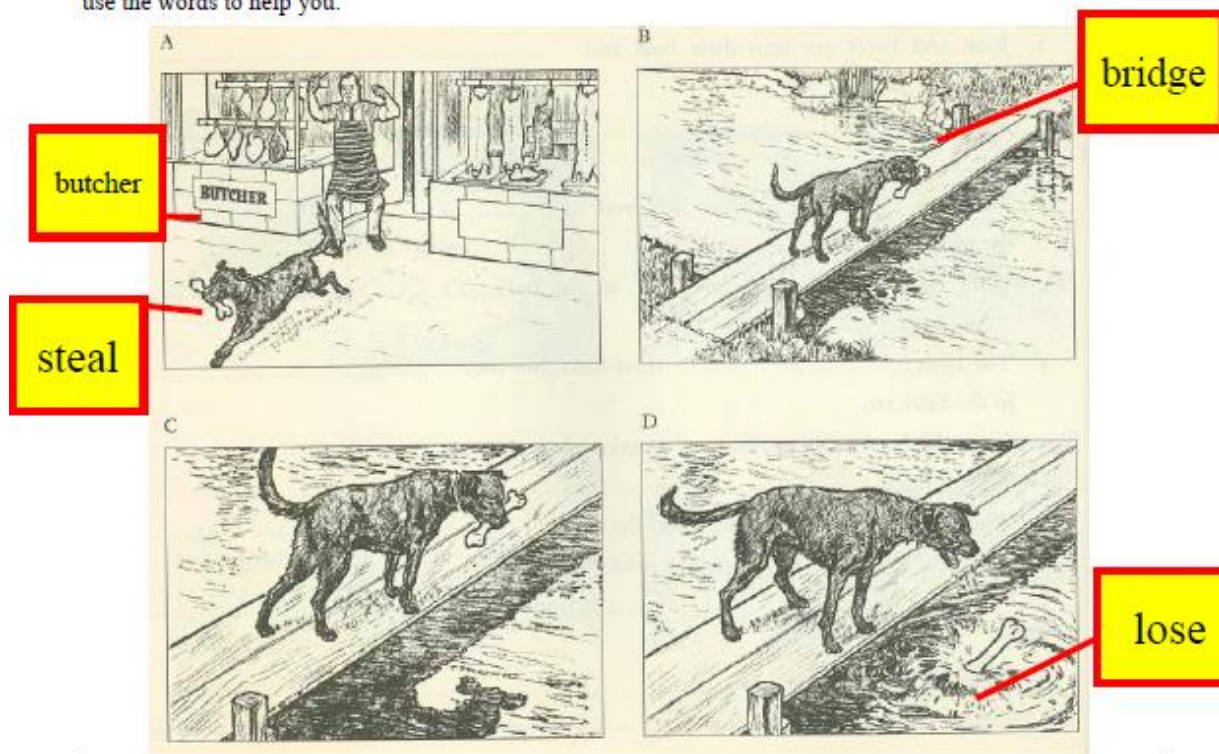
Look at these four pictures carefully. Start from A to D. Write about 80 words to describe the story. You may use the words to help you.

thief	A 	B 	shout
steal	C 	D 	stick
-stumble on -fall down			catch
			thank

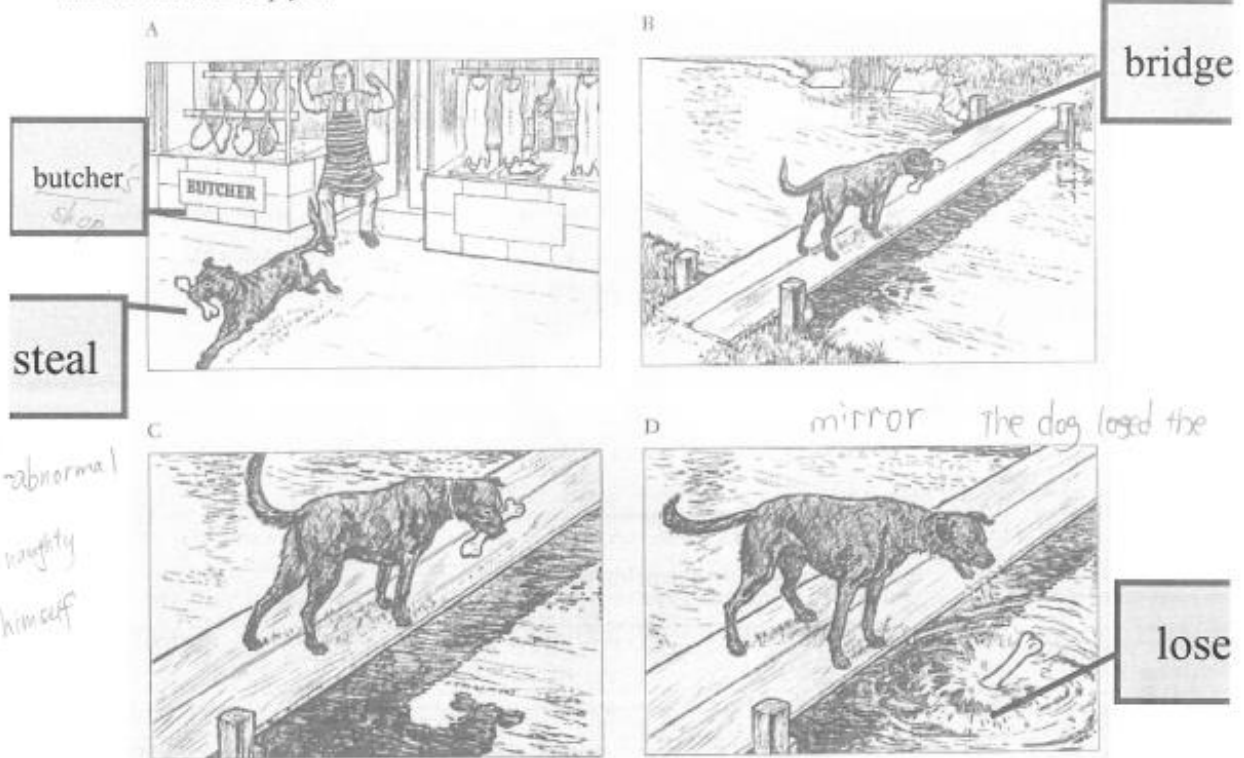
One day, the lady was went shopping. She wore a hat, a jacket, a dress and a necklace. The lady looks rich. The men saw the lady and put his hand. The men took out the lady's wallet and the ran away. Oh! The men was thief! The lady shouted at theif and said 'The bad thief, my wallet! The bad thief, my wallet.....' The old men saw it, He felt angry. He used the stick. The men stumble on stick and felt down. The policemen catched the thief. The lady said thank to old men. The lady felt happy.

Immediate post-test

Look at these four pictures carefully. Start from A to D. Write about 80 words to describe the story. You may use the words to help you.

[illegible]

Look at these four pictures carefully. Start from A to D. Write about 80 words to describe the story. You may use the words to help you.

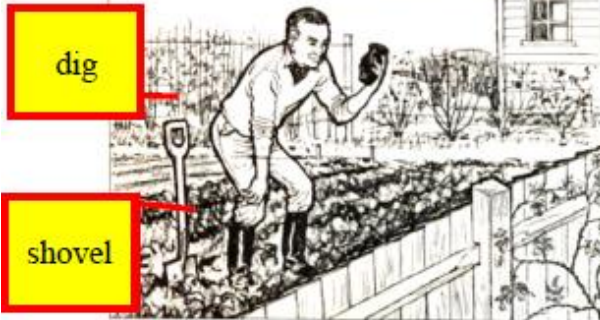


Once upon a time, the man had a dog. The man had a butcher's shop too. One day, The dog was abnormal. The dog stole a bone and ran away. The man saw it and then feel angry. He thoughts his had a naughty dog by himself. The dog ran to the bridge. Under the bridge was river. The dog saw the river. suddelly, The dog saw a bone in the water. The dog was very happy. The dog want to more than one bone. Then, The dog shouted at. The dog losed the bone. The dog was sad.

Delayed post-test 1

Look at these four pictures carefully. Start from A to D. Write about 80 words to describe the story. You may use the words to help you.

A



B



C



D



Look at these four pictures carefully. Start from A to D. Write about 80 words to describe the story. You may use the words to help you.

He find that

Composition 20



Once upon a time, A man a big garden. It was behind his house. One day, the man went to tidied the garden. He used a shovel to tidy. Digg Digg..... Suddenly, he digg a pot. He thought it was rubbish, then he putted away at other garden. Soon, A other man saw it and told up. The man thought 'maybe a good thing.....' And then, he told away at home. Later, he went to a antique shop used it changed many money. The man knew that, then ^{the} two man fought with each other a long a long.

Delayed post-test 2

Look at these four pictures carefully. Start from A to D. Write about 80 words to describe the story. You may use the words to help you.

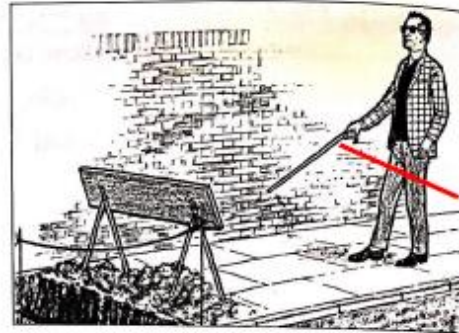
A

pedestrian



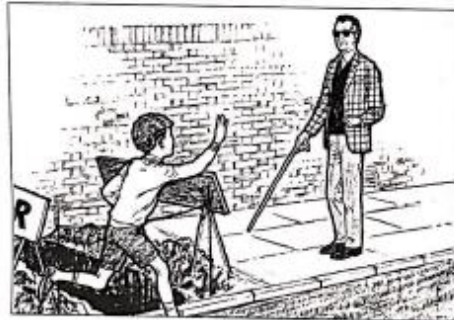
hole

B



stick

C



D

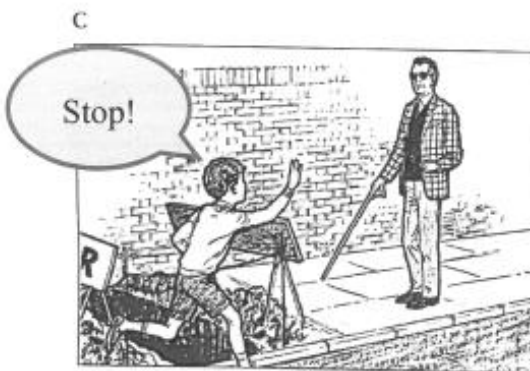
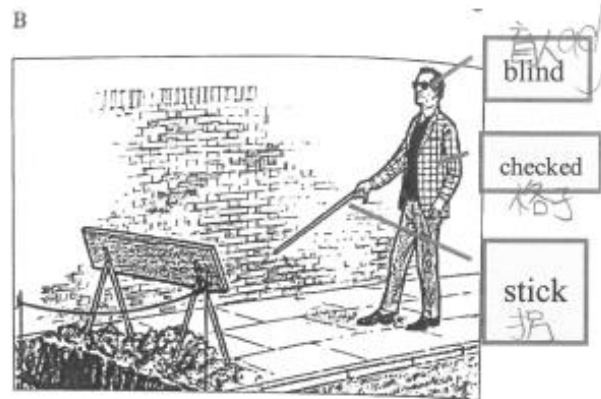
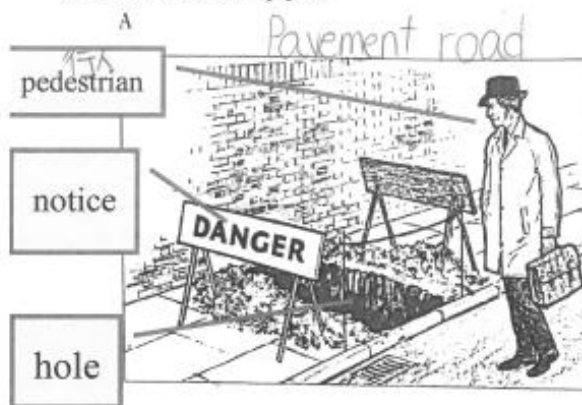


took ___'s arm

[illegible]

appreciate

Look at these four pictures carefully. Start from A to D. Write about 80 words to describe the story. You may use the words to help you.



One day, a pedestrian is walking on a pavement road. The man who is in the suit. The man who is the hat. He walks walks The big notice is in front of the man. The notice is about danger. There have a big hole. The man see it, he is go to walk next to the pedestrian. However, the pavement road has a other man later. He is wearing a checked suit and black glasses. He has stick top. He can not see anything. He is blind. He walks and walks. Suddenly, a boy shout at him 'Stop, stop!' Then, the man is stop. A boy is go to take the blind man's arm. The blind man say thank you and appreciate is a helpful boy!

Appendix 2: Error correction tests

Pre-test

Please read each statement (question). Each statement has two sentences that are related. One of the sentences is underlined. It contains one error. Write out the underlined sentence correctly. There are no punctuation or spelling errors.

Example 1: John gets 100 marks in English test. She is happy!

Answer: **He** is happy!

Example 2: There is a girl in a park. She playing with a dog.

Answer: She **is** playing with a dog.

1. I look after a little girl and a little boy on Saturdays. A little girl is smart but the boy isn't.

2. Ken read books every day. It is his habit.

3. Kelvin was sick yesterday. He sleep all day.

4. I took three tests yesterday. Tests were difficult.

5. I saw an interesting movie last night. I forgot the name of movie.

6. Last night, I read a magazine and a newspaper. I don't know where a newspaper is today.

7. I read book about cooking. It is interesting!

8. I went to basketball game last Saturday. The players were very tall.

9. Amy felt bored at home. She asked she father to play with her.

10. Look at your left hand side. You can see a blue house and a red house. I live in a blue house.

11. I like playing football with my friends. I want to buy football.

12. My mum bought me pink ruler yesterday. I love it!

13. Peter loves to play with he younger sister. She is cute!

14. I play with a boy and the girl every Sunday. They are my good friends!

15. Did you see pencil case on the desk? I cannot find it.

16. Billy brought a yellow pen to school yesterday. But he lost pen after the first lesson.

Error Correction Pre-test

Please read each statement (question). Each statement has two sentences that are related. One of the sentences is underlined. It contains one errors. Write out the underlined sentence correctly. There are no punctuation or spelling errors.

Example 1: John gets 100 marks in English test. She is happy!

Answer: **He** is happy!

Example 2: There is a girl in a park. She playing with a dog.

Answer: She is playing with a dog.

1. I look after a little girl and a little boy on Saturdays. A little girl is smart but the boy isn't.

The little girl is smart but the boy isn't.

2. Ken read books every day. It is his habit.

Ken reads books every day.

3. Kelvin was sick yesterday. He sleep all day.

He slept all day.

4. I took three tests yesterday. Tests were difficult.

Three tests were difficult.

5. I saw an interesting movie last night. I forgot the name of movie.

I forgot the name of movie.

6. Last night, I read a magazine and a newspaper. I don't know where a newspaper is today.

I don't know where a newspaper is today.

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I read the book about cooking.

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I went to play basketball game last Saturday.

9. Amy felt bored at home. She asked she father to play with her.

She asked her father to play with her.

10. Look at your left hand side. You can see a blue house and a red house. I live in a blue house.

I live in the blue house.

11. I like playing football with my friends. I want to buy football.

I want to buy a football.



12. My mum bought me pink ruler yesterday. I love it!

My mum was brought me pink ruler yesterday.

13. Peter loves to play with he younger sister. She is cute!

Peter loves to play with his younger sister.

14. I play with a boy and the girl every Sunday. They are my good friends!

I play with with a boy and a girl every Sunday.

15. Did you see pencil case on the desk? I cannot find it.

Do you see pencil case on the desk.

16. Billy brought a yellow pen to school yesterday . But he lost pen after the first lesson.

But he lost the pen after the first lesson.

Post-test

Please read each statement (question). Each statement has two sentences that are related. One of the sentences is underlined. It contains one error. Write out the underlined sentence correctly. There are no punctuation or spelling errors.

Example 1: John gets 100 marks in English test. She is happy!

Answer: **He** is happy!

Example 2: There is a girl in a park. She playing with a dog.

Answer: She**is** playing with a dog.

1. I see a girl and a boy in a park. A girl is crying but the boy is laughing.

2. Ken has a pet. He pet is a puppy.

3. Kelly drink eight cups of water every day. She is healthy.

4. This morning, car crashed into a tree. The car was badly damaged.

5. I read a book last night. A book made me sad.

6. Mary buys a ring and a necklace for her mother's birthday. Her mother likes the ring but she doesn't like a necklace.

7. I watched movie yesterday. The name of the movie is *Mr. Bean*.

8. A woman and a man are talking outside my house. Ten minutes later, the woman is shouting at man.

9. I have a PE lesson yesterday. I was tired.

10. There is a cat and a mouse. Mouse is chasing the cat!

11. I get 100 marks in my exam. My father buys new computer for me.

12. My teacher gave me sticker yesterday. I love it!

13. Sally's father works overseas. Sally misses she father very much.

14. My mother has a white dog and the black dog. The white dog is taller than the black dog.

15. My friend lives in a big house. There is beautiful garden behind the house.

16. Billy brought a wallet to school yesterday. But he lost wallet after the first recess.

Error Correction Post-test

Please read each statement (question). Each statement has two sentences that are related. One of the sentences is underlined. It contains one error. Write out the underlined sentence correctly. There are no punctuation or spelling errors.

Example 1: John gets 100 marks in English test. She is happy!

Answer: He is happy!

Example 2: There is a girl in a park. She playing with a dog.

Answer: She is playing with a dog.

1. I see a girl and a boy in a park. A girl is crying but the boy is laughing.

The girl is crying but the boy is laughing.

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He's pet is a puppy.

3. Kelly drink eight cups of water every day. She is healthy.

Kelly drinks eight cups of water every day.

4. This morning, car crashed into a tree. The car was badly damaged.

This morning, a car crashed into a tree.

5. I read a book last night. A book made me sad.

The book made me sad.

6. Mary buys a ring and a necklace for her mother's birthday. Her mother likes the ring but she doesn't like @necklace.

Her mother likes the ring but she doesn't like the necklace.

7. I watched movie yesterday. The name of the movie is Mr. Bean.

I watched a movie yesterday.

8. A woman and a man are talking outside my house. Ten minutes later, the woman is shouting at man.

Ten minutes later, the woman is shouting at the man.

9. I have a PE lesson yesterday. I was tired.

I had a PE lesson yesterday.

10. There is a cat and a mouse. Mouse is chasing the cat!

The mouse is chasing the cat.

11. I get 100 marks in my exam. My father buys new computer for me.

My father buys a new computer for me.

12. My teacher gave me sticker yesterday. I love it!

My teacher gave me a sticker yesterday.

13. Sally's father works overseas. Sally misses ~~she~~ father very much.

Sally misses her father very much.

14. My mother has a white dog and ~~the~~ black dog. The white dog is taller than the black dog.

My mother has a white dog and a black dog.

15. My friend lives in a big house. ~~There is~~ beautiful garden behind the house.

There is a beautiful garden behind the house.

16. Billy brought a wallet to school yesterday. ~~But he lost~~ wallet after the first recess.

But he lost the wallet after the first recess.

Appendix 3: Exit questionnaire

1. Now that you have completed all tests, what do you think they were all about?

你已完成所有測試，你認為這些測試與下列哪項有關？

A. They were practicing and testing my writing skills (e.g. organization and content).

這些測試練習及測試我的寫作能力 (例：組織能力及內容)。

B. They were practicing and testing my grammar (e.g. tenses and articles).

這些測試練習及測試我的文法 (例：時態及冠詞)。

C. They were practicing and testing my general English skills.

這些測試練習及測試我的一般英語能力。

D. They were practicing and testing my vocabulary.

這些測試練習及測試我的詞彙。

2. Please write at least one sentence about what you think you learned from the tests.

你認為自己從這些測試學到甚麼？試寫最少一句句子作描述。

1. Now that you have completed all tests, what do you think they were all about?

你已完成所有測試，你認為這些測試與下列哪項有關？

A. They were practicing and testing my **writing skills** (e.g. organization and content).

這些測試練習及測試我的寫作能力 (例：組織能力及內容)。

☒ B. They were practicing and testing my **grammar** (e.g. tenses and articles).

這些測試練習及測試我的文法 (例：時態及冠詞)。

C. They were practicing and testing my **general English skills**.

這些測試練習及測試我的一般英語能力。

D. They were practicing and testing my **vocabulary**.

這些測試練習及測試我的詞彙。

2. Please write at least one sentence about what you think you learned from the tests.

你認為自己從這些測試學到甚麼？試寫最少一句句子作描述。

時態! (the, a) A boy is dancing, Then the boy is singing