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**The Use of Error Code Feedback as a Strategy to Support  
Private Lessons Students in the Writing Short Narrative  
Texts**

Tesis para optar al grado de Magíster en Innovación en la  
Enseñanza, Aprendizaje y Evaluación del Inglés

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## **Abstract**

Through the years, a substantial number of studies have examined the effects of grammar correction on the second language (L2) written errors; however, most of the existing studies are made in a classroom situation. This action research explores the influence that error code correction feedback has on the writing of short narrative texts by two learners with an intermediate level of English of 17 and 20 years old in a private lesson environment in Los Ángeles, Chile. To this end, the linguistic target chosen for the intervention was accuracy. The students received feedback during a writing task in which they should narrate a personal story. The task was assessed by two instruments: an analytic rubric and an error code checklist. The results of the data analysis revealed the effectiveness of metalinguistic feedback in the improvement of the participants' accuracy in writing. In conclusion, the strategy demonstrated its effectiveness, and that error code feedback not only works in English, but also could work in Spanish.

*Keywords:* Error code feedback, writing, private lesson students, short narratives, accuracy

## **Resumen**

A lo largo de los años, un gran número de estudios ha examinado los efectos de la corrección gramatical en los errores escritos en una segunda lengua (L2); sin embargo, la mayoría de estos estudios se han realizado en un contexto de aula. La presente investigación-acción explora la influencia que tiene la corrección a través de códigos de errores en la escritura de textos narrativos cortos por parte de dos estudiantes de 17 y 20 años en un contexto de lecciones privadas en Los Ángeles, Chile. Para ello, el objetivo lingüístico abordado en la intervención didáctica fue la precisión. Los estudiantes recibieron retroalimentación durante una tarea de escritura en la que debían producir una narración breve sobre un acontecimiento personal. Los textos fueron evaluados mediante dos instrumentos: una rúbrica analítica y una lista de verificación de códigos de error. Los resultados revelaron la efectividad de la retroalimentación metalingüística y respaldaron la precisión de la escritura de los dos estudiantes de clases privadas. En conclusión, este estudio reveló una efectividad de la estrategia utilizada y se concluyó que la corrección gramatical no solo podría funcionar en el idioma inglés, sino también en la lengua materna.

*Palabras clave:* Corrección gramatical. Escritura, estudiantes de lecciones privadas, textos narrativos cortos, precisión de la escritura

# **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

## 1.1 Problem statement

As the teacher's students in this study are adult learners in private lessons, in the Chilean public education system, according to the Ministry of Education (2021) graduate students should have been prepared when leaving the educational academic process to be able to use it as a tool in simple communicative situations of various kinds. According to this, students are expected to write stories and informative texts, such as emails, letters, articles, etc., and to use accuracy correctly. Nonetheless, facing the Chilean reality where there are graduated and nongraduated students who take part in private lessons, it is difficult to achieve the previous goals when students seem to be poorly prepared in terms of writing accuracy. However, very little is known about teachers' feedback use and pre-service teachers' actual knowledge and practices regarding error correction (Aranguiz & Quintanilla, 2016). According to a study carried out by Raihany (2014), it was found that there are a few problems with teachers' written feedback because it is not clear and points out only negative aspects. This shows that teachers may not have proper guidelines to give feedback which makes students have difficulty in correcting their written tasks.

In my teaching context of private lessons, my adults' students struggle with writing texts such as articles, short stories, letters, and even just a written conversation on social media among them. Even though most of these students had at least four hours or even forty-five minutes a week of English in school or college; they still need more preparation in terms of writing, especially in accuracy (grammar, and vocabulary). The most recurrent mistakes are word order, spelling, missing punctuation, wrong tense, incorrect word form, and wrong or missing prepositions. Consequently, they feel frustrated when asked to write a type of text, as they do not feel prepared to do it and they are afraid of failure. Hence, they need to know some strategies and how to implement them in their writing to feel more comfortable and to increase their motivation.

In order to address this issue, this action research will be focused on a metalinguistic corrective feedback strategy called error code feedback because this could be an effective strategy to help private lesson students to improve their English written language, since this type of feedback provides an opportunity to enhance students' writing. According to Ellis (2009), this strategy consists of abbreviated labels for different kinds of errors. Furthermore, it helps students become aware of their errors and not just their errors, but also a whole in writing and correcting them.

Because of this problem, this study attempts to explore the influence of students writing by using error code feedback to help private lesson students to become aware of their mistakes by working individually and accepting teacher's feedback in the interest of improving their writing process.

## **1.2 Aims**

### **1.2.1 General objective**

The general objective of this action research is to explore the influence error code feedback strategy has upon students' accuracy when writing short narrative texts.

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

1. To analyze the error code feedback strategy used by students in the writing process of short narrative texts.
2. To describe students' accuracy when writing short narrative texts.
3. To analyze students' perception about their short texts' writing accuracy before and after the intervention.

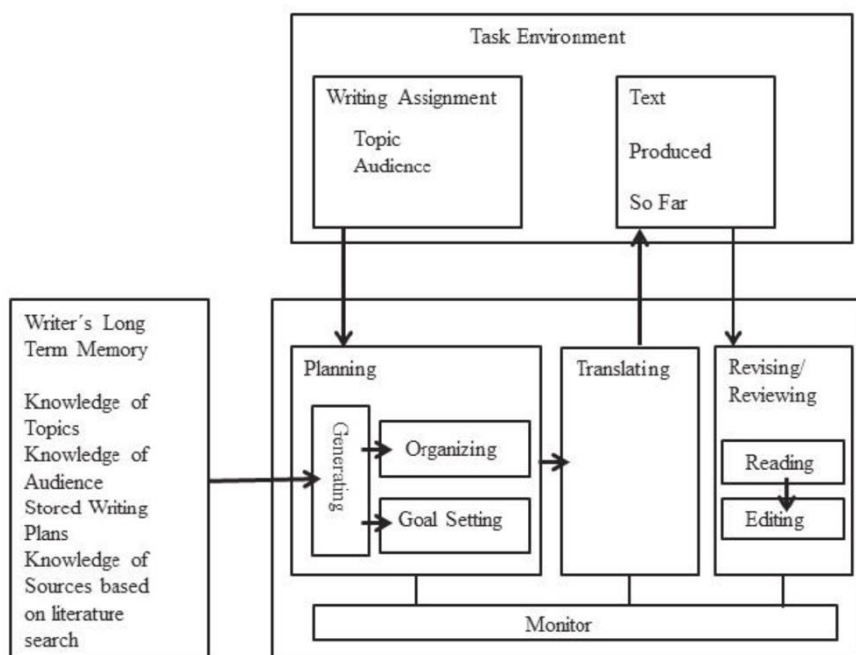
# **CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

## 2.1 Process of writing

Writing is a complex process that is closely related to learning. Emig (2020) stated that “writing serves learning uniquely because writing as process-and- product possesses a cluster of attributes that correspond uniquely to certain powerful learning strategies” (p. 122). Materials used in word recognition experiments can be controlled relatively easily, but thoughts, plans, and mental processes are much more difficult to control in an experiment (Harley, 2013). Therefore, since the seventies, there has been a line of research that has developed models that effectively explain the writing process in order to develop strategies that help to better teach and learn this skill.

There are different types of models of the writing process, such as Nystrand model (1982), Beaugrande & Dressler model (1982), Bereiter and Scardamalia model (1982), Candin and Hyland model (1999), and Grabe and Kaplan mode (1996). However, the most influential model of writing processes has been that of Hayes and Flower model (1980) as seen in Figure 1. According to Fuentes (2013) this model assumes the participation of three large units in the written production process: the task environment, the writer's long-term memory and cognitive processes (planning, translating, and revising). Álvarez & Ramírez (2006) declares that “this model is considered as a prototypical construction from which others are generated, this part of the generation, organization, and transcription of ideas to the text. In this model, writing is characterized not only by the purposes, strategies, plans, and objectives, but also by the discursive resources (rhetoric) of written language” (p. 31)

The uniqueness of the Hayes and Flower model is that it considers these processes as recursive and non-linear process, that is, they are not continuous or hierarchical processes, but processes that can be reused as many times as necessary, controlled by a monitoring mechanism (Fuentes, 2013). Therefore, the most important effect that this model has is that it allows a significant difference between expert and novice writers.



**Figure 1.** *Process Model of Writing (Hayes & Flower, 1980)*

Flowers and Hayes (1980) explained that the expert writers produce a writing in a very elaborated and planned manner, developing their objectives rhetorically and explicitly, they also continue to improve their writing throughout the process, generating a more global vision, however, novice writers have poorer planning. Subsequently, experts modify the content more during writing and revision than novices.

## 2.2 Writing skills development in EFL

Among the four skills, writing is the most complex one (Widiati, et al., 2015). The teaching of writing in ESL settings has increasingly become a factor of attention and importance for researchers (Evans et al. 2015; Lee, 2003; Craig, 2012). For any student, it is considered an important part of the achievement of communicative competence who acquires any language as a second or first language. According to Myles and Mitchell (2004), since 1970, communicative competence has been widely recognized as the goal of foreign-language learning.

Writing has positioned itself first in English language teaching because it involves not one but three language skills: listening, reading, and speaking. In addition, there

is a writing process, whether it is for adults or young people. According to Oscarson (2009), educational institutions have changed the way in which the writing process is taught in both the second and first languages. He also states that writing should not just be delivered but should be taught effectively at all levels; in fact, he briefly describes what the approach to the writing process entails, as follows:

- Pre-writing which includes generating and collecting ideas and facts through for example brainstorming by reading and talking.
- Multiple rough drafts.
- Comparing drafts through reading own or peer work.
- Feedback and revision to enhance content and organization on the drafts.
- Editing for formal language errors (i.e., spelling and grammar) at the final stage.
- The last version to be published, posted, and/or graded.

However, students still struggle with writing, such as language and content (Wigati, 2015). In this case, it is important to point out that teachers play an important role in the process of teaching writing, they are the ones who must do everything possible so that their students learn something beneficial and permanent. (Harmer, 2002). Thus, teachers also have an important role in the university stage of the writing process for students because they can graduate from college in a pertinent level.

### **2.3 Errors in EFL writing**

Phuket (2015) states that “mistakes are considered an important mark of language development in language learning” (p.12), but at the same time she declares that mistakes are undesirable problems that teachers try to prevent. The appreciation of an error as a negative output of language learning was built on the behaviorist theory of learning. River (1968) said that “the behaviorist theory, lying on Skinner’s model, suggests that learning is a habit formation process, resulting from reinforcement” (p. 73). According to François-Lavet., et al (2018) “reinforcement learning (RL) is the area of machine learning that deals with sequential decision-making” (p. 3). Thus, the external aspects such as the teachers’ input and the exposure to the native speaker environment performed an important role in contributing to the learners’ achievement in learning the TL (Target Language). Phuket (2015) also states that in recent times errors are seen differently as a sign of learning progress and errors are seen as the non-native results of students’ inadequate linguistic knowledge. Therefore, the errors are recognizable only by teachers or others who possess a piece of accurate knowledge about the grammatical approaches.

Identifying an error goes further by simply explaining the error. However, as linguists and teachers pay attention to the distinction between an error and a mistake, it is necessary to go over the definition of the two different concepts. According to the Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1992), a learner makes a mistake when writing or speaking because of a lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspects of performance. Whereas an error is the use of a linguistic item in a way that a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning. In other words, it occurs because the learner does not know what is correct, and thus it cannot be self-corrected. To know and distinguish the difference between an error and a mistake, Ellis (1997) proposes two ways. The first one is to check the consistency of the learner's performance. If the learner sometimes uses the correct form of a word and then uses the wrong one, it is a mistake. However, if the learner always uses the word incorrectly, then it is an error. The second manner is to ask the learners to try to correct their failures. Where the learners are unable to, the deviations are errors; where they are successful, they are mistakes.

According to Corder (1973), a few different categories for describing errors have been identified. Firstly, he classifies the errors in terms of the difference between the learners' utterances and the reconstructed version. In this way, "errors fall into four categories: (1) omission of some required element; (2) addition of some unnecessary or incorrect element; (3) selection of an incorrect element; and (4) misordering of the elements" (p.277). Nevertheless, the author himself adds that this classification is not enough to describe errors. That is why he includes the linguistics level of the errors under the sub-areas of morphology, syntax, and lexicon (Corder, 1973). Ellis (1997) maintains that "classifying errors in these ways can help us to diagnose learners' learning problems at any stage of their development and to plot how changes in error patterns occur over time" (p. 51). This categorization can be exemplified as follows:

Figure 2. It shows the linguistics level of errors under the sub-areas of morphology, syntax, and lexicon based on Corder (1973).

**Figure 2. Error linguistics level**

| <b>ERROR</b>     | <b>TYPE</b>            | <b>EXAMPLE</b>                          |
|------------------|------------------------|---|
| <i>Omission</i>  | Morphological omission | A strange thing happen to me yesterday. |
|                  | Syntactical omission   | Must say also the names?                |
| <i>Addition</i>  | In morphology          | The books is here.                      |
|                  | In syntax              | The London                              |
|                  | In lexicon             | I stayed there during five years ago.   |
| <i>Selection</i> | In morphology          | My friend is oldest than me.            |
|                  | In syntax              | I want that he comes here.              |
| <i>Ordering</i>  | In morphology          | get upping for 'getting up'             |
|                  | In syntax              | He is a dear to me friend.              |
|                  | In lexicon             | key car for 'car key'                   |

An error may vary in magnitude. It can include a phoneme, a morpheme, a word, a sentence, or even a paragraph. Due to this fact, Brown (2000) states that “errors may also be viewed as being either global or local” (p. 122). Global errors hinder communication. They prevent the message from being understood as in the example below (Corder, 1973):

*I like bus but my mother said so not that we must be late for school.*

On the other hand, local errors do not prevent the message from being understood because there is usually a minor violation of one segment of a sentence that allows the hearer to guess the intended meaning as follows:

*If I hear from her, I would let you know.*

The final group is the two related dimensions of error, domain, and extent.

Prastikawati (2013) declares that “The domain is the rank of the linguistic unit from

phoneme to discourse that must be taken as context for the error to be understood, and extent is the rank of a linguistic unit that would have to be deleted, replaced, supplied, or reordered to repair the sentence” (p. 4)

Corder (as cited in Hamed, 2018) classifies errors into two groups: overt and covert errors. He declares that “overt errors are unquestionably ungrammatical at the sentence level and covert errors are grammatically well-formed at the sentence level but are not explainable within the context of communication” (p.222). For example, “I’m fine, thanks.” Is a correct sentence but if it is given as an answer to the question of “How old are you?” it is covertly an error.

## **2.4 Corrective feedback**

Feedback is the most important part of the language writing process. Sheen and Ellis (2011) referred to Corrective Feedback (CF)

to the feedback that learners receive on the linguistic errors they make in their oral or written production in a second language (L2). Both oral and written CF have attracted considerable attention in recent years because of their significance for the development of theories of L2 acquisition and because they have held an important place in L2 pedagogy” (p. 593)

Continuing with Ur (1996), she defines feedback as “Information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of the learning task, usually intending to improve their performance “(p. 242). Nassaji (2011) stated that in grammatical correctness, there is no simple solution for it, furthermore, Sheen and Ellis (2011) support what Nassaji (2011) said and declare that “CF is a very complex issue with no simple rules-of-thumb available to guide teachers” (p. 601). In addition, it is important to highlight and mention that both teachers and students have to know and accept that errors are inevitable in the writing and learning process, it is an existing fact, thus, it is necessary to correct and try to improve students’ writing. Over the years several researchers have accomplished different types of research focused on second language errors, because of all these investigations, errors began to be appreciated as a significant and natural process of language learning (Diab, 2005, Wang, 2010; Katayama, 2007). In L2 writing tasks, students usually have several options to be able to respond to corrective feedback given by the teacher, in addition to correcting an error. These include rephrasing or removing the text containing the error or simply ignoring the feedback (Ranalli, 2018). Therefore,

it is important to know that errors are a good sign of students' learning in the process of language acquisition.

Teachers have an advantage since they can discover students' biases in instructional practices. The teacher's role should be to investigate and discover what their students think and feel about what and how they want to learn, in this case, writing (Wang, 2010). Therefore, it is a relevant factor that can be investigated. Most of the students in the classroom see the teacher as the only source of authority they value their revision more than other methods or types of revision, it may be because they have confidence in the teacher's knowledge and skill (Srichanyachon, 2012). Kosem et al, (2011) reported a case where Soviet students' writing was corrected by teachers. They state in this case that one of the outstanding characteristics of the Solar corpus is that the annotation of errors in the texts is not based only on defining the error, but also on the corrections provided by the professors. Thus, the corpus presented the linguistic practice of the Slovenian teachers, which was reflected in the actual marking that took place in a daily classroom environment and was also representative of the linguistic production of the students.

On the other hand, Correa and Flores (2018), in the context of writing stories in English as a foreign language class, conducted a study where they examined the feedback provided by an English teacher to Chilean high school students' texts. The study aimed to examine students' decisions about the types of teacher feedback of their writings. The results demonstrated that the participants adopted most of the comments given by the teacher. The student's texts evidenced proceed, but still, regardless of the feedback provided, they presented some grammatical and organizational issues. Therefore, that is why corrective feedback is important.

#### **2.4.1 Importance of Written corrective feedback**

Bitchener and Knoch (2008) explained that researchers who have worked in the area of corrective feedback, as well as second language teachers, have long recognized that written corrective feedback (WCF) helps not only students but also teachers to acquire and demonstrate proficiency in the use of specific linguistic forms and structures. As a positive effect, they have been concerned and have become aware of investigating the different methods or more effective ways to provide WCF to students, in order to improve accuracy in students' writing. Bitchener and Knoch (2008) conducted a study, where they investigated the effectiveness of WCF on ESL students' writing, as a result, they found that students

who received all three WCFs (direct corrective feedback, written and oral metalinguistic explanation) outperformed those who did not receive the WCF, in addition, their level of accuracy was maintained during the seven weeks of intervention.

Regarding the effectiveness of corrective feedback on errors, the literature review on L2 learning has wearily shown varying positions. Even if there is much more agreement among researchers that corrective feedback is useful in general, there is much less disagreement about how and when it should be given to be more effective (Nassaji, 2011). Corrective feedback (CF) is considered a key characteristic in the teaching and learning of writing (Sintawati & Wulandari, 2020). According to Hashemnezhed and Mohammadnejad (2012), error treatment is considered an inseparable part of writing skills. Collaborating with written feedback helps students have more opportunities in the classroom to review their writing immediately after receiving written CF and is a useful technique for students. They become more independent and more responsible. In addition, it can help students to increase their self-esteem and motivation, which would lead to better performance in high school.

In a Chilean context, Cuevas & Arancibia (2020) investigated the value of feedback; the purpose of their study was to analyze the perceptions and expectations of a group of engineering and education professors regarding the feedback from student written assignments. The results showed that regarding the reception of the students regarding the feedback, it was concluded that the professors perceived a negative reception from their students to written assignments, but the professors also perceived a positive reaction from their students to the feedback provided. Though, if the students receive feedback negatively, various types of feedback can be applied, with the aim that the students get hooked and receive it positively.

## **2.5 Types of written corrective feedback**

Corrective feedback can be used on various grammatical features and forms of writing, such as content, organization, spelling, punctuation, etc. Thus, written feedback (WCF) is a written form of information provided by an agent, be it a teacher, parent, or researcher, to develop skills in students or to monitor their progress (Sintawati & Wulandari, 2020). Therefore, students will be more motivated, and the classroom environment will be more interesting and entertaining. Rassaei

& Moinzadeh (2011) developed a study about the immediate and delayed effects of three types of corrective feedback which are namely recast, metalinguistic feedback, and clarification requests. As a result of the intervention, the data analysis revealed the helpfulness of metalinguistic feedback. It seems that metalinguistic feedback reveals and proved to be an effective strategy to implement in any environment.

What is more, Ellis (2009) declares that corrective feedback has a crucial role in L2 learning and teaching language. The same author expounded on some types of corrective feedback that teachers can apply to correct students' writing. The following table about-corrective feedback strategies is adopted from Ellis (2009):

**Table 1.** Types of corrective feedback

| Type of Corrective Feedback  | Description  |
|--|--|
| Direct Corrective Feedback   | The teacher provides the students with the correct form.   |
| Indirect Corrective Feedback   | The teacher indicates that there is an error but does not provide the correction.                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Indicating + locating the error:</li> </ul> | This takes the form of the underlining and use of cursors to show omissions in the student's text.             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Indication only:</li> </ul>                 | This takes the form of an indication in the margin that an error or errors have taken place in a line of text. |
| Metalinguistic Feedback  | The teacher provides metalinguistic clues as to the nature of the error.                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use of error code:</li> </ul>               | The teacher writes codes in the margin or over the error.  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brief grammatical description:</li> </ul>   | The teacher gives a number for each error and provides a grammatical description at the bottom of the text.    |
| Electronic Feedback  | The teacher indicates an error and provides a source or link where the   |

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
|               | student can find some examples of correct usage.  |
| Reformulation | This consists of a native speaker's reworking of the student's entire text to make the language seem as native-like as possible while keeping the content of the original intact. |

Source: Ellis, R. (2009). The effects of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback in English as a foreign language context. *System* 36(3), 353–371.

The following definitions are based on Ellis, (2009).

### **2.5.1 Direct CF**

In this case, the teacher provides the student with the correct form. As Ellis (2009) points out, this can be done in several different ways. It can be by crossing out a wrong word, phrase, or morpheme and correcting it by inserting a correct word or morpheme. This may be on or near the error.

### **2.5.2 Indirect CF**

It consists of indicating that the student has made an error without correcting it. This can be done by marking the error, either by underlining it, using the flags to display the error, or simply placing a cross in the margin next to the line containing the error.

### **2.5.3 Metalinguistic Feedback**

Metalinguistic CF involves providing students with some kind of explicit feedback on the errors they have made. The most common is the use of error codes. These consist in the use of codes for each linguistic error. Codes can be placed over the location of the error in the text or the margin.

### **2.5.4 Electronic Feedback**

Extensive corpora of written English can be tapped here to help students with their writing, such as Google. Software programs can be used as students write, or as a form of feedback.

### **2.5.5 Reformulation**

It allows learners to see a better way of expressing their ideas without being corrected and encourages learners to consider issues related to the overall organization, idea development, and the writer's sense of audience.

Regarding the use and application of WCF, the challenge about the benefits that it brings are still present, besides the desire to continue investigating it. Within the group that supports and defends WCF, a group of researchers has been interested in how different WCF strategies can have divergent impacts on the accuracy of L2 writers (Bitchener, J. et al, 2005; Ferdouse, 2012; Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 2003).

### **2.6 Previous studies in metalinguistic feedback**

Amrhein & Nassaji, (2010) developed a study where the objective was to analyze the opinions and preferences of ESL students and teachers concerning WCF. The results showed some inconsistencies in their judgment and not only in how WCF should be delivered but also in why. This presented that there was a clear need to clarify the written corrective feedback and not only on the part of teachers but also on the part of students writing.

There were predominantly differences in two types of WCF which were direct and indirect WCF. Direct WCF refers to the facility of the correct linguistic form or structure by the teacher (Ferris, 2003), and indirect WCF refers to feedback that basically indicates to the writer that an error has been made by using or putting a symbol or an abbreviation (for instance: 'p' representing a punctuation error). According to Bitchener J. et al (2005) coded feedback indicates the exact location of an error, and the type of error involved is indicated with a code (for example, V means an error in vocabulary). Ferdouse (2012) indicates that "the use of error codes to help students correct their writing has often been proved to be an effective method to facilitate error correction" (p. 62). For instance, according to the curriculum for English in Richards et al. (1992), it is very common in an ESL classroom to use the correction code technique. The same author explained in their study that 20 participants at the university demonstrated that students chose coded feedback and benefitted from it over non-coded feedback.

Storch (2010) explained regarding the results obtained were somewhat contradictory in terms of the studies that considered the effect of different types of

WCF. For example, Tan & Manochphinyo (2017) showed in their study the difference between direct and indirect feedback. The results revealed that for between-subjects' effects, indirect WCF was more effective than direct WCF; while Chandler (2003) reported that students who received direct WCF over those who received one of the indirect WCF showed greater advances in accuracy,

Another study carried out by Ahmadi-Azad (2014) was an attempt to identify the effects of two kinds of written corrective feedback strategies, which were coded and uncoded feedback in the Iranian EFL context. The results showed that the coded type of written corrective feedback had a positive effect on learners' accurate use of all selected grammatical structures. This demonstrates and reveals that the strategy of error code works, and it can be used as a useful strategy to implement in students writing. Additionally, Hashemian & Farhang-Ju (2018) investigated the consequences of different types of feedback, especially metalinguistic feedback. The results showed that the participants benefited from metalinguistic feedback by proving to be an effective strategy for the development of the students' grammatical accuracy.

In a study, executed in Chile, Jeldres & Espinoza (2017) describe a mixed-methods study comparing the writing performance of 60 EFL students of an English program at a university in Chile. Three types of focused, indirect written corrective feedback were used: coding, brief grammatical explanation, and underlining. The results indicate that two of the five linguistic categories enhanced significantly in terms of accuracy, and there were differences among types of feedback. In addition, they had a positive attitude towards multiple drafting and the writing process approach through systematic feedback. Furthermore, another study in Chile was carried out by Westmacott (2017), this study reports on action research implemented with intermediate learners in a Chilean university. The researcher altered from providing direct to indirect coded feedback and explored the responses of different learners to the two types of feedback. The majority of students in this EFL setting stated that indirect feedback was more helpful, as it drives deeper cognitive processing and learning, and additionally, they showed how individual differences and learning context affected the responses of the students. Furthermore, Kloss and Quintanilla (2022) conducted a study where the purpose was to determine the effectiveness of direct and metalinguistic focused written corrective feedback (WCF) on information structuring connectors. The findings indicated that WCF was an effective strategy because there was a significant decrease in the number of errors of information-structuring connectors of their participants.

## **CHAPTER III: METHOD**

### **3.1. Type of study**

This study corresponds to action research which according to Reason and Bradbury (2001) “It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory, and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities” (p.1). Burns (2009) also declares that action research is part of a broad movement that has been going on in education generally for some time. It is related to the ideas of ‘reflective practice’ and ‘the teacher as a researcher’. The same author said that “AR involves taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring your teaching contexts” (p.2). And the author also states that “action research offers a means for the teacher to become agents rather than recipients of knowledge about second language teaching and learning, and thus to contribute toward the building of educational theories of practice” (p.2) (Burns, 2005). Action research is a better approach to put in practice in a situational problem that teachers can face either in classroom or private lessons environment

Regarding the purpose of this study, it can be said that it is small-scale action research used to explore and explain how the error code strategy will be used to support individuals’ writing skills in their private lessons.

### **3.2. Participants**

This action research was developed with two private class students from Los Angeles, Chile. One is 17 years old, and he is in his senior year in high school. The other one is 20 years old, she just finished high school and she was preparing to go to college. Therefore, the level of English of the students is intermediate according to the CEFR. They had at least 3-4 years of experience learning English in high school and/or college and they attend 2 hours of private English classes per week.

The sample corresponds to a purposive sample. Campbell, et al. (2020) define purposive sampling in a qualitative way where a relatively small and purposively selected sample may be employed, with the purpose of increasing the depth of understanding instead of breadth. He also explained that it can be also called judgment sampling because of the qualities the participants can possess. In this sampling, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find participants who can or are willing to participate and provide information under knowledge or experience.

### **3.3 Research question and objectives**

#### 3.3.1 Research question

This action research was designed to address the following question:

How can the error code feedback be used as a strategy to support students' accuracy in the writing of short narrative texts in their private lessons?

#### 3.3.2 Research objectives

This research has the following objectives.

##### 3.3.2.1 General objective

To explore the influence error code feedback strategy has upon students' accuracy when writing short narrative texts.

##### 3.3.2.2 Specific objectives

1. To analyze the use of error code feedback strategy used by students in the writing process of short narrative texts.
2. To describe students' accuracy when writing short narrative texts.
3. To analyze students' perception about their short texts' writing accuracy before and after the intervention.

### **3.4 Research problem**

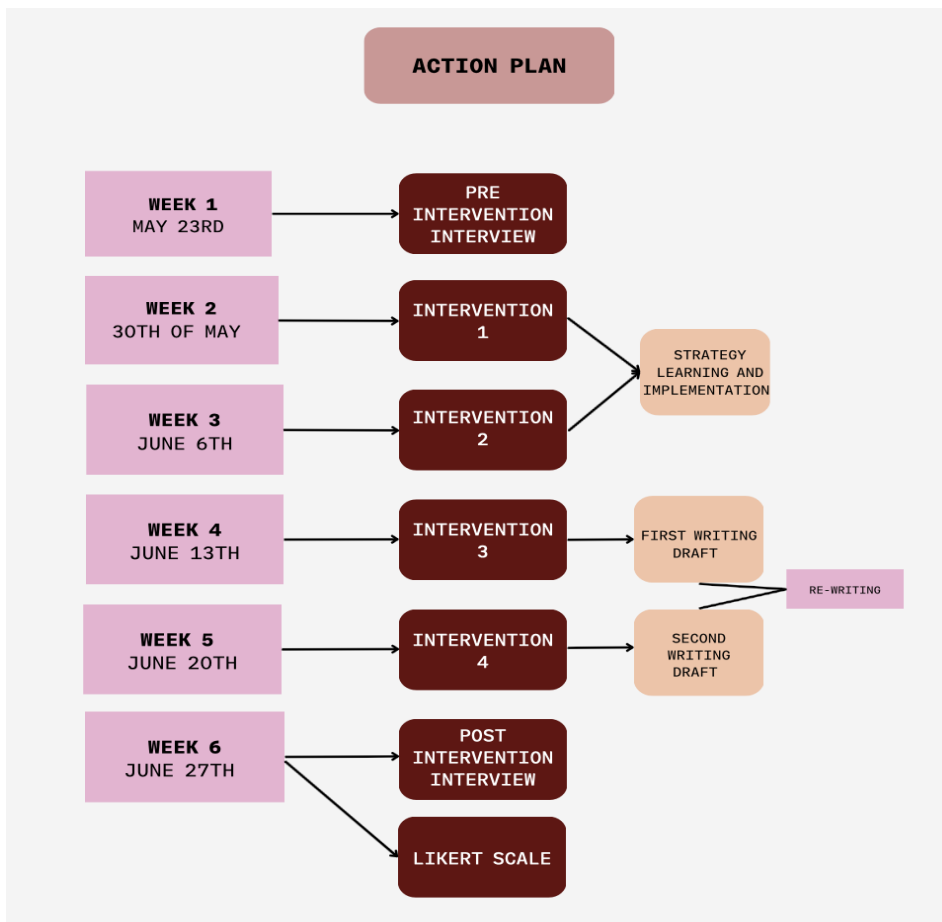
This study aims at improving a problem discovered among 2 EFL private lesson students in Los Ángeles, Chile. Therefore, since the participants are from private lessons, thus they are graduating or graduated from an educational institution, it is generally expected that they can write different writing tasks in English. However, these students have shown a low competence in terms of accuracy such as grammar and vocabulary (punctuation, word order, vocabulary, word choice, verb tense, preposition, verb form, and missing pronoun), thus, before the intervention, the high number of errors made during the narrative tasks were crucial to start focusing on the writing skill. The private lessons environment has the benefit that the teacher can deal with the student individually, making it easier to identify their errors and weaknesses. Thus, because of how they write, it was crucial to begin to focus on writing, since it has probably been the weakest ability of students in English. What is more, the students showed a low understanding of the written feedback, as they did not know how to correct the written text, therefore, they kept

making the same mistakes repeatedly. As a response to the problem mentioned, the following action research proposes to investigate the implementation of error code feedback to decrease the number of errors and help them become aware of their mistakes by working individually and accepting suggestions given by the teacher-researcher. This study aims to experiment with a solution based on this technique.

### 3.5 Stages of the action plan

The action plan for this intervention was divided into four sessions. The sessions were performed four online and four on-site, each session had different activities to learn and to put into practice the strategy proposed in this study which is error code feedback. At the end of each session, there was an activity to assess their knowledge of the strategy. It is important to mention that before and after the intervention a semi-structured interview was taken to the participants to answer the third specific objective (See Figure 3.). The objective, activities and procedures, time, materials, and research objectives are shown in Table 2.

**Figure 3.** Action plan



Additionally, each session of the intervention had its activities. Firstly, in the first two sessions the teacher-researcher taught them the error code feedback strategy and gave them activities to practice them in order to get familiar with the strategy before they used it. These activities and presentations were shown in a Google presentation shared with them. Thus, the students practiced the strategy by identifying the error codes in two different texts shown in a Google presentation. Consequently, the main task was to write a text related to life expectations (see appendix 1). In addition, between the third and fourth sessions of the intervention, the students had to rewrite the text they wrote before with the feedback of the error code made by the researcher to analyze the decrease in the number of errors made by the participants, and thus compared the first and second draft's errors. These short narrative texts were written in a Google Document, which the teacher created and shared with the students.

**Table 2. Intervention planning**

| Date – N° of the session              | Objective  | Activities/procedure  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| May 23rd – 29th / 1 <sup>st</sup>     | <p>The students can identify the error code strategy proposed by reading meanings.</p> <p>The students can apply the error code strategy by correcting sentences with mistakes.</p>          | <p><b>Introduce the error code strategy:</b> <i>The students are first introduced to the error code strategy by reading its description on a Google presentation.</i></p> <p><b>The students understand the strategy:</b> <i>The students study the error-correcting strategy and understand it by correcting sentences given by the teacher. They will have to be uploaded to a file on Google drive.</i></p> <p><b>Reflection:</b> <i>The students reflect on the strategy, and then it is an instance to ask any question that they could have, to clear all kinds of doubts for better development of their feedback writing.</i></p> |
| May 30th – June 5th / 2 <sup>nd</sup> | <p>The students can explain why the error code corrections were applied in two texts given by the teacher.</p> <p>The students can organize and plan their written short narrative text.</p> | <p><b>A deeper error code strategy understanding:</b> <i>The students read two different short narrative texts with different types of error code feedback, then they have to explain why those error codes were applied.</i></p> <p><b>The process of writing their narrative text:</b> <i>The students choose a theme to write about by giving brainstorms of their topic with the purpose of organizing and planning their writing and identifying the</i></p>   |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  | <i>process of the short text. The topic is related to a personal experience.</i>   |
| June 6th – 12 <sup>th</sup> / 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | <p>The students can write a short narrative text about the topic that they want.</p> <p>The students can practice accuracy in writing to improve it.</p> | <p><b>Introduction of their written piece:</b><br/><i>The students are first introduced to an analytic rubric about accuracy on where the students base their written texts.</i></p> <p><b>Writing their short narrative texts:</b><br/><i>The students have to write a short narrative text about the topic they have chosen based on the rubric explained before by the teacher.</i></p> |
| June 13th – 19 <sup>th</sup> / 4 <sup>th</sup> | The students can apply the error code feedback to rewrite their short narrative texts to produce a final product.  | <p><b>After writing:</b> <i>The students read their own text which is already corrected with the error code strategy proposed by the teacher.</i></p> <p><b>Re-writing:</b> <i>The students rewrite their text by correcting their errors with the error code feedback provided by the teacher.</i></p>  |

### 3.6 Data collection techniques

In this action research, three types of instruments were used to collect data, two of which were quantitative and one qualitative.

#### 3.6.1 Checklist

It was conducted to assess the first specific objective, to analyze the error code feedback strategy by students in the writing process of short narrative texts. To do this, a checklist was used in the first and second draft of the student's writing in order to collect data about the number of errors that students made in their short narrative texts before and after the intervention. Burns (2009) said that a checklist is used when the student may not have advanced language abilities, is very young or the researcher wants to reduce the risk of shades of judgment. Also, Burns (2009) declares that a checklist is used to acquire information about the problem and the teaching learning process in the writing class.

This checklist aimed to analyze the use of the error code feedback strategy in the process of writing short narrative texts. It consisted of sixteen grammatical errors each one with its codes: subject-verb agreement (sv), double subject (ds), no subject (s), singular/plural (pl), spelling (sp), article (A), punctuation (p), verb form (vf), verb tense (T), word form (wf), wrong word (ww), wrong word order (wo), wrong or missing pronoun (pron), preposition (prep), and conjunction missing or incorrect (conj). The researcher applied it in the first and second drafts in order to compare

the number of students' errors that they made in both texts, and which ones decreased (See Appendix 3.).

### 3.6.2 Analytic Rubric

The analytic rubric was aimed to assess the second specific objective to describe students' accuracy when writing short narrative texts. To do this, an analytic rubric was used during the process of the students' writing to describe students' accuracy in the writing of the short narrative text. Shipman, et al. (2012) explained that the analytic rubric provides separate components for each task of the assignment guiding the student who may have difficulty with a specific area of the assignment.

This rubric was created by the teacher to cover all aspects of accuracy. The analytic rubric used to assess the writing had five performance criteria which focused on: spelling, punctuation, sentence parts, sentence structure, and vocabulary. Where the highest point of the dimensions was 4 (exceptional) and the lowest was 1 (poor). These dimensions were developed as follows:

| <i>Criteria</i>           | <i>Exceptional (4)</i>  | <i>Good (3)</i>                     | <i>Fair (2)</i>                     | <i>Poor (1)</i>                        |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Spelling</i>           | 3 – 2 errors  | 4 – 5 errors                        | 6 – 7 errors                        | More than 8 errors                     |
| <i>Punctuation</i>        | 3 – 2 errors  | 4 – 5 errors                        | 6 – 7 errors                        | More than 8 errors                     |
| <i>Parts of speech</i>    | Parallelism in verb use, noun-pronoun agreement; proper use of adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions. | 6 to 7 errors                       | 8 to 9 errors                       | More than 10 errors                    |
| <i>Sentence structure</i> | All sentences are well constructed  | Most sentences are well constructed | Some sentences are well constructed | Most sentence lack proper construction |
| <i>Vocabulary</i>         | 4 – 6 errors  | 6 – 8 errors                        | 8 – 10 errors                       | More than 10 errors                    |

The researcher-teacher applied this instrument after the students wrote their texts with the purpose of comparing if there was an increase in the criteria points by relating both texts, in order to get a consistent result (See Appendix 2.).

### 3.6.3 Semi-structured Interview

The semi-structured interview was led to assess the third specific objective, to analyze students' perception about their short texts' writing accuracy before and after the intervention. To do this, there was one semi-structured interview with five pre-created questions, which was implemented before and after the intervention. According to Harrell & Bradley (2009), interviews are discussions, usually face-to-face between an interviewer and a participant. It can be performed in person, over the phone, or online (considering the private online lessons context).

The interview was applied in English, but the students were able to answer both in English or Spanish, so they felt the most comfortable answering. What is more, the interview was voice recorded, with the prior consent of the two participants. Consequently, the interview was transcribed into a Microsoft Word document. The data obtained from the interview was organized in a concept map considering the discourse of the students to identify the main categories for analysis through content analysis (See Appendix 1.).

## 3.7 Data analysis techniques

In this study, the researcher decided to use qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques to explore the influence that the error code feedback strategy had on private lesson students' accuracy when writing short narrative texts.

### 3.7.1 Checklist and Analytic Rubric results

A Checklist and an Analytic Rubric was used to analyze the students' perceptions and use of the error code correction feedback. The data was analyzed by using averages and percentages in order to collect the data of the participants more directly and precisely, and to extract more and detailed information about the number of errors made by the participants.

### 3.7.2 Semi-structured interview results

Regarding qualitative data collection techniques, content analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the interview. According to Mayring (2014), semi-structured interview is a set of techniques for the systematic analysis of texts of many kinds addressing not only manifest content but also the themes and core ideas found in texts as primary content. To analyze private lesson students' perception about their short texts' level accuracy before and after the intervention coding data for assessing students' perceptions was used. In the case of this study, it was used to identify and describe key meanings within the interview that the researcher made with her students, and to reduce and summarize those meanings that are most

relevant to answer the research question by categories (main categories and subcategories).

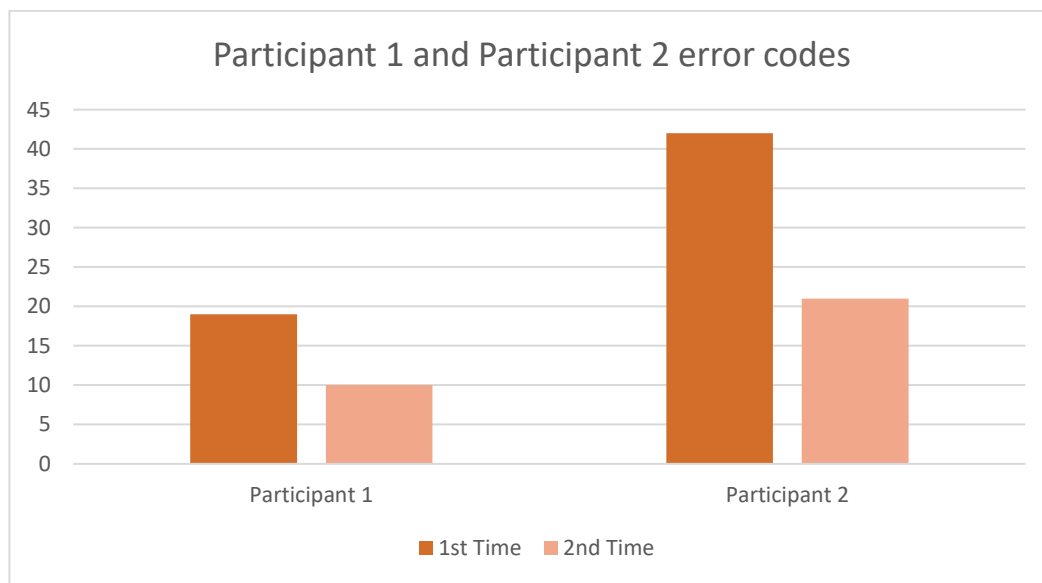
## **CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS**

In this chapter, the data collected all along the intervention is presented and analyzed according to each specific objective stated for this action research. The data collected in terms of answers given by the participants were not altered to ensure the validity of the information collected by the teacher.

#### **4.1. Specific objective 1: To analyze the use of the error code feedback strategy in the process of writing short narrative texts.**

To address specific objective 1, a checklist was used to collect the data. The checklist consisted of comparing the number of errors the students made before and after implementing the error correction strategy.

The graphic in Figure 4 shows a global analysis of students' number of errors before and after the implementation of the error correction.



**Figure 4.** Both participants' error codes before and after the implementation of the error code feedback.

It is important to mention that, in general terms, a significant difference was observed between the students' results before and after the implementation of the error code correction strategy. Figure 3 shows that in the first draft, they made more errors compared with the second draft after being introduced to the error code feedback strategy. For instance, participant 1, in the first draft, made 19 errors, and in the second time made 10 errors, with 50% reduction of errors. On the other hand, participant 2 made 42 errors in the first draft and the second time made 21 errors, with 51,1% reduction of errors (as shown in Table 3). In the second draft, it is clear

that the students improved their mistakes in their texts by correcting their mistakes using the error code feedback. Regarding the difference between the first and second draft, the error correction strategy did show an impact by benefiting the students' writing, since in the second draft there was a considerable reduction in errors, thus demonstrating a clear improvement in results and a decrease in the number of errors made.

| Errors        | Double subject | Singular/plural | Article | Punctuation | Verb form | Verb tense | Wrong word order | Wrong word | Word form | Conjunction missing or incorrect | Wrong or missing pronoun | Preposition |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|---------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------------|------------|-----------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Participant 1 | 0              | 0               | 1       | 3           | 3         | 1          | 3                | 2          | 0         | 0                                | 3                        | 3           |
| Participant 2 | 1              | 1               | 2       | 6           | 1         | 7          | 1                | 8          | 2         | 1                                | 6                        | 6           |

**Table 3. Errors made by Participant 1 and Participant 2 in the first draft**

| Errors        | Singular/plural | Punctuation | Verb form | Verb tense | Wrong word order | Wrong word | Word form | Wrong or missing pronoun | Preposition |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------------|------------|-----------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Participant 1 | 0               | 2           | 1         | 0          | 1                | 0          | 0         | 2                        | 2           |
| Participant 2 | 1               | 0           | 3         | 5          | 0                | 4          | 1         | 1                        | 6           |

**Table 4. Errors made by Participant 1 and Participant 2 in the second draft.**

To be more specific, Table 3 and Table 4 show that Participant 1 in the first draft made more errors in different categories in comparison with the second draft after the intervention. In order to be more specific, she improved in verb form, verb tense, article and wrong word order. She overcame the errors in a meaningful manner, perhaps, not all the errors were enhanced but the error code feedback worked positively on her writing. On the other hand, it can be observed that Participant 2 in the first draft made more punctuation errors, verb tense, wrong word order, and wrong or missing pronouns and prepositions. Nevertheless, in the second draft after the intervention, he reduced the number of errors in a significant manner, including punctuation, verb tense, wrong word order, and wrong or missing pronouns and prepositions. These results showed that the error code feedback strategy had a significant impact on his accuracy in writing before and after implementing the intervention.

| Participants | Number of errors (First draft) | Number of errors (Second draft) | Percentage of decrease |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
|--------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|

|                      |    |    | (Out of 100%) |
|----------------------|----|----|---------------|
| <b>Participant 1</b> | 19 | 10 | 50%           |
| <b>Participant 2</b> | 42 | 21 | 51,1%         |

**Table 5. Participants' number of errors obtain from the first and second drafts.**

As can be seen from Table 5, there is a notable decrease in the number of errors made by the participants in comparison with the errors of the first and the second draft. The error correction had a positive impact on their writing by demonstrating an improvement in their results throughout the four-week intervention. It can be deduced that the strategy applied during the development of the intervention allowed them to enhance their writing, supporting them to be more aware of their writing skills since they could recognize their errors.

#### **4.2. Specific objective 2: To describe students' accuracy when writing short narrative texts.**

To address Specific Objective 2, the participants' short narratives were assessed with an analytic rubric. Accuracy was measured by the following dimensions: Exceptional with for points, Good with three points, Fair with two points and Poor with one point.

##### **4.2.1 Students' accuracy and analytic rubric findings.**

To describe students' accuracy when writing short narrative texts, a first writing task was assigned which consisted of writing about experiences in life. They had to narrate an experience that changed their lives by adding 6 to 8 feelings that they experienced in the past when it happened in a 150 to 200 words short narrative. The total scores are shown in Table 6 below.

| <b>Participants</b> | <b>FIRST DRAFT</b>                 |  | <b>SECOND DRAFT</b>                |  |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|
|                     | <b>Points obtained (Out of 20)</b> | <b>Percentage of achievement (Out of 100%)</b> | <b>Points obtained (Out of 20)</b> | <b>Percentage of achievement (Out of 100%)</b> |
| Participant 1       | 13                                 | 65%  | 17                                 | 85%  |
| Participant 2       | 8                                  | 40%  | 15                                 | 75%  |

**Table 6. Participants' Scores from the first and second drafts by using the analytic rubric.**

As shown in Table 6, it can be affirmed that an increase in students' level of accuracy is appreciated at the end of the intervention process, where it was possible to improve their percentage of fulfillment of the objective of the task. The main finding of this study is that students' accuracy in writing a short narrative text improved with the use of error code feedback.

#### 4.2.2 Rubric Criteria Findings

To describe students' accuracy when writing short narrative texts, the findings of the rubric will be illustrated. It can be noticed Table 7 an increment in the participants' scores on almost every criterion of the analytic rubric used to assess both the first and the second drafts of the narratives. This means a rise in the final score of the second draft.

Table 7 below indicates the specific results from the analytic rubric in the first and second drafts per participant.

| Participants | PARTICIPANT 1 |             |                |                    |            |       | PARTICIPANT 2 |             |                |                    |            |       |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|------------|-------|---------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|------------|-------|
|              | Spelling      | Punctuation | Sentence parts | Sentence structure | Vocabulary | Total | Spelling      | Punctuation | Sentence Parts | Sentence Structure | Vocabulary | Total |
| FIRST DRAFT  | 3             | 2           | 2              | 3                  | 3          | 13    | 2             | 2           | 1              | 2                  | 2          | 8     |
| SECOND DRAFT | 4             | 4           | 3              | 3                  | 3          | 17    | 4             | 3           | 2              | 3                  | 3          | 15    |

**Table 7. Scores per criteria and results from the analytic rubric.**

As shown in Table 7, the most common errors made by both participants were punctuation, sentence structure, and vocabulary, meaning that students demonstrate a low level of accuracy and metalinguistic awareness when writing. However, both participants improved these errors by applying the strategy proposed by the researcher.

In this example, it can be seen that Participant 2 improves punctuation and vocabulary errors by adding the comma to the introductory phrase and changing the uncountable noun by an adjective. It was possible to identify it and correct it thanks to the error code correction.

#### ***Punctuation and vocabulary***

- *First draft*

And finally my friends give me a strength hug and see with a sad face to

- *Second draft*

And finally, my friends give me a strong hug and see me

On the other hand, Participant 1, in this example, improved the word order error by changing the order of the adjectives in the sentence; If he had not changed it, it would have been a change of meaning due to the wrong word order.

### **Word order**

- *First draft*

with the Debravadores, but the travel wasn't in plane, if not that it was by bus, an experience unique and funny.

- *Second draft*

Debravadores, but the travel wasn't at plane, if wasn't that it was by bus, a funny and unique experience.

## **4.2. Specific objective 3: To analyze students' perception of their short texts' writing accuracy through an interview before and after the intervention.**

To assess students' perception of their short texts' writing accuracy, a semi-structured interview in English was conducted before and after the intervention. Students' views on the subject were summarized through a content analysis shown in Table 8 and Table 9. It is important to mention that the interview was in English, but the participants could answer using Spanish or English.

### *Content analysis of the participants' perception of their short text's writing accuracy before the intervention.*

| <b>Theme</b>          | <b>Sub-theme</b>     | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Examples</b>  |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------|--|
| Strengths on accuracy | Vocabulary Awareness | 4                | Participant 1: "Cuando sé que significan las palabras"<br><br>Participant 2: "Mi fortaleza es el conocimiento de las palabras y el vocabulario." |
|                       | Word order           | 2                | Participant 1: "mis fortalezas..eeh yo creo que sería quizás no sé qué palabra es pero sí en que orden van"                                      |
|                       |                      |                  |  |

|                            |                   |   |   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|---|---|
| Struggles on accuracy      | Parts of speech   | 3 | Participant 2: "I don't know how to start the sentence...I mean the pronoun to put it in the sentence"  |
|                            | Prepositions      | 3 | Participant 1: "eeh..las preposiciones serían una de mis debilidades"   |
| Goals in language learning | Reading Awareness | 2 | Participant 1: "leer libros o ver películas para poder tener más vocabulario y obviamente pasar el inglés a mi vida cotidiana."<br><br>Participant 2: "o sea lo que me falta para poder escribir mejor es, ya como...a ver...por ejemplo leer ya cosas en inglés" |
|                            | Writing Awareness | 4 | Participant 1: "sería mejor si supiera más significado de las palabras y los adverbios."<br><br>Participant 2: "necesito mejorar en los tiempos y los pronombres juntos."   |

**Table 8. Participants' perception about their writing's accuracy before the intervention.**

In the first interview, the content analysis revealed three major categories from the participants' responses: strengths on accuracy, struggles on accuracy, and goals in language learning.

### **Strengths on accuracy**

Students indicated that one of their best strengths before and after the intervention was vocabulary. On the one hand, before the intervention, it was vocabulary awareness and word order as seen in the following quote, where "P" is professor and "S" is student:

*Participant 1 – Vocabulary Awareness*

*"P: Una de tus fortalezas ¿es tener conocimiento o saber que significan las palabras?"*

*S: Sí, así es. El significado de las palabras del inglés al español "*

*Participant 1 – Word Order*

*“Mis fortalezas en la escritura podría ser en que orden van las categorías gramaticales”.*

On the other hand, after the intervention, the sub-categories were vocabulary use, word order, and sentence structure (See Table 9.). The most prominent sub-themes were the use of vocabulary and word order because it was repeated compared to the interview done before the intervention, as seen in the following quotes:

#### *Participant 2. – Vocabulary Use*

- *“Vocabulario en general, porque yo sé que en inglés cada palabra tiene varios significados, pero creo que puedo saber en qué contexto usarlo”*
- *“mmmh...a ver... creo que vocabulario en general...porque he aprendido más palabras durante el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés”*

#### *Participant 1 – Word Order*

- *“...pero ya sé en qué orden van las palabras por lo que del 1 al 7 sería 7*
- *“...siento que yo sé cómo voy a formular una oración [...] pero ya como él va a ser como ya como ya por lo menos ya formularlas sería como 7”*

The students were able to enhance and identify their strengths when writing after the intervention, since they dominated the concepts better, such as vocabulary and word order.

### **Struggles on Accuracy**

Analyzing the participants' perception, it appeared “the weaknesses that students had when writing in English”. In this category, the subcategories compared to the previous category were different in terms of before and after the intervention. Firstly, the first sub-category of their writing struggles was “parts of speech”. The participants indicated that parts of speech tend to be a problem for them, either because of their use or their meaning, as seen in the following quote:

#### *Participant 2*

*“I don't know how to start the sentence...I mean the pronoun to put it in the sentence”*

Lastly, the second subcategory was “prepositions”, as seen in the following quote:

#### *Participant 1*

*“Eeh...las preposiciones serían una de mis debilidades”*

*Participant 2*

*“Las preposiciones son mi mayor debilidad porque me cuesta mucho saber cuándo usarlas”*

Secondly, after the intervention, there were three sub-categories: verb tense, preposition use, and vocabulary meaning. It is apparent that in the three subcategories the parts of speech predominated, especially prepositions, which is why it continues to be a pattern of weakness for the students, as seen in the following quotes:

*Participant 1*

- *“porque hay cosas del inglés que aún me falta manejar por ejemplo las preposiciones o también el tema de los verbos irregulares.”*
- *“Emm...mi debilidad es sería serían algunos vocabularios que por falta de práctica no me los sé”*

*Participant 2*

- *“Yo creo que eso mismo sí, el vocabulary y el tiempo me confundo de tiempo y eso”*
- *“Porque hablando de por así decirlo del tiempo me diga, no siempre estoy en el tiempo que va que yo quiero decir”*
- *“yo creo que tiempo de nuevo pero que esté bien junto a las preposiciones”*

It is also important to note that "vocabulary" dominates both strengths and weaknesses in her writing. This is because students know the meaning of the words but not how to apply them in a sentence.

*Thematic analysis of the participants' perception of their short text's writing accuracy after the intervention.*

| <b>Theme</b>      | <b>Sub-theme</b>   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Examples</b>  |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|--|
| Writing Awareness | Sentence structure | 2                | Participant 1: “El orden es mi fortaleza...sería cómo el orden de las oraciones”<br><br>Participant 2: “...al hacer una oración no sé positiva o negativa, ya sé cómo formularlo Y...o al interrogativa” |

|                        |                      |   |  |
|------------------------|----------------------|---|--|
|                        |                      |   | también ya sé cómo va este cómo es el orden y ya sea y de los tiempos ya sé como si fuese una en presente o en pasado”   |
|                        | Word order           | 3 | Participant 1: “...pero ya sé en qué orden van las palabras por lo que del 1 al 7 sería 7”   |
|                        | Vocabulary use       | 4 | Participant 2: “mmmh...a ver... creo que vocabulario en general...porque he aprendido más palabras durante el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés”   |
| Weaknesses on accuracy | Vocabulary Meaning   | 3 | Participant 1: “Emm...mi debilidad es sería serían algunos vocabularios que por falta de práctica no me los sé”<br><br>Participant 2: “Yo creo que eso mismo sí, el vocabulary y el tiempo me confundo de tiempo y eso”  |
|                        | Preposition use      | 4 | Participant 1: “porque hay cosas del inglés que aún me falta manejar por ejemplo las preposiciones o también el tema de los verbos irregulares.”<br><br>Participant 2: “yo creo que tiempo de nuevo pero que esté bien junto a las preposiciones”  |
|                        | Verb tense           | 4 | Participant 1: “eh... sí porque...eh...porque hay cosas del inglés que que primero que aún me falta manejar por ejemplo las preposiciones o también el tema de los verbos irregulares.”<br><br>Participant 2: “por qué hablando de por así decirlo del tiempo me diga, no siempre estoy en el tiempo que va que yo quiero decir” |
| Error awareness        | Error identification | 4 | Participant 1: “Me di cuenta porque si había cosas por ejemplo que en lo que me equivocaba no calzaba y de que no se veía tampoco o sea como que no concordaba y de que ya con ya con esa intervención me ayudó, así como saber cómo más para ya fuera como del español o sea como   |

|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
|  |  |  | <p>no estar como centrada como en el inglés, solamente en inglés si no olvidaron como el español por decirlo así”</p> <p>Participant 2: “Porque indicaba y con eso... con eso cómo se llama en vez de que lo hagan así o sea que ya esté hecha y que te lo traen así y tu digas: “bueno entiendo el error” te marca que lo que lo malo y su explicación”.</p> |
|--|--|--|---|

**Table 9. Content analysis after the implementation of the strategy proposed.**

In the second interview, the content analysis revealed three major categories from the participants’ responses: writing awareness, weaknesses on accuracy, and error awareness. These responses and perceptions were collected before and after the implementation of the intervention. According to the research participants’ views and responses, they had a variety of perspectives regarding the concept of accuracy.

**Error Awareness**

Analyzing the participants’ perception, it appeared for the last category after the intervention “Error Awareness”. By applying the interview after the intervention, the students were more aware when writing. What is more, the two participants added in the interview that the error code feedback strategy was of great help since one of their opinions was that at school, they only correct the error or eliminate it.

*“..fue un buen método porque nunca en los colegios se dicen los errores siempre te cambian en lo que te equivocaste, nunca te dicen cuál puede ser tu error o no te lo identifican, no dejan cranear (pensar)”.*

*Participant 1*

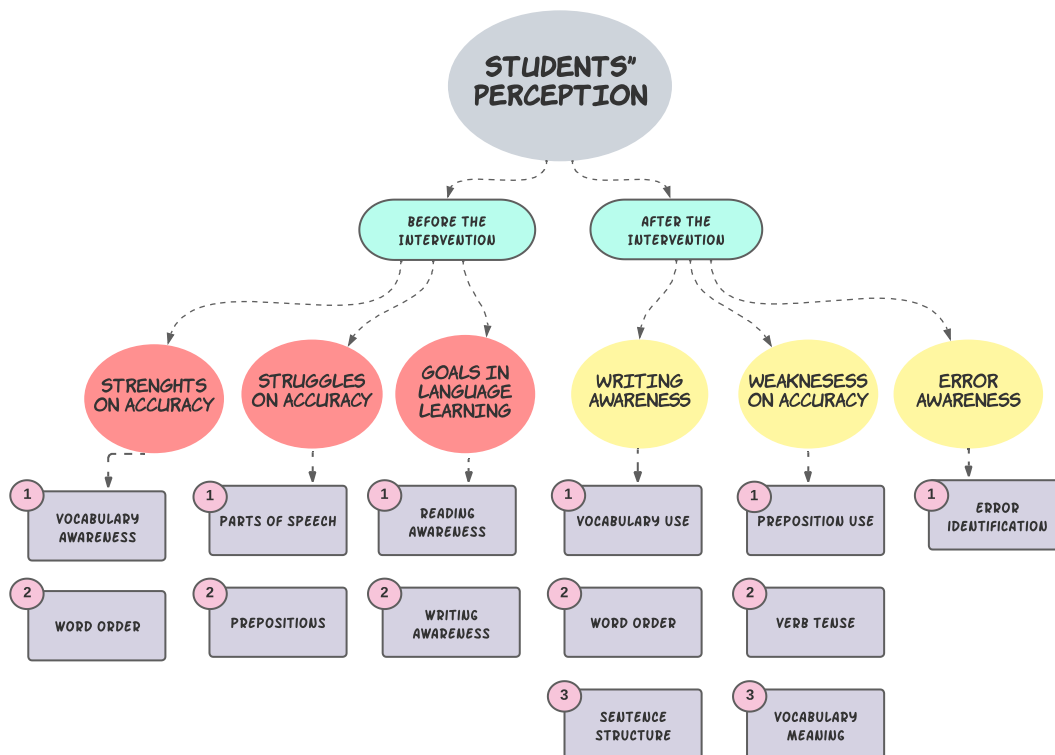
*“Porque indicaba el tipo de error y con eso... con eso cómo se llama en vez de que lo hagan así o sea que ya esté hecha y que te lo traen así y tu digas: “bueno entiendo el error” te marca que es lo malo y su explicación, en este caso el código del error”.*

*Participant 2*

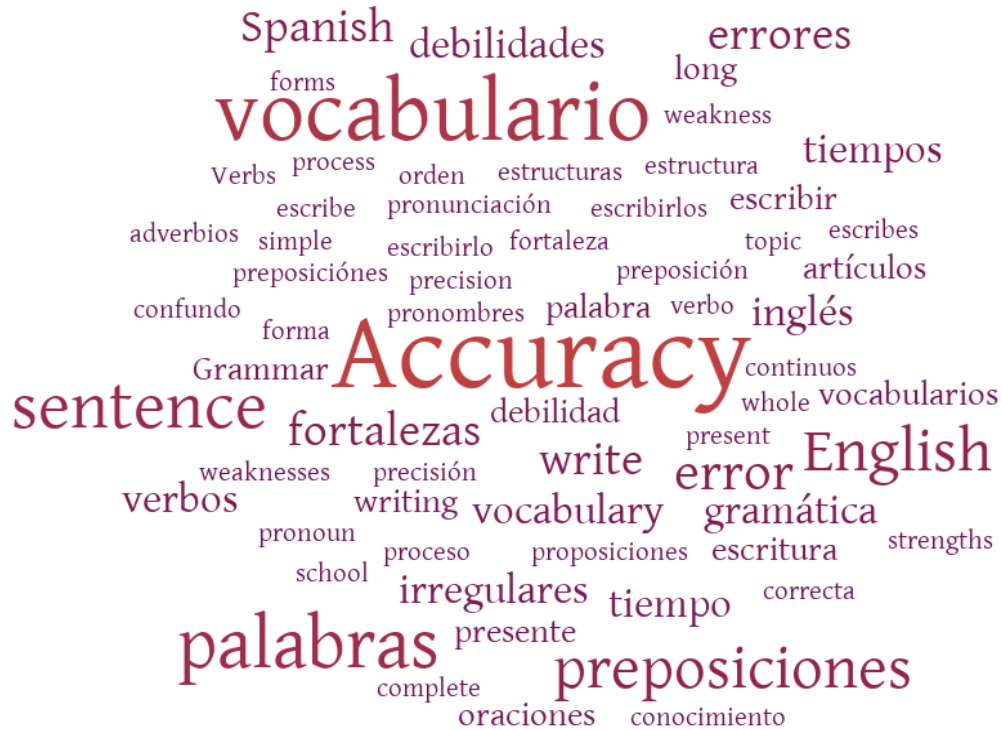
This category appears at the end of the intervention since the students, thanks to the strategy proposed, are more aware of their errors and have more knowledge about the writing process and what it takes to write a text.

Figure 5 shows the categories and sub-categories developed through this specific objective which were the students' perception of their short texts writing accuracy before and after the intervention.

**Figure 5.** Mind map of students' perception before and after the intervention with its categories and subcategories.



Regarding the participants' responses, it could be stated that the participants were more confident at the moment of answering the questions. Additionally, the participants had more knowledge of the concepts asked in the interview; moreover, evidently after having conducted the intervention, they were more aware of their mistakes and the aspects that they had to improve. Thus, a sufficient and solid result can be affirmed at the end of the intervention demonstrated in the comparison of both Table 8 and Table 9. In addition, it was observed that the participants had more knowledge regarding the identification of errors. This means that the proposed strategy was of great help, first, to know what accuracy is, and second to have a clear perception of their errors when implementing the strategy. It might be affirmed that the students' perception positively changed the results, without a doubt there were some aspects to improve where will be discussed in the discussion chapter. All this could be demonstrated thanks to the implementation of the error code feedback strategy proposed.



**Figure 6.** Word cloud comprises the most frequent terms expressed in both interviews.

Figure 6 shows the most frequent words from both interviews. Favorably, word accuracy and vocabulary were the most frequent. As has been shown in the development of this specific objective, the students do not show knowledge of accuracy in writing, so the strategy error code feedback has been a great help for them, specifically in the perception of their writing.

Overall, it can be affirmed that the answers given by the participants demonstrated a positive attitude towards the implementation of the error code feedback strategy and they considered the methodology helpful for them.

# **CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION**

## **5.1 Reflections based on the results.**

In the current chapter, I will interpret the findings, considering the research objectives of this study, which set out with the aim of assessing the importance that the use of the error code feedback had on private lesson students on short narrative texts. In addition, their perception about their level of accuracy before and after the intervention were discussed.

### **5.1.1 SO1: To analyze the error code feedback strategy used by students in the writing process of short narrative texts.**

To answer the research question and address the first research objective, written tasks were applied to analyze the use of the error code feedback in short narrative texts. The writings were focused on different types of errors within accuracy, so the results obtained allowed the researcher to conclude different situations.

#### **5.1.1.1 Summary of the main findings**

The results clearly demonstrated an improvement in results and a decrease in the number of errors made comparing the first and second drafts. Therefore, it can be observed and discussed that the error correction strategy did show an enhancement in grammar (word order, pronoun, and vocabulary) by benefiting the students' writing, furthermore, the results show that there is a positive effect of this type of methodology in short narrative texts, contributing positively to research more practically, both for the teacher and the student. However, it is important to highlight that the preposition error in both the first and second drafts of the participants did not have a notable change. Not so with conjunctions, double subject, and article errors, since the error code strategy did help to improve them in a significant way. In general terms, an important difference was observed between the students' results before and after the implementation of the error code feedback strategy.

#### **5.1.1.2 Discussion based on literature**

The study allows the teacher-researcher to postulate that all the aspects of accuracy involved in written corrective feedback are equally important in the process of helping students improve their writing texts. As mentioned in the literature review, using metalinguistic WCF showed a difference in the frequency of errors when comparing the first and second drafts. Therefore, it can be considered a successful strategy, as some researchers have already concluded (Rassaej & Moinzadeh, 2011; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Sintawati & Wulandari, 2020).

However, an important finding to discuss is the unnoticeable change of prepositional errors since prepositions are a more complicated subject to approach and teach. This discrepancy could be attributed to a few factors; prepositions are a difficult part of speech to consider and require a meaningful time, so this action research was based on four study sessions, which is not enough for this type of error to correct or teach. This finding was also reported by Al Ajmi (2015) who concluded that one aspect of his limitations was the limited time to develop teaching prepositions, he declares that seven sessions are not enough, but a full semester for this type of error could be better. Due to the few sessions in this study, an improvement in this aspect could not be achieved.

### **5.1.2 SO2: To describe students' accuracy when writing short narrative texts.**

To address the second specific objective, written tasks were applied to analyze their level of accuracy in short narrative texts. The instrument focused on five criteria, such as spelling, punctuation, parts of speech, sentence structure, and vocabulary. Thanks to the collected data it was possible to reach different conclusions.

#### **5.1.2.1 Summary of the main findings**

As mentioned above, the results obtained showed that the total errors made by the participants were higher in the first draft compared to the second, therefore, the score obtained from the rubric increased positively in the second draft compared to the first; it could be seen in the percentage of achievement, comparing both drafts. This means that the strategy error code used did help to improve the level of accuracy, however, there were some aspects to consider. The students improved greatly in punctuation, spelling, and sentence parts, but in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure, there was not much enhancement.

#### **5.1.2.2 Discussion based on literature**

These results are in agreement with those obtained by Chandler (2003) and Westmacott (2017) where they have mentioned the importance of feedback by enhancing writing; in addition, they affirm that WCF showed greater improvements in the level of accuracy, so a beneficial alternative is to use an error code feedback strategy to help and guide students in this process as complex as writing is. This also accords with our earlier observations, where Nassaji (2011) states that grammatical correction is not simple as it seems, this is how the teacher, or the guide plays an important role in the process of writing for the students because they can support them by boosting their level of accuracy.

One unanticipated finding was that vocabulary is part of the students' strengths and weaknesses in this study, since in the specific objective one it was considered a

strength, while in this second specific objective it was recognized as a weakness. This inconsistency may be because students felt confident about their level of English at the beginning, but after the intervention they were more conscious about their errors and mistakes, so they recognized it as a weakness. Also, vocabulary should be evaluated in a larger group of students, in order to have a more detailed result. These results reflect those of Dilans, G (2010) who also found that a vocabulary study should be done in a larger group with more participants in order to have clearer and more precise results.

### **5.1.3 SO3: To analyze students' perception about their short texts' writing accuracy before and after the intervention.**

Another important finding is that students' perceptions support the contribution of error code feedback to writing skills, as there was a positive change in their performance. Accuracy improvement using WCF was supported and enhanced by developing a writing short narrative text, as the qualitative data demonstrated an improvement in their errors.

#### **5.1.3.1 Summary of the main findings**

The error correction was beneficial to the students' improvement of grammar and vocabulary in some way. What is more, students, in this part of the intervention, were able to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses concerning feedback given by the teacher in the short narrative texts writing task. This result may be explained by the fact that they commented that it contributed not only to their writing skills but also to their attitudes toward the process of learning. In addition, the students' perception positively changed the results, without a doubt there were some aspects to improve as was shown in the development of this chapter, however, the participants have a better knowledge about what accuracy is and thus be able to improve their writing errors. All this could be shown thanks to the implementation of the error code feedback strategy proposed.

#### **5.1.3.2 Discussion based on literature**

Furthermore, as noted in both interviews and the development of the intervention, students showed a positive attitude towards corrective feedback. They noted that corrective feedback was consistent in writing revision as a circumstance to improve their writing through this strategy of error code feedback. Consequently, they valued this strategy and hoped to receive feedback in the time or years that they remain studying.

Likewise, the results showed that in terms of students' decisions and perceptions, the participants adopted most of the teacher's comments by improving accuracy of their texts. This finding was also reported by Correa & Flores (2018) who examined feedback provided by an English teacher to Chilean secondary student texts, in the context of writing short stories collaboratively in an English as a foreign language class. The teacher in this study was challenged to be consistent with a specific type of feedback which is something difficult to cope with; this finding collaborates with the ideas of Nassaji (2011) and Cuevas and Arancibia (2020) who suggested that error code feedback is a challenging strategy to achieve in a successful manner. What is more, one of the comments provided by the students was that the error code feedback strategy can not only help in English writing but also in Spanish writing. This result reflects that of Aliaga (2021) who also found that it is also a helpful strategy for Spanish writing. Further research must be accomplished to determine teachers' deep perception of written feedback and the implications in their teaching practice and beliefs.

## **5.2 Implications and limitations**

An implication of this study is that some very important matters regarding accuracy need to be discussed and addressed. One of the subjects that emerge from these findings is that the participants did not improve other aspects of their writing such as the cohesion of their texts. Since this study only evaluated accuracy, there were other aspects to consider, perhaps a possible explanation for this might be that students only correct the marked error and not the full text. In the results, it was possible to identify that the students only worried about correcting the marked error, which was not incorrect, nonetheless, it would have been ideal if they had followed the writing process by checking the entire text and checking not only the grammatical errors but also the coherence ones. Hence the teaching approach must be improved so that students contemplate a whole and not just something specific.

On the other hand, the results in terms of vocabulary and their perception of it let the researcher reflect that she performed an important role in the study because students demonstrated vocabulary was part of their strengths and weaknesses, thus it was an important issue for both.

Additionally, when considering the limitation of the current action research, it is important to mention that the internet and time were important aspects to consider. Since this study was implemented through online sessions, the internet was essential for the intervention, however, sometimes the signal was lost because of the bad internet either student or professor's internet. As a consequence, there were much class time lost.

## **CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION**

This study certainly has shown that it is a contribution to the impact of error code feedback on students in improving writing skills in EFL. The use of error code feedback promoted a good working environment in private lessons and encouraged students to write short texts based on their past life experiences that could have changed their life. Throughout the development of this study, the researcher was able to detect a clear reduction in students' writing errors in short texts in terms of the use of the error code correction. Also, when comparing how they wrote in ESL in the first text to how they did in the second text, there was a clear improvement thanks to the use of error code feedback because it gave to their writing a purpose in terms of improvements. What is even better, before this study, evidence of accuracy in private lessons was purely anecdotal, thus, they managed to understand what accuracy is, where it could be seen reflected in both interviews. In the first interview, both participants did not know what accuracy was or what it involved, while in the second interview they were aware of what accuracy in writing was beneficial for their written performance. Therefore, the information provided gave the researcher scientific evidence.

The results of this action research demonstrate that error code feedback can positively influence students' writing and help them to become aware of their mistakes during the writing process. In the first short narrative text, the students presented many errors of all kinds, but as the intervention progressed the students became aware of their errors by applying the error code correction strategy. Therefore, they were able to relate the feedback provided in the second text, correcting the errors in the most corrected manner for them, giving as a result a positive one, where the text had a significant decrease in errors. Thus, it not only generated motivation for the students, but also for the researcher-teacher.

One of the most significant findings to emerge from this study is that the use of codes was a strongly significant aspect to promote students' writing. The students commented on their errors in both texts and concluded that the error correction through codes helped them notably to change in a positive manner their appreciation of the errors, in addition to taking the strategy as a future help for them since both students had no awareness from this type of feedback, which was completely new to them. Thus, they commented that they would appreciate to continue having error code feedback in their next evaluations. What is more, the students reflected that this type of feedback can be used not only in English but also in Spanish, and it motivated them to continue enhancing their writing skills in Spanish, since they understood that they need a competent domain of their language to be able to function in another language.

The change that occurred in both texts was very notable. In the last work that the students handed in, they made fewer errors than in the first, because they used and considered the feedback given by the teacher. However, there was an important factor to consider, and it was that without a doubt they significantly improved their errors, but they were not able to consider other aspects of the text, so there were other types of errors such as coherence errors, which is as important as the other errors.

Finally, by working more closely on writing with the students in private classes, the researcher sought to prepare them to be aware of their errors and reflect a little more when writing. Having into account that it is not only important that they write texts, but also that they understand them and understand the process involved in writing in order to produce efficient writing in English.

## **6.1 Personal reflection**

The teacher in this study was challenged to be consistent with a specific type of feedback and type of error categories which is something challenging to handle. The information that was extracted from the intervention was good enough to understand that error code feedback achieved positive results in terms of improving students' writing. However, there was uncertainty on the part of the researcher since she did not know if the strategy could have benefited or aided them considering writing is a difficult and somewhat tedious process, consequently the students might have been bored. However, fulfilling this study has had a positive impact both on the students and on my teaching practice.

In addition, thanks to the development of the study, an interesting topic arose to be able to continue investigating, since the students only focused on the marked error and not on other aspects such as the coherence of the text. Further research must be implemented to determine teachers' deep perception of written feedback and the implications of their teaching methods and principles.

## **6.2 Recommendations for further research**

The strategies and activities implemented as part of the study plan can be applied in different subjects and not only in English classes, but the strategy error code feedback can also be used especially in Spanish classes. Likewise, it is suggested to continue studying the contribution of the error code feedback since it is a very good strategy, but it could be complemented with something else to make it complete and thus the results would be even better, involving a whole process of writing and not only writing accuracy. In addition, a reasonable approach to tackle this issue could be to use error correction to create a collaborative environment not only for the student but also for the teacher, helping the teacher to improve his feedback, and where the practice can be extended without difficulty beyond private lessons, but also in the classroom environment.

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## Appendixes

### Appendix 1.

#### INTERVIEW

**SO3:** To analyze students' perception about their short texts' writing before and after the intervention.

Description: This interview will be applied in English, but the interviewees would be able to answer in Spanish.

| QUESTION  | OBSERVATION |
|---|-------------|
| Do you often make accuracy mistakes when writing in English? Why? |             |
| What are your strengths when writing?                             |             |
| What are your weaknesses in the writing process?                  |             |
| What is the hardest part for you when you write in English?       |             |
| How confident do you feel when writing in English?                |             |

**Appendix 2.**

**RUBRIC**

**SO2:** To describe students' accuracy when writing short narrative texts through an accuracy analytic rubric.

| <b>ACCURACY ANALYTIC RUBRIC</b> |   |  |   |  |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Criteria</b>                 | <b>Exceptional (4)</b>  | <b>Good (3)</b>  | <b>Fair (2)</b>   | <b>Poor (1)</b>  |
| <b>Spelling</b>                 | Correct spelling, even of more difficult words.<br>(3 - 2 errors)   | Spelling is usually correct, especially on common words.<br>(4 - 5 errors)   | Spelling errors distract the reader and misspelling of common words occurs.<br>(6 - 7 errors)   | Frequent spelling errors significantly impair readability.<br>(more than 8 errors)   |
| <b>Punctuation</b>              | Proper use of commas, semi-colons, and end of sentence punctuation. No errors in capitalization.<br>(3 - 2 errors)    | Occasional errors in the use of commas, colons, semi-colons, and end sentence punctuation. Few errors in capitalization.<br>(4 - 5 errors) | Frequent errors in the use of punctuation such as comma splices, misuse of commas, colons or semi-colons, and apostrophes disrupt the flow of the text.<br>(6 - 7 errors) | Repeated errors in the use of commas, colons, semi-colons, apostrophes, and end of sentence punctuation impede understanding of the text. Repeated errors in capitalization.<br>(More than 8 errors) |
| <b>Sentence parts</b>           | Parallelism in verb use, noun-pronoun agreement; proper use of adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions.                 | The student makes 6 to 7 errors in verb use, noun pronoun agreement, adjectives, adverbs, or prepositions.                                 | The student makes 8 to 9 errors in verb use, noun pronoun agreement, adjectives, adverbs, or prepositions distract and confuse.   | The student makes more than 10 errors in verb use, noun pronoun agreement, adjectives, adverbs, or prepositions distract and confuse.  |
| <b>Sentence Structure</b>       | All sentences are well-constructed by using the parts of speech in a logical order with varied structures in English. | Most sentences are well-constructed in English by using the parts of speech in a logical order and there is some varied sentence           | Some sentences are well-constructed in English by using the parts of speech in a logical order, but others are fragments or run-ons.                                      | Most sentences lack proper construction in English; there are frequent run-ons or fragmented sentences.  |

|                   |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------|--|--|--|--|
|                   |  | structure in the text.   |  |  |
| <b>Vocabulary</b> | Vocabulary is always related to the syntax, and it is appropriate for their level.<br>(4 - 6 errors) | Vocabulary is clear but simple with some use of figurative language.<br>(6 - 8 errors) | Vocabulary is basic, some descriptive words are used and do relate to the topic and syntax.<br>(8 - 10 errors) | Vocabulary is mostly incomprehensible. (More than 10 errors) |

### Appendix 3.

#### CHECKLIST

**SO1:** To analyze the use of the error code feedback strategy in the process of writing short narrative texts by using a checklist.

This checklist will be applied in the draft and in the final writing, to collect the information before and after the intervention.

| <b>Error</b>                                     | <b>1<sup>st</sup><br/>participant</b> | <b>2<sup>nd</sup><br/>participant</b> | <b>3<sup>rd</sup><br/>participant</b> | <b>4<sup>th</sup><br/>participant</b> |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Subject-verb agreement ( <i>sv</i> )             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Double subject ( <i>ds</i> )                     |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| No subject ( <i>s</i> )                          |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Singular/Plural ( <i>p/</i> )                    |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Spelling ( <i>sp</i> )                           |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Article ( <i>A</i> )                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Punctuation ( <i>p</i> )                         |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Verb form ( <i>vf</i> )                          |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Verb tense ( <i>T</i> )                          |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Word form ( <i>wf</i> )                          |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Wrong word ( <i>ww</i> )                         |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Wrong word order ( <i>wo</i> )                   |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Wrong or missing pronoun ( <i>pron</i> )         |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Preposition ( <i>prep</i> )                      |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Conjunction missing or incorrect ( <i>conj</i> ) |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |