

IMPROVING STUDENTS' GRAMMAR THROUGH ERROR LOGS

Christopher Adam Lear

Jane Hislop

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

- Repeated written errors/mistakes by L2 learners

Research aim

- Find an effective method which improves specific L2 learner grammar without explicitly teaching it

LITERATURE REVIEW

- The “*Grammar Correction*” debate in L2 writing (Ferris, 2004; Truscott, 1996)
- Corrective feedback (CF) – can only be effective if students respond to it (Ellis, 2008)

CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

Direct feedback

- Teacher provides correct form
- Students' preferred feedback type

Indirect feedback

- Teacher indicates error
- Teacher does not correct
 - Indicating (coded) + locating (underlining)
 - Indication only
- Cognitive problem-solving

CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

Uncoded	Focused	Feedback
An error has been located in some way (highlighted, underlined, circled)	Intensive (specific errors)	

LITERATURE REVIEW CONT'D

- Error logs
 - Little research on the effectiveness of error logs after receiving CF (Ferris, 2004)

Which errors to correct?

Global	Impedes understanding e.g. verb tense (VT)
Local	Merely distracting e.g. subject-verb agreement (SVA), plural/singular(PL/S)

- Corrections of most frequent errors are encouraged.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Can error logs in combination with uncoded, focused feedback reduce the frequency of SVA, PL/S, or VT errors in student writing?
2. Are error logs with CF more effective than only using uncoded, focused feedback?

METHODOLOGY

Academic Writing Course	Participants	Test	Control
First-year	26	14	12
Second-year	33	18	15

METHODOLOGY CONT'D

- Data collection (Quantitative)
 - Control and test groups
 - Groups selected randomly
 - Every five weeks

METHODOLOGY CONT'D

- Errors tracked:

Local

Subject-verb agreement (SVA)

Plural / singular nouns (PL/S)

Global

Verb tense (VT)

METHODOLOGY CONT'D

- First submitted draft errors recorded
- Uncoded focused CF for SVA, PL/S, and VT errors
- Other errors given either direct or indirect feedback

82.2 percent ^{of} people think that they are healthy ~~on the questionnaire~~, but 71.8 percent feel stress, in their daily life (Hakuhoudou Seikatsu Souken, 2016). At the present day in Japan, people can be healthy ^{thanks} ~~thinks~~ to ^{who writes} ~~improvement~~ in medical technology and welfare. Although, the number of Japanese suicide is increasing, ^{do not} ~~is~~ increasing. Actually, the number is more than the one in era of the World War II (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2015). This is a strange truth, because modern people should not have fear of death because of war. The Japanese people ^{because A, B, and C.} ~~enjoy~~ better physical health today than ever before, ^{but they do not enjoy good mental health because of various stress.} ~~but they do not enjoy good mental health because of various stress.~~ ^{because people feel stress on human relations, and it causes depression or suicide.}

One of modern Japanese main stress is stress from human relations. At first, about half of ^{people who are in twenties} ~~twenties~~ feel stress from human relations at workplace or school (Hakuhoudou Seikatsu Souken, 2016). Main causes of this are bullying and harassment. Today in Japan, there are quite a few news about these. Next, only 2 percent ^{of} people feel stress from human relations on the internet (Hakuhoudou Seikatsu Souken, 2016). This result shows people are satisfied with communication on internet. Therefore, people are tired of real human relations.

Depression is well known as modern Japanese main mental disease. First, the number of patients with depression are increasing. The patients increased by 18 percent from 2005 to 2015 (World Health Organization, 2017). Second, ^{with} ~~human relation has~~ ^{have} possibility to ~~be~~ cause of depression. This means Japanese who ^{have} ~~has~~ problems on human relation ^{with} ~~has~~ heavy risk being depression. As you can see, Japanese must be careful about their mental condition. ^{with}

METHODOLOGY CONT'D

- Test group
- Only SVA and PL/S errors

Writing 3, Spring Semester, 2019

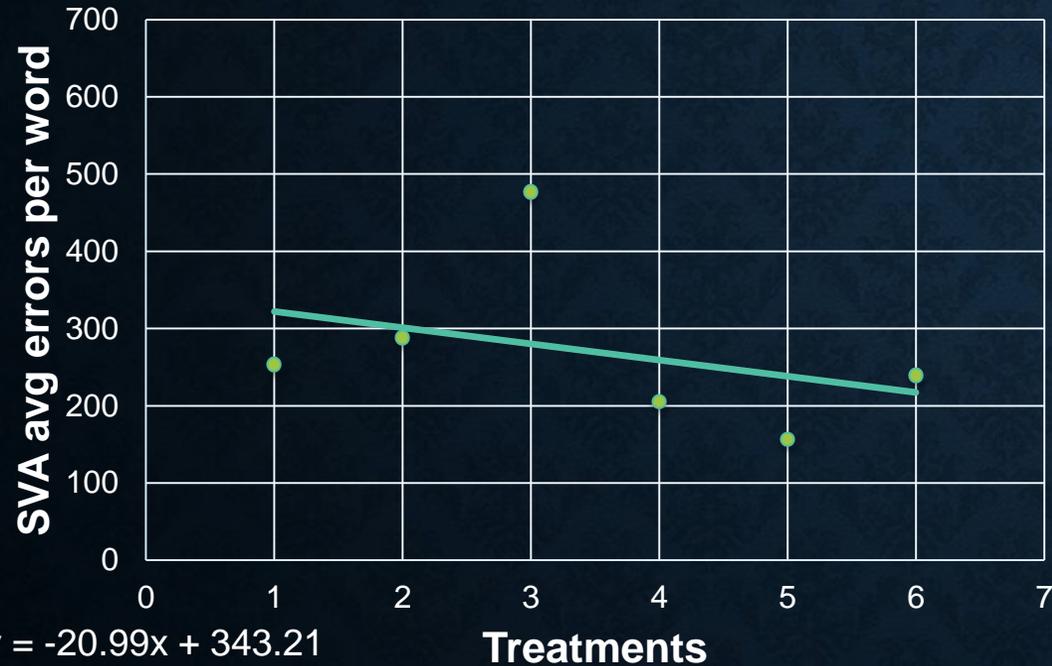
Error Log: Essay 1

Sentence with error	What kind of error is this?	Corrected sentence	Rules and notes	Error or mistake?
Example: The average number of bicycles <u>are</u> increasing.	Subject-verb agreement	The average number of bicycles <u>is</u> increasing.	The subject comes before a phrase beginning with 'of' and a singular subject takes a singular verb. Class handout	Error: You did not know the correct rule. Mistake: You knew the correct rule, but accidentally used the incorrect form.
One of the biggest fact. of life span is ~	Singular / Plural problem	One of the biggest <u>facts</u> of life span is ~	Since, there are many kind of facts, I had to write plurals's..	mistake!
With the spread of portable game	Singular / Plural problem	With the spread of portable <u>games</u>	"game" is not only one, so it is plural.	mistake
restriction prevent children from playing ...	"	<u>restrictions</u> prevent children from playing	"restriction" is not only one, so it have to put "s"	mistake
Workers is likely to ~	Subject - Verb Agreement.	Workers <u>are</u> likely to ~	"Workers" is plural, I had to write "are."	mistake

1ST YEAR RESULTS - SVA

N = 14

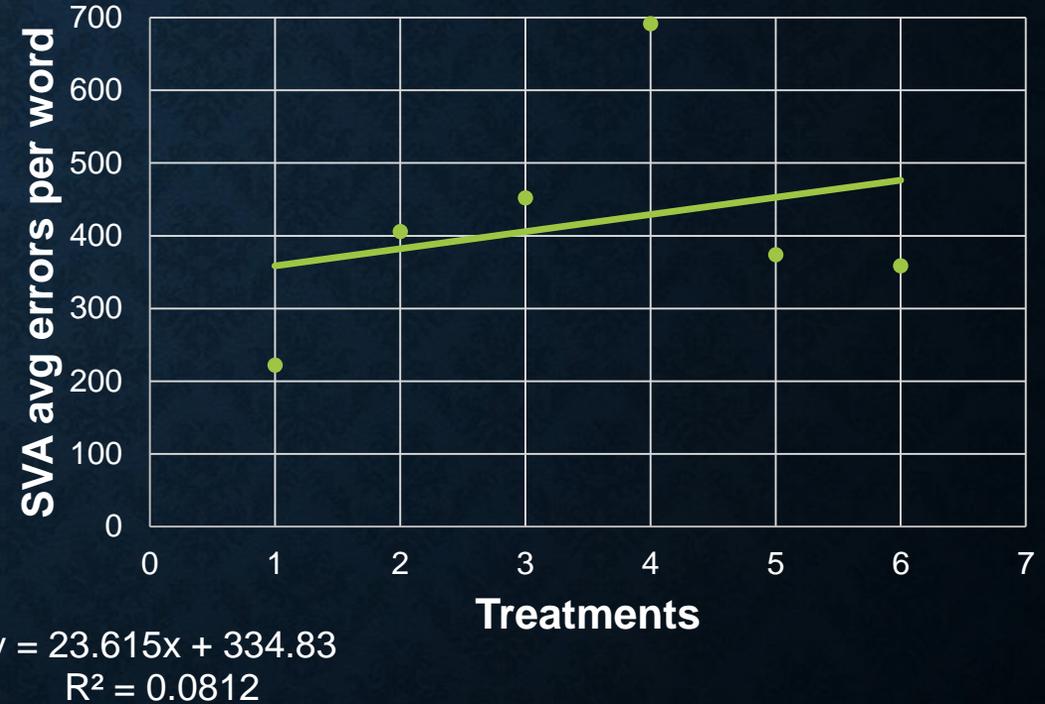
1st Year Control Group



- SVA avg errors per word
- Linear (SVA avg errors per word)

N = 13

1st Year Test Group

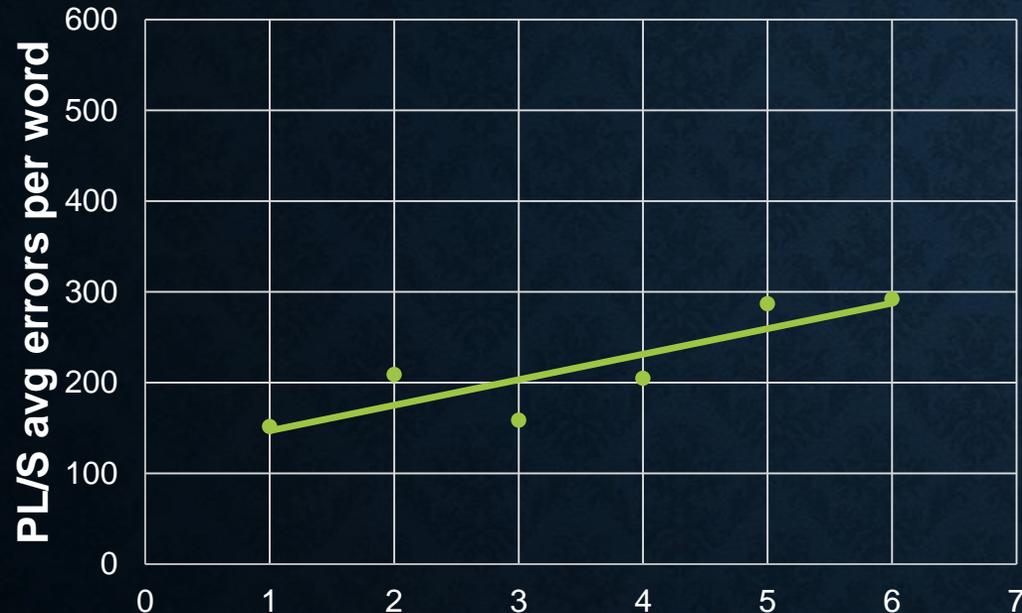


- SVA avg errors per word
- Linear (SVA avg errors per word)

1ST YEAR RESULTS – PL/S

N = 14

1st Year Control Group



$$y = 28.07x + 119.2$$

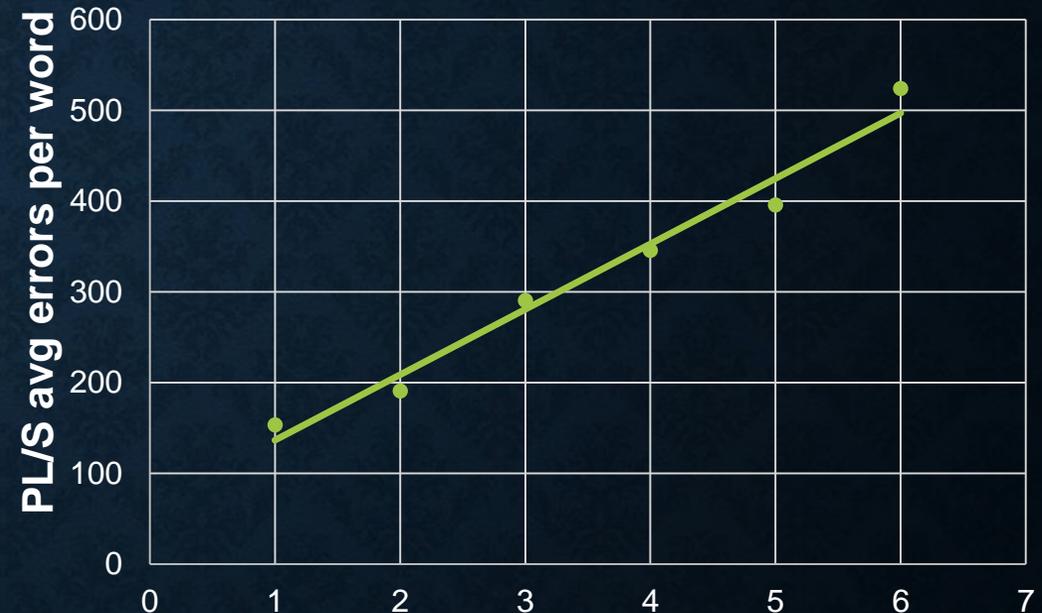
$$R^2 = 0.7487$$

Treatments

- SPI avg errors per word
- Linear (SPI avg errors per word)

N = 13

1st Year Test Group



$$y = 72.06x + 64.73$$

$$R^2 = 0.9751$$

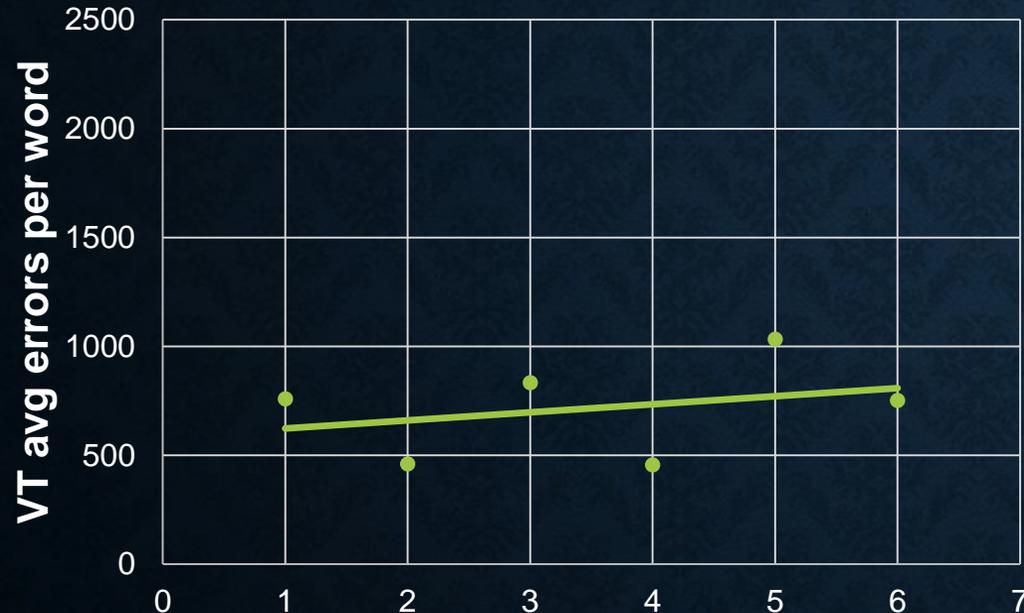
Treatments

- SPI avg errors per word
- Linear (SPI avg errors per word)

1ST YEAR RESULTS – VT

N = 14

1st Year Control Group



$$y = 37.232x + 585.58$$

$$R^2 = 0.0965$$

Treatments

- VT avg errors per word
- Linear (VT avg errors per word)

N = 13

1st Year Test Group



$$y = 307.24x - 320.89$$

$$R^2 = 0.5471$$

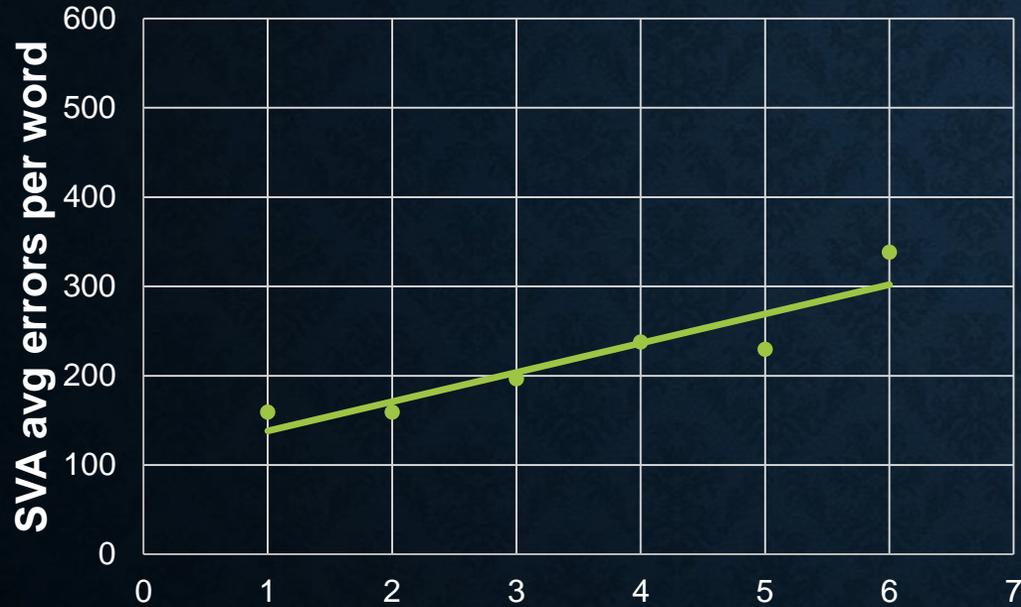
Treatments

- VT avg errors per word
- Linear (VT avg errors per word)

2ND YEAR RESULTS - SVA

N = 24

2nd Year Control Group



$$y = 19.212x + 225.21$$

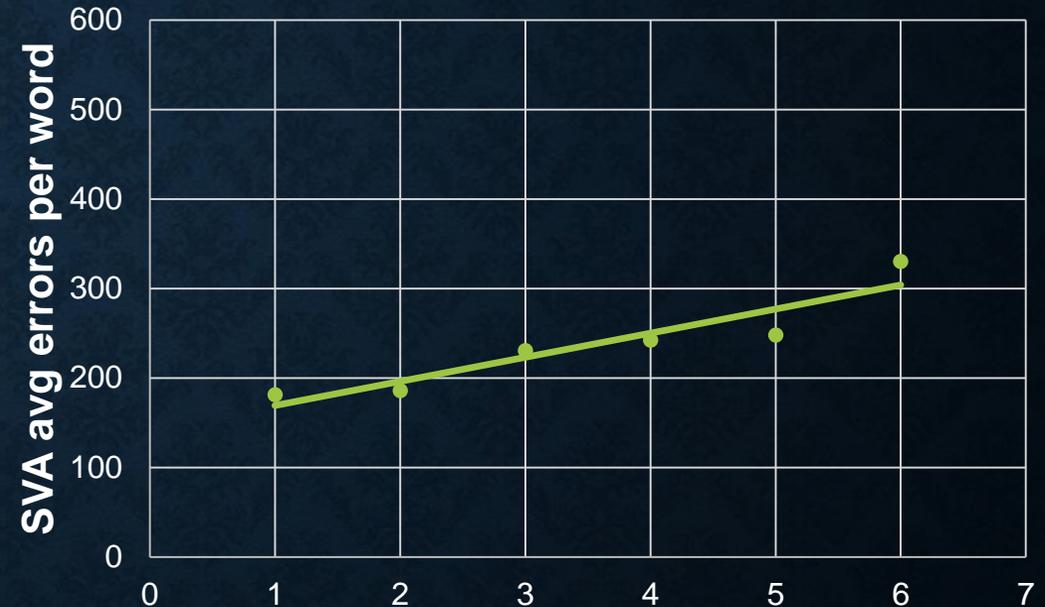
$$R^2 = 0.1993$$

Treatments

- SVA avg errors per word
- Linear (SVA avg errors per word)

N = 24

2nd Year Test Group



$$y = 35.957x + 142.22$$

$$R^2 = 0.7114$$

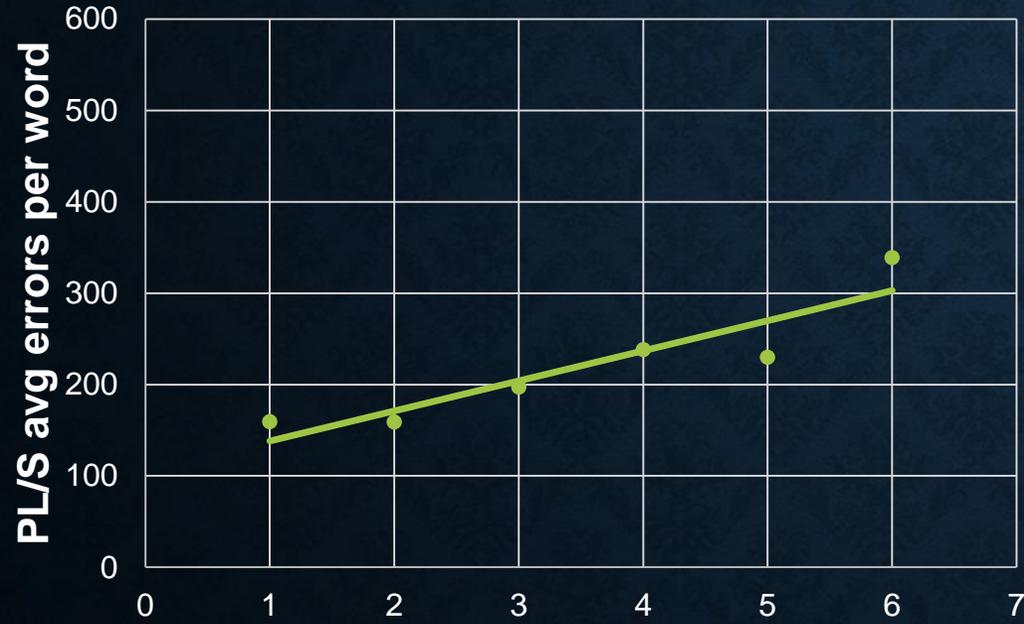
Treatments

- SVA avg errors per word
- Linear (SVA avg errors per word)

2ND YEAR RESULTS – PL/S

N = 24

2nd Year Control Group



$$y = 32.872x + 105.48$$

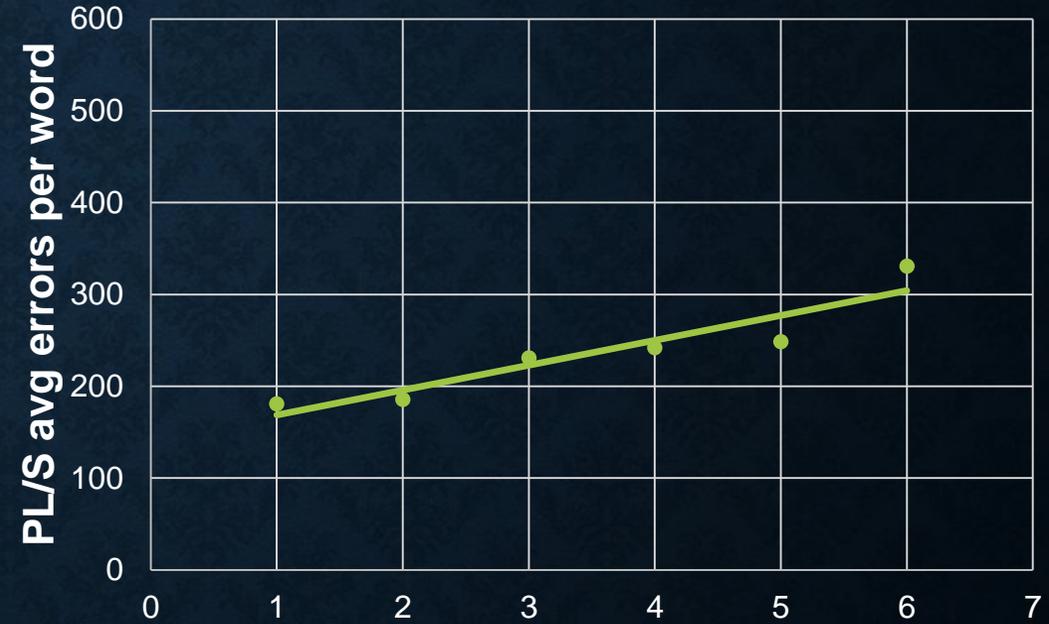
$$R^2 = 0.8414$$

Treatments

- SPI avg errors per word
- Linear (SPI avg errors per word)

N = 24

2nd Year Test Group



$$y = 27.116x + 141.65$$

$$R^2 = 0.8709$$

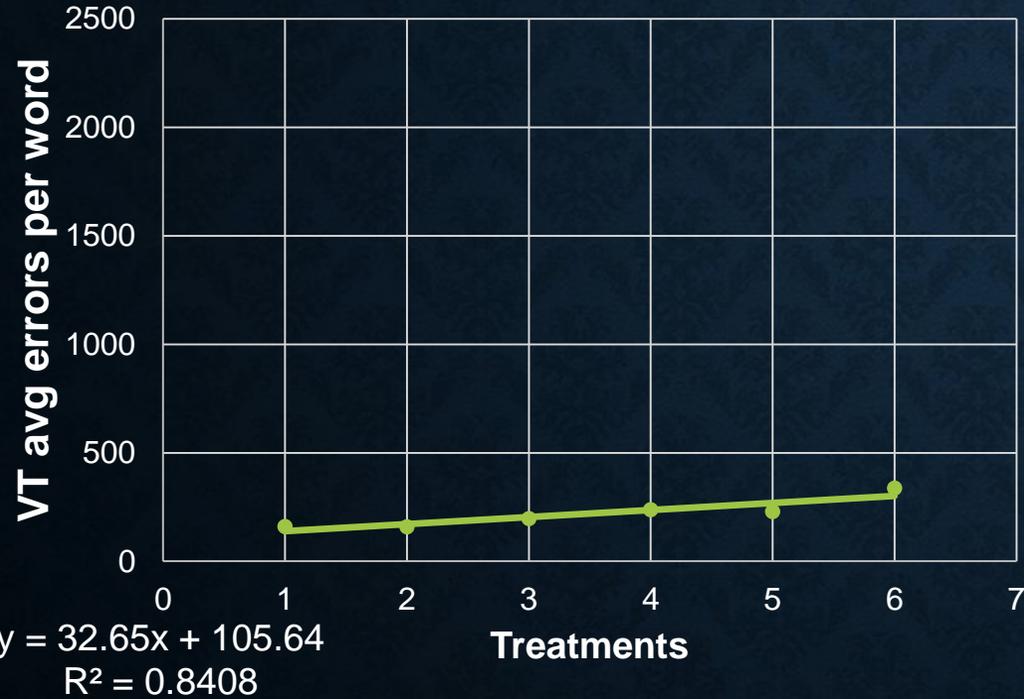
Treatments

- SPI avg errors per word
- Linear (SPI avg errors per word)

2ND YEAR RESULTS - VT

N = 24

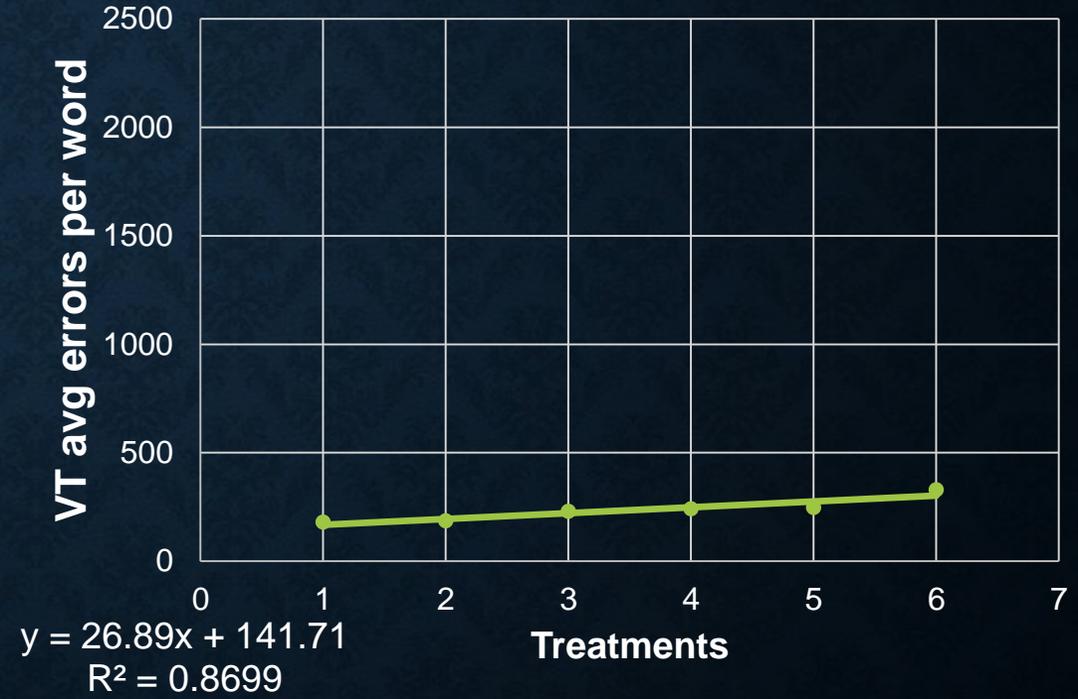
2nd Year Control Group



- VT avg errors per word
- Linear (VT avg errors per word)

N = 24

2nd Year Test Group



- VT avg errors per word
- Linear (VT avg errors per word)

RESULTS

SINGLE FACTOR ANOVA

Statistical Analysis – 1st Year P-values	Test	Control	Test vs Control
Subject-verb Agreement	0.000009	0.0005	0.222
Plural/Singular	0.0000002	0.00009	0.074
Verb Tense	0.000000000 00004	0.000000007	0.0997

RESULTS

SINGLE FACTOR ANOVA

Statistical Analysis – 2nd Year P-values	Test	Control	Test vs Control
Subject-verb Agreement	0.0003	0.0015	0.963
Plural/Singular	0.069	0.0023	0.074
Verb Tense	0.0000000000 096	0.00000000092	0.0997

DISCUSSION

What can be said about CF and error logs?

- CF does help reduce learner errors
- Uncoded focused CF does result in improvements in L2 written grammar
- Error logs are not detrimental to the improvements
- Error logs have little influence on the extent of the improvements

RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVIEWED

1. Can error logs in combination with uncoded, focused feedback reduce the frequency of SVA, PL/S, or VT errors in student writing?

Yes and no.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVIEWED

2. Are error logs with CF more effective than only using uncoded, focused feedback?

Error logs seem to have little additional effect on reducing specific errors.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations of this study

- Only English majors
- The number of errors and mistakes were not individually tracked
- The frequency of specific errors in the error logs were not individually tracked

FUTURE RESEARCH

Limitations of this study

- Comparison of errors versus mistakes
- Track repeated identical errors
- Comparison of global versus local errors via error log

REFERENCES

- Ellis, R. (2008). A typology of written corrective feedback types. *ELT journal*, 63(2), 97-107.
- Ferris, D. R. (2004). The “grammar correction” debate in L2 writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here? (and what do we do in the meantime...? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13(1), 49-62.
- Ferris, D. R. (1999). The case of grammar correction in L2 writing classes: A response to Truscott (1996). *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8 (1), 1-11.
- Hartshorn, K. J. Evans, N. W. Merrill, P. F. Sudweeks, R. R., Strong-Krause, D. & Anderson, N. J.(2010). Effects of dynamic corrective feedback on ESL writing accuracy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 44, 84-109.
- Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning*, 46, 327-369.