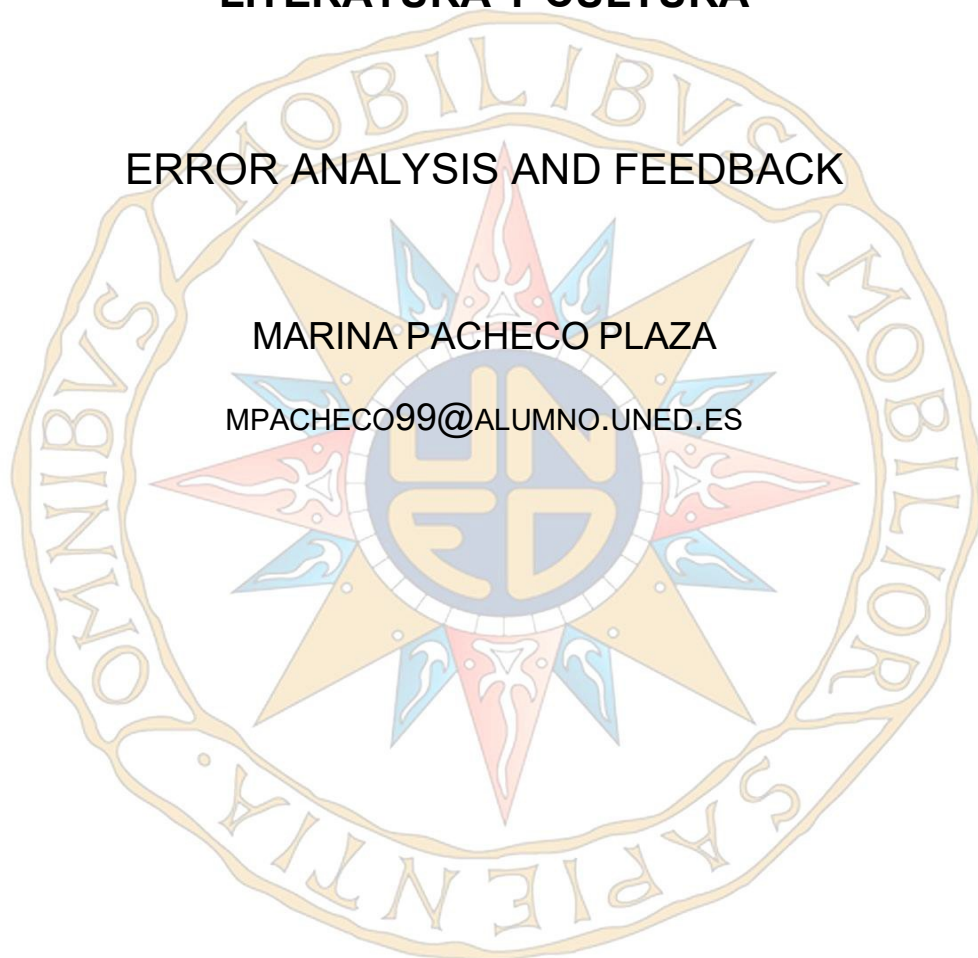**TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO**

GRADO EN ESTUDIOS INGLESES: LENGUA, LITERATURA Y CULTURA

ERROR ANALYSIS AND FEEDBACK

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ABSTRACT AND KEY WORDS

This study examines written errors in a corpus of 30 compositions produced by 15 participants. The participants are 6th Grade students of a bilingual school in the South of the Community of Madrid; 7 girls and 8 boys (aged 10-11). All of them are students of English as a second language (L2), whose first language (L1) is Spanish. This paper identifies the most important students' written errors, presents their common sources, and analyses them thoroughly with the aim of helping the students correct their errors and avoid making mistakes. This study also aims to shed light on what is the most effective type of feedback and the language (the L1 or the L2) that should be used by the teacher when providing it. The results will provide insight into language learning because it will provide information regarding the teaching practice.

Key words: Error analysis, feedback, L2 English, L1 Spanish, errors.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Every teacher knows that making mistakes is the basis of learning. Maria Montessori defended that mistakes have this purpose (Montessori, 1967). The way we deal with the fact that students make mistakes may differ among teachers. However, students' errors and mistakes are to be found in the daily teaching and learning practice.

Teachers of English as a Second Language (L2, hereinafter) deal with similar errors and mistakes. While errors show linguistic incompetence in the learners' output (i.e. incomplete learning), mistakes are the result of poor performance, a slip of the tongue, that sometimes happen to everybody for several reasons (Corder, 1974). Some errors are usually repeated in the students' production of the L2. When this practice takes place, some action needs to be taken in the teaching and in the learning tasks.

As an L2 English teacher at the Primary School Level, I have written this paper with the objective of identifying and preventing the most frequent errors made by my students (age range: 10 to 11 years old) in their written production. This paper also aims to identify the most suitable type of feedback for my students, namely, the one that helps them learn from their errors and avoid mistakes. The present study is relevant to Second Language Teaching (SLT, hereinafter) since it contributes to a better understanding and an improvement in the teaching of this subject. In order to carry out this study, research has been done for L2 English students' errors produced in their writing skills. It also focuses on the teacher's feedback based on the students' written performance.

The empirical study that has been carried out has tested 15 participants (aged 10-11) coursing the 6th Grade of Primary Education in an English-Spanish bilingual school in the south of the Community of Madrid. In order to examine their errors, parents were asked for permission to analyse some of their children's writing activities that they normally do in class in preparation for external exams. These external exams are taken by all Primary Education students in bilingual schools at the end of this educational stage. They test their

level of English in the four skills of the language, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Writing is a difficult productive skill where students can show their knowledge of English. Regarding language development, comprehension evolves ahead of production (Berk, 2012). In general, while Primary Education students are better at comprehension skills (i.e. listening and reading), Year 6 students are used to writing productively in English in order to improve their competence in this skill. As mentioned above, external exams at the end of Primary Education test students' competence in the four skills of a language, and SLT in Primary Education fosters comprehension before production. Thus, productive skills are introduced later and need more practice with the oldest students. The present study will prove that L2 English teachers usually find the same errors every time students' pieces of work are corrected. Attention to avoiding fossilization[1] has also been taken into account. Therefore, feedback is considered to be an effective teaching tool to help students so that mistakes can be avoided. Corrective Feedback is a useful tool for L2 English learning (Bitchener, 2008). As already mentioned, this paper also aims to identify the most suitable type of feedback for L2 English students of Primary Education, and therefore, positive, focused, indirect written feedback (with a metalinguistic explanation) will be implemented in the study. The language used when giving feedback to students (that is to say, their first language (L1) or their L2) will also be discussed.

Literature review on Error Analysis in the field of L2 English learning has reported that the interference of our L1 is highly present among beginner students. This interference results in what we call interlingual errors. Other types of errors are found when students have been learning the L2 for a while, these are called intralingual errors. (Brown, 2007; Gass & Selinker, 2008; Oller & Richards, 1973).

The present work is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses earlier formal works on Error Analysis in SLT, and the role played by feedback in L2 English students' output. Section 3 explores empirical works on Error Analysis and on

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[1] Fossilization refers to the process in which incorrect language becomes a habit and cannot be easily corrected (Selinker, 1972).

the effects that L2 English teachers' feedback have on the students' performance. Section 4 formulates the research questions (RQs, hereinafter) that have guided the data analysis. Section 5 addresses the methodology followed in the empirical study, namely, the participants, the tasks implemented, and the data codification. Sections 6 and 7 analyse the data examined and the discussion of findings, respectively. Section 8 draws conclusions and suggests lines for future research.

2. FORMAL WORKS ON ERROR ANALYSIS AND FEEDBACK

In order to analyse our students' errors when using an L2, one should start by looking at the different theories that can account for them. Applied Linguistics helps us to do so. It entails different branches such as Contrastive Analysis Theory (Lado, 1957), Error Analysis Theory (Corder, 1967) or the Interlanguage Theory (Selinker, 1972). These three theories explain the concept of error in different ways.

Contrastive Analysis was formulated in the 1950s and described similarities and differences between the L1 and the L2. According to this theoretical approach, errors were always the result of the interference from the L1 into the L2.

Error Analysis was born in the following decade as a reaction to Contrastive Analysis. It described learners' interlanguage for the first time (i.e. the learners' version of the L2). It focuses on the linguistic aspects of the learners' errors and not so much on their L1. This change of paradigm was possible thanks to contributions to the field, such as Mackey's, who proved that different learners with the same native language make different mistakes. He argued that "the first language itself is not the only influence on second language learning" (Mackey, 1965:4). Recent studies on Error Analysis lend support to the Contrastive Analysis Theory since they claim that while interlingual errors (i.e. transfer from L1 into L2) appear more at beginner levels, intralingual errors start to appear as learners progress in learning the L2 (Brown, 2007; Gass & Selinker, 2008; Oller & Richards, 1973).

The Theory of Interlanguage suggested by Selinker (1972) would go further by drawing attention to the possibility that the learner's language can be regarded as a distinct language or system with its own particular characteristics and rules.

As Applied Linguistics' branches evolved in the way they looked at errors, SLT methodology moved from the concept of error as evidence for ineffective teaching, to the concept of error as a tool to understand language learning effectively. This claim has evolved in four types of theories, namely, Behaviourist Learning Theory (Skinner, 1957), Generativist Learning Theory (Wittrock, 1974), Communicative Language Teaching (Hymes, 1966), and the Constructivist Approach (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978).

Behaviourism believed in habit formation through correct language drilling. Errors were wrong habits that should always be eradicated. Behaviorism supported linguistic structuralism and resulted in traditional methods in SLT, such as the Grammar-Translation method, the Direct Method, or Audiolingualism. The Grammar-Translation method (Plotz, 1853) is based on translation and teaching grammar; the Direct Method (Gouin, 1860) believed that foreign languages are learnt very much the same as we acquire our L1 (thus, L1 was banned in the classroom); and Audiolingualism (Skinner, 1957) believed that learning is a result of conditioning (i.e. stimulus – response).

Reactions to Behaviorism and, more specifically, the Audiolingual Approach, appeared with generativist methods. In particular, they emphasize meaningful learning, as it is the case of the Cognitive Anti-Method or the Cognitive Code Method. The Cognitive Anti-Method (Newmark, 1966) tried to simulate natural learning processes in the classroom in an unstructured way, whereas the Cognitive Code Method (Carroll, 1966) offered a structured methodology in which students moved from the known to the unknown. Those methods allowed the fossilization of L2 students' errors and mistakes.

When the communicative competence in SLT was regarded as the students' main goal when learning a language, a functional, pragmatic approach to SLT appeared, namely, the so-called Communicative Language Teaching method.

This method understands errors as a natural outcome when learning a language. Furthermore, it suggests that some action needs to be taken so that the students' communicative competence can be reflected in their output and, as a consequence, errors cannot be fossilized or interfere with communication.

Ellis (1994) distinguished two types of interference or transfer errors, namely, communication transfer and learning transfer. The need to recognize a more direct role of the L1 in L2 learning was then proposed. Following the Constructivist Approach (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978), since learners' L1 knowledge is part of their "previous knowledge", it constitutes a very important source of knowledge which a learner could draw upon in forming and testing new hypotheses about L2 learning. Therefore, the use of the students' L1 in the teacher's feedback facilitates the understanding of L2 learning, which allows, in turn, error correction and mistake avoidance meaningfully.

Now that we have looked at the sources of errors and their consideration in different methods in SLT, we are going to look at different classifications of errors. Although we believe that they are a natural outcome when learning an L2, it is important to know the different types of errors that are found in SLT.

According to Corder (1973), errors can be classified in terms of the difference between the learners' utterance and the reconstructed version. In this way, errors fall into four categories, namely, (a) omission of some required element; (b) addition of some unnecessary or incorrect element; (c) selection of an incorrect element; and, (d) misordering of the elements.

Nevertheless, Corder (1973) added that this classification was not enough to describe errors. He further classified errors into overt and covert. While overt errors are unquestionably ungrammatical at the sentence level, covert errors are grammatically well-formed at the sentence level but are not interpretable within the context of communication. For example, "I'm fine, thanks" is a correct sentence; however, if it is given as an answer to the question "How old are you?", it is considered as a covert error.

In both structural and communicative approaches to language teaching, feedback is viewed as a means of fostering learners' motivation and ensuring

linguistic accuracy (Ellis, 2009). This rationale has been implemented in the present study (see section 5). Some teachers claim that correcting students' written work is too tiring and not much appreciated by students (Mohamed, 2019), and thus, a different approach has to be taken into consideration for the so-called written Corrective feedback.

Corrective Feedback refers to any teacher's reaction which transforms or demands the learner's improvement of output (Chaudron, 1977). According to Lightbown and Spada (1999), feedback allows the learner to be aware of his or her incorrect use of the L2 output.

As discussed earlier, errors and error correction have been considered from different perspectives in the diachronic history of SLT methodology. Nowadays, positive feedback is highly implemented since it treats errors as tools for learning. Now that a humanistic approach to Education is followed (which is based on the principle that the whole being, emotional and social, needs to be engaged in learning, not just the mind), a way to engage the students is to give them positive feedback and use errors as tools for learning (James, 2013).

In the case of written Corrective Feedback, different strategies have been proposed. As illustrated in Table 1, teachers may recast errors (i.e. repeat errors back to the learner in the correct form), repeat errors for the learner to correct them, request for clarification, correct errors explicitly, bring out the learner's knowledge to correct his or her errors, or use body language to point out errors so the learner corrects them.

Table 1. Corrective Feedback strategies (Ellis, 2009: 9)

Strategy	Definition	Example
Recast	The corrector incorporates the content words of the immediately preceding incorrect utterance and changes and corrects the utterance in some way (e.g. phonological, syntactic, morphological or lexical).	L: I went there two times. T: You've been. You've been there twice as a group?
Repetition	The corrector repeats the learner utterance highlighting	L: I will showed you. T: I will SHOWED you.

	the error by means of emphatic stress.	L: I'll show you.
Clarification request	The corrector indicates that he/she has not understood what the learner said.	L: What do you spend with your wife? T: What?
Explicit correction	The corrector indicates an error has been committed, identifies the error and provides the correction.	L: On May. T: Not on May, In May. We say, "It will start in May."
Elicitation	The corrector repeats part of the learner utterance except for the erroneous part and uses rising intonation to signal that the learner should complete it.	L: I'll come if it will not rain. T: I'll come if it ……?
Paralinguistic signal	The corrector uses a gesture or a facial expression to indicate that the learner has made an error.	L: Yesterday I go cinema. T: (gestures with right forefinger over left shoulder to indicate past)

Apart from the strategies discussed earlier, there are two main types of feedback, namely, direct or indirect feedback. Direct feedback provides the correct language form, whereas indirect feedback indicates the presence of an error without supplying the correct form or uses an error-coding system to signal the general category of an error for the learner to correct it. Some researchers argue that indirect feedback is more effective and benefits to the students' long-term writing performance when compared to direct feedback in L2 learning (Ferris, 2002; Frantzen, 1995; Lalande, 1982). According to Ferris (2002), direct feedback is appropriate for beginner students. Besides, in the case of metalinguistic feedback (i.e. the one which provides metalinguistic information about the nature of the error), teaching is not only focused on the grammatical properties that underlie the language, but also on the use of the L2. According to Ebadi (2014), focused, metalinguistic Corrective Feedback is better than the traditional Corrective Feedback.

A difference should also be addressed between focused and unfocused feedback (Alimohammadi & Nejadansari, 2014). Focused feedback addresses only on one or two error types, whereas unfocused focuses on all the L2 learners' errors. Several formal works on feedback suggest that unfocused feedback may turn into negative feedback, causing a feeling of distrust in the

language learner (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Therefore, present theories on feedback in SLT give more credit to focused feedback.

As a whole, feedback is "a key element of the scaffolding provided by the teacher to build learner's confidence and the literacy resources to participate in target communities" (Hyland & Hyland, 2006: 83). It may serve not only to let learners know how well they have performed but also to increase motivation and build a supportive classroom climate (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). According to Brookhart (2017), feedback includes two factors, namely, cognitive and motivational. The cognitive factor gives students the information they need so that they can understand where they are in their learning and what to do next. Once students feel that they understand what to do and why, most students develop the motivational factor, which refers to the feeling of control over their own learning. All in all, "feedback can encourage and advance student learning if it focuses on 'growth rather than grading'" (Sadler, 1983: 60).

There are also theoreticians who believe that feedback may reduce the difference between acquiring and learning a language (Ellis, 2009). We acquire our L1 in a natural and non-formal setting; however, we learn an L2 through formal education. Based on the cognitive view of the L2, Corrective Feedback facilitates learning by activating internal processes such as attention and rehearsal that, in turn, make L2 learning possible. Alternatively, acquisition is believed to last longer in L1 contexts.

3. EMPIRICAL WORKS ON ERROR ANALYSIS AND FEEDBACK

Earlier empirical works on Error Analysis have shown its importance in SLT (Alonso, 1997; Dotti & O'Donnell, 2014). According to them, it is necessary that teachers analyse students' errors frequently, based on critical self-evaluations, the teacher's use of resources, and the techniques implemented when teaching an L2 (Hasyim, 2002). These factors give us knowledge about the discipline that is being taught.

Corder (1974) proposed five steps to follow when analysing errors: (a) select a corpus[2]; (b) identify errors; (c) analyse those errors; (d) classify them; and (e) evaluate them.

Given that interlingual errors are the result of the L1's interference, they are likely to happen at beginner levels. The study conducted by Alonso (1997) analysed the written errors of a group of twenty-eight first-year high school L2 English students (aged 14-15) in the northwest of Spain. Their findings showed that: (a) the structures of the L1 represent the main factor of interference in the L2; (b) phonetic, orthographic, syntactic or semantic similarity to the items in the L1 are delayed in their learning process in the case of L1 Spanish students; (c) grammar and vocabulary interference errors are not an important cause of error; (d) deviant forms occur most frequently in the verbal and the pronominal systems along with linguistic structures.

Alonso's (1997) work took into consideration Lott's (1983) classification of interference errors, as summarized in Table 2 below. More specifically, overextension of analogy (i.e. misusing vocabulary), transfer of deviant forms (i.e. grammar errors), and interlingual/intralingual errors (due to a lack of lexical or grammatical distinctions in the L1).

Table 2. Types of interference errors (Lott, 1983)

Type of error	Explanation
Overextension of analogy	The student misuses a vocabulary item because it is similar phonetically, orthographically, semantically or syntactically to another form in the L1
Transfer of structure deviant forms	The student makes a grammar error because the L1 rules are followed.
Interlingual/Intralingual	Grammar or vocabulary errors students make because of a lack of lexical or grammatical distinctions in the L1 that exist in the L2.

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[2] "A corpus is a collection of texts when considered as an object of language or literary study" (Kilgarriff & Grefenstette, 2003: 334).

Other empirical studies examined L1 Spanish learners of L2 English (Dotti & O'Donnell, 2014). One of the learning issues that has been studied in those works is the use of the article in L2 English.

The study conducted by Dotti and O'Donnell (2014) analyses the singularly most frequent error in terms of the ungrammatical overtness or absence of the English article in noun phrases. Given that this work aims to tune the teaching for L1 speakers, the study concluded that (a) learners need to be made aware of two main referential contexts where their Spanish practice should not be mapped onto English: the production of generic forms using plural and noncount nouns; and (b) explicit teaching as to how to identify generic reference would be useful. Furthermore, this study determined that there are four referential contexts which are problematic for Spanish learners of English, and where specific teaching materials could be provided: (a) the production of proportions such as '20% of...' or 'most of...'; (b) references to places for their primary use (e.g. going to university); (c) references to mealtimes such as breakfast and lunch; (d) mass/count nouns, as some words change from mass to count (or vice versa) in translation: e.g., *información* (i.e. a mass noun)/some information (i.e. a count noun). However, the set of such words is small, and these words can be explicitly taught in class.

Therefore, Dotti and O'Donnell's (2014) study argues for the importance of remedial teaching once the errors are analysed.

Providing students with mini-grammar lessons has been proven to be an effective way for them to understand, correct and avoid the most frequent written grammatical errors in the L2 (Ferris, 2002). This is seen in the study conducted by Limoudehi, Mazandarani and Mofrad (2018) who studied Iranian L2 English learners who received mini-grammar lessons. Results showed that there was improvement in the experimental group (the one that received such remedial teaching) after being provided with Corrective Feedback in the form of mini-lessons and self-study materials. In other words, these findings provided clear evidence in support of teacher Corrective Feedback and are in line with the results of studies conducted by L2 English researchers in the field (Ashwell, 2000; Bitchener, Cameron, & Young, 2005; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener &

Knoch, 2010; Chandler, 2003; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima 2008; Ferris, 2004; Ferris & Roberts, 2001). However, these results argue against those studies that state that Corrective Feedback has little or no effect on learners' writing (Robb, Ross, & Shortreed, 1986; Tang & Liu, 2018).

As evidenced by the studies reported earlier, there is not much agreement on the benefits of providing Corrective Feedback to L2 learners (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009). The debate commenced when Truscott argued that "grammar correction has no place in writing courses and should be abandoned" (Truscott, 1996: 328).

Ferris (1999) responded to Truscott's (1996) findings three years later. She believed that "there is mounting research evidence that effective error correction (which is selective, prioritized, and clear) can and does help at least some student writers" (Ferris, 1999: 4). In fact, according to Ferris (1999), for every study that shows positive effects for error correction, there is another study that reports no effects, or even negative effects.

Other authors stay impartial and claim that "it may be that what is effective feedback for one student in one setting is less so in another" (Hyland & Hyland, 2006: 88).

Different types of feedback were assessed for L2 learners. For instance, Farjadnasab and Khodashenas (2017) examined seventy-nine Iranian EFL learners. The subjects of the study were randomly assigned to one of four groups, as discussed below:

- Group 1 received direct Corrective Feedback (errors were corrected by the teacher);
- Group 2 received indirect Corrective Feedback (the teacher indicated and located the errors and learners were required to revise their papers);
- Group 3 received indirect Corrective Feedback (the teacher indicated and located the errors; the students were given back the text and no revision was required);
- Group 4 included the control group and, thus, received no feedback.

There was a decision to limit the focus of the feedback based on the positive findings of SLT studies where intensive Corrective Feedback successfully targets a single linguistic category (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Muranoi, 2000) or focuses on a few linguistic categories (Bitchener et al., 2005). In the case of Farjadnasab and Khodashenas' (2017) study, the relative effectiveness of two different types of feedback (direct and indirect) was assessed over a two-month period by means of a pre-test–post-test design. The pre-test took place at the beginning of the two-month period. The post-tests were implemented after two weeks (an immediate post-test), and after two months (a delayed post-test).

The implementation of each type of feedback in the treatment groups resulted in improving the students' writing at different levels (Farjadnasab & Khodashenas, 2017).

This study is in line with Bitchener's (2008), since it revealed that the students' accuracy when receiving written Corrective Feedback in immediate post-tests is higher when compared to those ones in control groups where this level of performance is retained longer. He also claimed that written Corrective Feedback should be emphasized more in the teaching and learning process.

In addition, Bitchener, et al. (2005) emphasized the positive effect of written Corrective Feedback on the writing accuracy of learners.

Nevertheless, there are authors such as Bitchener and Knoch (2009) who claim that error correction has no significant effect on the learners' writing accuracy and can be used only for low level students. Furthermore, the results of their study suggested that direct feedback brings about greater impacts on students' writing accuracy, whereas various kinds of feedback are more likely to produce long-term learning improvement over time than others.

Although previous empirical studies conclude that Corrective Feedback is effective on L2 learning, giving feedback and the analysis of errors by language teachers are two areas that have also been criticized by some experts (Byram, 2004; Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1993). Some criticisms of Error Analysis include (a) the danger of giving too much attention to learners' errors. If

teachers are preoccupied with noticing errors, many correct utterances may go unnoticed; (b) teachers tend to study what learners are doing wrong, rather than what makes them successful; (c) it is sometimes very difficult to identify the unitary source of an error; (d) production errors (such as the ones we can find in the writing skill) are only a subset of the overall performance of the learner.

According to feedback criticism (Guenette, 2007; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Mohamed, 2019), it has been claimed that (a) even positive feedback can be seen as negative from the part of the students; (b) it takes too much time for the teacher to first analyse his/her students' errors and then find the best way to give this feedback to the learners. Sometimes, this effort is not appreciated by students (especially young ones) and may not result in improvement; (c) it takes too long for improvement to be seen based on giving feedback. Also, there should be other sources of input to create lessons rather than the incorrect realizations of the students, since some areas of language would not be covered this way.

The type of language used by the teacher when giving feedback has also been another controversial issue in the literature of SLT (Almoayidi, 2018). It is the English teacher's job to help learners develop their proficiency in the L2. Thus, a balanced approach is needed and, therefore, an ideal setting would involve the L1 while recognizing the importance of maximizing L2 use in the classroom.

In favor of the L1 use, Schweers (1999) carried out a study with L1 Spanish speakers who were learning English as an L2. Based on his classroom's recordings and some questionnaires for the students, he discovered that students found it easier to cope with the L2 teacher if he/she can speak their L1 because this indicates that the teacher can help the students better.

On the other hand, a significant number of linguists (Littlewood & Yu, 2009; Nation, 2003; Scott & de la Fuente, 2008; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002) believe that using the L1 in the classroom might hinder L2 learning and that it is essential to immerse learners in activities using the L2 only.

The present work will focus on Error Analysis and positive, focused, indirect written feedback (with a metalinguistic explanation) by considering the use of the L1 while providing feedback to students, as will be discussed in section 7.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The RQs that have guided the data analysis of this study are formulated as follows.

RQ 1. What are the most frequent written errors in Primary Education students of the 6th Grade?

Based on RQ 1, we predict that the most frequent written errors to be found in Primary Education students of the 6th Grade are errors in the verbal and the pronominal systems along with linguistic structures, as Alonso (1997) concluded in her study. Also, the incorrect use of the English article in noun phrases may probably be found according to Dotti and O'Donnell (2014).

RQ 2. What are the sources of these errors? To what extent does the L1 interfere in the production of these errors? Are there any intralingual errors?

Based on RQ 2, we predict that these errors are the result of the students' L1 interference in the production of the L2 because interlingual errors are highly present among beginner students. On the contrary, intralingual errors appear later (Brown, 2007; Gass & Selinker, 2008; Oller & Richards, 1973). Thus, interlingual errors should be found to a larger extent in the students' writings compared to intralingual errors.

RQ 3. What is the most effective type of written Corrective Feedback when focused and indirect feedback is compared to unfocused and direct feedback?

Based on RQ 3, we predict that focused, indirect Corrective Feedback is believed to be the best one (Ferris, 2002). This is the case since it has been found to help students understand errors so that they can correct them, and, in turn, fossilization of mistakes is avoided.

RQ 4. Does the L1 help the teacher in the metalinguistic explanation of the students' errors?

Based on RQ 4, we predict that the L1 helps the teacher in the metalinguistic explanation of the students' errors because following the Constructivist Approach (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978), learners' L1 knowledge is part of their "previous knowledge", which constitutes a very important source of knowledge for the learner to draw upon in forming and testing new hypotheses about the L2. Therefore, the use of the students' L1 in the teacher's feedback facilitates the understanding of L2 learning, which allows, in turn, error correction and mistake avoidance meaningfully, as Schweers' (1999) findings discussed earlier (see section 3) also suggest.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Participants. Fifteen L2 English Primary Education students (7 girls and 8 boys) have participated in the present study. Spanish is their L1. Their ages range from 10 to 11 years old.

This sample constitutes the 62.5% of a 6th Grade Primary class in an English-Spanish bilingual state school in the south of the Community of Madrid.

5.2 Tasks. An online assessment test (the Online Cambridge Assessment Test) was taken by the whole Year 6 class in order to select a group with a homogeneous L2 language level to participate in the study. Results on the test showed that the students' level generally corresponds to the A2 level from the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR, hereinafter, Council of Europe, 2001).[3]

Parents were asked for permission to analyse some of their children's writing activities that they normally do in class (see appendix I).

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[3] The CEFR is an international standard for describing language ability. It describes language ability on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. This makes it easy for anyone involved in language teaching to see the level of different qualifications.

The research materials used are those ones that include written compositions. Students were asked to write stories (35-50 words) based on three pictures. The compositions were taken from Question 32 in Tests 3 and 6 of *A2 Key for Schools Trainer (Second Edition)*, a book used for the preparation of external exams that 6th grade students in bilingual schools take at the end of Primary Education.

The tasks students have carried out have been divided into (a) a pre-task, (i.e. the first writing students were asked to to); (b) the teacher's application of focused, indirect written feedback, which consists of correcting the students' writing, giving them a metalinguistic explanation of their errors and asking them to improve their writing after this session; and (c) a post-task (i.e. the last writing students were asked to to). Thus, the tasks have been conducted in three different sessions along February 2020.

Since this study also aims to discuss the language used when giving feedback to L2 English students (i.e. their L1 or the L2) during the task, the fifteen participants were divided into two groups. Seven participants constitute the group called "Feedback L1" and eight constitute the other group called "Feedback L2". Feedback L1 group received written Corrective Feedback and a metalinguistic explanation of their errors in the L1, whereas the other group, Feedback L2, received this type of feedback in the L2.

5.3 Data codification. Data has been collected at three different points: (a) after writing 1 (pre-task); (b) after the students' writings were corrected and metalinguistic feedback was given to them (task); and (c) after writing 2 (post-task).

One of the students who initially participated in the study and took the pre-task was absent during the task. His data was excluded from the sample.

As mentioned in section 3, Corder (1974) proposed five steps to follow when analysing errors. They have been followed in this study. Firstly, the corpus selected corresponds to the students' writings mentioned earlier. Secondly, their most frequent errors have been identified, analysed and classified.

Generally, the participants of this study present interlingual errors that can be classified into three categories: (a) lexical errors; (b) grammar errors; and (c) spelling errors.

Lexical errors match Corder's (1973) classification of errors and they include (a) omission of some required element; (b) addition of some unnecessary or incorrect element; (c) selection of an incorrect element; and, (d) misordering of the elements. In the present study, lexical errors are subdivided into (a) wrong word (which corresponds to Corder's selection of an incorrect element), (b) extra word (which corresponds to Corder's addition of some unnecessary or incorrect element); and (c) missing word (which corresponds to Corder's omission of some required element).

Grammar errors are classified into (a) noun morphology; (b) verbal tense; (c) verbal agreement; (d) verb morphology; and (e) constituent order. The latter corresponds to Corder's misordering of the elements.

Spelling errors have also been considered. They are significant in L2 English L1 Spanish students due to the fact that, while Spanish follows clear spelling rules, English has fewer spelling rules and the way it is written differs from the way it is pronounced. As discussed earlier, Primary Education students are firstly exposed to comprehension before production in the L2. Besides, following the Spanish Primary Education curriculum, the oral aspects of the language are presented before the written ones. Although students learn spelling rules, they present problems in this field because of a delayed exposure to the written language in the L2.

6. RESULTS

Results have been extracted at three different points: (a) after writing 1 (pre-task); (b) after the students' writings were corrected and metalinguistic feedback was given to them (task); and (c) after writing 2 (post-task).

As illustrated in Table 3, grammar errors were highly present in the L2 English learners' output, followed by lexical errors. Spelling errors were the least type of errors presented at this point.

Table 3. Results in the Pre-Task

GROUP	LEXICAL ERROR	GRAMMAR ERROR	SPELLING	TOTAL
FEEDBACK L2	19 (30.6%)	28 (45.2%)	15 (24.2%)	62 (100%)
FEEDBACK L1	14 (29.2%)	21 (43.8%)	13 (27%)	48 (100%)

Grammar errors were also the most frequent in the L1 English learners' output, followed by lexical and spelling errors. However, this feedback group showed fewer errors than Feedback L2 group.

As illustrated in Table 4, lexical errors were the highest, followed by grammar errors in the task. Spelling errors were once more the least type of errors.

Table 4. Results in the Task

GROUP	LEXICAL ERROR	GRAMMAR ERROR	SPELLING	TOTAL
FEEDBACK L2	11 (38%)	10 (34.5%)	8 (27.5%)	29 (100%)
FEEDBACK L1	16 (80%)	3 (15%)	1 (5%)	20 (100%)

Feedback L1 group made more lexical errors, whereas Feedback L2 group made more grammar and spelling errors.

As illustrated in Table 5, lexical errors were, again, the highest, followed by grammar and spelling errors, in the post-task.

Table 5. Results in the Post-Task

GROUP	LEXICAL ERROR	GRAMMAR ERROR	SPELLING	TOTAL
FEEDBACK L2	39 (65%)	16 (26.6%)	5 (8.4%)	60 (100%)

FEEDBACK L1	17 (30.4%)	22 (39.2%)	17 (30.4%)	56 (100%)

While Feedback L1 group showed more grammar and spelling errors, Feedback L2 group presented more lexical errors.

Figures 1, 2 and 3 compare the two feedback groups, namely, Feedback L1's (as represented in orange) and Feedback L2's (as represented in purple). They present the types of errors along the three tasks.
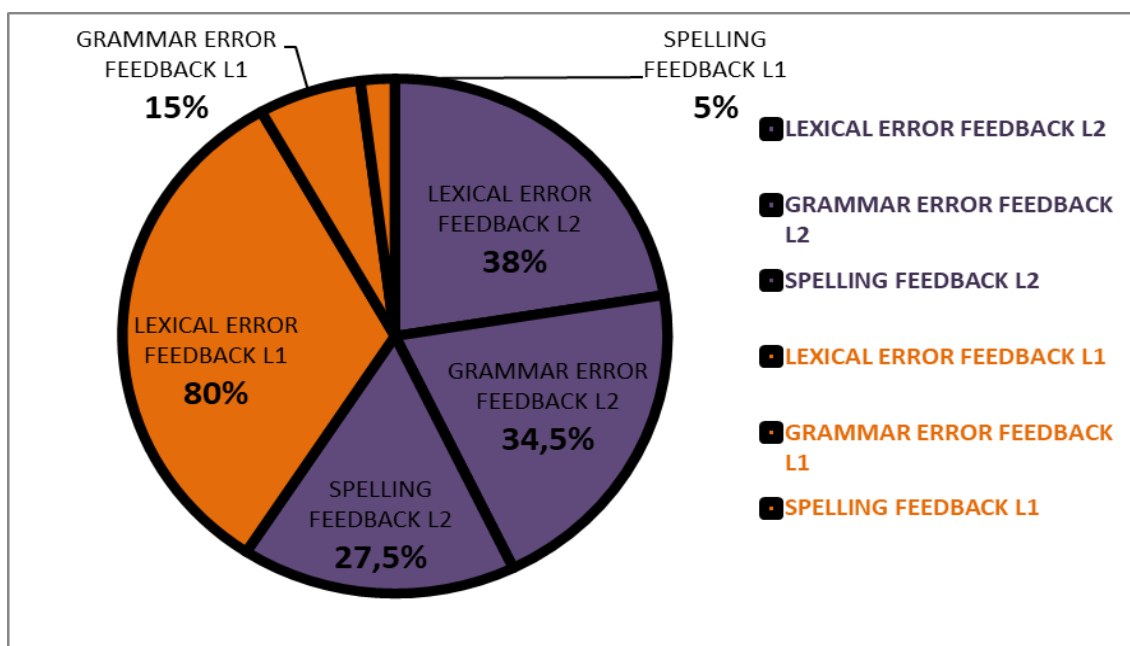
As displayed in figure 1, Feedback L2 group presented more errors as a whole in the pre-task, being grammar errors the most frequent one in both groups.

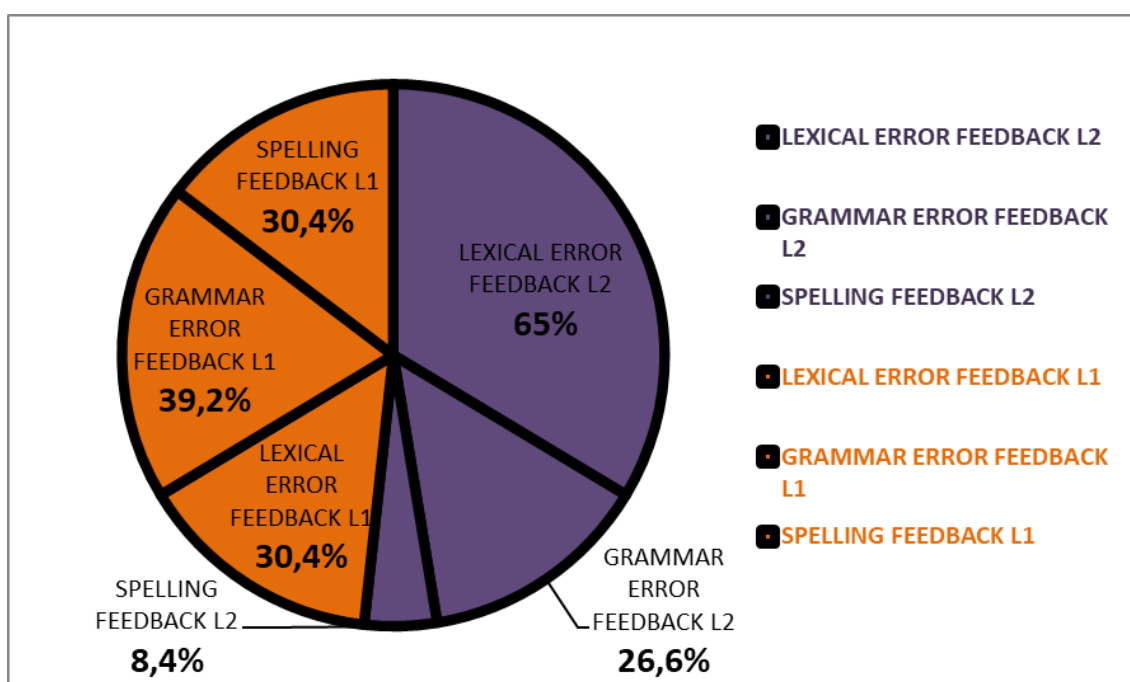Figure 1. Feedback L1 and Feedback L2 groups in the Pre-Task
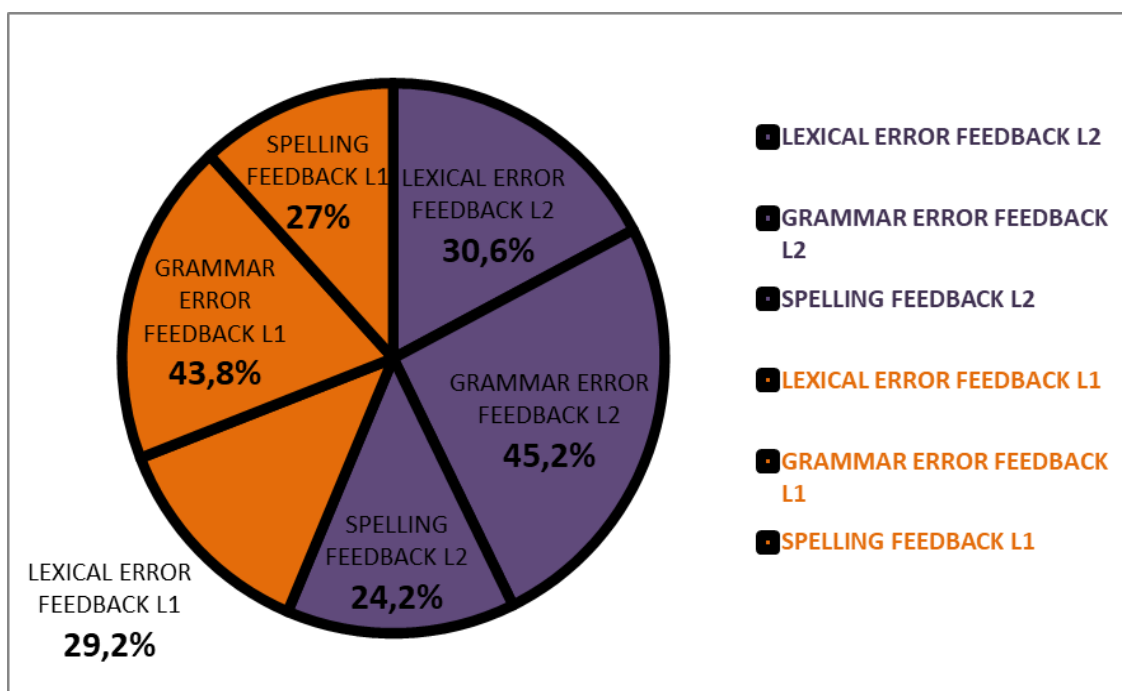
As displayed in figure 2, Feedback L2 group made, again, more errors as a whole, in the task, being lexical errors the most frequent in both groups.

Figure 2. Feedback L1 and Feedback L2 groups in the Task

As displayed in figure 3, the number of errors made by the two groups is more equal in the post-task, being Feedback L2 group the one which made a few more errors (being lexical errors the most frequent). For the Feedback L1 group, grammar errors were the most frequent.

Figure 3. Feedback L1 and Feedback L2 groups in the Post-Task

Regarding the evolution of the two feedback groups, and as seen in figure 4, we observe that Feedback L1 group showed fewer errors than Feedback L2 group in the three tasks. Regarding the types of errors, lexical errors increased dramatically in the task. Nevertheless, they were reduced to initial results in the post-task. Similar results are seen in the grammar errors, as opposed to spelling errors that increased in the post-task.

Figure 4. Evolution Feedback L1 group
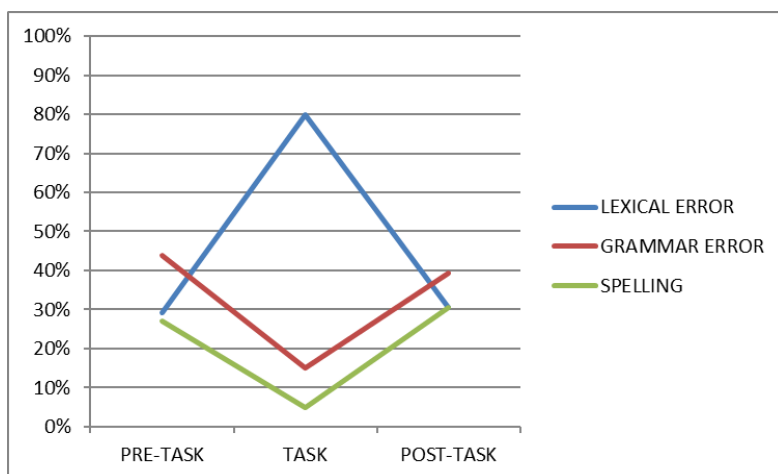
As displayed in figure 5, Feedback L2 group made more errors as a whole in the three tasks. While lexical errors increased drastically in the post-task, grammar and spelling errors were reduced through the tasks that the students accomplished for the study.

Figure 5. Evolution Feedback L2 group
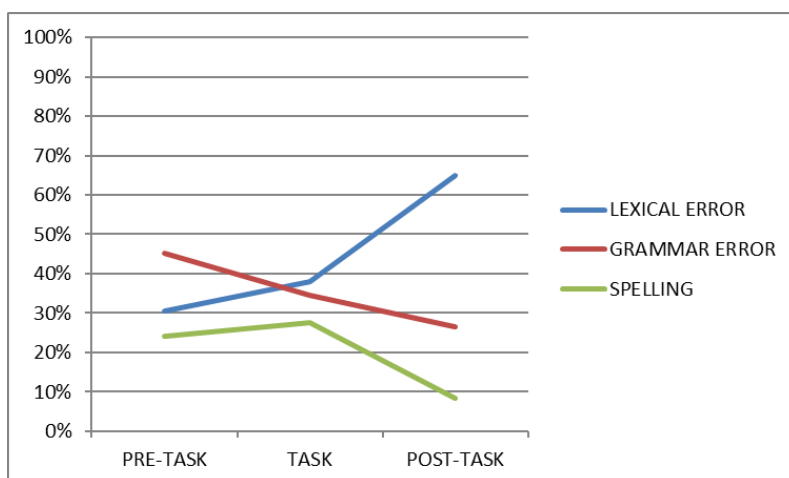
7. DISCUSSION

Based on the findings analyzed in section 6, most of the errors in the corpus are interlingual errors given that they are caused by interference from the L1 (Lott, 1983). Students tend to apply the rules of their L1 when they do not know the rules of the L2. As (1). The preposition used does not respond to the difference in meaning to prepositions in the L2. The student generalizes the use of prepositions in both languages, and does not differentiate between in (=*dentro de*) and on (=*sobre*, *encima de*) in the L2. This results in a lexical error due to the selection of an incorrect element (i.e. wrong word).

(1) They found a handbag in the floor".

A lexical error due to the addition of a non-required element (i.e. extra word) is found in (2).
(2) "Elsa called to the person". The student transfers the structure "*llamar a alguien*" in the L1 into the L2.

A lexical error due to the omission of a required element (i.e. a missing word) is found in (3).
(3) "The girl was so excited because was * looking at the handbag". Because of verb inflection, Spanish does not require the presence of a subject, whereas English always needs it.

In this study, intralingual errors do not occur as often as interlingual errors. However, there are some examples which respond to the students' overextension of rules learned in the L2. As (4), which contains a grammar error due to the generalization of the formation of the regular past in the L2 for irregular verbs.

(4) "They finally found the person that losted the handbag".

Spelling mistakes sometimes show an interlingual source of error (e.g. "movile". This is the case because of the similarity of "*móvil*" in Spanish). Furthermore, an intralingual source of error could explain the rationale behind the spelling mistakes produced (e.g. "hoo" instead of "who" shows the student's knowledge of phonological rules in the L2 which he wrongly transfers to writing).

Regarding the effectiveness of feedback and, in particular, focused, indirect and metalinguistic feedback, our findings have revealed that feedback fosters learner's motivation and ensures linguistic accuracy (Ellis, 2009). Students have been aware of the positive effects of feedback in L2 English learning as an opportunity to use errors as tools for learning.

Since, as already pointed out, several formal works on feedback suggest that unfocused feedback may turn into negative feedback (Ferris & Roberts, 2001), analysis of only lexical, grammar and spelling errors has been carried out in the present study. Otherwise, students could have been overwhelmed by finding too many mistakes in their output and the goal of learning from errors would have been lost.

Students' errors have been analyzed and presented to them. Besides, in order to cater for positive feedback, their writings have not only been corrected from a linguistic point of view, but also attention to content has been considered such as good ideas and expressions, among others.

Indirect feedback, by means of an error-coding system (see appendix II) has been applied in this study and proven to be satisfactory based on the already discussed findings (see section 6), which show that overall errors have been reduced along the tasks of this study. According to Ellis' (2009) Corrective Feedback strategies, the strategy of repetition has been applied in this study. In the learners' written utterances, errors have been highlighted by means of emphatic stress (i.e. errors have been underlined by using such error-coding system and different colours) and students have been asked to improve their writings. As discussed earlier, some researchers argue that indirect feedback is more effective than direct feedback and it is declared to bring out more benefits to the students' long-term writing performance when compared to the role played by direct feedback (Ferris, 2002; Frantzen, 1995; Lalande, 1982).

Long-term writing performance has not been proven in this study for time restraints, but immediate feedback has proven to be effective. These findings are in line with Bitchener's (2008) work in proving that the students' accuracy when receiving written Corrective Feedback in immediate post-tests is high.

Indeed, the present work has reflected that lexical, grammar and spelling errors were dramatically reduced in the task immediately after writing 1 was corrected and students received a metalinguistic explanation of their errors.

On the other hand, this study has also shown that the effectiveness of feedback is relative since it might be effective for some students and less effective for others (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). In the task implemented in the present work, when students focused on correcting their errors, some of them produced other errors. These results suggest that as well as accuracy is better in immediate post-tests, there is space for making different errors. These findings are not in line with the study conducted by Limoudehi, et al. (2018) who claimed that they found improvement in the group that received remedial teaching.

Regarding the two languages used for providing feedback to the two subgroups in this study, results show that both groups obtained similar results in the post-task. Feedback L2 group made slightly more errors overall. Therefore, this study proves that the L1 has some benefits when used for clarification (or even to provide feedback). However, as these results do not differ much between the two feedback groups, it is wise to follow theoreticians who claim that it is essential to immerse learners in activities using the L2 only (Littlewood & Yu, 2009; Nation, 2003; Scott & de la Fuente, 2008; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002), and later, use the language that is considered to be more effective for each learner. This gives a personalized response to the teaching and the learning process.

8. CONCLUSIONS

This study has proven that the most frequent written errors to be found in Primary Education students of the 6th Grade are mostly grammar errors. These results are in line with Alonso's (1997) study, which pointed to frequent errors in the verbal system. However, they are not in line with Dotti and O'Donnell's (2014) study, which highlighted the incorrect use of the English article in noun phrases as a recurrent error.

As theoreticians suggest, these grammar errors are generally the result of the students' L1 interference in the production of the L2 (Brown, 2007; Gass & Selinker, 2008; Oller & Richards, 1973). On the other hand, some intralingual errors have appeared in the students' writings as well. This shows that L2 rules are internalized by the students.

Focused, indirect Corrective Feedback has also shown success in L2 English learning. Students learned an error-coding system in order to understand the analysis of errors presented by the teacher and eagerly improved their first written productions. Therefore, positive, focused, indirect written feedback (with a metalinguistic explanation) has helped students understand errors so that they could correct them, and prevented error fossilization.

Regarding the language to use when the teacher provides feedback, the present study has revealed that the L1 would help the teacher in the metalinguistic explanation of the students' errors. However, as results suggest, there is not a clear correspondence between using the students' L1 when giving feedback and obtaining better results. Further work would be required in this respect.

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APPENDIX I: Consent Form for parents

Yo, D. / Dña. _____, padre/madre/tutor legal del alumno/a _____ de 6º curso de Educación Primaria del CEIP Bilingüe XXX, de XXX, autorizo a la tutora de mi hijo/a, Dña. Marina Pacheco Plaza, a analizar los errores gramaticales en su producción escrita en lengua inglesa, con el fin de llevar a cabo un estudio empírico de investigación conducente a un trabajo universitario.

El objetivo de dicho trabajo es avanzar en el conocimiento de la enseñanza del inglés como segunda lengua. El análisis de errores partirá del perfil lingüístico de cada alumno/a en base al Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las lenguas (MCER) – estándar internacional que define la competencia lingüística – y no conllevará el juicio de su conocimiento lingüístico.

En XXX, a 22 de enero del 2020.

FDO.:

padre/madre/tutor legal

APPENDIX II: Error-coding system

GROUP "FEEDBACK L2"

LEXICAL ERROR (VOCABULARY)	WRONG WORD	WW
	EXTRA WORD	EW ( )
	MISSING WORD	MW
GRAMMAR ERROR	NOUN MORPHOLOGY (FORM)	NF
	VERBAL TENSE	T
	VERBAL AGREEMENT	Sing/plur
	VERB MORPHOLOGY	VF
	CONSTITUENT ORDER	O →
SPELLING	SPELLING	Sp.

GROUP "FEEDBACK L1"

VOCABULARIO	PALABRA INCORRECTA	PI
	PALABRA EXTRA	PE ( )
	FALTA PALABRA	FP
GRAMÁTICA	FORMA NOMBRE	FN
	TIEMPO VERBAL	T
	CONCORDANCIA	Sing/plur
	FORMA VERBO	FV
	ORDEN	O →
ORTOGRAFÍA	ORTOGRAFÍA	Ort.