

**AN INVESTIGATION OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK PROCESSES INVOLVING  
THE WRITING SKILL  
IN VCE SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS**

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Master of Education

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**December 2014**

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This research project received the approval of the Monash University Standing Committee for Ethical Research on Humans (MUHREC). (Project: CF13/2006 – 2013001019)

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr Maria Gindidis, who gave me endless support, detailed advice and inspiration for this research paper. Furthermore I am very grateful to the students who volunteered to take part in this study and Polyglot College for allowing me to conduct this research. I would also like to thank my mother who has always encouraged and believed in me with nothing but her best wishes sent from afar during this time.

Dr Campbell Aitken of *Express Editing Writing and Research* provided professional editing services in accordance with the Institute of Professional Editors' *Guidelines for editing research theses*.

Finally, I would like to record my indebtedness to my husband, Grant Thomas, for his endless love, understanding support and unique ability to cheer me up throughout this study. My research would not have been possible without his support.

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

ATER	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
Middle school	from Year 5 to Year 8 (in Polyglot College)
Senior school	from Year 9 to Year 12 (in Polyglot College)
SAC	School Assessment Coursework
VCAA	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VTAC	Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre
WCF	Written Corrective Feedback

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis describes an investigation of feedback processes during Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) second language writing classes. The research explored the various feedback methods used for VCE second language students' writing; the findings suggest possible effective feedback methods that effectively develop and maintain students' writing skills.

My research was based on the premise that the "voice" of students is vital to both the analysis and discussion of specific feedback methods and how these are valued in their writing. I reviewed feedback methods and sought to document and identify the benefits of feedback on students' writing compositions. Existing literature indicates that feedback is a consequence of performance on tasks. The function of feedback is based around three important questions: Where am I going? How am I going? Where to next? (Hattie, 2009, p. 177). Students and teachers seek answers to those three questions in any feedback process; it is with these answers that they are able to create a productive and effective learning environment.

Recent research points to levels and steps that can be used to answer the three feedback questions. These steps are in accordance with Hattie's (2009) well-known study in the field. The first, 'Task' level, relates to how well tasks are understood by the learner. The 'Process' level links understanding of the effective process needed to understand. The third level, 'Self-regulation' or 'Self-monitoring', involves modifying and adapting learner skills towards actions and self; this also involves the level and skill of personal evaluation.

The research question at the heart of this thesis is: how does Hattie's feedback model translate into actual feedback processes commonly used for VCE second language writing? What are

VCE students' perceptions and understandings of the most effective feedback strategies on second language writing tasks?

My study involved the analysis of responses from students in their last year of secondary education studying Chinese, French and Japanese as second languages. A mixed methods research design involving surveys and semi-structured interviews was used to collect data.

## **Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION**

Since 1998, I have been teaching Japanese at various year levels to students in several Victorian schools. I often reflect on the following questions: “Am I teaching Japanese to students effectively?” “Am I preparing students to merely imitate, by providing them with techniques they copy in order to get the highest grades?” “Am I only teaching grammar translation to them?”

I believe feedback is very important for second language acquisition; however, I wondered if I was giving my students effective feedback that was both comprehensible and practical for them. I always attempt to give immediate feedback to students after correcting their errors, and write long evaluative comments on their essays using a different coloured pen. I found in the past returning essays with too many red marks discouraged students, so now, to counteract what I believe is the tyranny of the red pen, I use multiple pen colours in order not to undermine their confidence. This brings me to a further question: do students really lose confidence in writing because of teacher feedback?

Recently I observed that whilst giving more essay writing as homework to students, my feedback did not result in the expected reduction of errors; instead, the same errors re-occurred. This revelation was an important catalyst for my research.

### **1.1 Personal Motivation**

I consider myself one of the lucky individuals who, having dreamt of becoming a teacher since I was a child, succeeded in fulfilling this life goal. I received the majority of my education in Japan. I was inspired to become a teacher because of my Year 6 teacher; I felt he had much better style of teaching than my other teachers. His classes were highly engaging. He encouraged us to think for ourselves. Was there an alternative way to do a task? What was our

opinion on this question? In his Japanese class, we had to think about why an author uses certain words rather than other words. How did this impact on our perceptions as a reader? Twenty-five years ago, the accepted method of study in Japan was transmissive—to memorise what was written in our textbooks and what our teacher said in order to attain higher marks for the examinations. My Year 6 teacher did not subscribe to this method in order to encourage my fellow students and me and our fascination with the subjects he was teaching.

Since 1998, I have been teaching Japanese to students at various year levels, at a number of schools in Victoria. Now as a qualified teacher, I often ask myself, “Am I teaching Japanese to students effectively?” “Am I developing students to become critical thinkers or do I seek to provide them with techniques designed to attain the highest grade?” “Am I the teacher I hoped to be?” As noted earlier, I believe feedback is one of the most important skills for second language acquisition, yet I wonder whether I am offering my students the same thinking skills and inspiration I received from my Year 6 teacher. These reflective questions were the beginning of the journey that led to this thesis.

## **1.2 Why did I need to do this research?**

I have been teaching Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) second language Japanese for over ten years. During this time my Japanese VCE classes have been small in size (usually 5 to 10 students), and my current school is committed to continuing small class sizes. Some students have been in my Japanese classes for over six years. I believe this extended period of contact, together with smaller classes, has been conducive to developing excellent teacher and student relationships. During my time as a senior secondary Japanese teacher, I have chosen to give feedback on student writing without reflecting deeply or collecting evidence linked to their learning benefit. When I began to consider enrolling in a Masters degree and conducting research in education, I realised that the question I needed to answer was whether my feedback

practices were effective. Moreover, I wanted to identify the best strategies for developing and elevating students' writing skills for maximum potential. This question and desire underpinned my motivation for the research and this thesis.

Whilst there is great deal of literature on “feedback” and second language writing, the journey undertaken by myself as a teacher furthered my skills as an educator. My research included my “voice” as a second language teacher together with the voices of the students interviewed for this study.

### **1.3 Background to the Study**

The feedback process has been found to be important for developing second language writing skills. “Feedback has long been regarded as essential for the development of second language (L2) writing skills both for its potential for learning and for student motivation” (K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006, p. 83). As a VCE Japanese second language teacher, I give feedback on my students' compositions immediately, in most cases by the next day. In this feedback I correct grammar, vocabulary and Japanese characters, and include comments regarding fluency, structures and content. I also grade and mark against criteria and a rubric. The reason for my rapid provision of feedback is that I assume students quickly forget what they wrote in their essay; immediate feedback encourages students to revisit their work and realise and revise their errors. Recent reflections about my teaching raised the following questions: “Am I giving feedback to my students in the right way?” “Are there any other ways to provide feedback?” “Does my feedback help them with their writing skills?” and finally “Am I building up students' confidence in writing?” I noticed students often checked their mark first, then read my comments. When I didn't request that they re-read and rewrite their essays, they did not audit their own errors. In fact, their essays, together with my feedback, usually stayed in their display folders without a second look. I also observed that even when they rewrote their essays, some

students repeated the same errors in the rewritten version. This led to a further question: does my feedback improve long term writing skills, or do students simply learn to provide responses that they know I want to see?

#### **1.4 Aim of the Study**

The goal of this study was to investigate whether giving immediate feedback on students' Japanese second language writing has any learning benefit, and which feedback strategy, if any, is the most effective. To achieve maximum progress with writing skills, which is the best feedback strategy a teacher of a second language could use? Answers to these questions were formulated using data collected from students themselves. My study permitted a student voice to be visible in the debate and research on feedback.

I investigated several written student feedback methods to achieve my main aim, with the additional aim of improving my own teaching abilities. I explored forms of feedback used in VCE second language students' writing and how these methods and strategies best develop students' writing skills. Moreover, I examined—and present herein—the views of students themselves and how they valued the feedback provided on their writing compositions.

According to Hirose (2007), few researchers have studied teachers' feedback on Japanese essay writing. Moreover, they researched “the characteristics of the feedback” (p. 137), but do not point out whether feedback is beneficial to the learner. Hirose also mentioned various studies on peer-response and teacher–student writing conferences in Japanese language education, but stated that these do not clearly demonstrate benefit for students. Given the paucity of research on feedback in the context of teaching Japanese as a second language, I drew on research linked to feedback in all contexts, and collected data from students to elucidate the feedback

characteristics and effectiveness of feedback with respect to second-language teaching of Chinese, French and Japanese.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

My overarching question for this study was:

- Which feedback method is the most effective for second language students' writing skills?

To explore this question, I proposed an investigation of students' views of the feedback process, involving gathering data on what students believed were effective strategies. The secondary questions that helped to frame this study were:

1. Which feedback methods or strategies do students prefer? Why?
2. Which feedback methods or strategies do students think are beneficial to them? Why?

In order to investigate what VCE Languages students actually believe about feedback processes, I limited the research to three types of feedback methods in second language writing. I limited the study in this way in consideration of both the limitation of time and students' maturity and language competence.

The first of the feedback methods I researched involves teacher error corrections and teacher comments accompanied by a grade or mark. The reason for choosing on this method was that I often use it for feedback in my own classes, therefore I was interested in understanding it more thoroughly. Teacher error corrections and comments with a grade or mark is referred to as error correction in this study. The other two feedback methods explored and researched in this paper were teacher error identification, henceforth referred to as error identification and peer-correction. The Literature Review (Chapter 2) contains a detailed explanation of these methods.

## 1.6 The Significance of Writing in VCE Second Language Subjects

The independent school in south-east Melbourne in which I am currently teaching offers Japanese and French as second languages from Year 3 to VCE, and Chinese second language from Year 7 to VCE. My study focused on VCE Units 3 & 4 second language writing processes.

**Table 1**  
**Outcomes and coursework assessment tasks for Unit 3 and 4**

Outcomes	Unit 3 (3 tasks)	Outcomes	Unit 4 (3 tasks)
1 Express ideas through the production of original texts.	A 500 <i>ji</i> <sup>1</sup> personal or imaginative written piece.	1 Analyse and use information from written texts.	A response to specific questions, messages or instructions, extracting and using information requested.
2 Analyse and use information from spoken texts.	A response to specific questions, messages or instructions, extracting and using the information requested.	2 Respond critically to spoken <b>and</b> written texts which reflect aspects of the language and culture of Japanese-speaking communities.	(a) A 500–600 <i>ji</i> informative, persuasive or evaluative written response, for example, report, comparison or review. <b>and</b> (b) A three-to four-minute interview on an issue related to the texts studied.
3 Exchange information, opinions and experiences.	A three- to four-minute role play, focusing on the resolution of an issue.		

(Adapted from VCAA, 2004, p. 38)

In the Japanese Second Language study design, which is identical to all second language study designs in Victoria, there are six outcomes, one oral examination and one written examination, with Unit 3 filling semester 1 in Year 12 and Unit 4 semester 2.

Tables 1 and 2 show there is one writing outcome for each unit, totalling 20% of the final study score. At the end of the year there is one written examination (VCAA, 2004). The writing section contributes 7.5% of the overall examination score, therefore (as indicated in Table 3) writing contributes 27.5% of the total study score. This clearly highlights the significance of writing in VCE second languages.

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<sup>1</sup> Ji is one Japanese character

**Table 2**  
**Contribution of assessment tasks to study score**

School-assessed coursework	End-of-year examinations
<b>Unit 3</b> 500 <i>ji</i> personal or imaginative written piece 10% Response to spoken texts 5% Three- to four-minute role-play 10%	<b>Oral examination</b> Conversation 12.5% Discussion
<b>Unit 4</b> Response to written texts 5% 500–600 <i>ji</i> informative, persuasive or evaluative written piece 10% Three- to four-minute interview 10%	<b>Written examination</b> Listening and responding Part A: Response in English 7.5% Part B: Response in Japanese 7.5% Reading and responding Part A: Response in English 10% Part B: Response in Japanese 5% Writing 7.5%
50%	50%

(Adapted from VCAA, 2004, p. 39)

**Table 3**  
**Overall contribution of school-assessed coursework and end-of-year examinations**

Oral	32.5%
Responding to spoken texts	20%
Responding to written texts	20%
Writing	27.5%

(Adapted from VCAA, 2004, p. 40)

According to the Unit 3 Outcome 1 Descriptor (VCAA, 2013, pp. 4-5), to receive a high score students need to demonstrate comprehensive understanding of the narrative perspective in writing required for the task, including appropriate use of an introduction, body and conclusion. This and the following criteria are articulated below.

Students' writing also needs to have relevant and comprehensive content showing some sophistication. Variety of language including accurate vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and where relevant, script is used appropriately for the audience, context, purpose and text type. Ideas are organised and effectively sequenced throughout within and between paragraphs and with cohesiveness in the writing as a whole. (VCAA, 2013, pp. 4-5)

Unit 4 Outcome 2A Descriptor (VCAA, 2013, pp. 12-13) also indicates that to achieve high scores, students need to demonstrate a wide understanding and present comprehensive information with some sophistication about an aspect of the culture associated with the language. Students need to show their own ideas, opinions and comparisons effectively supported by relevant evidence from texts studied. They need to know the relevant text type structures and demonstrate a variety of language range, including vocabulary, grammar and characters. (Table 4)

**Table 4**

**Written examination section 3, writing in the language, assessment criteria**

Relevance, breadth and depth of content
• relevance of content in relation to task set
• comprehensiveness and sophistication of content
Appropriateness of structure and sequence
• introduction, body, conclusion as appropriate to text type
• organisation and sequencing of ideas within and between paragraphs, cohesiveness of writing within and between paragraphs
Accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar
• accuracy of vocabulary and grammar
• variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures
• appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar for the text type, audience, purpose and context of the task

(Adapted from VCAA, 2013, p. 26)

Before commencing this research, when correcting students' errors, I became focused on character and grammar errors; students seemed also to focus on these. What can be noted is that with each criterion and descriptor, it is important to consider not only accuracy of the grammar and characters used but content, language fluency, and structures in order to write a good essay. How does a teacher include all the criteria in student feedback effectively? What is the best way to improve their writing skill? The questions posed and discussed in this thesis underpin both the motivation and context for collecting student opinions and discussions, their input and data collected attempt to offer answers and strategies (Chapter 5).

## **1.7 Summary**

In this introductory chapter I presented and described the scope of this study. I outlined the research questions explored, based on effective feedback methods of VCE students' second language writing.

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I describe and link the feedback model offered by Hattie (2009), who conducted the largest meta-analysis on the subject to date, with the feedback methods used on VCE students' second language writing compositions. My literature review also covers the three writing feedback methods (error correction, error identification and peer-correction) I chose to address; however research in this field has focused predominantly on English second language classes—only a few studies involve second language classes such as Japanese. In addition, in this chapter I review the important role that essay writing plays in the current VCE curriculum.

### 2.1 Feedback

The University of Melbourne's Professor John Hattie published *Visible learning: a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement* in 2009. He is one of the world's most prominent researchers, authors and speakers on what works in education. Fundamentally, Hattie suggested that what works best for students is what works best for teachers (Hattie, 2009, p. 67).

*Visible learning* presented evidence-based quantitative research about what works in schools to improve learning. On the basis of his research, Hattie asserted that visible teaching and learning happens when learning has a goal, it seeks and gives feedback, actively looking into different learning strategies and engaging others including teachers, students and peers.

What is most important is that teaching is visible to the student, and that the learning is visible to the teacher. The more the student becomes the teacher and the more the teacher becomes the learner, then the more successful are the outcomes. (Hattie, 2009, p. 25)

Hattie (2009) identified six main contributors to students' achievement: home, student, school, teacher, teaching and curricula. His data show that teaching effective sizes are most evident above average effective size of  $d = 0.40$ . Hattie posits that an effective size can be calculated in two ways (Figure 1)

**Figure 1**  
**Calculation for an effective size**

$$\text{Effective size} = [\text{Mean treatment} - \text{Mean control}] / \text{SD}$$

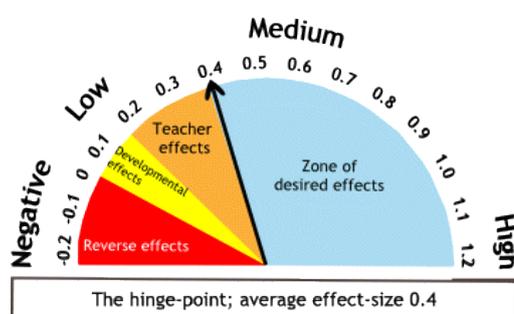
or

$$\text{Effective size} = [\text{Mean end of treatment} - \text{Mean beginning of treatment}] / \text{SD}$$

(Hattie, 2009, p. 8)

Hattie used this as a barometer of influence on achievement. He showed the average of each influence guided by an arrow moving through zones. All influences of effect size above  $d = 0.40$  were categorized into the *zone of desired effects*, as these influences had the greatest impact on student achievement. The typical effects from teachers were between  $d = 0.15$  and  $d = 0.40$ , and between  $d = 0.0$  and  $d = 0.15$  is what a student could probably achieve without schooling.

**Figure 2**  
**Barometer of influence on achievement**

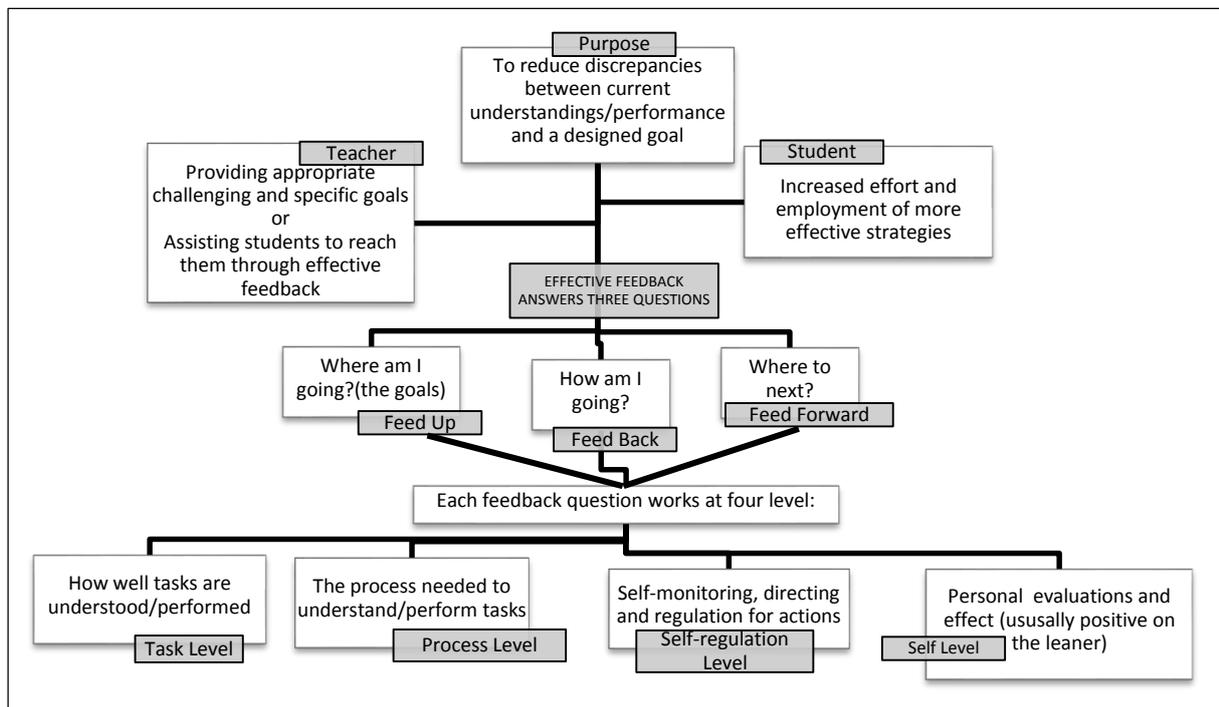


(Hattie, 2009, p. 19 et passim)

Feedback was ranked 10 in influence, as measured by an effect size of 0.73 on student achievement. Hattie stated “feedback is most powerful when it is from the student to the teacher” (Hattie, 2009, p. 173).

The Hattie model, developed from a meta-analysis of research in the field, sees feedback as reducing the discrepancies between current understandings and goals. Hattie and Timperley (2007) note that effective feedback must answer three questions posed by a teacher and/ or by a student: Where am I going? (What are the goals?), How am I going? (What progress is being made toward the goal?), and Where to next? (What activities need to be undertaken to make better progress?) They called these three questions “feed up” “feed back” and “feed forward” (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3**  
**A model of feedback**



(Hattie, 2009, p. 176)

Hattie noted that each feedback question works at four levels. The first level of feedback relates to how well performed or accomplished is the specific task—in other words, is the answer

correct or incorrect in the task; he refers to this as “task” level. The second level of feedback refers to strategies and methods; this level he calls the “process” level. At the third level of feedback students are not informed of the exact answer to the tasks; they must discover it from their own construct of knowledge. This is referred to as the “self-regulation” level. At the fourth level is the personal evaluation, referred to in Hattie’s model as the “self-level”.

As a teacher I was aware that teaching Japanese writing to VCE students often meant that students were cognitively pulled into a “translation” world. Although students have unique ideas and thoughts that they want to write in Japanese, many do not switch from first language thinking to Japanese thinking. Students, in my experience, always attempt to translate exact sentences from English into Japanese sentences. They do not realise that it is impossible to accurately translate every word into another language in order to express their thoughts. I have a deep understanding of this problem since I am a non-native English speaker, and I have experienced this situation many times. I have to manipulate my sentences both syntactically and morphologically, and apply my English semantic and grammar knowledge to express my opinions and thoughts. I remind students of this process when giving feedback, and let them know where their sentences didn’t make sense. My comments demonstrate how they could better express their own ideas. Hattie’s feedback model is neatly aligned with these considerations, and the process of expressing ideas in the second language, allowing students to realise the cognitive difference of thinking in the second language, also lends itself to Hattie’s self-regulatory feedback strategy.

## **2.2 Feedback on Writing**

There is much research literature regarding feedback on second language writing. As noted in Chapter 1, Hirose (2007) published studies regarding teachers’ feedback on Japanese writing composition; however, the studies Hirose referred to only commented about “the

characteristics of the feedback” and didn’t point out whether feedback was beneficial to the students (p. 138). Hirose also stated that various studies of peer-correction and teacher–student conferences in education on Japanese writing had been conducted, yet none clearly demonstrated the effect of these methods on student’s writing skills. As a result, Japanese teachers are teaching writing composition to their students without any clear evidence regarding the benefits of peer-correction and teacher–student conferences (Hirose, 2007, p. 137).

K. Hyland & F. Hyland (2006) expressed that even though there is an interest and increase on oral and peer feedback, written feedback still plays a huge role in teaching second language writing. As a second language Japanese teacher, I correct students’ writing errors and include an overall comment at the end of paper with a mark. I have seen colleagues’ students’ work returned with symbols and codes next to the students’ errors, but without detailed comments; for example, “P” for particle errors, “K” for Kanji errors, “C” for characters errors including Hiragana and Katakana, “G” for grammatical errors. However personally I feel it is inappropriate to use only symbols; it doesn’t provide enough feedback to the students.

Hirose (2010) noted that making error corrections using symbols is common in secondary Japanese writing; however, it may not be an effective feedback method for improving students’ writing skills, despite the amount of time that teachers devote to it. Hirose also claimed that few teachers reflect on the feedback method they use. Do we truly understand what their students want to say in their writing? Do we give the appropriate feedback on their writing following their needs? Hirose noted that many Japanese teachers in Japan used the peer-correction feedback method, and that few studies focus on the pros and cons of this method (Hirose, 2010).

Like Hirose, Ishibashi (2002) indicated that the most commonly used feedback methods by Japanese teachers in Japan were error correction and writing comments using a red pen. It is identical to the feedback teachers in this study frequently give to VCE students in language classes. Many studies report student improvement after feedback; however, little is known about the effectiveness of specific feedback processes.

Lee (2010) argued that teachers needed to reflect on their experience, problematise their own practice and take action to change their ineffective attitudes towards feedback. Her research recommended that students' learning of writing would improve if these steps were consciously enacted. She expressed that in order to maximise learning, not only teachers but students should become involved in this feedback process. Feedback is not just a teacher's tool to give a score to students' writing, it should be "a pedagogical tool to improve learning and teaching" (Lee, 2010, p. 46). Lee (2011) advocated that it is important for teachers to use a range of feedback methods, according to the error types and students' proficiency levels. Writing is a process and skill that includes steps through various stages; from the first idea in your mind to completing the writing composition. Therefore, a single draft from a student did not help to improve skills. Students need to understand and use this writing process to improve their writing skills and to be actively involved in the feedback process. Lee (2011) asserted that students should evaluate their own or peers' essays, as this strategy encouraged them in reaching their initial goals based on teacher feedback. Lee (2011) studied whether students could control their own learning using an explicit set of criteria to enhance their writing ability. However, Lee did not identify which feedback process was the most beneficial for students' writing skills and for the purpose of this paper on the writing skills of students learning Japanese as a second language.

### **2.3 Error Correction – Teacher Error Corrections and Comments with Marks**

Research on teacher feedback, specifically with respect to writing, continues to be collected by many English as a second language (ESL) teachers. ESL teachers spend considerable amounts of time giving feedback to students on their writing. (For example, I spend approximately 10-15 minutes reading, making corrections and giving feedback on a 500 ji essay outside class hours; even with only ten essays, this usually amounts to an extra two hours of work.) Nonetheless, Semke (1984) argued that teacher error correction with comments is not effective for the improvement of student writing skills. Fathman and Whalley (1990) also examined the feedback process with respect to grammar and content errors. They found that teachers give feedback which is often vague, contradictory, unsystematic and inconsistent, making their students confused and frustrated and causing them to disregard their teachers' comments. On the other hand, when students received underlined grammar correction that indicated the place where the error occurred, students significantly improved their grammar on rewrites of the papers (Fathman & Whalley, 1990). Additionally, students who did not receive feedback from teachers could construct better sentences than students who did. Consequently, Fathman and Whalley (1990) concluded that students' writing could improve with or without teacher feedback.

In the ESL community there is debate over whether teachers should correct the grammar in their students' writing. Truscott (1996) claimed that grammar correction is unhelpful and potentially harmful so should be avoided in the writing class, but did not directly state that the feedback process is not beneficial for students' writing skills. Ferris (1999), on the other hand, asserted that the results of previous studies, including Truscott's, were inconsistent with respect to the value of grammar corrections. Moreover, in Chandler's (2003) ten-week comparative study involving a group of participants that received grammar corrections and a control group

that did not, the control group significantly increased the accuracy of their writing; therefore, he maintained that teachers should give error corrections and require students to self-correct their work.

Kobayashi (2002) collected data from eleven intermediate Japanese students, asking them to write a letter to an imaginary pen friend about their summer holiday while looking at a set of eight pictures. After students completed their writing pieces, they received both grammar-focused and content-focused feedback from their teacher. A few days afterwards students revised their original writing, producing another writing piece with the same eight pictures. Kobayashi found that the revised writing composition was more fluent, accurate and complex than the original. Kobayashi also found that the two types of teacher feedback had different influences on students' revised compositions.

Just indicating errors is time-consuming for teachers, but is it beneficial for students? Students might just copy teachers' corrections and not fully comprehend their mistakes. Do they learn from their errors or only imitate teacher's corrections? If teachers only indicate errors, will students investigate what was wrong? If students understand their errors, why do they repeat their mistakes? Researchers have attempted to answer all these questions. Kanatani (1993) claimed that students typically take their teachers' comments very seriously and that they can recall the error corrections very well. Sugita (2006) studied the types of comments teachers made in feedback; he found that the teachers who avoided giving their comments with an imperious tone were aware that it was important not to confuse their authority towards students and the purpose of constructive feedback. That students are more likely to pay attention to teacher's feedback when the tone is not punitive has been corroborated by other researchers (Noro, 2004). Nonetheless, Armstrong (2010) compared the fluency, accuracy and complexity of graded and ungraded writing pieces; she found little difference between graded and ungraded

essays. Her study found that marks alone did not always motivate students to create better writing.

## **2.4 Teacher Error Identification**

According to Ferris and Roberts (2001), more coded, indirect feedback can significantly improve student's writing. Coding is a shorthand method of correction and feedback, often using symbols or characters, and is usually unique to the person doing the correction. Ferris and Roberts showed that if teachers gave coded feedback on students' writing, students are then able to correct their own compositions more successfully; the students who did not receive feedback were less successful in self-correcting their writing. Similarly, Tono and Kanatani (1995) demonstrated that direct correction was not as effective as underlining in enabling learners to pursue more complete structures. Chandler (2003), on the other hand, argued that there is no difference in students' writing following teacher error correction and teacher error identification.

## **2.5 Teacher–Student Conferences**

Hirose (2007) examined the effects of teachers' written comments in teacher–student conferences in a Japanese writing class. The study included feedback on content but not grammar corrections. Although Hirose's paper states that teacher–student conferences can help students revise their writing more effectively than teacher error correction, it is beyond the scope of this study to include teacher-student conferences.

## **2.6 Peer-correction**

How do students perceive receiving feedback from their peers? Sometimes I ask students to swap their worksheets and correct themselves. Other times, I create mock essays that I

deliberately add many common errors to and ask students to correct by themselves. The result is they are often not sure or do not agree with their peer-corrections, thus they often came to clarify with me. Are they not comfortable with peer feedback? Are they not confident with their own corrections? It might be difficult for students to review their own writing and find errors because they are unable to recognise the error.

Sugiyama (1999) stated that the student is able to become both a writer and a reader during the peer-correction process. For this reason, peer-correction helps students' writing skills. Generally teachers tend to avoid peer-correction due to concerns about language acquisition and cultural differences amongst students; however, students can often recognise the errors in other student's writing easily and can review compositions effectively. Ikeda (1999) studied peer-correction on second language Japanese writing composition, and found that it was as effective as teacher error correction at the middle school level. Nevertheless, it was noted that if a teacher did not indicate focus points to correct, students tended to focus only on correcting the grammar and characters.

Alternatively when teachers asked students to focus on the content, they were able to exchange opinions and seek explanations on their content. Therefore, peer-correction's effectiveness depends on the teacher's input and direction. Peer-correction is more informal than teacher error correction; it is arguably for this reason that it encourages students to produce writing. Students feel they have a greater right to reject peer-corrections than teacher error corrections, therefore they are able to maintain their thoughts and ideas in writing compositions.

Rollinson (2005) suggested that while peer-correction may not be a waste of time for students, it is time-consuming. The opportunity to be a reader helps students to be more self-reliant writers. Hirose (2010) also found that students needed to constantly communicate with a reader and that this enabled them to recognise and deepen their ideas in order to express their thoughts.

Thus peer-correction is an effective stimulus for the writing process. If a student can clearly articulate their thoughts, they will be able to write a good composition for their readers. By becoming a reader, students realise the importance of clear and consistent writing, and can lessen their reliance on teacher error correction.

Writing classes are a way to practise making linguistically correct sentences as well as allow students to express their thoughts clearly using the written medium. Obviously teachers strive to create this environment for our students. Students may not have confidence in their own ability, but they can often give appropriate feedback to a peer. According to Caulk (1994), peer-correction provides useful and helpful suggestions to students. Teachers tend to give general feedback to students, because if they give specific suggestions and include content and grammar corrections, students may review their work without understanding why it is incorrect. Teachers usually avoid changing a student's original composition too much from what they wanted to say, avoiding harsh or strong tones. In contrast, students are able to give specific and direct comments to their peers. Villamil and de Guerrero (1996) indicated that peer-correction offers opportunities to students to explain and clarify their own views. Whilst students are giving and receiving feedback in peer-correction classroom contexts, they are able to further develop their knowledge and skills. Unfortunately, disagreements and uncreative behaviour amongst students are sometimes outcomes of this feedback process. The research shows that teachers need to be aware of these behaviours during peer-correction. It is also important to the process that students are able to identify different ideas and learn to accept and deal with peers who hold different ideas to their own; the process of peer-correction offers the opportunity for this learning.

Yangin's (2012) study shows even when teachers were reluctant to use peer-correction in their classes, because they thought students might not be able to find answers beyond the surface

level of suggestions, the students contributed to the process at both content and language levels. In addition, most students thought that the comments received from peers were useful; however, students still valued the teachers' comments on their final drafts as confirmation. Yangin (2012) also pointed out that the results of peer-correction and teacher error correction were almost identical. Yangin's conclusion was that teachers should use peer-correction more in their classes.

Overall, the research literature indicates that peer-correction is an effective on the writing process.

## **2.7 Student Self-Correction**

Chandler (2003) reported that student self-correction and teacher error correction or error identification (underlining and coding) were associated with positive attitudes and significant improvement in writing fluency, as well as a slight increase in the quality of content. In contrast, Semke (1984) found that student self-correction did not help their writing skills or affect their level of achievement and attitude.

In Ishibashi's (2005) study, students who engaged with self-correction in their revision process perceived their errors naturally and thus improved their fluency and content. Ferris (2004) argued that students should revise or at least self-correct their compositions after receiving feedback, ideally in class, where they can consult with their peers and teachers.

Tanaka and Kita (1998) studied twelve university exchange students' Japanese writing compositions using self-correction. On the first day, the teacher allowed students to set the writing composition. After completing them, the teacher requested their students to complete the task using self-correction as much as they could. The next day, teachers gave feedback on their writing using codes and error identification, and let the students self-correct. If students

could not understand where they should make a change, teachers explained this to them and reviewed their compositions. On the third day, teachers gave more error identification feedback using only a code, and students then re-reviewed their own compositions. Teacher's feedback in this study was entirely surface-focused. The results were that students' errors decreased, but there was no conclusive evidence that one feedback strategy was more important than another. The authors concluded that a varied approach to providing feedback was needed for writing improvement. Tanaka and Kita also suggested that in order to improve students' writing they need to receive their teacher's feedback as well as using and engaging with self-correction strategies.

Whilst this paper does not focus on student self-correction as a strategy due to VCE students' maturity and language proficiency level, it is worthwhile to include in the literature review as it is consistently discussed alongside other feedback strategies in the research cited for this paper.

## **2.8 Students' Preferences**

I believe listening to students is important as they are co-constructors of their own education. By listening to students' perceptions of their writing feedback, we can evaluate how we provide feedback and which strategy they deem more beneficial. What is the overall effect of using positive or confrontational methods to deliver my feedback? Which type of feedback do students want to receive? Does this feedback have an impact for their writing skill or their confidence? Usually as the VCE teacher I returned their writing with feedback and often explained some points orally. Did students perceive that this helped their writing skill?

Radecki and Swales (1988) noted that students preferred direct teacher correction on all their errors, including error correction and feedback on content. Similarly, according to Leki (1991),

students want their teacher to show them where the error is and to give them a clue on how to correct it. When their teacher marked the errors and gave a hint regarding the incorrect area, students began to problem-solve independently, and correcting their grammar errors became similar to working on a puzzle. Leki's study also showed that students get a great deal out of teachers' error corrections. Students claimed to always or nearly always carefully study the grammatical errors on their returned papers. Interestingly, Leki's students were reluctant to seek assistance from their peers; this, according to the researcher, was due to the fact that students think untrained peer-correction is not particularly helpful.

Enginarlar (1993) presented data showing that students preferred a problem-solving collaborative approach similar to Leki's (1991). Enginarlar studied 47 university students' opinions of this feedback procedure. The vast majority of students (98%) agreed that teachers' comments on their papers were worthwhile. Enginarlar concluded that when feedback is provided in a problem-solving manner, students revise their work as a collaborative type of learning where responsibility is shared by the two parties. Likewise, Nelson and Carson's (1998) study demonstrated students strongly preferred teachers' feedback over peer feedback. Students believed they had insufficient knowledge and skills and preferred to see teachers as the experts (Sengupta, 1998). Teachers are authority figures and consequently their comments have a guarantee of quality, unlike the comments of peers (Tsui & Ng, 2000). It might also be difficult for students to review their own writing and find errors because they are unable to recognise the errors.

Shizuka (1994) studied Japanese EFL students' perceptions of four different feedback methods: teacher correction, teacher underlining, peer-correction and self-correction, finding that students didn't feel they were learning the correct forms with teacher correction. After

receiving teacher corrections of their writing, they felt there was nothing left to improve or work out for themselves.

Matsumoto et al. (2003) demonstrated that teacher feedback, coupled with the strategy of students' rewriting their original composition, produced significant improvement in both quality and fluency of writing. Giving feedback without rewriting was seen as ineffective.

Chandler (2003) found that more than two-thirds of the students preferred their teacher's error corrections; it was observed that this made them feel more comfortable about making their own corrections. Nevertheless, in this study some students stated they learned the most from teachers' underlining (coded error indication). This was due to the fact they could look up the answer by themselves, and this made it easier to remember the mistakes they made. Ferris (1995) found that students often received mixed feedback from their teachers, but stated that the majority of the students (93.5%) felt that their teachers' feedback had helped them to improve their writing. In contrast, Weaver (2006) found that most students identified feedback that was too general and lacking in detail or vague as unhelpful in error correction. In order to improve their writing skills, they believed they needed the feedback to include constructive comments or suggestions. Weaver also noted that students wanted a balance between positive and negative comments. Students see nothing wrong with critical evaluation on their feedback, but they need to receive positive feedback to gain confidence.

Saito (1994) examined types of feedback teachers were giving to their students and compared these with students' preferences. Saito's study indicated that most of the students found teacher feedback was most useful when it was focused precisely on grammatical errors. Students' attitudes towards non-teacher feedback, such as peer-correction or self-correction, tended to be critical.

Matsuzawa and Yamaguchi (2012) examined four different kinds of feedback in English writing: peer correcting, direct correcting, self-correcting and underlined correcting. Most student preferred the direct-correcting feedback; however, analysis of the pre-test and post-test writing revealed no significant differences between the four kinds of feedback.

## **2.9 Recent Studies of Written Corrective Feedback**

Debate continues regarding the effectiveness of error correction on students' writing compositions. This is called written corrective feedback (WCF) developing students' writing skills. The most notable research in this field has been produced by Bitchener (2008), Storch (2010), Sheen (2007), Van Beuningen, De Jong, and Kuiken (2012), and Truscott and Hsu (2008). Despite the studies that advocate that teachers' feedback concentrated on selected errors is more beneficial to students' writing than responding to every single error in an unfocused manner, many teachers are still spending long periods of time correcting all errors on students' writing. Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, and Takashima (2008), Sheen (2007) and Lee (2013) stated that overall selective and focused WCF is helpful to students, particularly for lower proficiency levels, and that responding to all errors in an unfocused manner can have harmful effects for lower-proficiency students. Bitchener and Ferris (2012) added that unfocused WCF was useful only for advanced learners with a high level of proficiency or ability.

Several studies show the effectiveness of different WCF strategies, including direct and indirect (coded and uncoded) feedback. Direct feedback involves the teacher providing correct answers, while indirect feedback means providing hints using underlining, circles and symbols to let students work out the correct answers (I referred to this as error identification earlier). Recently, Bitchener and Knoch (2010) and Van Beuningen et al. (2012) found that direct feedback is an effective strategy for increasing learners' accuracy over time. Lee (2013) declared that many

teachers are not aware of the range of WCF strategies; they need to be informed and trained to use such strategies. “Without heightened awareness of what WCF strategies to use for different error type or different student needs, teachers will simply repeat their existing practice without bringing any major benefit to student learning” (Lee, 2013, pp. 111-112).

Bitchener and Ferris (2012) claimed that teachers should correct errors, not mistakes, which are easily corrected by students themselves. Van Beuningen et al. (2012) stated that direct WCF is more effective for grammatical errors and indirect WCF works better for non-grammatical errors. Teachers need to choose which error should be corrected and why; as yet it is safe to state that research fails to offer conclusive evidence about which errors teachers should correct. Other research found effective WCF must be timely; feedback is given a right time limit to avoid “unproductive time gaps between errors that were made and when they were corrected” (Evans et al., 2010, p. 456). Nevertheless, no study to date has determined what “timely” feedback is.

The evidence about the effectiveness of verbal explanations with WCF (error correction with an additional student-teacher conference) is still inconclusive, but it is quite common for teachers to offer a conference to students while returning their writing (Lee, 2013). Lee (2013) asserted that although teachers giving verbal explanations in grammar lessons is not problematic, teachers should consider how such explanations provided with WCF benefit students’ writing skills. Teacher needs to deliberate on the use of post-feedback strategies to maximise student learning.

Although many studies on WCF have been published to date, few have involved Japanese language classrooms. It is crucial for teachers to reflect on their own class and create improvement opportunities in teaching and learning using feedback. Thus we need further

research to understand how teachers give feedback, their students' motivations, proficiency levels and students' perceptions.

As a Japanese teacher, I tend to give error correction and may focus too much on how students can create exemplary writing compositions including excellent use of grammar, vocabulary, characters, and additional depth in content. It may be presumed that all feedback methods are equally beneficial for student's writing skills; students clearly need to participate in the feedback process to perceive their own errors. If students are able to see their errors, it is possible to revise their composition and progress their writing skills towards their maximum potential. The Feedback process: error correction, error identification, teacher-student conference, peer-correction and self-correction, all might be an essential process for students.

Nevertheless it is not clear from this literature review which feedback method is the most effective for second language writing composition. What are the students' perceptions for feedback methods? The question of the best feedback method is still open for debate and a source of continued research.

## **2.10 Discussion and Summary**

In this chapter I explored research into feedback processes linked to assessment of second language writing. It is evident that there is a paucity of research into feedback processes in a number of different second languages. The chapter created subtopics linking a body of research to the research questions presented in chapter one.

In Chapter 3 I present and describe the mixed method research methodology used in this study.

## **Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Overview**

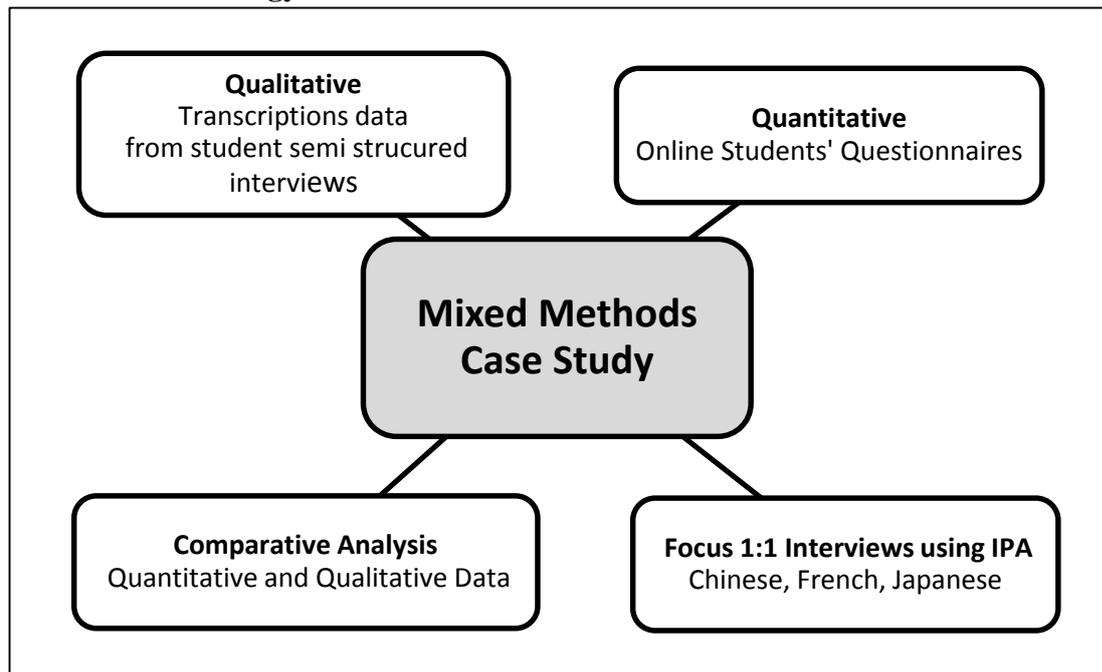
In this chapter I present and discuss my research methods. The chapter also provides details of the research participants, data collection instruments and methods of data analysis used to investigate the relationships between students' views and the three feedback processes chosen.

In order to find answers to the research question: what do second language students actually think about feedback received on their writing? I used a student survey to ascertain preferences about feedback methods and specific views on each of the feedback strategies. After analysing the data collected from students, I revisited the literature review in order to draw upon possible answers to the questions posed and finally offer recommendations for feedback processes and methods that could be employed by future VCE second language teachers.

In this research I used a mixed methods approach. The research design includes qualitative and quantitative data collection methods.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with students studying Chinese, French or Japanese as a second language for VCE Units 3 & 4. Using a case study method and semi-structured interview questions, these interviews were designed to generate rich data to add depth and breadth to the quantitative data. (Figure 4)

**Figure 4**  
**Research methodology**



### 3.1.1 Definitions

Crucial terms and definitions used in the following sections are described below.

**Error correction:** This includes the teacher’s corrections of all the “surface errors”: grammar, vocabulary, and characters (Chandler, 2003; Hyland, 2003; Ishibashi, 2002), and the correction of “content errors” in student’s writing by crossing out perceived errors and providing the correct answers (Ferris, 1995). The teacher writes an overall comment regarding their errors and gives an overall mark on the criteria (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996; Sugita, 2006).

**Error identification:** The teacher indicates the place where a perceived error occurs using underlining, brackets, or circling; the teacher codes under or next to students’ writing without any commentary or marks (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Peloghitis, 2010).

**Teacher–student conference:** The teacher discusses the work with a student individually, including any positive and negative feedback on their writing, after the student completes a composition (Ashwell, 2000; Narita, 2009).

**Peer-correction:** This is a correction style in which the writer becomes a reader. Students evaluate, discuss and exchange their opinions on each other’s writing using a conference-style process (Ikeda, 1999; Sugiyama, 1999).

**Student self-correction:** The students evaluate and revise their own writing compositions and correct themselves (Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 2001; Hyland, 2000).

In designing this study, limitations of time, students’ capacity of second language level and maturity were carefully taken into consideration. After considering these issues, I chose to examine three types of feedback methods for second language writing. Using my own Japanese feedback methods was an important reason for choosing participant online surveys in this paper. Teacher error corrections and comments with a grade following the teacher-student conference were the most used by myself. I also decided not to include student self-correction due to the students’ second language level and maturity. The process of students’ rewriting in this study will be what is referred to as student self-correction. The research focuses on an analysis of the effectiveness of these three feedback methods in improving students’ writing across three different languages.

Terms and definitions specifically used in this study;

- 1) Teacher error corrections and comments with grade following a teacher–student conference is defined as **error correction**.
- 2) Teacher error identification is defined as **error identification**.

- 3) Student corrects and comments with grade on their peers' essays; defines as **Peer-correction** in this study.

## **3.2 Research Design**

Mixed methods research blends quantitative and qualitative research methods. The combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods has become an important methodology over the last fifteen years (Lopez-Fernandes & Molina-Azorin, 2011). Mixed-methods designs help ideas to be more effective when considering how the strength and the results obtained through these research methods can enrich and improve understanding. Mixed methods research enables collection of varied data to answer difficult questions, as it offers breadth and depth of understanding with this corroboration.

### **3.2.1 Quantitative research methods**

Aliga and Gunderson (2002) described quantitative research methods as methods used to explain a phenomenon through collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods such as statistics. Reality is independent of people's understanding, thus the goal of a quantitative study, is to define and measure variables. Traditionally quantitative methods are used more often by scientific researchers rather than social scientists. The goal of quantitative research is to test theories, establish facts, and describe the facts statistically. Quantitative methods have some disadvantages, one of which is the need to study large samples in order to obtain statistically accurate and representative findings, while qualitative methods, which do not seek representativeness, are able to focus on much smaller numbers of research subjects. In addition, results are numerical descriptions rather than detailed and elaborate accounts of human perception.

### **3.2.2 Qualitative research methods**

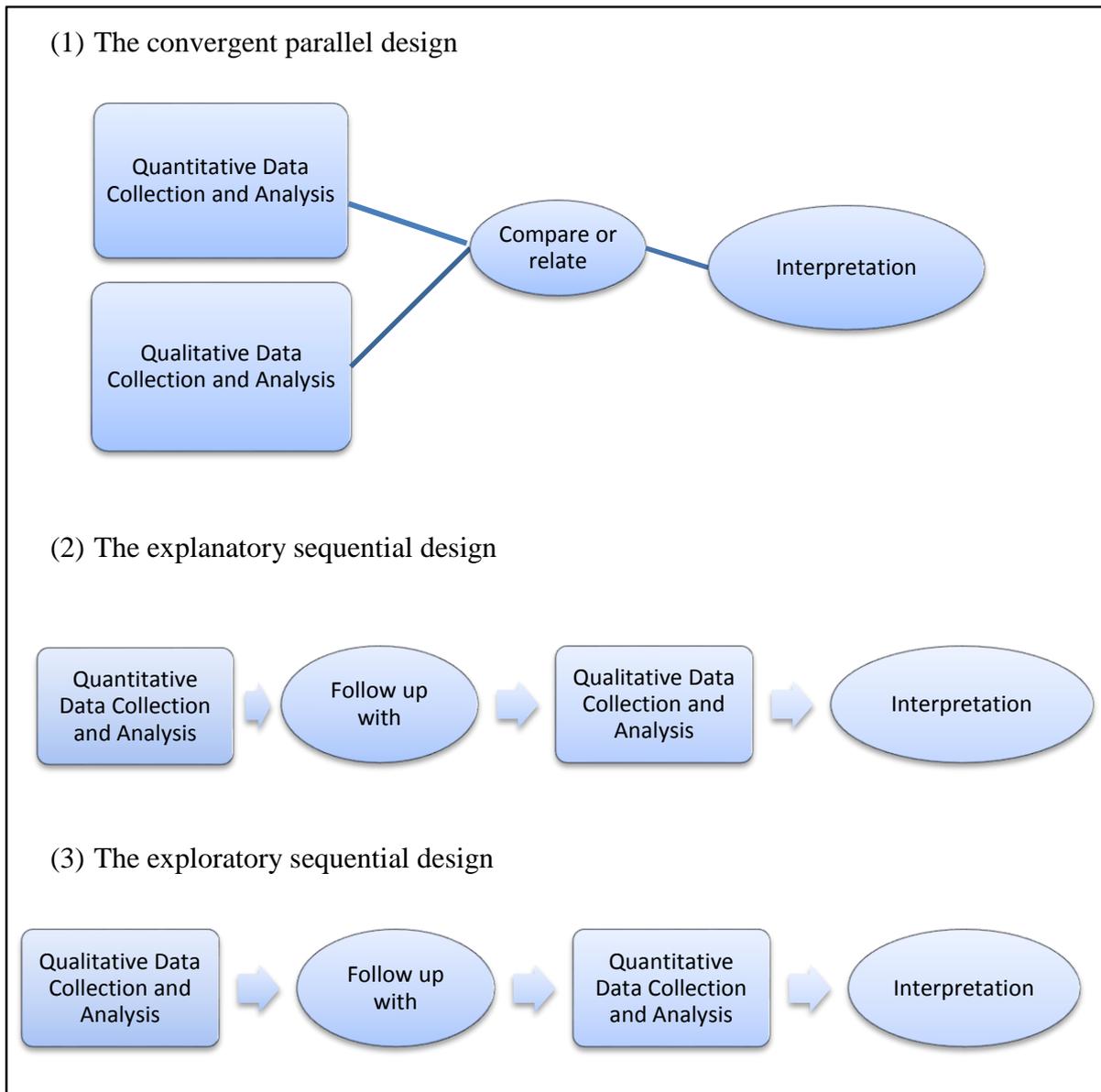
In qualitative research, a researcher will seek to understand a phenomenon by examining components of reality in a general way. This method involves complexity in conducting interviews and seeking to capture the voices of stakeholders or participants involved in research (a qualitative approach was adopted for this study as the voice of student opinion on which feedback method was more important was integral to the study). Data in qualitative research are represented textually and displayed using inductive logic with an emphasis on natural settings. Thus researcher uses subjective information to explore a topic. The key purpose for using qualitative method is to examine complex phenomena to define the reality within; this in turn allows new theories to be constructed by researchers. Understanding these findings in a natural setting is important; however qualitative methods have some disadvantages. Subjectivity can lead to procedural problems and researcher bias is built in and unavoidable, however, qualitative researchers accept these biases and treat them as aspects that need to be understood and used when interpreting the data (McMillan, 2004). Qualitative methods may be difficult to understand in regards to complex natural interactions, and challenges with accurately measuring a variable can occur. This study has as its emphasis a descriptive analysis of data from semi-structured interviews.

### **3.2.3 Mixed research methods**

Researchers from various disciplines (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) refer to mixed research methods as a third methodology. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) and Creswell (2002), using mixed methods research, the researcher is allowed to provide the same priority to quantitative and qualitative aspects, equally weighing designs or alternatively use a different weighting in research design. Using a mixed methods study the researcher can collect obtain different types of data at different points of the design. Conducting a mixed research method

study allows for different types of data to be integrated, making results more reliable and stronger (Creswell, 2002). There are many types of mixed method designs; Creswell (2011) presented six basic mixed methods designs (Creswell & Plano, 2011). See Figure 5.

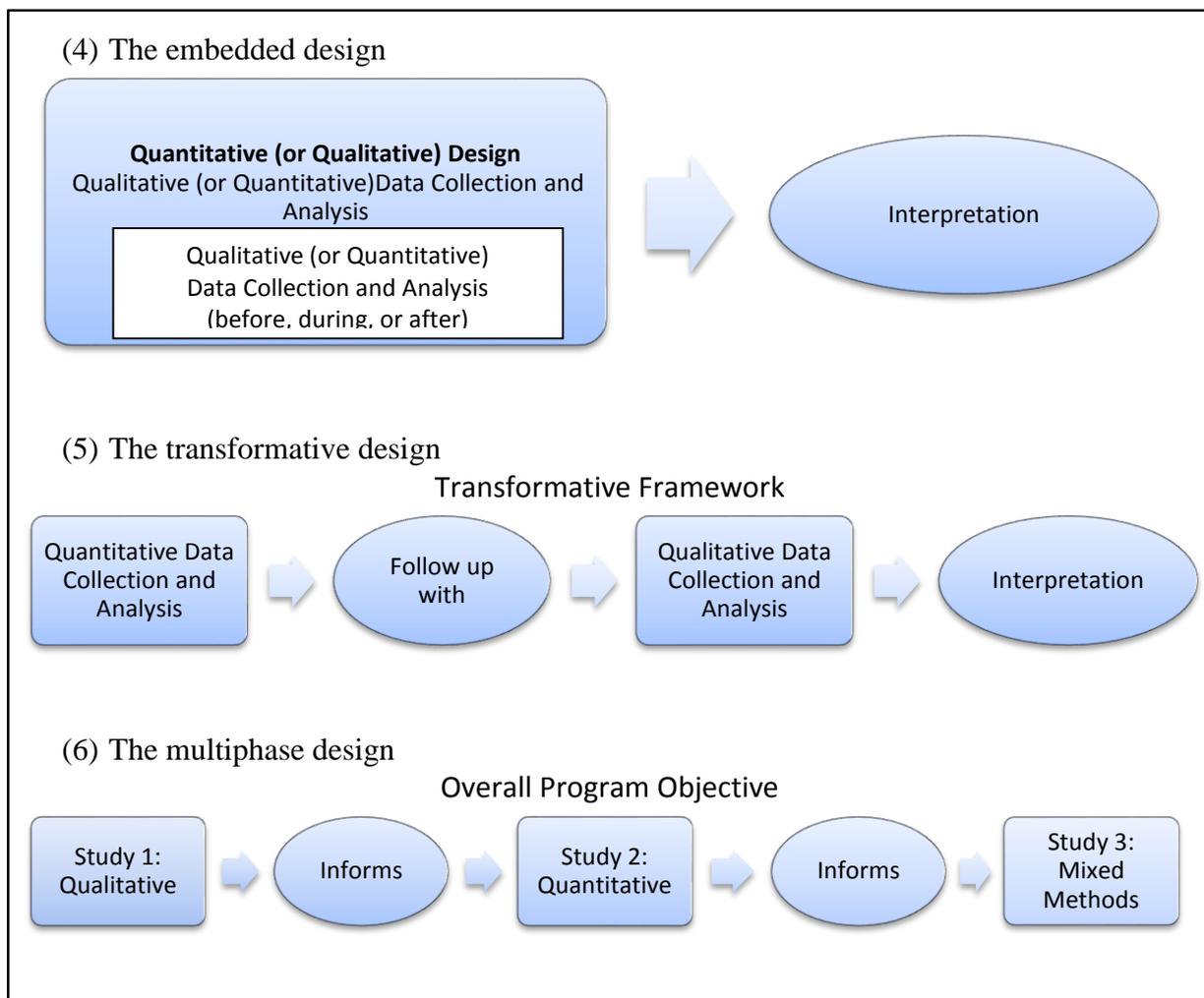
**Figure 5**  
**Six Major Mixed Methods Design Adopted**



In the convergent parallel design, researcher parallel timing to implement the quantitative and qualitative data and prioritise the methods equally whilst keeping the strands independent during analysis then mixing the results during overall interpretation.

The explanatory sequential design involves the analysis of qualitative data to support the interpretation of quantitative findings. Quantitative data that assists in the interpretation of qualitative findings is called the exploratory sequential design.

**Figure 5**  
**Six Major Mixed Methods Design Adopted (Continued)**



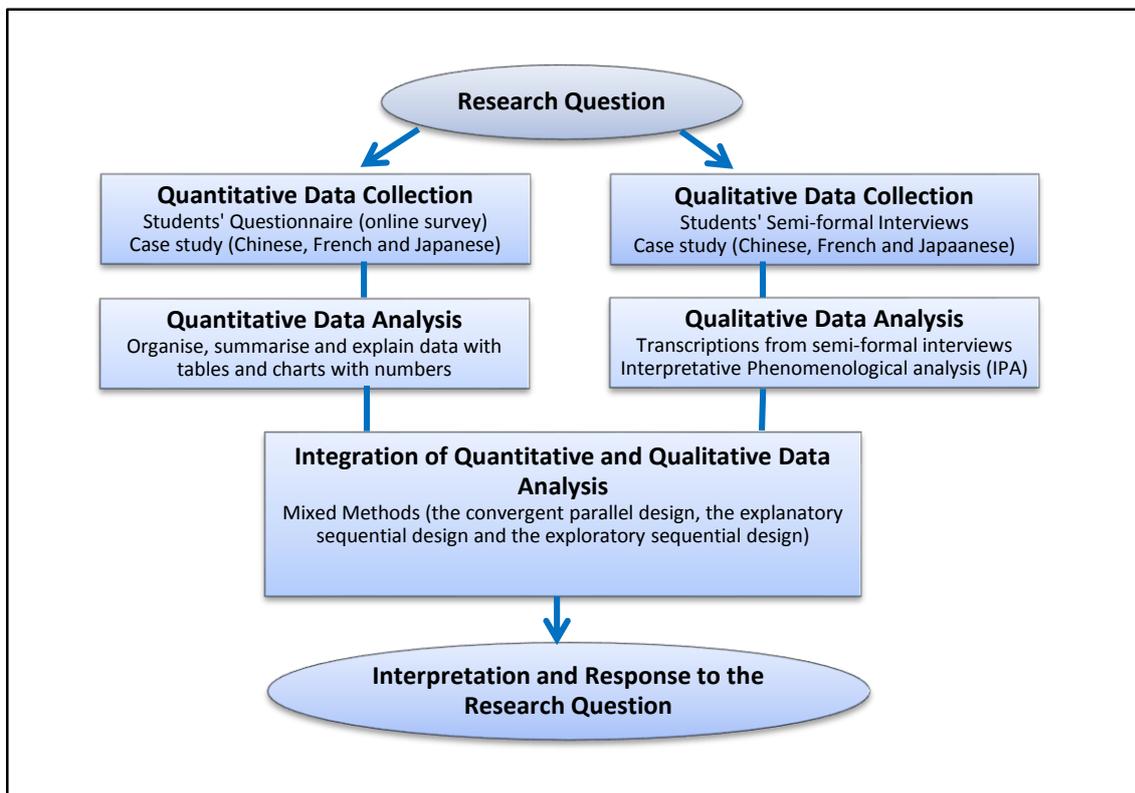
(Croswell & Plano, 2011 pp. 69-70)

An embedded design is when the researcher collects the primary data using methods (quantitative or qualitative) and then embeds secondary data aligning to the primary data collected.

The transformative design is a design that the researcher shapes within a transformative theoretical framework. All decisions such as interaction, priority, timing, and mixing are made within the context of the transformative framework. The purpose is to evaluate a theoretical perspective at different levels of analysis.

The multiphase design is often used in program evaluation where quantitative and qualitative approaches are used to support the development of specific programs. It is used for connecting, merging and embedding within programmatic objects. Usually it is used for program development and evaluation research (Creswell & Plano, 2011).

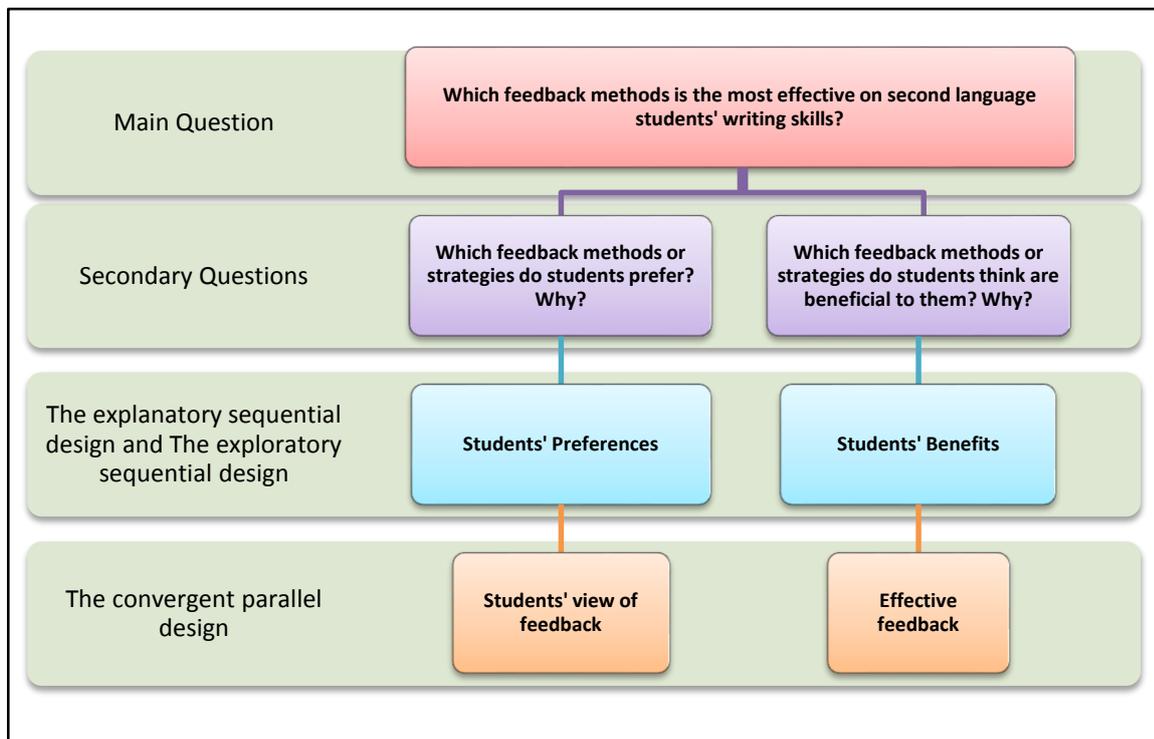
**Figure 6**  
**The framework for this study**



In this study, after the collection of the quantitative data from students' online surveys and qualitative data from students' semi-formal interviews, each dataset was carefully analysed as a case study for each language (Chinese, French and Japanese students). Subsequently the convergent parallel design, explanatory sequential design and the exploratory sequential design were applied to validate and interpret data in order to respond to the research questions in this paper. See Figure 6.

All the quantitative and qualitative data I collected were thoroughly evaluated and interpreted with the various angles using mixed methods. Firstly the explanatory sequential design and the explanatory sequential design were applied to unpack the secondary questions for this study. This was followed by using the convergent parallel design to address the main question of this research and discussion of the implications and prospect of the feedback on the writing skills in VCE second languages (Figure 7).

**Figure 7**  
**Mixed methods for this study**



### 3.2.4 Case study

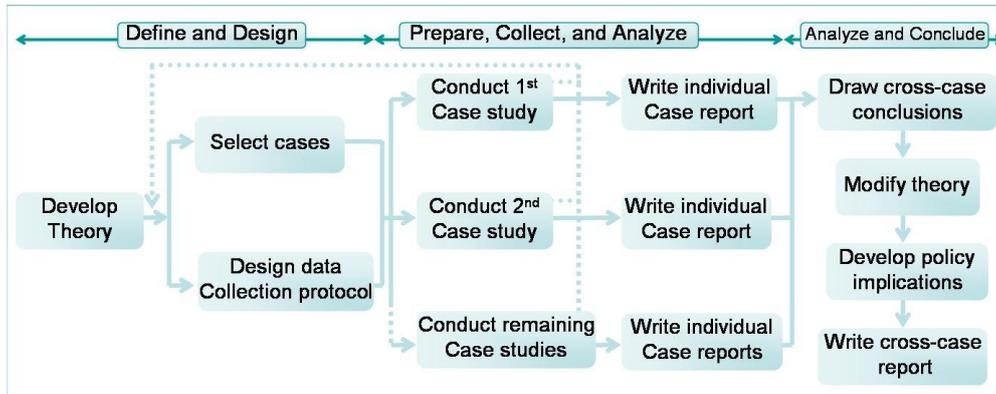
In order to investigate the feedback process in a more detailed in-depth examination of the person, group and setting, I chose a case study approach for this research. According to Yin (2009), “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). The case study approach allows reviewing and dealing with a real situation, allowing the researcher to collect more in-depth findings. In addition case studies are preferred when “how, why or what questions are being asked, or when the investigator has little control over events, or when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context” (Burns, 1994, p. 313). The researcher can focus on illuminating variables, phenomena, processes and relationships that deserve more intensive investigation.

Nevertheless, case studies have some disadvantages. The results of case studies are difficult to generalise to the wider population and are challenging regarding drawing and articulating a definite cause and effect. Yin (2009) suggested that the defining characteristic of a model case study is that it brings attention to the general public interest. Each case needs to show that the researchers collected all relevant information. A case study involves examining different forms of evidence and alternative theories, and citing data that may be positioned against researchers’ views. More importantly, the researcher must engage with the reader’s attention and interests (Figure 8).

A case study strategy was ideal for my research as it allowed exploration of complex feedback processes in the natural environment. Nowadays many studies combine multiple case studies and qualitative analysis. Along similar lines, my study employed three different languages as individual case studies at the same college, buttressed by qualitative and quantitative data. The

purpose of each case study was to explore relationships and deep understandings of student’s perceptions of feedback processes.

**Figure 8**  
**Case study method**



(Yin, Robert K, 2009, p. 57)

### 3.2.5 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is a tool for analysing qualitative data. IPA compares individual cases to build a picture of a phenomenon. According to Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), IPA is a qualitative research approach committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences. Thus IPA is highly appropriate for this study, as it explores second language students’ views of the feedback process using their experiences.

IPA is influenced by three major approaches: phenomenology, hermeneutics and an ideographical theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenology in IPA aims to understand people’s relationship to the world and to make sense from these events as they relate to them. Hermeneutics are an important component of IPA, involving understanding the relationship between the context of data productions, past events, and the documented text’s interpretation of life in the present day. Ideography is connected with the “particular”.

In IPA a researcher should analyse in a detailed, systematic way and use small samples. IPA allows the researcher to grasp how particular articulated events, processes and relationships relate to particular contexts. Using IPA, phenomenology will reveal the principle of peoples' experience of a phenomenon, and whilst IPA is conducted on relatively small sample sizes, the aim is to find a reasonably consistent sample. Semi-structured interviews in this study were used for IPA, and the interview transcripts were analysed using qualitative analysis. This process enabled me to document a comprehensive analytical interpretation.

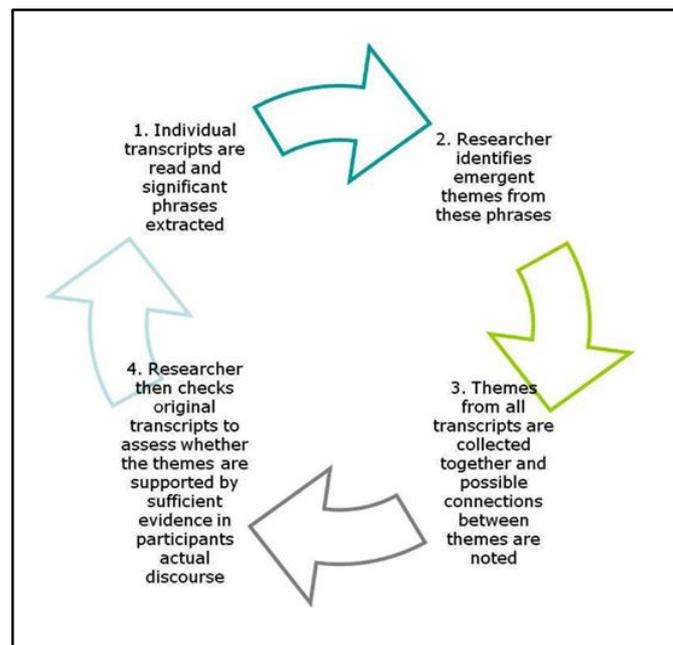
The first step of analysing transcripts involved multiple readings to familiarise the researcher with the scripts and content. I then produced a comprehensive and detailed set of notes and comments on the data (Appendix 6) and used them in analysis. These steps took the most time in what is inevitably a time-consuming process. I then began looking for emergent themes; I used two margins in this process, with the left margin used to code the themes of the connecting parts of the transcript (Appendix 6). Similar or associated codes were collapsed into broader themes, which were noted in the margin on the right hand side. Once this process was completed for every transcript, the data were analysed as a single dataset.

There are several ways of looking for the patterns and connections between emergent themes. One of the basic forms of identifying patterns between emergent themes is "abstraction". Using abstraction, I was able to group the themes that were similar together and rename them into "super-ordinate" themes (Smith et al., 2009).

The next step involved "polarisation", meaning examining the transcripts for relationships between emergent themes, this time focusing on difference instead of similarity (Appendix 7). I noted the frequency with which a theme was supported. There are many ways to look for themes in IPA.

The most valuable aspect of using IPA as a methodological tool in this study was that emerging themes across transcripts were used to create bigger themes, which in turn demonstrated the structure of the experience across the whole study (Appendix 7). The themes emphasised differences between the transcripts in each condition. Themes are explained and identified with examples of participants' thoughts and ideas, as well as the identifying number for each participant. "The researcher will go through as many iterations of this cycle as he/she feels is necessary to capture adequately the themes and sub-themes that emerge from participants' discourse" (Lewis, Lloyd, & Farrell, 2013, p. 4). See Figure 9.

**Figure 9**  
**The processes involved in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**



(Lewis et al., 2013, p. 4)

### 3.3 Research Context

The VCE students involved in this research were all from Polyglot College (a pseudonym), a private, non-selective-entry school in the city of Melbourne, Australia, at which I teach. Polyglot College has over 3,000 students from Kindergarten to Year 12, on three campuses.

Polyglot College's vision (from the school website) states that small classes provide individual attention, and this is further enhanced by their parallel education model, in which girls and boys learn in the same classroom until Year 4, and in Years 5 to 12 learn in gendered classrooms. Polyglot College embodies the goal of giving attention to the welfare of each student and his or her total school experience. Through their model of parallel education, the school seeks the best that can be achieved academically for each student. Polyglot College has high expectations for each student and provides them with the support needed to achieve academically. Senior school in Polyglot College has achieved excellent results in the VCE over many years; most students are placed in the top 20% in the state.

The three-year VCE program at Polyglot College, coupled with one of the widest range of subject choices available, ensures that there are programs to suit individual student's interests and abilities. The senior school operates at Keysborough, Berwick, Brighton and Beijing. VCE studies are offered at four levels: Year 10 (pre-VCE level), VCE Units 1 & 2, VCE Units 3 & 4, and Enhancement Studies (approved first-year university subjects). Students are able to select a program according to their individual needs, talents and interests. Polyglot College offers languages from Year 3 (French and Japanese) and when students begin Year 7, they choose one of three languages (Chinese, French or Japanese). Currently, only one local campus offers Chinese at secondary school level. At Polyglot College, students study Chinese second language and Chinese second language advanced, and French and Japanese second language at VCE levels. The number of students learning languages at VCE during the school years of 2013 and 2014 are shown in Table 5 below.

**Table 5**  
**Languages Other Than English learners in Polyglot College in 2013 and 2014**

	2013				2014			
	Units 1 & 2		Units 3 & 4		Units 1 & 2		Units 3 & 4	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>French</b>	12	39	17	27	25	43	14	30
<b>Chinese</b>	12	7	6	6	10	7	6	6
<b>Japanese</b>	16	14	23	17	42	33	17	15

\*Unit 3 Semester 1 last year secondary education

\*Unit 4 Semester 2 last year secondary education

### 3.4 Sampling Procedure

With permission from the school's Vice-Principal, I distributed the explanatory statements (Appendix 1) and consent forms (Appendix 2) to students and their parents/guardians at the end of Term 3 in the 2013 school year. When students agreed to participate in this study and returned their consent forms and parent/guardian consent forms, I arranged for the questionnaire to be distributed to the school email addresses students provided in their consent forms. Data gathered for this study was provided entirely voluntarily by seven VCE Units 3 & 4 Chinese second language students, six VCE Units 3 & 4 French second language students, and 17 VCE Units 3 & 4 Japanese second language students who were enrolled during the 2013 school year, a total of 30 students.

The research was timed so as not to interfere with students' examination periods at the school. Students completed the questionnaire anonymously and had the option of responding electronically. Participants were able to access the questionnaire easily using their iPads, standard equipment for students at Polyglot College. The questionnaire (Appendix 4) was distributed to all participating students via an internet hyperlink sent using the school's email address. Students were able to respond to the questionnaire in their own time during Terms 3 and 4 on scheduled days.

The questionnaire used is referred to in both the Saito (1994) and Leki (1991) studies. It was constructed to measure the usefulness of three specific different types of feedback, and designed to take approximately 5 minutes. Students rated each type of feedback on a Likert five point-scale. Likert scales are commonly used in questionnaire-based research; they are easy to read and complete, and produce highly reliable quantitative data. However using a Likert scale can mean participants avoid extreme responses to categories and may even agree with a statement in order to please the researcher. Therefore the questionnaire has carefully considered questions and measurements.

After students completed the questionnaire, I conducted semi-structured interviews (refer to Hyland, 1998), with several students of each language group with the view of corroborating the survey data findings. These semi-structured interviews took approximately 10 minutes for each student, and were performed between DATE 1 and DATE 2 in a private room within the school. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by me shortly afterwards to maximise accuracy.

### **3.5 Position of the researcher**

I have been teaching Japanese at Polyglot College since 2007, and worked in many different schools prior to this. I strongly believe the feedback process is essential to the teaching and acquisition of a second language. As noted earlier, the goal of this study was to discover what second language students believe about the feedback process and contribute to a shared understanding with other languages educators to improve teaching and learning.

Through the mixed methods, multiple case-study design, I embedded my own experiences related to teaching language. As I am a non-native English speaker, I am also able to relate to what second language students are thinking. I also completed VCE Chinese second language

in 2009. As a researcher, I found I was able to adapt my understanding from both the language educator and language learner perspectives. Using my experiences, as well as my quantitative and qualitative data, I was able to position both my skills and knowledge to draw on results to my research questions.

### **3.6 Survey Instrument**

Leki (1991) surveyed of ESL students to find out what type of corrections and comments on writing compositions were most helpful in improving the accuracy of their written English. I would like to refer to his survey in this study to review the students' views of the three feedback methods. I was initially interested in whether the data from the surveys indicated any significant difference in students' preferences and views across the three languages.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

In chapter 4 I present the results of correlation analysis of students' preferences for the three feedback methods. The discussions also analyse and study any correlations, over the full sample, and separately for each language group.

The interviews were organised during students' school time and held with one student at a time. Eleven students, including four Chinese second language students, three French second language students and four Japanese second language students, participated in the interview process, and interviews were audio-recorded with their consent and/or that of their parents or guardians (Appendix 8). The transcripts of the audio-recordings were carefully analysed by the researcher using IPA. Prior to each interview, I explained the three different feedback methods. In order to discuss students' preferences related to each of the three feedback methods and to gain insight into particular students' views, comments from each student's transcripts were analysed and groupings were identified under emergent themes (Appendix 6). After

documenting emergent themes in student's transcripts, I created a visual chart to explore this data, carefully grouping the emergent themes, drawing connections and finding structures (Appendix 7).

After analysing the qualitative data from student interviews, I compared the data to those from the questionnaires completed by VCE Unit 3 & 4 students. (As noted earlier, 30 students participated in the survey, seven Chinese second language students, six French second language students and seventeen Japanese second language students.) I analysed the data to ascertain students' preferences and what they believed were effective methods of giving feedback on essay writing in their respective languages.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

This research was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines and principles of fair management for the participants. The study was certified by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC). The Committee was satisfied this study met the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Humane research. In accordance with the protocols of MUHREC, in early year sent a letter to the Vice-Principal of Polyglot College explaining the study and seeking permission to distribute a letter to eligible students inviting them to participate. Explanatory statements were also sent to students and parent/guardians, due to most students being under the age of 18.

Students were asked to comment on what they think and understand about each of the three feedback processes targeted in this thesis, they were also asked to describe how they use the feedback they are currently receiving on their writing compositions.

Student's questionnaires were designed to take approximately five minutes to complete and were completed in their spare time using their iPad. All VCE students have their iPad as a tool

for learning in this school. As previously noted, the interviews were conducted in the students' spare time during school hours in a public area and took no more than 10 minutes. The study was designed not to expose participants to inconvenience or discomfort, and classes and important study time were not disrupted. Participating in this research involved no link to assessment tasks with the VCE course or study scores or Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) scores.

### **3.9 Withdrawal Rights**

Participating in this study was voluntary and participants were under no obligation to consent to participation. However, even if participants' parent/guardian(s) consented to their child's participation, they were able to withdraw from further participation or use of their data at any stage prior to the writing of research findings.

### **3.10 Confidentiality**

Participants in this study were guaranteed full confidentiality. Pseudonyms are used in this thesis to protect all participants; no individually identifying information has or will be used in any report about the research.

### **3.11 Storage of Data**

Data were stored in accordance with Monash University regulations, kept on University premises, in a locked filing cabinet for five years.

### **3.12 Summary**

In this chapter, the researcher described the methodology and design used for this study. The data collection and analysis were collected and presented using a mixed methods research approach. Examples of the IPA method used in this study are included in Appendices 6 and 7.

In the following chapter, the quantitative and qualitative data from three case studies are presented. Results are shown for students of three different languages: Chinese, French and Japanese.

## Chapter 4: RESULTS

In this chapter I present quantitative data gathered from the students' questionnaires and qualitative data from students' semi-structured interviews. Thirty VCE Units 3 & 4 second language students in the 2013 cohort at Polyglot College (pseudonym), including seven Chinese second language students, six French second language students and 17 Japanese second language students, voluntarily completed the study questionnaire. After submitting their questionnaires, 11 students participated in face-to-face interviews conducted at Polyglot College; four were Chinese second language students, three were French second language students and four were Japanese second language students. The semi-structured interviews took from seven to eight minutes and were audio-recorded. .

**Table 7**  
**Sample number for the questionnaire**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Chinese</b>	7
<b>French</b>	6
<b>Japanese</b>	17
	<b>30</b>

I will henceforth refer to students studying VCE Units 3 & 4 Chinese second language as “Chinese students”, those studying VCE Units 3 & 4 French second language as “French students” and those who are studying VCE Units 3 & 4 Japanese second language as “Japanese students” in this thesis.

**Table 8**  
**Basic descriptors of semi-structured interview participants**

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Language study</b>
<b>Aaron</b>	17	Male	Japanese
<b>Brendan</b>	18	Male	Japanese
<b>Christine</b>	17	Female	Japanese
<b>Danielle</b>	17	Female	Japanese
<b>Edward</b>	17	Male	French
<b>Frank</b>	17	Male	French
<b>Grace</b>	17	Female	French
<b>Hayley</b>	17	Female	Chinese
<b>Isabelle</b>	15	Female	Chinese
<b>Jacob</b>	15	Male	Chinese
<b>Kurt</b>	16	Male	Chinese

#### **4.1 Quantitative Data**

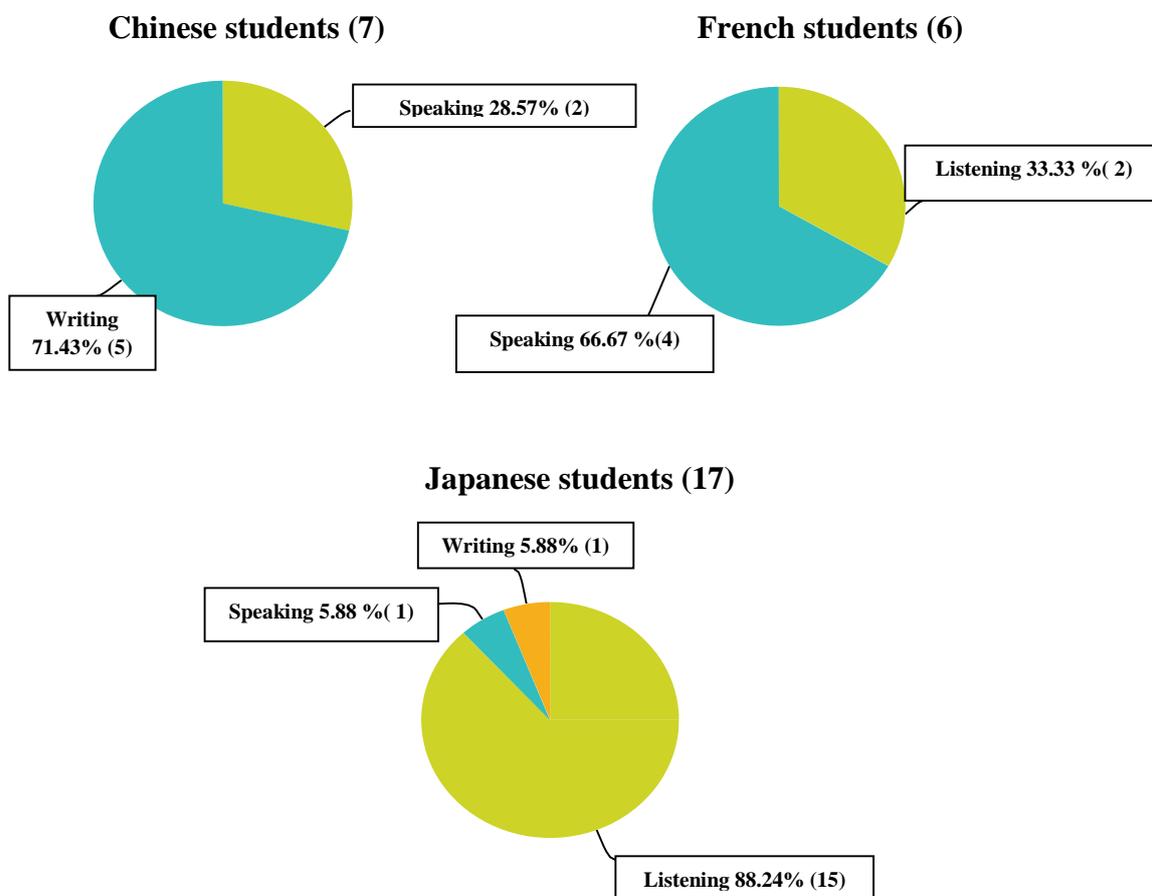
Chinese students considered writing (71%) the most difficult skill set to acquire when studying the language, followed by speaking (29%).<sup>2</sup> In contrast, most French students (67%) regarded speaking as the most challenging skill to attain, whereas 88% of Japanese students identified listening as the most difficult skill set.

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<sup>2</sup> The four basic skills in language acquisition are listening, reading, writing and speaking.

**Figure 10**

**Question 2: Which is the most difficult skill to acquire when studying the language?**



Japanese is one of few languages that use a combination of phonograms and ideograms; however, many linguistics researchers have noted that it is more appropriate to describe the language as using phonograms and logograms. Phonograms are means of writing character that present sounds without any meaning (such as Hiragana and Katakana<sup>3</sup> in Japanese), and ideograms are characters or symbols that present ideas or meanings (such as Kanji<sup>4</sup> in Japanese and Chinese or numbers), but Kanji in Japanese and Chinese characters are commonly known as logograms. Whilst Kanji represent entire words or phrases, this student result linking listening as the most difficult skill, was data I had not anticipated so as a researcher I was

<sup>3</sup> Scripts used in Japanese

<sup>4</sup> One of three scripts used in Japanese, Chinese characters

surprised by this result. I assumed that Japanese students would think that writing skills, which require use of a complicated writing system, would have identified this as the most challenging skill. (This result is discussed further in chapter 5, linking ideograms, logograms and phonograms.) Japanese students at Polyglot College have English as their native or first language. English is a phonogrammatic language, but the Japanese language has both a logogrammatic and phonogrammatic language construct. Therefore the sound of characters has meaning in English and they can recognise and comprehend meaning in listening tasks, whereas Japanese has phonograms and logograms using also the shape of characters. Kanji itself has significant meanings attributed to it, causing challenges with comprehension in listening materials for Japanese students.

Chinese students commented on the difficulty in attaining writing skills; however, it is doubtful that students were referring to the writing system involving characters. The data refer to both the content and the ideas expressed in essays (this was clarified in their interview data). Also, Chinese students' family background may be linked to these responses. Chinese students in this study have also attended Chinese private schools, referred to as "community Chinese Saturday schools". Many students with parents from Chinese-speaking backgrounds (which describes all my Chinese-studying participants) attend these schools in Victoria for several years. These students are immersed in the home language and are more familiar with listening and speaking than writing.

Chinese students in the study, despite having Chinese-speaking parents, had English as their first language. They were immersed in English, hence they may have found it difficult to connect the sound and a character instantly in their writing, since Chinese is based on logograms. Despite Chinese students feeling writing was the most difficult skill to acquire, a large minority reported enjoying writing essays (43%); in contrast, all French students reported

that they liked writing essays. Five of the 17 (nearly 30%) of Japanese students reported liking writing essays, but six (35%) reported the reverse and six that they neither liked nor disliked writing essays. Interestingly, most Japanese students did not agree with the premise that the writing skill was difficult to attain, yet this was juxtaposed with the finding that they did not like to construct sentences and express their ideas in essays.

**Table 9**

**Question 3: Do you like writing essays in your language study?**

Response options	Chinese % (n)	French % (n)	Japanese % (n)
totally like	0 (0)	0 (0)	5.88 (1)
like	42.86 (3)	100 (6)	23.53 (4)
neither	28.57 (2)	0 (0)	35.29 (6)
do not like	28.57 (2)	0 (0)	35.29 (6)
hate	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 (7)</b>	<b>100 (6)</b>	<b>100 (17)</b>

The survey showed that it was important for students of all three languages to have as few errors as possible in their essays. Twenty-six students (87%) responded that it was ‘very important’ or ‘important’ to minimise the number of errors in their essays.

**Table 10**

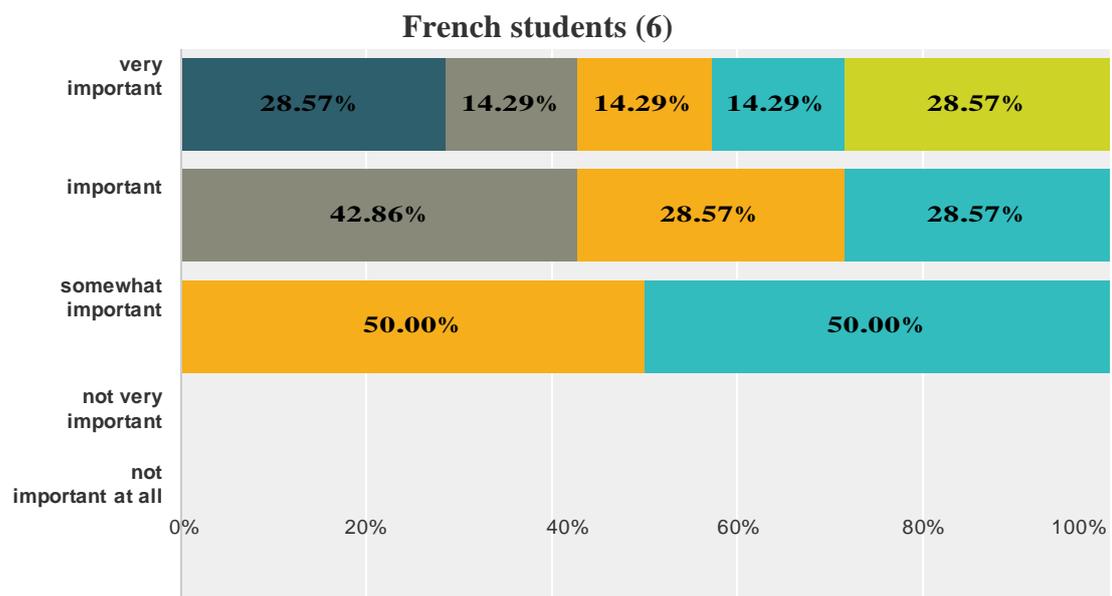
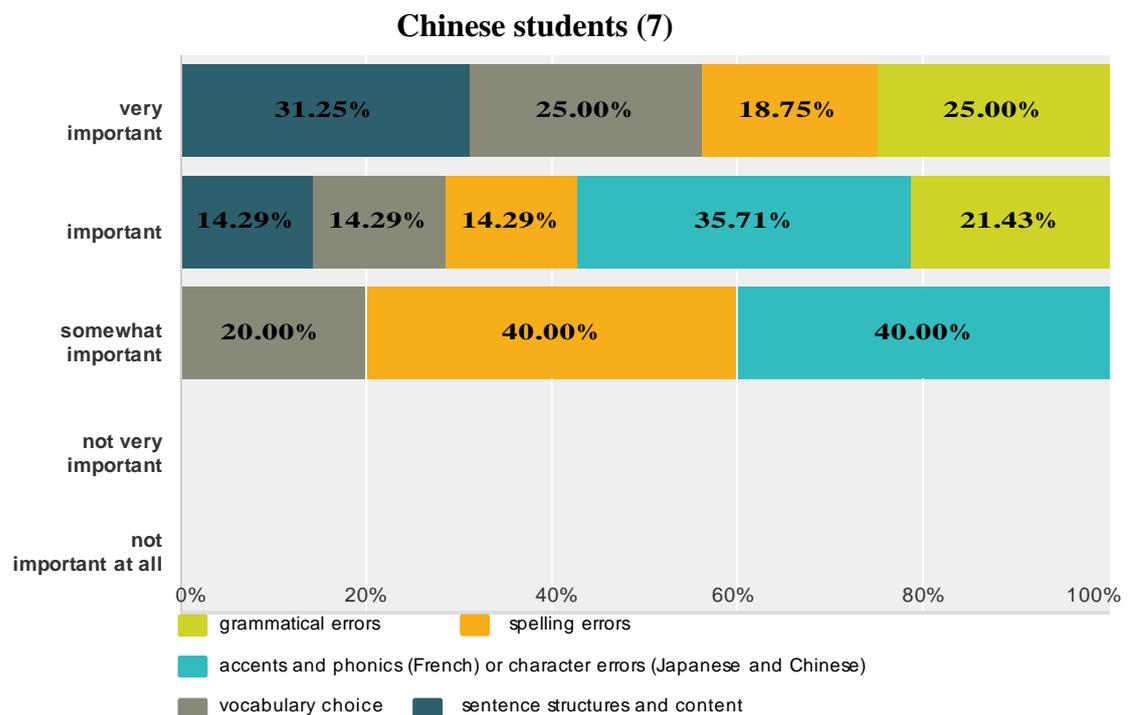
**Question 4: How important is it to you to have as few errors as possible in your essay?**

Response options	% (n)
very important	40 (12)
important	46.67 (14)
somewhat important	10 (3)
not very important	3.33 (1)
not important at all	0 (0)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 (30)</b>

Chinese students concentrate on structures and then content rather than grammatical or character errors. Interestingly, Chinese students carefully noted comments indicating errors in structures and content. In contrast, Japanese students regarded it as more important that the teacher points out their grammatical errors compared with sentence structures and content, but they also considered comments relating to spelling to be important. French students considered

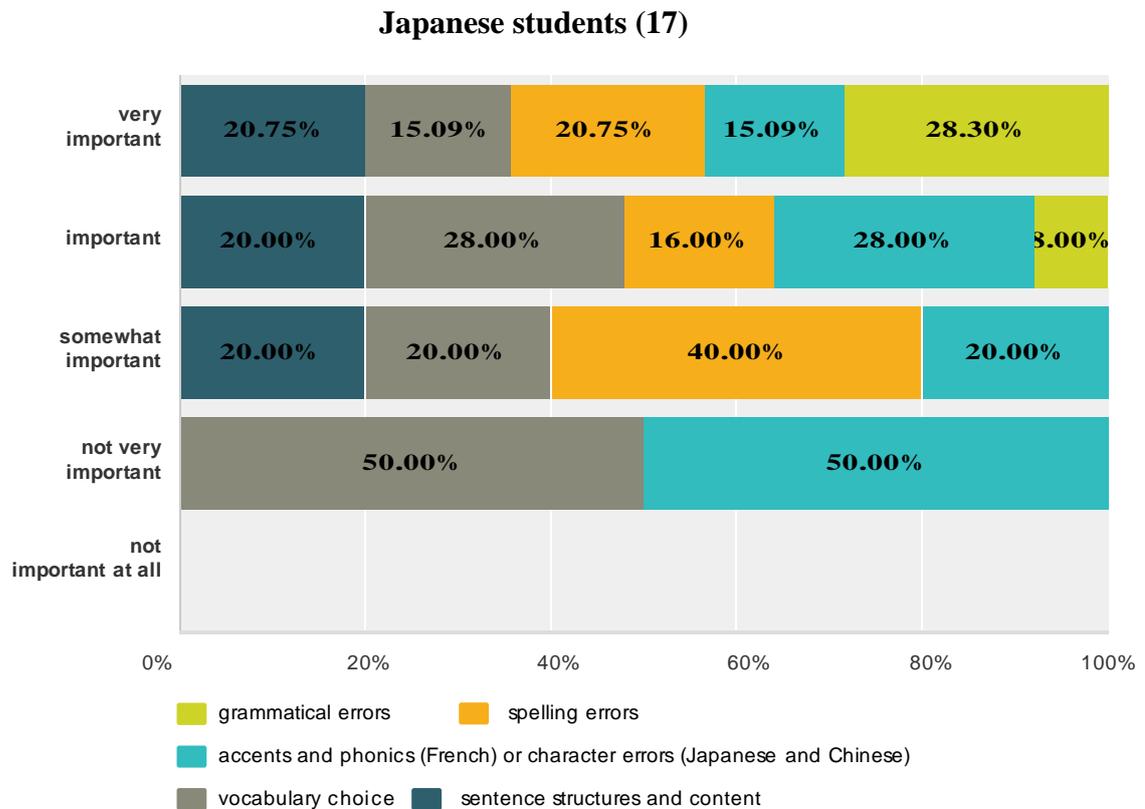
it important that teacher comments related to sentence structures and content. It was significant for French students to carefully view comments relating to ideas and expressions in the content. Japanese students noted comments on spelling errors as the most important feedback on their essays, followed by comments on structure and content.

**Figure 11**  
**Question 5: How important is it to you for your teacher to point out errors in your essay?**



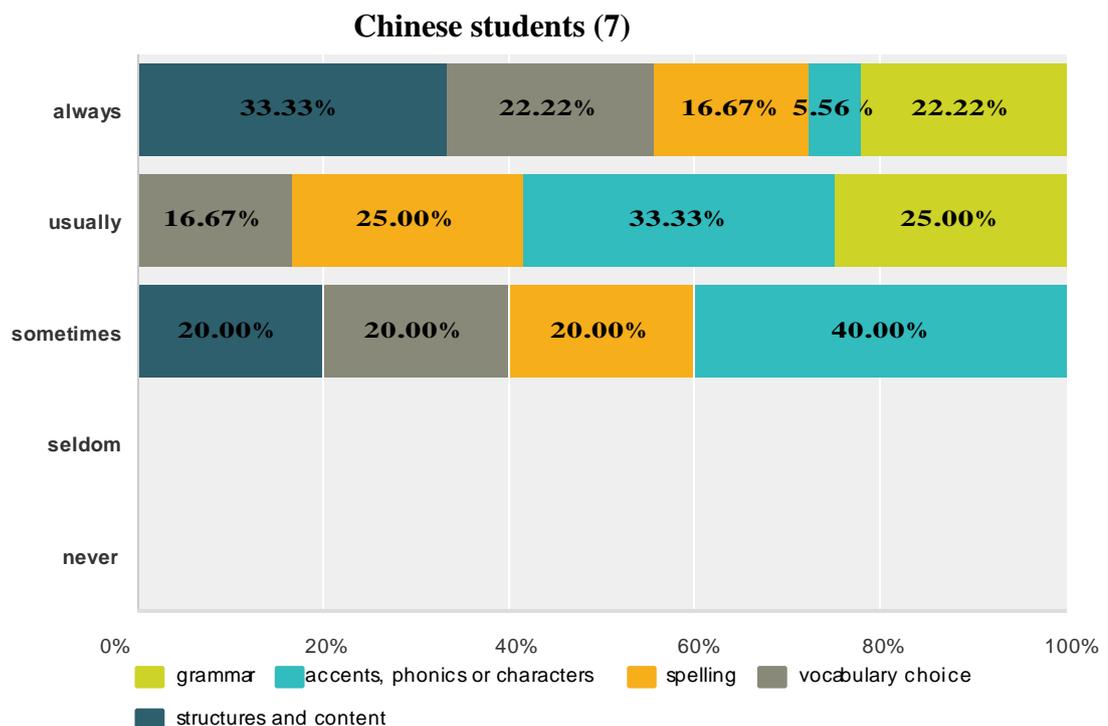
**Figure 11**

**Question 5: How important is it to you for your teacher to point out errors in your essay? (Continued)**



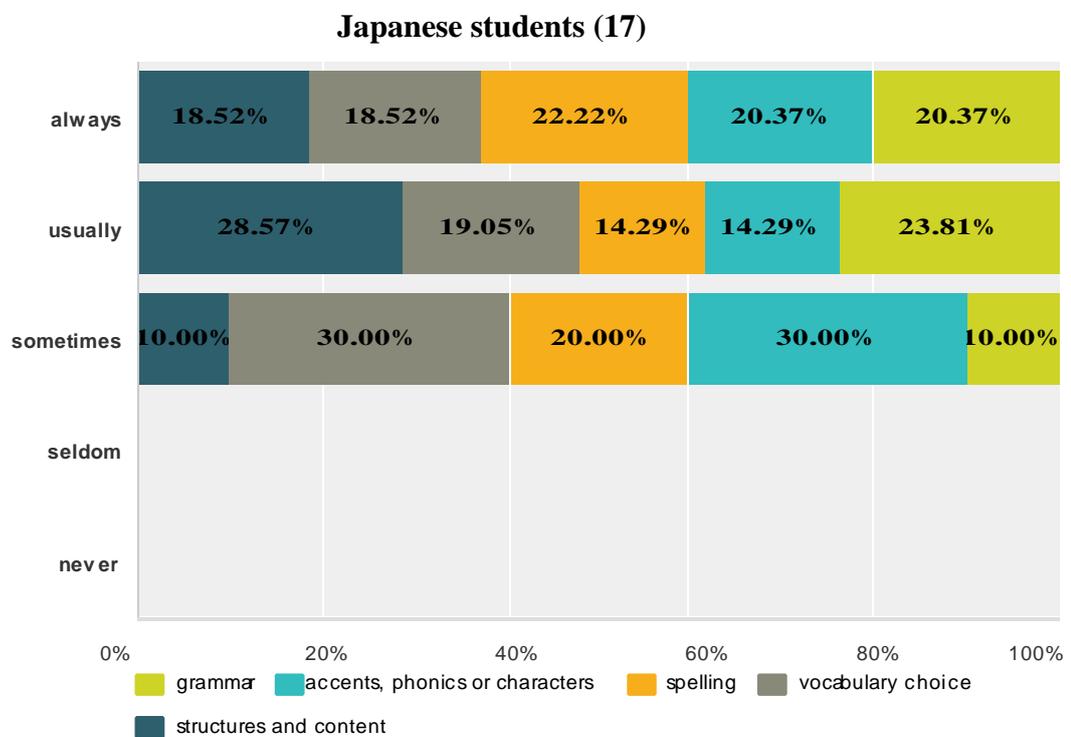
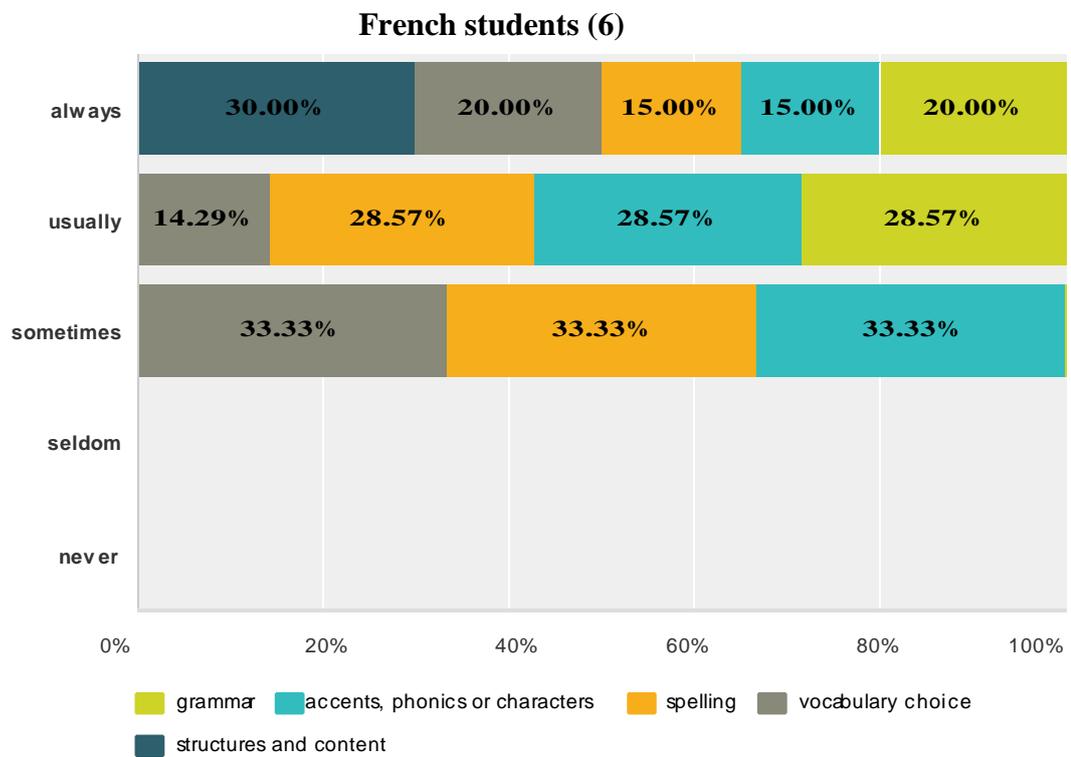
**Figure 12**

**Question 6: When your teacher returns a marked essay to you, do you look carefully at the comments showing the errors in ... ?**



**Figure 12**

**Question 6: When your teacher returns a marked essay to you, do you look carefully at the comments showing the errors in ... ?(Continued)**



The majority of students (90%) in all three languages wanted their teacher to correct all errors, major or minor, and 70% students preferred teachers to use a red pen. Approximately 27% of students responded that it did not matter; as long as students could recognise teachers' feedback on their essays, students were not concerned with the colour of pen markings. This result surprised me, as I had in the past attributed great importance to the colour of pen when correcting. The results highlighted that students were focused on their errors, not on the colour of pen used for how these errors were identified and corrected.

**Table 11**

**Question 8: If there are many errors in an essay, what do you want your teacher to do? (Chinese, French and Japanese students 30)**

Response options	% (n)
correct all errors, major and minor	90 (27)
correct errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones	3.33 (1)
correct repeated errors whether major or minor	3.33 (1)
correct only errors that might interfere with communicating your ideas	3.33 (1)
It does not matter	0 (0)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 (30)</b>

**Table 12**

**Question 9: What would you prefer your teacher to use when marking your essay? (Chinese, French and Japanese students 30)**

Response options	% (n)
a pen with red ink	70 (21)
a pen with some other less noticeable colour of ink	3.33 (1)
a pencil	0 (0)
it does not matter	26.67 (8)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 (30)</b>

Japanese (88%) and Chinese (86%) students results noted that they preferred the teacher to cross out what was incorrect and write in the correct word or structure to indicate an error; and only 12% Japanese and 14% of Chinese students stated they wanted the teacher to indicate where the error was and then give them only a clue for accurate correction. On the other hand, 67% of French students wanted teachers to cross out the error and write in the correct word and 33.33% of students wanted teachers to indicate the errors and give them a clue. Why do French

students prefer to be given a clue on their errors more than Chinese and Japanese students? This could relate to cultural values in Asian languages classes, where teacher's work can be seen as transmissive and teacher focused with correction of students' work. French pedagogical values relating to the learner as an enquirer may possibly be attributed to this finding. Interestingly, no student in any of the three languages wanted teachers only to identify the error; the survey results showed that error correction was more valued than error identification, especially by Japanese and Chinese languages students. Error correction provides correct answers, but this involves less cognitive effort. Is this process truly beneficial for students' long term writing skills?

**Table 13**

**Question 10: How do you want your teacher to indicate an error in your essay?**

Response options	Chinese % (n)	French % (n)	Japanese % (n)
The teacher crosses out what is incorrect and writes in the correct word on structure	85.71 (6)	66.67 (4)	88.24 (15)
The teacher shows where the error is and gives a clue for correcting it	14.29 (1)	33.33 (2)	11.76 (2)
The teacher only shows where the error is	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
The teacher ignores errors in grammar and only pays attentions to the ideas expressed	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
It does not matter	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 (7)</b>	<b>100 (6)</b>	<b>100 (17)</b>

When Chinese and Japanese students received essays with feedback, students made a mental note of the errors they needed explained. Similarly, French students usually made notes after receiving their feedback and identified the need for teacher explanation (but rarely asked peers).

Most Chinese students remember the comments on the organisation and structure of their essay most strongly, and next the comments on the ideas expressed or grammar. Most French and Japanese students remember comments involving grammar errors better than ideas or structures. These results suggest French and Japanese students are driven more by grammar

while they are writing essays than by genuine concern for expressing their ideas, viewpoints and impressions.

**Table 14**

**Question 12: Of the comments that your teacher makes on your essay which ones do you remember best?**

Response options	Chinese % (n)	French % (n)	Japanese % (n)
Comments on your idea	28.57 (2)	33.33 (2)	0 (0)
Comments on the organisation/structure of the essay	71.43 (5)	16.67 (1)	23.53 (4)
Comments showing errors in grammar	0 (0)	50 (3)	76.47 (13)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 (7)</b>	<b>100 (6)</b>	<b>100 (17)</b>

Almost all students of all three languages (93%) believed teacher explanation of errors was the most helpful way to grasp what they did wrong and what they should do to address those errors in the future. All Chinese and French students responded that the teacher explaining the errors assisted their understanding the most, but fewer Japanese students (88%) agreed with this finding.

**Table 15**

**Question 13: When you make an error what helps you most understand what you did wrong?**

Response options	Chinese	French	Japanese
Having your teacher explain the error.	100 (7)	100 (6)	88.24 (15)
Looking it up by yourself in a grammar handbook	0 (0)	0 (0)	5.88 (1)
Asking a peer to explain the error.	0 (0)	0 (0)	5.88 (1)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 (7)</b>	<b>100 (6)</b>	<b>100 (17)</b>

Nearly 60% of all 30 students responded that re-writing just the sentence or section where the error appeared helped to avoid making the same errors again in future essays, and 20% students would rewrite whole essays again. However, none of the French students responded that they would rewrite the entire essay. It also appears more students are just reading the essay without rewriting.

**Table 16****Question 14: What helps you avoid making that error again?**

Response options	Chinese % (n)	French % (n)	Japanese % (n)	Three languages % (n)
Rewriting the whole essay	28.57 (2)	0 (0)	23.53 (4)	20 (6)
Rewriting just the sentences or section where the error appeared	57.14 (4)	66.67 (4)	52.94 (9)	56.67 (17)
Just reading the essay carefully without rewriting anything	14.29 (1)	33.33 (2)	23.53 (4)	23.33 (7)
Nothing, because you know you will probably forget and make the same errors again no matter what you do	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 (7)</b>	<b>100 (6)</b>	<b>100 (17)</b>	<b>100 (30)</b>

These data indicate that most languages students make a mental note of their errors. Twenty-six of 30 students (87%) always or usually followed this process. A total of 70% of students across all three languages stated they would ask their teacher for an explanation.

**Table 17****Question 15: What do you do when you have your essay returned?****Chinese, French and Japanese students (30)**

Response options	Always % (n)	Usually % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Seldom % (n)	Never % (n)	Total % (n)
Make a mental note of the errors	50 (15)	36.67 (11)	10 (3)	3.33 (1)	0 (0)	<b>100 (30)</b>
Write down errors identified	6.67 (2)	16.67 (5)	40 (12)	30 (9)	6.67 (2)	<b>100 (30)</b>
Identify points you want explained	33.33 (10)	43.33 (13)	10 (3)	10 (3)	3.33 (1)	<b>100 (30)</b>
Asking for a teacher explanation	43.33 (13)	26.67 (8)	20 (6)	10 (3)	0 (0)	<b>100 (30)</b>
Asking for a peer explanation	23.33 (7)	10 (3)	33.33 (10)	23.33 (7)	10 (3)	<b>100 (30)</b>
Consult a dictionary/grammar book/textbook/exercise book	10 (3)	16.67 (5)	50 (15)	20 (6)	3.33 (1)	<b>100 (30)</b>

**Table 18****Question 15: What do you do when you have your essay returned?****Chinese students (7)**

<b>Response options</b>	<b>always % (n)</b>	<b>usually % (n)</b>	<b>sometimes % (n)</b>	<b>seldom % (n)</b>	<b>never % (n)</b>	<b>total % (n)</b>
Make a mental note of the errors	42.85 (3)	42.85 (3)	14.28 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	<b>100 (7)</b>
Write down errors identified	14.28(1)	28.57(2)	28.57(2)	28.57(2)	0 (0)	<b>100 (7)</b>
Identify points you want explained	42.85 (3)	57.14 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	<b>100 (7)</b>
Asking for a teacher explanation	42.85 (3)	28.57 (2)	28.57 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	<b>100 (7)</b>
Asking for a peer explanation	0 (0)	42.85 (3)	42.85 (3)	14.28 (1)	0 (0)	<b>100 (7)</b>
Consult a dictionary/grammar book/textbook/exercise book	0 (0)	42.85 (3)	42.85 (3)	14.28 (1)	0 (0)	<b>100 (7)</b>

**French students (6)**

<b>Response options</b>	<b>Always % (n)</b>	<b>Usually % (n)</b>	<b>Sometimes % (n)</b>	<b>Seldom % (n)</b>	<b>Never % (n)</b>	<b>Total % (n)</b>
Make a mental note of the errors	50 (3)	50 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	<b>100 (6)</b>
Write down errors identified	0 (0)	16.66 (1)	50 (3)	33.33 (2)	0 (0)	<b>100 (6)</b>
Identify points you want explained	50 (3)	33.33 (2)	16.66 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	<b>100 (6)</b>
Asking for a teacher explanation	50 (3)	33.33 (2)	16.66 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	<b>100 (6)</b>
Asking for a peer explanation	16.66 (1)	0 (0)	16.66 (1)	66.66 (4)	0 (0)	<b>100 (6)</b>
Consult a dictionary/grammar book/textbook/exercise book	0 (0)	0 (0)	50 (3)	50 (3)	0 (0)	<b>100 (6)</b>

**Japanese students (17)**

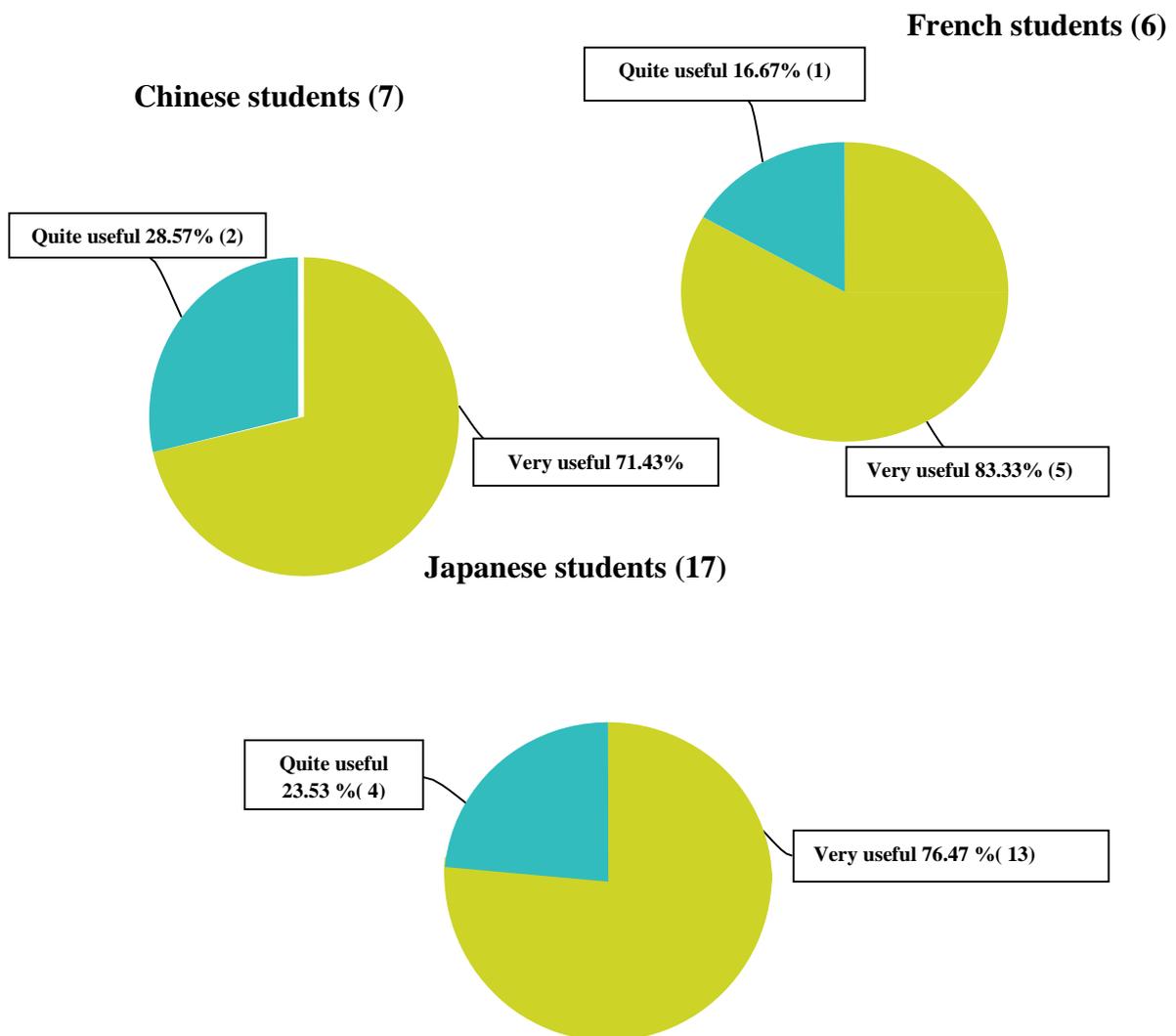
<b>Response options</b>	<b>Always % (n)</b>	<b>Usually % (n)</b>	<b>Sometimes % (n)</b>	<b>Seldom % (n)</b>	<b>Never % (n)</b>	<b>Total % (n)</b>
Make a mental note of the errors	52.94 (9)	29.41 (5)	11.76 (2)	5.88 (1)	0 (0)	<b>100 (17)</b>
Write down errors identified	5.88 (1)	11.76 (2)	41.17 (7)	29.41 (5)	11.76 (2)	<b>100 (17)</b>
Identify points you want explained	23.52 (4)	41.17 (7)	11.76 (2)	17.64 (3)	5.88 (1)	<b>100 (17)</b>
Asking for a teacher explanation	41.17 (7)	23.52 (4)	17.64 (3)	17.64 (3)	0 (0)	<b>100 (17)</b>
Asking for a peer explanation	35.29 (6)	0 (0)	35.29 (6)	11.76 (2)	17.64( 3)	<b>100 (17)</b>
Consult a dictionary/grammar book/textbook/exercise book	17.64 (3)	11.76 (2)	52.94 (9)	11.76 (2)	5.88 (1)	<b>100 (17)</b>

As mentioned earlier, most students in all three languages make mental notes of their errors and ask for detailed teacher explanations in order to improve their essay writing. The findings

linked to peer explanations and feedback were as follows. A small proportion of Japanese students (18%) indicated that they preferred not to ask for peer explanations; a large minority of Chinese students (46%) reported that they usually asked for peer explanations. Chinese and Japanese students usually consulted a dictionary, grammar book, textbook or exercise book to address feedback corrections, but 50% of French students reported rarely using those books. On the process of error correction, 77% of all students responded that it was useful, including Chinese 71%, French 83% and Japanese 76%.

**Figure 13**

**Question 16: Error corrections with comments (The teacher gives feedback by making comments with error correction.)**

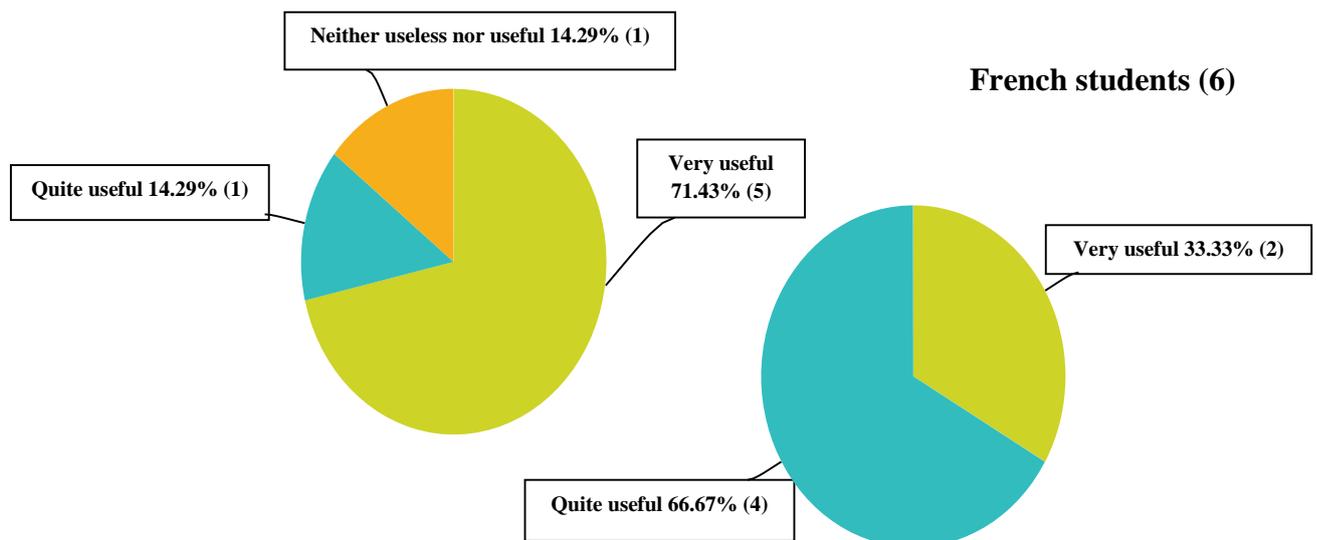


When asked about the process of error identification in feedback, more than 80% of students of Chinese students responded that it was very useful and 14% students noted it was quite useful for their second language study. In addition, all French students believed error identification was a useful method for them. However only 59% of Japanese students said error identification was a useful method, even including students who responded with ‘quite useful’, only 64.7% of students chose this as a useful process. 11% of Japanese students responded that the process of error identification was useless for error identification.

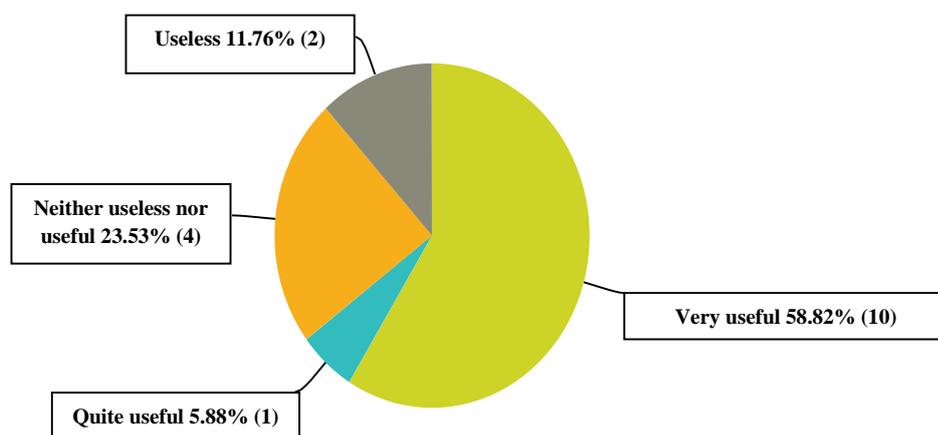
**Figure 14**

**Question 17: Error identification (The teacher indicates the place where the error occurs by underlying or circling it.)**

**Chinese students (7)**

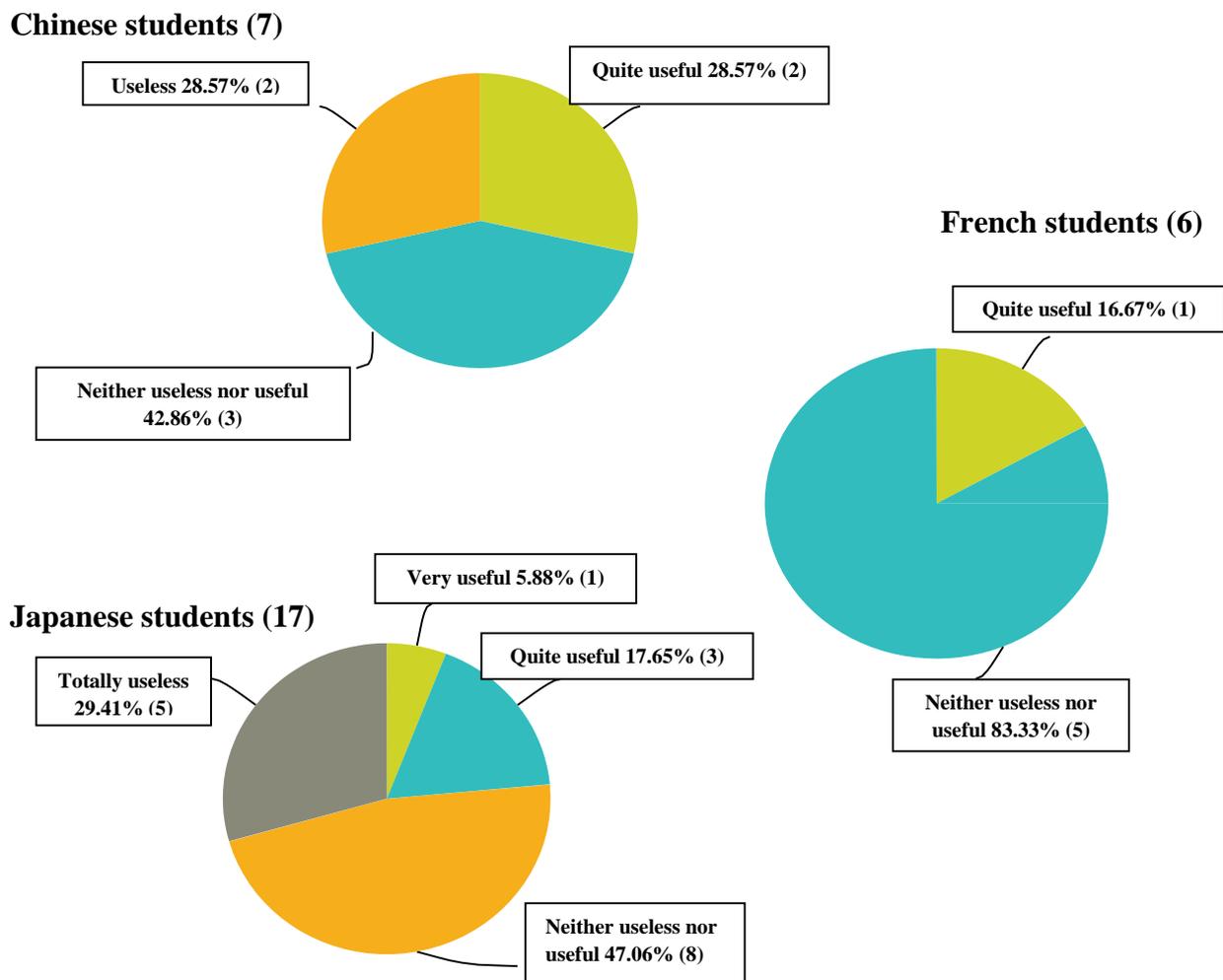


**Japanese students (17)**



Another interesting finding was that 53% of all language students regarded peer-correction as neither useless nor useful; however, further analysis of data for each language offers a more detailed overview of the survey results related to this process.

**Figure 15**  
**Question 18: Peer-correction (students evaluate each other's work)**



Chinese students (28%) thought peer-correction was quite a useful method. In contrast, no French students believed peer-correction was a useless method. Four Japanese students noted that peer-correction was quite a useful method, but five responded that it was a totally useless. Out of the three languages, only Japanese students (5) felt peer-corrections were totally useless. In peer-correction processes, students must use their critical thinking skills; I believe this is a

central part of a high-quality feedback process. It may take time, but the process is valuable for developing students' writing skills. Further research into why Japanese students feel this way about peer-correction is recommended (it is not within the scope of this paper).

## **4.2 Qualitative Data**

### **4.2.1 Case Study One: Chinese**

The VCE Units 3 & 4 Chinese second language students whom I interviewed have studied Chinese as a second language since they were in primary school. All have also attended Chinese community schools to learn Chinese privately. They do not find VCE Chinese to be a difficult subject to study due to their prior knowledge and skills, but they did notice a large increase in the difficulty of the subject between Years 5, 6, 7 and 8 and their VCE Chinese studies. Chinese students asserted that writing (essays) was more challenging than listening, reading and speaking. In order to receive high marks on their essays in their outcomes (internal examination tasks) and in their final examinations, their essays have to include sophisticated ideas, breadth and depth of content, and Chinese students found this challenging, as the following quote demonstrates.

**Researcher:** How do you feel about studying Chinese in VCE?

**Hayley:** I find it OK but that is because I have been going to Chinese schools since I was four years old, it is .. I don't find it extremely hard but at the same time it isn't easy either.

**Researcher:** Which part isn't that easy?

**Hayley:** I think writing essays I find that hard cause it is hard to come up with ideas and sometimes if you get your structure wrong that is three marks [lost].

**Researcher:** Do you think is there any change from study in middle school to now in VCE, is there any change in that?

**Hayley:** I think there is a big change actually because in middle school what we learnt was pretty easy compared with what we learn now. I don't know if it is because my Chinese is OK and that is why I found it easy but there is a big jump.

Chinese students put themselves under more pressure, stress and competition in VCE classes than in previous language classes at middle school level, but they believe studying Chinese gives them many opportunities for their future and lets them understand different cultures, thus they enjoyed studying Chinese at VCE level very much.

**Kurt:** I think it [studying Chinese second language in VCE] is a really good opportunity because I can learn a new language and learn about the culture and broaden my knowledge so I think it is really good.

**Researcher:** Is there any change from study in middle school to now in VCE?

**Kurt:** Yeah, the change is quite big because it is more serious now and then there is the whole VCE structure ... 'cause in middle school [it] is just normal essay writing, diary writing, so it is more serious.

**Jacob:** I feel that Chinese as a VCE subject is actually very different to what Chinese is because there is a lot more stress, there is a lot more competition and a lot more pressure. Compared to when I did Chinese not as a VCE [subject], just at Chinese school, I felt Chinese was a lot more free and a lot more fun and a lot more enjoyable. So I guess now, Chinese is still good but not as entertaining because it is a lot more complex and difficult than before.

All four Chinese students—Hayley, Isabelle, Jacob and Kurt—preferred to receive their feedback immediately after submitting their essays. It was acceptable if their teacher returned feedback to students a few days after submission, but they regarded a week to receive feedback as too long. Chinese students were often concerned that they felt that they forgot what they actually wrote in their essays, including grammar, choice of vocabulary and ideas related to content. Furthermore, Chinese students expressed distress when unable to prepare for upcoming School Assessment Coursework (SACs) when they did not have time to correct their errors and learn from past essays with teacher feedback. The data revealed that this feedback played an important role for their preparation for end-of-year examinations.

**Jacob:** Immediately [getting back the feedback] is definitely better.

**Researcher:** Why is that?

**Jacob:** Because you have more time to change it [your work]. I remember a teacher would give me feedback on Chinese a few days after and it was really annoying because I didn't have much

time to go over it and normally I like to ask my teacher why did I get this wrong? What should it be like?

Chinese students noted that they did not rewrite their essays, they only rewrote the specific sections in which errors were identified after receiving feedback. Chinese students referred to character and vocabulary errors as ‘small mistakes’ and were seen as not warranting rewriting an entire essay.

**Researcher:** What do you do when you receive feedback at first?

**Hayley:** I read through what my teacher has written and what my mark is and if I don’t know then I ask, I don’t usually rewrite but I do read through it.

**Researcher:** Why don’t you rewrite it?

**Hayley:** Sometimes ‘cause my mistake isn’t big, it might just be a few characters, so it isn’t worth rewriting.

They practised in their exercise books, and this was deemed as adequate preparation for small errors. On the other hand, if they made mistakes in sentence structure, they were willing to rewrite whole paragraphs to remember the order of sentences, as the transcripts below show.

**Isabelle:** I read it and I try to understand where I have gone wrong and I know I am supposed to rewrite where I have gone wrong but sometimes I forget to do that.

**Researcher:** Okay, are you supposed to rewrite the whole essay or part of the essay?

**Isabelle:** When I remember I usually only rewrite the part I have made a mistake on, 'cause usually my mistake is occasionally my sentence structure is the wrong way around so I usually just rewrite that paragraph or that sentence so I can remember the order.

The content in essays that was cited as not interesting or grammatically incorrect was referred to as 'big mistakes'. Chinese students were willing to rewrite their entire essays in the belief that this was an improvement strategy.

**Kurt:** I read through it [feedback] first and then see how I can change my essay to make it better and if I don't understand the feedback I go and ask my teacher and see if he can give me specific examples of how I can change my essay to make it better.

**Researcher:** Okay, are you rewriting the whole sentences or just the part with mistakes?

**Kurt:** For Chinese I don't rewrite the whole sentences, I just sometimes rewrite the specific error but I don't rewrite the whole essay.

**Researcher:** Are you using a special exercise book for that one or just a writing paper—what are you doing?

**Kurt:** If it is a character mistake I just practise it a few times then I can remember, but if it is like the whole structure is wrong then I rewrite it and I give it to my teacher and he can correct it again. So it depends on how big the mistake is.

**Researcher:** What is your big mistake?

**Kurt:** If the whole structure is wrong or the content is not interesting enough, the point is not good enough.

Chinese students preferred error correction to error identification or peer-correction. The reason offered was that it allowed students to identify places where they made errors, and with error correction they were certain that they would not make the same errors again. Students felt this strategy helped them to remember not to repeat errors.

Chinese students said that they preferred error identification in their language study. However, other students felt that error correction was most beneficial; they stated that corrections in your feedback would help you know what you needed to do in future essays.

**Isabelle:** Yes I think it is error correction [the most beneficial method] because I know what I have done wrong and then I can try and fix it as opposed to error identification. Sometime I can't always figure out where I have gone wrong and can make me feel passive to figure out my own errors.

These data reveal that error identification was regarded as a valuable learning method because students had to discover their own answers and would learn from that process. On the other hand, error correction was seen as presenting what was incorrect and viewed as a strategy that showed how to change and improve essay writing. Chinese students expressed confidence when reliable teachers provided the solutions. Whilst they noted they liked error correction, contrastingly Chinese students did not think error correction was beneficial for their own learning. Students wanted to know what was incorrect but also did not like the uncertainty.

**Jacob:** I like it better when it is error identification 'cause I can have a think about it and sometimes the teacher will come up and ask me about it or I can ask the teacher. They can explain where I went wrong and what I did, cause [with] error correction you don't really need to ask the teacher cause the correction is there, but [with] error identification you have to ask them most of the time and you have to explain to yourself why it is like this and why it is wrong, so I definitely like error identification better.

**Kurt:** I think error correction [is beneficial for me] cause I like the idea of having a mark. I like knowing what I get and also knowing which part I need to improve on and I sometimes like the teacher actually writing the right answer so I get a better idea. So error correction is most beneficial.

Chinese students reported little experience with peer-correction but were definitely not in favour of it. This might have been because all students in VCE Units 3 & 4 classes at Polyglot College in this study were learning their second language, consequently none of them could be regarded as an expert in the subject. Moreover, some reported being uncomfortable about peers reading their essays.

**Researcher:** Do you want to [experience peer-correction]?

**Kurt:** Sometimes I want to [experience peer-correction] cause I can hear more about other people's opinions, but I am not really comfortable about peers reading my essays.

**Researcher:** Why is that?

**Kurt:** I am not sure I can pick up all the mistakes.

Chinese students are not keen to receive feedback of uncertain quality from peers, and they are not confident in their own ability to correct peers' work.

**Researcher:** For you, which one [feedback method] is most beneficial?

**Hayley:** Error correction.

**Researcher:** Why is that?

**Hayley:** Because it [Chinese] is our second language and we don't know enough for peer-correction. When a teacher corrects it is easy for us to know where our mistakes are and it is easy for us to see what not to do next time.

#### **4.2.2 Case Study Two: French**

French students saw studying French as a second language in VCE as valuable. French students believed studying VCE French would allow them to understand the culture and help with job opportunities in the future. They also revealed that their main reason for studying VCE French was the scaling in the ATAR. According to 2013 scaling reports (VTAC, 2013), French second language was scaled and increased by an average of 11 points (Appendix 3).

Like their Chinese student counterparts, French students had encountered a substantial increase in the demands of their subject between middle school and VCE. They reported that French took up a lot of their study time. French students had to write one to two essays a week, but struggled to find time as they had other VCE subjects to study. Several of the interviewees

asserted that immediate feedback helped students to improve and offered them confidence in their writing skills.

**Edward:** I, yes, I find getting feedback really good 'cause say you write three essays and hand them in at the same time' you see the same mistakes coming back' and you know that is what you need to work on' and say you work on that and you see the mistake isn't there then it is quite an immense sense of ... you feel pretty proud that you made a difference and you are getting better and it takes quite a lot of time for the teachers to mark so I don't feel like I need to get the essay back the next day.

**Grace:** I do like it [immediately receiving feedback] but sometimes my teacher doesn't hand it back. I like it when she hands it back not straight after but a day after.

**Frank:** Yeah the sooner the better I guess because after you have done [written the essay], it is still in your mind so to have feedback quickly helps you improve better I think.

After receiving their feedback, French students read through their all mistakes with their written essays and used the internet to find answers if they were unsure about what was incorrect and how to make it right. Thus, instead of rewriting their essays again, French students preferred to write new essays.

**Grace:** I look through the correction and if there are ticks, so I look through the correction and I take note of them.

**Researcher:** You rewrite just the mistakes or the whole essay?

**Grace:** I think I rewrite my corrections but also I look it up on the internet if I don't understand.

French students referred to errors of grammar as major errors, and content and structure of essays were seen as minor errors. Students stated that they believed essay content and structure were not difficult to improve.

**Frank:** I read through it first, so looking at all the feedback and look at the bits like mistakes I could improve on. I look at more the big errors rather than the smaller ones 'cause I know quite often the smaller ones are [due to] a lack in concentration whereas the bigger ones are something I could work on and improve, so I guess I look for those ones more.

**Researcher:** You mean the bigger ones, what is that? Grammar or what?

**Frank:** Yeah well I guess if I am getting the whole concept in the grammar wrong rather than just misspelling a word or something like that.

**Researcher:** What about the content or structure?

**Frank:** Yeah I think the structure stuff is good to get feedback on 'cause that is something pretty easy to improve on and obviously you get marks for structure and it's not really hard to get it right, and by looking at the errors it makes it easy to get those marks.

French students believed that error correction was a good method for addressing small errors such as spelling errors, but error identification was the better feedback method for big errors such as grammatical mistakes. I found these responses noteworthy, as they contrasted with the opinions of the Chinese and Japanese students. Chinese and Japanese students agreed that error correction was suitable for major mistakes and error identification for the smaller mistakes. Students of Chinese and Japanese character-based languages saw making errors in characters or particles as simple but noted that it was more challenging for them to solve grammatical errors.

**Edward:** I think you learn a lot more from this one [error identification] because you have to read it and then you have to find out what is wrong with it, whereas with this one [error correction] the answer is given to you and you think oh yeah I know that and then you forget about it. So I mean there is sometimes ... it is almost this is what is needed for spelling whereas this is better for grammar.

French students did not offer positive responses about error correction. Students noted that they did not have to go through their essays and find the answers after receiving error correction feedback, the errors were corrected and the answers were in front of them. Students did not need to work it out for themselves, and that was not seen as a strategy for improving their mistakes.

**Edward:** Probably error identification [is better than error correction] cause have to think about what I have done wrong.

**Researcher:** Why do you have to think?

**Edward:** Well I think if I have to think about what I have done wrong I am less likely to make the error again, so every time I make an error and I revise it then it gets better and eventually I am not making errors, which is what I want for the exam obviously. It takes time and ... I don't have the time to revise every error because I have other subjects. I won't have time to [re]write an essay, so that is probably where error correction comes in 'cause you can see the correction and you don't have to have the time seeing what it is. But sometimes you just look at it and think you know what it is but the next time you make the same mistake...

Edward noted that if he revisited his errors and reflected on them, he was less likely to make the same errors again. He believed this helped to progress his language skills. French students also stated they did not have enough time to revise all errors themselves due to the time needed to study other VCE subjects. Error correction was a convenient method for busy students, but it was not the most beneficial and effective method for their learning. In contrast, some French students claimed that error correction was the more effective method for their learning. They stated that they wanted to know exactly what was incorrect and how they should correct it for the next task.

**Frank:** I think that error correction probably works the best, I mean compared to error identification, cause you don't have to go in and try to find what you were meant to do and you might go and look something up and see how to do it and what you find might not be right anyway, so it's a lot more effective to have it

corrected for you. I think peer-correction is good as well 'cause by correcting someone else's work you help yourself as well.

Grace also commented she was not fond of error identification and cited error correction as the most beneficial method for her learning.

**Grace:** In my opinion I don't really like error identification.

**Researcher:** Why not?

**Grace:** Because I just like [them] teachers giving it to me like what I am supposed to write.

**Researcher:** Which is the most beneficial [method] for you?

**Grace:** Probably error correction. Because the teacher gives me what I need to improve on, so I know what I need to improve on so then I can make it better for next time.

French students reported less experience with peer-correction than other feedback methods. This was similar to Chinese students, however French students in this study noted that peer-correction would help them and other students improve their writing skills.

**Frank:** I guess it's because it [peer-correction] forces you [to think about] what mistakes [you] are making and you are thinking how to do it right, so it helps you as well.

Lundstrom and Baker (2009) claimed that second language learner's writing skills improve when reviewing peers' essays. The students in my study noted that learning how to give peer feedback and corrections helps to improve a student's own writing skills.

**Grace:** I think peer-correction is good because it helps you, because you are correcting other people's mistakes but also helps the other person as well but we don't really do that in class.

**Researcher:** Why is that?

**Grace:** Too time-consuming probably.

**Edward:** We don't do a lot of peer-correction at all because obviously we are not all fluent in French or perfect, not like where we can talk about what we have written.

Lundstrom and Baker (2009) also noted in their research that peer-correction was more effective for students with lower language proficiency, as beginners have a lot more to learn than relatively advanced students. Nonetheless, Lundstrom and Baker's (2009) study entirely supports giving feedback to peers and receiving feedback from peers. Their research, plus the data evaluated in this thesis, suggests that peer-correction is an effective strategy for advancing second language students' writing skills.

#### **4.2.3 Case Study Three: Japanese**

Four Japanese VCE Units 3 & 4 students responded that studying Japanese in VCE was enjoyable and offered them new opportunities for the future and knowledge about Japanese culture and people. They also mentioned that there was less fun in VCE Japanese study than in lessons experienced in the middle school years at Polyglot College.

**Aaron:** I think that the workload increases rapidly as you progress and you are not ready for it after year ten and year nine. The lower years has [sic] less work and then the workload increases

massively and it is sort of unexpected and sort of takes you by shock.

Japanese students were the most concerned about their ATAR and scaling for end-of-year examinations. Studying VCE Japanese was also seen as taking up a lot of time and the workload as substantial. Japanese students expressed they were under a lot of pressure.

**Researcher:** Do you enjoy studying VCE Japanese as a second language?

**Christine:** I do enjoy it, I like the style of the VCE and how we have to do SACs and it prepares us for, like, the end-of-year exam. I think it is very helpful for the end-of-year exam and helps us learn the language.

**Researcher:** Which part is really enjoyable in learning a language in VCE?

**Christine:** I would say learning the culture in VCE, so maybe just learning the grammar points and vocabulary and learning how to construct your own sentences and being able to truly understand Japanese culture by understanding passages.

Japanese students noted they like to receive their feedback immediately because they still remembered accurately what they wrote in their essays. Danielle and Brendan informed me that with immediate feedback she was able to recall thoughts in her mind from her essay, consequently this correction made sense for her when she read through the feedback and comments.

**Danielle:** I think it is good to get it [feedback] immediately, because you kind of still have the same thought, like, you haven't completely

forgotten what you have written so it so good to get the feedback to change it before it is seen.

**Brendan:** It's [immediately getting your feedback is] good because you know what you have just written and you might think, OK I know this part sort of isn't right, and when you read it you think I know how to fix it and mentally you just think about it.

After receiving their feedback, Japanese students usually read thorough the points in which teachers had identified errors and made comments and then rewrote individual sentences. They noted that they sometimes rewrote before and sometimes after the sentence, but never the entire essay. Christine mentioned that she read the correct sentence aloud a few times to hear what it would sound like. She believed this technique assisted her to avoid repeating errors in her SACs and examinations.

**Christine:** I just read over what mistakes I have made and see the teacher's correction and say his correct version out loud to see how it sounds, just to let it sink in as to how it would sound out loud. I wouldn't rewrite the entire passage unless my teacher asks me to and I wouldn't rewrite the entire essay.

Danielle, on the other hand, did not rewrite or make notes at all, instead she just placed corrected essays in a special folder as a reference for the future.

**Danielle:** I read through all the feedback and take note of where I have a mistake, like if I have made the same mistake over again, like if I have used the wrong partial or drawn the wrong character.

**Researcher:** So you make a special note of these?

**Danielle:** Yes, a mental note.

**Researcher:** Do you mean you write in a special book or in a notepad?

**Danielle:** Well I have a special folder that my essays go in, I don't really write down the mistakes I have made because they have already been written down so I can just [look] through the folder and see the mistakes when I need to.

Like their Chinese and French counterparts, Japanese students had limited experience of peer-correction. Several interviewees noted that it was good to discuss essay ideas with peers and that Japanese students believed this was a good learning process; however, not everyone regarded this as useful. Several students told me they did not have sufficient skills or confidence to examine their peer's writing compositions. The students commented (as did Yang, Badger, and Yu (2006)) that their teacher, as a professional, was more experienced and trustworthy than their peers.

**Aaron:** Peer-correction is more difficult because you are never one hundred per cent sure if it is correct what they are saying. So whereas, if it is the teacher, you know it is right cause it is their job to make sure it is right, and also as a male we are quite competitive with our scores and as a result the wanting to correct others is minimal.

**Brendan:** Peer-correction only really works when there is someone in the class who is very good or is better than you at Japanese.

**Christine:** Peer-correction is good because you learn much more from each other as students; it can also be bad, because if your peer doesn't know then everyone gets it wrong.

Danielle mentioned that after she receives feedback from her teacher and when she still doesn't understand or is not sure about her teacher's comments, peer-correction helps her clarify her understanding. For Danielle, a peer can explain to you in a way you understand.

**Danielle:** I think peer-correction is good if you've got help from your teacher and then it hasn't really helped you, and then they [peers] can teach you in a way that you can understand it.

As previously stated, Japanese students agreed that error correction was beneficial for big errors such as grammar, content and structures, but for minor errors such as particle mistakes and character mistakes they needed error identification.

**Danielle:** Because it [error correction] clearly marks the error you have made and shows you the correct way to do it so you won't get it wrong again, whereas [with] error identification there is still a chance you might correct yourself wrong.

**Aaron:** I feel that my errors that I make aren't an overall sentence structure, it is normally just I spelt a word wrong. I put the wrong particle somewhere or I used the wrong verb. I feel like it is of benefit to me to go back and find my mistakes so I don't make it [sic] again.

**Brendan:** In saying that error identification is also useful, obviously you know what you have to fix it but you have to find out how to fix it, and it is part of the learning process ... error correction is helpful when you are stretched for time, like, when you don't have much time, 'cause you know what you did wrong and you know how to change it and you might just think about it or write it out a few times or whatever.

Error identification was mentioned as a way of giving students more opportunities to self-correct, unlike error correction, where students already had all errors corrected by teachers. However, Christine explained how she did not realise the meaning of symbols in her error identification feedback at first.

**Christine:** When my teacher corrects my work he put [sic] like K or P. I didn't know what they meant until halfway through the year, so yeah, I didn't know, I don't really care about identification, I care more about the correction.

Danielle stated that she wanted to be sure not to repeat these errors in her next essay.

**Danielle:** Because [error correction] clearly marks the error you have made and shows you the correct way to do it, so you won't get it wrong again, whereas error identification there is still a chance you might correct yourself wrong [sic].

Christine also stated that it was good to have a discussion with peers about your ideas. She believed it helped her gain depth and breadth for her content.

**Christine:** For content or structure I would say error correction or peer-correction [is the best method of feedback], 'cause for essay writing peer-correction would help, you could discuss ideas with your friend and structure your essay better and have interesting comments. Error correction, I guess it is good feedback from your teacher because he is marking your essay so it is good feedback.

Regarding the colour of the pen, Japanese students commented that any colour of pen was acceptable, as long as they could see it clearly in the corrections and comments on their essays. Too many comments in their feedback with lots of red pen made students feel dejected; even though students wanted corrections for their improvement.

**Danielle:** Well my teacher will usually underline, so not completely cross out, just underline where it is wrong and then an annotation on the side, so it can be overwhelming if there are a lots of mistakes, but I think it is good to see all the mistakes you have made rather than some of the mistakes not being pointed out.

Other Japanese students noted:

**Aaron:** I like writing essays the most, I feel like it is the most open aspect of the language whereas the listening and reading is more narrowed down, however you sort of, it sounds clichéd, but you get to express yourself more in writing, not creatively but you can use the various grammar patterns you've learnt throughout the

year whereas you are more restricted with the other two segments [listening and reading].

**Danielle:**

I probably like writing the most because when we have a writing SAC we have learnt about a specific topic, so all of the writing questions are focused on that topic so you can always think of things to write about.

In this chapter I presented an exploration of students' questionnaire data and semi-formal interview transcripts are together with a summary of the results. In order to respond to the primary research question of this study: which feedback method is the most effective for improving students' writing, a discussion and detailed analysis is presented in the following chapter five.

## **Chapter 5: DISCUSSION**

Data presented in the previous chapter indicates all students enjoyed studying second languages in the VCE program and were optimistic about acquiring second language skills, even though they found languages a very time-consuming subject. The data also showed that students believed that immediate feedback played a significant part in the development of second language writing skills.

Prior to discussing the findings in relation to the paper's main research question, I will review the research results relating to the secondary questions posed in Chapter 1:

1. Which feedback methods or strategies do students prefer? Why?
2. Which feedback methods or strategies do students think are beneficial to them? Why?

### **5.1 Students' Preferences**

According to my research, VCE second language students prefer receiving error correction over error identification and peer-correction. The vast majority of students felt that it was important for them to have as few errors as possible in their essays, thus they preferred to have answers provided on their corrected essays. They preferred teacher corrections rather than seeking answers by themselves due to the risk of continued errors with the latter method. Students sought reassurance on their writing. As a result, error identification and peer-correction were not suitable for their needs, and viewed with uncertainty by students. Students could identify where they made errors, but had no guarantee that the corrections they found or made were accurate; they had no confidence in their answers. If students could not locate accurate answers, it made them feel both uncomfortable and annoyed. Consequently students would have to ask teachers for help later. Students preferred to obtain answers immediately from their teachers, as they are experts in their fields. Chinese and Japanese students stated that

as they were learning second languages, none of them had high-level skills in the languages, and therefore students were not confident in their ability to correct their peers' work. Time was also a key factor for VCE students since they had other subjects to study and learning languages, especially through writing essays, took up a substantial amount of their time. Students wanted to use time efficiently, therefore they favoured error correction feedback which they were able to read through and immediately learn before the next SAC or end-of-year examination. Immediacy of feedback was a crucial point for students as well. Students preferred to receive their feedback no more than a few days after submission, otherwise they forgot what they wrote in their essays (including language, ideas and topic development). After one week, students did not recall what they had written in their essays and therefore lost their motivation to improve their writing skills for any future essays.

Even students receiving essays with red pen all over on their writing stated that they preferred the red pen rather than a similar colour to their own writing.

Students enjoyed learning other languages in VCE because they regarded it as important to be able to communicate with people and understand their culture, as well as giving them future opportunities for travel and work. All students expressed concern about their ATAR scores; this was because they were in VCE Units 3 & 4. I became somewhat dejected about the student's focus on advantages with respect to ATAR scores as a reason for studying language in the interviews; however it cannot be helped for students in the current educational system in Australia.

Chinese and Japanese students commented that it was good to have error identification for small errors such as particle and character mistakes and error correction for big errors such as grammatical and content errors; in contrast, French students preferred the complete opposite. Chinese and Japanese students had more confidence with their character or particles than

grammar and content, but, French students had more confidence with grammar and content; 100% of French students reported that they liked to write essays.

## **5.2 Students' Perceptions of the Most Beneficial Form of Feedback**

With respect to the second question, which method do students think most beneficial, I found that students often responded with answers framed from two different realities: “Yes, it is beneficial for language acquisition” or “Yes, it is beneficial for me as a VCE student right now, so I like it.” An analysis and close look of the data from the semi-structured interviews and the survey data assists to address this question.

### **5.2.1 Error Correction**

Most students asserted that error correction was the most beneficial feedback method for helping them to acquire language. However I suspect those students who responded meant (as I stated above) “in my current situation, error correction is a beneficial method for me, so I like it and am comfortable with it.”

### **5.2.2 Error Identification**

Students also reflected that error identification was the most beneficial strategy to acquire a second language, but the challenge to using this method was the VCE and its time constraints. Chinese and French students commented that after receiving error identification you must think for yourself and explain what you did wrong; they believed this process helped to improve their writing skills. Japanese students were unsure about error identification; this was due to the fact they needed to find out the right answers using their teacher's clues, but they needed assurance that the answers they found were accurate. A large majority of Chinese students found the error identification strategy very useful and another 14% quite useful. Similarly, all French students

believed error identification was the most useful feedback method. Conversely, only 58% of Japanese students said error identification was the most useful method, and Japanese students two (11%) characterised it as an entirely useless method (because it was too time-consuming). Data indicated that it was very important to Japanese students that the teacher point out their grammar errors rather than any other errors, hence when students received error identification feedback on grammar, they found it difficult to locate accurate answers by themselves and became frustrated with the process. On the other hand, Chinese and French students always examined comments carefully and considered content errors as very important.

### **5.2.3 Peer-correction**

Over half of all language students in this study responded that peer-correction was neither useless nor useful. Two of the seven Chinese students considered peer-correction useless, but none of the French students; five of the 17 Japanese students believed peer-correction was totally useless. Across all three languages, however, seven students identified peer-correction as a valuable method of acquiring language. Their reason for not preferring it, irrelevant of its worth, was that to examine a peer's work and offer feedback was too difficult. Students expressed that their own language skills were too low to participate in this strategy, even extending this to being unable to recognise their own errors. Students did not state that this process involved higher-order thinking skills; they were more concerned with their perceived lack of skills and the emotive factor of having someone else read their work (it was "uncomfortable"). This is reflected in the finding that 30% of Chinese and Japanese students stated peer-correction was a useless method. Why no French students regarded peer-correction as useless is an interesting question. French students in this study were seen to be willing to experience more challenge to progress their writing skills. French students stated that error identification was a great strategy for addressing grammatical errors and content errors, and

error corrections were useful for spelling and vocabulary choices. The reason for this could lie in the fact that French is a Romance language and more closely aligned with English than either Chinese or Japanese, thus giving English-speaking French students more confidence to use this feedback process. French is phonogrammatic, whereas Chinese is logogrammatic and Japanese is, as mentioned previously, both a phonogrammatic and logogrammatic language.

### **5.3 Effective Feedback**

The main research question from chapter one is:

- Which feedback method is the most effective for improving second language students' writing skills?

Hattie (2009) noted that feedback is the most influential part of the learning process, therefore the type and timing of feedback will impact on learning effectiveness. According to Hattie, effective feedback answers three questions: Where am I going? How am I going? and Where to next? This was evidenced in my (much smaller) study in the number of times students used the word “know” in their responses; they wanted to know where they were going and how they were doing in their final year of VCE. All students in this study had the goal of successfully completing VCE Units 3 & 4, feedback therefore was intrinsically and extrinsically tied to achieving higher marks in SACs and end-of-year examinations. Students in this study were keen to know how they were doing in writing their second language essays. Hattie (2009) presented a model of feedback, each feedback question working on four levels: the task level, process level, self-regulation level and self-level, and those four levels influence effectiveness for learning.

### **5.3.1 Error Correction**

Students studying all three languages deemed error correction the most valuable of the three methods I evaluated. This feedback method was the first level of Hattie's feedback model—task level. Immediate error correction provides students with more confidence and immediately students can see where they are at and what they must do next. Hattie (2007) asserted that too much reliance on the task level of feedback forces students to only focus on instant achievement and not the skills to attain longer-term goals. The VCE students I interviewed stated that without having advanced skills in their second languages, their preference was to receive error correction feedback. Teacher generated error correction offered the certainty that the corrections were accurate; this point was very important for students, because feedback was seen as a mechanism to reduce the gap between understanding and learning goals. Students in this study needed accuracy to attain the goal of high examination grades in the VCE. Nevertheless, while students stated that error correction was preferred at this time, meaning more beneficial for their VCE goals, they were clear that error identification was more beneficial for thinking about errors and an effective long-term strategy for learning a second language.

### **5.3.2 Error Identification**

A sizeable majority of students responded that error identification was a useful feedback method. (although more identified error correction as useful). 12% students claimed it was a useless feedback method. Error identification is the second level in Hattie's model, the processing level. Students receive a clue indicating where they made mistakes; they then reflect and critically identify answers themselves. "Whether students engage in error correction strategies following error detection depends on their motivation to continue to pursue the goal or to reduce the gap between current knowledge and the goal" (Hattie, 2007, p. 93).

As a teacher of Japanese of many years standing, I consider error identification to be a more effective feedback process than error correction. It involves a deeper learning process and is not focused on achieving short-term and potentially short-lived goals. Students valued error identification as a beneficial feedback process; however, at the time of this study their goal was to achieve higher marks in SACs and end-of-year examinations, which precluded identification of the feedback method as their preferred strategy. Although VCE students must focus on short-term goals, they were still aware of how important it is to deliberate and seek correct answers. A possible reason that most Japanese students categorised error identification as a “useless strategy” is because it is relatively hard for them to identify correct answers in grammar. Brendan viewed error identification as a useful and effective learning process, noting that as a student using this method you must find out and discover the answers; however, he conceded that VCE students have no time to engage with this learning process due to time and pressure. Christine stated she was unsure of the meaning of the annotated codes with error identification, therefore she ignored those codes and only read through the teacher’s comments. Students’ unfamiliarity with codes in error identification, and therefore not knowing what they should do, may have been a widespread issue. Error identification does not answer the question “Where am I?” for some students, therefore they cited this feedback as a useless method.

### **5.3.3 Peer-correction**

All three sets of second-language students had minimal experience of peer-correction in language classes, even if they had experienced the strategy in other subject areas. This is the third, self-regulation level in Hattie’s (2007) feedback model. Self-regulation, including self-assessment, is a highly effective and challenging level; students must assess themselves using all their knowledge and skills, thus need to have confidence in themselves. When I consider VCE Units 3 & 4 students’ language proficiency and maturity, I conclude that self-regulation

level feedback is beyond the capacity of many. Accordingly, only 23% of students saw peer-correction as useful. VCE students' maturity does not lend itself to strong metacognitive skills in acquisition of second language skills; they cannot reflect deeply about the methods that promote effective learning and why. Also, Japanese and Chinese are languages that use logograms (Japanese is one of the few languages that use both logograms and phonograms), but French is a phonogrammatic language, like English. There may well be a connection between these differences in language structures and reluctance to use peer-correction.

According to this study, VCE second language students do not regard peer-correction as an effective feedback method for essay writing. Students are still unsure of the correctness of their responses, and do not have sufficient confidence in themselves to offer such feedback.

#### **5.3.4 Students' Views of Feedback**

All participants claimed that immediate feedback was beneficial for their learning and that all three feedback methods—error correction, error identification and peer-correction—facilitated their language acquisition. Whilst collecting data, I detected that students tended to misunderstand feedback. Their view of feedback was that it was correction, to get the right answers from somebody; the teacher was trusted to provide answers or offer corrections. Students could then learn the correct answers quickly and apply them in the next task. Therefore, students considered error correction the most beneficial feedback process. Some students decided not to rewrite entire essays, only to rewrite incorrect sentences, and others rewrote specific words or sections and/or sounded them out by reading the corrections aloud.

In this chapter I discussed the results of analysis of data collected to understand students' viewpoints on the three feedback methods evaluated in the study. There is clear evidence that the immediacy of feedback was as an important factor for students who participated in this study.

## **Chapter 6: CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

### **6.1 Conclusions Regarding the Initial Research Questions**

- Which feedback method is the most effective for improving second language students' writing skills?

I explored three methods of giving feedback on VCE Units 3 & 4 students' writing: error correction, error identification and peer-correction. To answer the main research question, I formulated two sub-questions based around the preferences and benefit of students' views.

VCE Units 3 & 4 Chinese, French and Japanese language students prefer to receive error correction feedback on their essays, because they do not have enough time for other methods that might be more beneficial in the long term. Moreover, they need to have accurate answers and are not confident in their ability to identify them. However students did note that the most beneficial feedback on their writing is not just error correction. Students preferred the error correction feedback process and responded to it as a best feedback process for their learning right now. However they are not beneficial and effective method. Because students do not think themselves, somehow they noted that in order to acquire true knowledge of languages students must reflect and critically think for themselves and learn from it. Students in VCE Units 3 & 4 are very focused on achieving high marks in the ATAR at the end of the year. New (1999) investigated the correction process of students using a software program in French writing. Results noted that students saw 'content' as a valuable component in their writing however noted that they did not revise content much. New also found similarly to this study, that students found it difficult to rewrite their ideas with further clarity. Students needed clearer instructions in learning to revise their writing including suggestions that were based on the linguistic grammatical and lexical aspects.

As a result the question to the answer is still open. Which feedback method is the most effective for second language students' writing skill? Clearly much more research is needed to answer this question. My study found that effectiveness and quality of feedback is indeed dependent on teachers. When the person giving feedback and person receiving feedback put them together into the feedback process which might be error correction, error identification, peer-correction and self-correction striving to improve their skills together, that feedback method becomes the most effective process. Hattie and Yates (2014) listed nine key points to help describe when feedback becomes an effective element. One of their key points is that "the feedback process resides in that what is received and interpreted by a student, rather than what a teacher gives or believes has taken place" (Hattie & Yates, 2014, p. 55). Hattie and Yates (2014) also indicated that feedback becomes powerful when the learning environment welcomes and recognises errors as a positive part of developing skills. Students learn and progressing their skills in the feedback process becomes an effective learning tool. "One element common to both reformulation and feedback is the fact that they both incorporate problem-solving" (Mantello, 1999, p.130). This study concludes with the summative finding that it is a vital for a second language teacher to explicitly select a type of feedback rather than merely provide corrections to students' writing. This informed choice and explicit use of a selected feedback process offers a quality focus for the student to work with in the improvement cycle.

## **6.2 Possible Limitations**

This study has some limitations. Firstly, my study involved only 30 VCE Units 3 & 4 second language students studying only three languages, so the generalisability of the results is limited. I did not consider the genders or native languages of the students in assessing their views about the three feedback methods. Another limitation is that, due to time and resource limitations, I

only investigated three feedback methods, so it is possible that other feedback methods indicates the alternative results.

Despite these limitations, the findings have important implications for the understanding of feedback methods on student's writing compositions. It can be presumed that all feedback methods are beneficial for student's writing skills equally; students clearly need to engage with the feedback process to perceive their own errors. If students are able to see their errors, it is possible to revise their compositions and progress their writing skills towards their maximum potential.

### **6.3 Implications for Professional Practice and Further Research**

Most language teachers, including me, commonly use error correction in class and students are used to receiving this feedback method. It is clear that more research is needed to determine the best feedback strategies and methods in second languages classrooms. Using more and different feedback methods when students are younger or at beginner level of language proficiency is a possible strategy. If students become more used to experiencing peer-correction and error identification and even self-correction learning second languages research results may differ in the future. Like Mantello (1997), who noted that when teachers choose a feedback method or strategy, they should reflect on important considerations such as problem-solving, students' language proficiency levels, differentiation such as explicitness for weaker students and methods for students with stronger skills, I found that teachers need to explore a variety of feedback methods and reflect on their own teaching.

#### **6.4 Final comments**

The feedback process in second language learning does not involve merely returning linguistic-based corrections on student's content answers. It is an interactive and indispensable learning journey for both teachers and students. The inclusion of students in the feedback process is an important factor for effective improvement, as is the choice of feedback method which needs to vary and be explicitly presented and described for students.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Explanatory statements

MONASH University



3<sup>rd</sup> September 2013

#### Explanatory Statement Parent/Guardian

#### **Title: An investigation of effective feedback processes involving the writing skill in VCE second language classrooms**

**This information sheet is for you to keep.**

My name is Miki Thomas and I am conducting a research project with Ms Maria Gindidis an academic in the Faculty of Education, Monash University. This research forms an important part of the thesis in my Masters of Education Degree.

You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision.

With permission from the Principal of your College, I have permission to distribute this letter for recruiting participants. In replying to this letter, I will obtain your contact details.

I believe that the feedback process is an important element for developing second language writing skills. I would like to invite your child who is currently studying a second language at the VCE level to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision with your child.

#### **The aim/purpose of the research**

The goal of this study is to investigate whether giving immediate feedback on students' second language writing has any learning benefits; and which feedback strategy is the most effective?

In this study I would like to research a number of written student feedback methods. This research aims to explore the various forms of feedback from VCE second language students' writing and how these methods and strategies best develop their writing skills. Moreover I would like to examine the view of students themselves and how they value the feedback provided on their writing compositions.

The first of the feedback methods to be researched in this paper focuses on teacher error corrections and teacher comments accompanied by a grade or mark. Teacher error corrections and comments with a grade or mark is referred to as "**error correction**" in this study. The

other two feedback methods explored and researched in this paper will be teacher error identification, referred to as “**error identification**” and “**peer-correction**”.

**Error correction:** This is including the teacher corrections on all the “surface errors”: grammar, vocabulary, and characters. Also the correction on “content errors” on student’s writing by crossing out perceived errors and providing the correct answers. The teacher writes an overall comment regarding their errors at the end of writing piece with a mark or grade on the criteria.

**Error identification:** The teacher indicates the place where a perceived error occurs by using underlines, brackets or circling it; the teacher codes<sup>5</sup> under or next to students’ writing without any commentary or marks.

**Peer-correction:** This is a correction style where the writer becomes a reader. Students evaluate, discuss and exchange their opinions on each other’s writing using a conference style process.

### **What does the research involve?**

Students who voluntarily participate in this research, will be asked to complete the consent form. I will contact volunteer students via email. The study involves completing a brief survey and participating in semi-structured interviews. Students will be asked to comment on how they think and see each feedback process and how they use the feedback they are currently receiving.

### **How much time will the research take?**

The student questionnaires will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and will be done in their spare time using their iPad. The interview will be conducted in student’s spare time during school hours in a public area and will take no more than 45 minutes.

### **Inconvenience/discomfort**

Classes and important study time will not be disrupted. The research will not cause any level of inconvenience and disadvantage to your child as it is conducted during their spare time. Participating in this research has no involvement or link to assessment tasks with the VCE course your child is studying.

### **Payment**

Participants receive no payment. This participation is voluntary.

### **Can I withdraw from the research?**

Being in this study is voluntary and your child is under no obligation to consent to participation. However, if you do consent to your child’s participation, you may withdraw from further

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<sup>5</sup> Codes: a shorthand method of correction/feedback often using symbols or characters and is usually unique to the person doing the correction.

participation at any stage but you will only be able to withdraw prior to having the interview transcript approved.

### Confidentiality

Your child is guaranteed full confidentiality if they participate in this research. Pseudonyms will be used to protect all participants; no identifiable information will be used in any report about the research. In addition, digital transcripts will be password protected on the computer.

### Storage of data

Data collected will be stored in accordance with Monash University regulations, kept on University premises, in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

### Results

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Miki Thomas [REDACTED]. The findings are accessible for one year after the completion of the research project.

If you would like to contact the <b>researchers</b> about any aspect of this study, please contact the Supervisor:	If you have a <b>complaint</b> concerning the manner in which this research <b>A5/2013 - CF13/2006 – 2013001019</b> is being conducted, please contact:
Ms. Maria Gindidis Monash University Education Building 6 Room 324 Clayton Campus Wellington Rd Clayton Victoria 3168  [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	<b>Executive Officer</b> <b>Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)</b> <b>Building 3e Room 111</b> <b>Research Office</b> <b>Monash University VIC 3800</b>  [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Thank you.

[REDACTED]

Miki Thomas



3<sup>rd</sup> September 2013

## **Explanatory Statement – Student groups**

### **Title: An investigation of effective feedback processes involving the writing skill in VCE second language classrooms**

**This information sheet is for you to keep.**

My name is Miki Thomas and I am conducting a research project with Ms Maria Gindidis an academic in the Faculty of Education, Monash University. This research forms an important part of the thesis in my Masters of Education Degree.

You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision.

With permission from the Principal of your College, I have permission to distribute this letter for recruiting participants. In replying to this letter, I will obtain your contact details.

I believe that the feedback process is an important element for developing second language writing skills. I would like to invite you as a student who is currently studying a second language at the VCE level to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision with your parent.

#### **The aim/purpose of the research**

The goal of this study is to investigate whether giving immediate feedback on your second language writing has any learning benefit; and which feedback strategy is more effective?

In this study I would like to research a number of written feedback methods. This research aims to explore the various forms of feedback from your writing in the second language you are studying and how these methods and strategies best develop your writing skills. I would like to examine your view as a student and how you value the feedback provided on your writing compositions.

The first of the feedback methods to be researched in this paper focuses on teacher error corrections and teacher comments accompanied by a grade or mark. Teacher error corrections and comments with a grade or mark is referred to as “**error correction**” in this study. The next two feedback methods explored and researched in this paper will be teacher error identification, referred to as “**error identification**” and “**peer-correction**”.

**Error correction:** This includes the teacher corrections on all the “surface errors”: grammar, vocabulary, and characters. Also the correction of “content errors” on your writing by crossing out perceived errors and providing the correct answers. Then the teacher writes an overall comment regarding their errors at the end of writing piece with a mark or grade on the criteria.

**Error identification:** The teacher indicates the place where a perceived error occurs by using underlines, brackets or circling it; the teacher codes<sup>6</sup> under or next to your writing without any commentary or marks.

**Peer-correction:** This is a correction style where you the writer becomes a reader. Students evaluate, discuss and exchange their opinions on each other’s writing using a conference style process.

### **What does the research involve?**

Students who voluntarily participate in this research, will be asked to complete the consent form. I will contact volunteer students via email. The study involves completing a brief survey and participating in semi-structured interviews. As a student you will be asked to comment on how you think and see each feedback process and how you use the feedback you are currently receiving.

### **How much time will the research take?**

The student questionnaires will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and will be done in your spare time using your iPad. The interview will be conducted again in your spare time during school hours in a public area and will take no more than 45 minutes.

### **Inconvenience/discomfort**

Classes and important study time will not be disrupted. The research will not cause any level of inconvenience and disadvantage to you as a participant as it is conducted during your spare time. Participating in this research has no involvement or link to assessment tasks with the VCE course you are studying.

### **Payment**

Participants receive no payment. This participation is voluntary.

### **Can I withdraw from the research?**

Being in this study is voluntary and as a student you are under no obligation to consent to participation. However, if you do consent to participate, you may withdraw from further participation at any stage but you will only be able to withdraw prior to having the interview transcript approved.

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<sup>6</sup> Codes: a shorthand method of correction/feedback often using symbols or characters and is usually unique to the person doing the correction.

## Confidentiality

You are guaranteed full confidentiality if you decide to participate in this research. Pseudonyms will be used to protect all participants; no identifiable information will be used in any report about the research. In addition, digital transcripts will be password protected on the computer.

## Storage of data

Data collected will be stored in accordance with Monash University regulations, kept on University premises, in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

## Results

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Miki Thomas [REDACTED]. The findings are accessible for one year after the completion of the research project.

If you would like to contact the <b>researchers</b> about any aspect of this study, please contact the Supervisor:	If you have a <b>complaint</b> concerning the manner in which this research <b>A5/2013 - CF13/2006 – 2013001019</b> is being conducted, please contact:
Ms. Maria Gindidis Monash University Education Building 6 Room 324 Clayton Campus Wellington Rd Clayton Victoria 3168  [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	<b>Executive Officer</b> <b>Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)</b> <b>Building 3e Room 111</b> <b>Research Office</b> <b>Monash University VIC 3800</b>  [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Thank you.

[REDACTED]  
Miki Thomas

## Appendix 2: Consent forms

### Consent Form-Parent/Guardian

#### **Title: An investigation of effective feedback processes involving the writing skill in VCE second language classrooms**

**NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records.**

I agree that [\(insert full name of participant\)](#) may take part in the above Monash University research project. The project has been explained to [\(insert name of participant\)](#) and to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records.

I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to allow [\(insert full name of participant\)](#) to:

	YES	NO
complete a questionnaire asking about the feedback processes on their writing in the second language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
be interviewed by the researcher and be audio-taped	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I understand that my child's participation is voluntary, that he/she can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that they can withdraw from further participation at any stage but will only be able to withdraw prior to having approved the interviews transcript without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the questionnaire and interview for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics without my signed consent below.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

I understand that data from questionnaire and audio recorded interview will be kept in secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

I understand my son/daughter will remain anonymous at all times in any reports or publications from the project.

I give permission for my son/daughter's voluntary participation in this research.

**Student Participant's name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Participant's Age** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's / Guardian's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's / Guardian's relationship to student participant?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's / Guardian's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## Consent Form-Students

### **Title: An investigation of effective feedback processes involving the writing skill in VCE second language classrooms**

**NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records.**

I (insert full name of participant) agree to participate in the above Monash University research project. The project has been explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records.

**I understand that agreeing to take part means that I will participate in:**

	YES	NO
<b>completing a questionnaire asking about feedback processes on writing in the second language I am studying</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>being interviewed by the researcher and audio-taped</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw from further participation at any stage but will only be able to withdraw prior to having approved the interviews transcript without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the questionnaire and interview for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics without my signed consent below.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

I understand that data from the questionnaire and audio recorded interview will be kept in secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

I understand I will remain anonymous at all times in any reports or publications from the project.

I would like to voluntarily participate in this research and give permission for the researcher to contact me using my school email below.

**Participant's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant's school email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature: \_\_\_ Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3: 2013 Scaling report

### 2013 Scaling Report

VCAA provides VTAC with study scores (relative positions). These study scores are scaled in order to calculate scaled aggregates and Australian Tertiary Admission Ranks (ATARs). Candidates are in the 2013 scaling population if, excluding small studies, they have obtained at least one VCAA study score in 2013, at least four in total, at least one in an English study [English, English (SL), English Language or Literature], but do not already have an ATAR. The scaling population is therefore a subset of the entire population. The means and standard deviations below pertain to the scaling population in 2013.

The following table gives the 2013 scaled means and standard deviations as well as the VTAC scaled study scores (rounded to the nearest integer) corresponding to the study scores of 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50. The formal aggregation process uses VTAC scaled study scores to two decimal places, but the following information gives an indication of how scaling adjusts scores in the various studies.

2013 study	Mean	St. Dev	20	25	30	35	40	45	50
Chinese	40.3	6.8	30	36	41	46	49	52	54
French	40.6	6.6	30	36	41	45	49	52	54
Japanese	38.4	6.6	28	34	39	43	47	50	52

(Adapted from VTAC, December 2013)

## Appendix 4: Questionnaire

### Questionnaire

Please respond to the questions below by circling the number that comes closest to representing your opinion

For example: if you feel your answer to the question is “very important”, then you would circle the 1) see below:

- ① very important
- 2) important
- 3) somewhat important
- 4) not very important
- 5) not important at all

Please remember there are no right or wrong answers. The aim of this survey is to simply gauge different individual opinions.

### Section 1

#### **A. Currently, which language do you study in VCE at school?**

- 1) Chinese
- 2) French
- 3) Japanese

#### **B. Which is the most difficult skill to acquire studying the language?**

- 1) Listening
- 2) Speaking
- 3) Reading
- 4) Writing

#### **C. Do you like writing essays in your language study?**

- 1) totally like
- 2) like
- 3) neither

4) do not like

5) hate

## **Section 2**

**A. How important is it to you to have as few errors as possible in your essay?**

1) very important

2) important

3) somewhat important

4) not very important

5) not important at all

**B. How important is it to you for your teacher to point out your grammatical errors in your essay?**

1) very important

2) important

3) somewhat important

4) not very important

5) not important at all

**C. How important is it to you for your teacher to point out accents and phonics (French) or character errors (Japanese and Chinese) in your essay?**

1) very important

2) important

3) somewhat important

4) not very important

5) not important at all

**D. How important is it to you for your teacher to point out your errors in spelling in your essay?**

1) very important

- 2) important
- 3) somewhat important
- 4) not very important
- 5) not important at all

**E. How important is it to you for your teacher to point out vocabulary choice in your essay?**

- 1) very important
- 2) important
- 3) somewhat important
- 4) not very important
- 5) not important at all

**F. How important is it to you for your teacher to point out your errors in sentence structures and content in your essay?**

- 1) very important
- 2) important
- 3) somewhat important
- 4) not very important
- 5) not important at all

**G. When your teacher returns a marked essay to you, do you look carefully at the comments showing the errors in grammar?**

- 1) always
- 2) usually
- 3) sometimes
- 4) seldom
- 5) never

**H. When your teacher returns a marked essay to you, do you look carefully at the comments showing the errors in accents, phonics or characters?**

- 1) always
- 2) usually
- 3) sometimes
- 4) seldom
- 5) never

**I. When your teacher returns a marked essay to you, do you look carefully at the comments showing the errors in spelling?**

- 6) always
- 7) usually
- 8) sometimes
- 9) seldom
- 10) never

**J. When your teacher returns a marked essay to you, do you look carefully at the comments showing the errors in vocabulary choice?**

- 1) always
- 2) usually
- 3) sometimes
- 4) seldom
- 5) never

**K. When your teacher returns a marked essay to you, do you look carefully at the comments correcting the organisation/structure of your essay?**

- 1) always
- 2) usually
- 3) sometimes
- 4) seldom

5) never

**L. When your teacher returns a marked essay to you, do you look carefully at the comments correcting errors on the ideas expressed in the content?**

1) always

2) usually

3) sometimes

4) seldom

5) never

**M. If there are many errors in an essay, what do you want to your teacher to do?**

1) Correct all errors, major and minor.

2) Correct errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones.

3) Correct repeated errors whether major or minor.

4) Correct only errors that might interfere with communicating your ideas.

5) It doesn't matter.

**N. What would you prefer your teacher to use when marking your essay?**

1) A pen with red ink

2) A pen with some other less noticeable colour of ink

3) A pencil

4) It doesn't matter

**O. How do you want your teacher to indicate an error in your essay?**

1) The teacher crosses out what is incorrect and writes in the correct word on structure.

2) The teacher shows where the error is and gives a clue for how to correct it.

3) The teacher only shows where the error is.

4) The teacher ignores errors in grammar and only pays attention to the ideas expressed.

5) It doesn't matter.

**P. How carefully do you look at the comments your teacher makes on an essay?**

- 1) Read each one carefully.
- 2) Look at some comments more carefully than others.
- 3) Mainly pay attention to the teacher's comments on the ideas expressed.

**Q. Of the comments that your teacher makes on your essay which ones do you remember best?**

- 1) Comments on your ideas.
- 2) Comments on the organisation/structure of the essay.
- 3) Comments showing errors in grammar.

**R. When you make an error what helps you most understand what you did wrong?**

- 1) having your teacher explain the error.
- 2) looking it up by yourself in a grammar handbook.
- 3) asking a peer to explain the error.

**S. What helps you avoid making that error again?**

- 1) Re-writing the whole essay.
- 2) Rewriting just the sentences or section where the error appeared.
- 3) Just reading the essay carefully without rewriting anything.
- 4) Nothing, because you know you will probably forget and make the same errors again no matter what you do.

**T. What do you usually do when you have your essay returned?**

Make a mental note of the errors

- 1) always
- 2) usually
- 3) sometimes
- 4) seldom
- 5) never

Write down errors identified

- 1) always
- 2) usually
- 3) sometimes
- 4) seldom
- 5) never

Identify points you want explained

- 1) always
- 2) usually
- 3) sometimes
- 4) seldom
- 5) never

Asking for a teacher explanation

- 1) always
- 2) usually
- 3) sometimes
- 4) seldom
- 5) never

Consult a dictionary/grammar book/textbook/exercise book

- 1) always
- 2) usually
- 3) sometimes
- 4) seldom
- 5) never

### **Section 3**

There are different ways to provide feedback to students writing essays in another language. Please circle one choice that best describes the usefulness of each type of feedback.

**A. Teacher error corrections with comments (the teacher gives feedback by making comments with error correction)**

- 1) totally useless
- 2) useless
- 3) neither useless nor useful
- 4) quite useful
- 5) very useful

**B. Error identification (The teacher indicates the place where the error occurs by underlying or circling it.)**

- 1) totally useless
- 2) useless
- 3) neither useless nor useful
- 4) quite useful
- 5) very useful

**C. Peer-correction (students evaluate each other's work)**

- 1) totally useless
- 2) useless
- 3) neither useless nor useful
- 4) quite useful
- 5) very useful

Thank you very much for your time and effort.

## Appendix 5: Semi-formal interview schedule

### Interview schedule

1. How do you feel about studying a second language in VCE? (warm up question)
2. Do you enjoy studying a second language in VCE? (warm up question)
3. Do you like receiving feedback on your essays immediately after submitting them?
4. Could you describe what you do after receiving feedback on your essays?
  - For example, do you read the feedback first or do you refer to the feedback when you revise?
  - Why?
5. After describing the three feedback methods to you – which one or how many have you experienced?
  - “error correction”, “error identification” or ‘peer- correction’?
  - Can you comment on any of these?
6. Which feedback method is the most beneficial for you?
  - Explain your choice.

## Appendix 6: Example of IPA analysis

A Japanese male (Aaron)

Miki: How do you feel about studying a second language in VCE?

Student: I feel that whilst it is quite the score via the scaling it also requires an amount of work and I am not sure it reflects the scaling but it does open you to new opportunities in the world when you enter sort of acquired professions in the future.

Miki: Your language is Japanese yes?

Student it is yes

Miki: Do you enjoy studying a second language in VCE?

Student: In VCE it has become more difficult and as such the enjoyment factor has decreased however I still feel it is my entitlement to complete what I have been learning for 6 years and enjoys it in as many ways as possible.

Miki: Why do you think it is not enjoyable now?

Student: I think that the work load increases rapidly as you progress and you are not ready for it after year 10 and year 9 and those lower years and the work load increases massively and it is sort of unexpected and sort of takes you by shock

Miki: Work load, what sort of work?

Student: The amount of SACs is quite daunting we have them kind of regularly at our school and also the amount of regular homework and also the variety you need to complete in Japanese, listening reading writing and speaking as well, it is sort of all of them need ample time and as a result a lot of time is taken up by the language

Miki: so the listening reading writing and speaking, everything you have as homework?

Student: basically yes

*Amount of work of work to learn Japanese*

*positive to learn language*

*more difficult decreased enjoyment factor*

*learning language workload massively increased (hard)*

*time consuming takes up many time to learn language (concern?)*

*score via the scaling*

*new opportunities future.*

*become more difficult*

*enjoyment decreased*

*workload increases rapidly*

*workload increases massively unexpected by shock*

*amount of SACs is quite daunting amount of regular homework*

*lot of time is taken up by language*

Miki: and also your class, how many lessons a week do you have it?

Student: 5 periods a week of 50 minutes each and then a lesson in my spare which is strictly oral practice with another teacher.

Miki: ok now do you like receiving feedback on your essay, strictly your essay we are talking about, immediately as you hand it in or the next day

*positive receiving mark you will know where you are at the moment*

Student: I feel like that is the best method of correction and it is also good if they give you as level of where you are at for example my teacher gives us a mark out of 20 and we should know, like if we had written that essay for a SAC we should know what mark we are going to get or what we would have got, so it is good to be able to mark yourself of how it would have been as a practice essay if it wasn't a SAC

*give you as level of where you are*

Miki: How often do you write an essay?

*writing essay once during a week*

Student: umm predominately my teacher calls for an essay due in during the week and then one over the weekend which is due in Monday morning

*an essay during week and over weekend*

Miki: So could you describe what you do on receiving feedback and then on your essay like read it through first and then revising or you make notes on it or rewriting or what do you do

*look at the mark (you know where you are) main problem acknowledge rewrite individual sentence*

Student: Predominately I would look at the mark that would have been given out of 20 and from there I would go back and look at what my main problem areas were and because it gives you the individual aspects of the marks, grammar concept and all that sort of stuff. You can see your weak point and rather than rewrite the whole essay I feel it is good to just correct individual sentences and sort of rewrite them rather than the whole essay

*look at the mark go back and look at what my main problem areas grammar concept and all that sort of stuff*

Miki: so you have a rewriting exercise book or what is the option

Student: I usually just do it on Genko Yoshi cause then it is kind of preparing you for the exam when you are required to write on Genko Yoshi rather than predominate work books

*prepare for exam.*

*can see weak point just correct individual sentence Kind of preparing you for the exam than work books*

Miki: ok, so looking at error correction error identification and peer correction and which one or how many have you experienced most

*very little experience peer correction*

Student: in my class we experience very little peer correction, however predominately my teacher corrects our errors rather than identifies them which is a different sort of method it depends on

*in my class experience very little peer-correction*

the size of the error when it is a big error like if you get the sentence completely wrong I feel that

*teacher corrects our errors rather than identifies*

writing the correction and where it was wrong can help however if it is a small correction like a the wrong particle then error identification is more of the method to go with.

*(teacher) error correction is better*

Miki: what do you feel about peer correction?

*in big error (grammar)*

Student: peer correction is more difficult because you are never 100 percent sure if it is correct

*but small error (spelling) is identification*

what they are saying so where as if it is the teacher you know it is right cause it is their job to make sure it is right and also as a male we are quite competitive with our scores and as a result

*peer correction more difficult you are never 100 percent sure as a male quite competitive*

*big error if you get the sentence completely wrong*

the wanting to correct others is minimal and quite often peer correction does take place with

*peer correction 100% but not sure*

occasionally it doesn't take place all the time

*you are never 100 percent sure as a male quite competitive wanting to correct others in minimal*

*wrong feel teacher correction help but small correction particle error identification is better*

Miki: ok final one these 3 which is the most beneficial for you?

*(less skills and ability)*

Student: I would rate error identification 1 error correction 2 and then peer correction 3

- 1. error identification
- 2. error correction
- 3. peer correction

*beneficial error identification*

Miki: could you explain more of the identification one?

*error correction*

Student: I feel that my errors that I make aren't an overall sentence structure it is normally just I

*peer correction*

spelt a word wrong I put the wrong particle somewhere or I used the wrong verb I feel like it is of

benefit to me to go back and find my mistakes so I don't make it again

*my errors are normal just spelt a word wrong wrong particle wrong verb it is beneficial to me to go back and find my mistakes*

Miki: what about structure and then those content part with identification

*having small mistakes*

Student: I feel like with content structure if you are given a page reference of your text book

*so error identification is good*

where you can learn specific sentences for the type of essay you are doing it doesn't have to be

corrected but if you are given a reference you can go to that is a benefit

*you can go*

Miki: what about those marking ones then those error corrections where they are correcting for you and then without mark, you know you said out of 20?

Student: I feel like if it is solid enough feedback for the level you are at then it is ok as long as you can go back, I think if you are without a mark it promotes you more to go back and rewrite the whole essay to try and get it better however if you have a mark you know where you are at already and you are more sure on your essay rather than going back and rewriting the whole thing you can rewrite individual segments that you have gotten wrong

*Can go back without mark more go back get better rewrite individual segments*

*feedback as long as you can go back without a mark it promote you more to go back rewrite the whole essay to try and get better*

Miki: do you like writing essay the most or least

Student: I like writing essays the most I feel like it is the most open aspect of the language where as the listening and reading is more narrowed down however you sort of it sounds clichéd but you get to express yourself more in writing, not creatively but you can use the various grammar patterns you've learnt throughout the year whereas you are more restricted with the other 2 segments

*you can express you more in writing like it*

*like writing essays the most open aspect of the language you get to express yourself more in writing.*

Miki: when you are writing an essay, can you straight what your thoughts, cause you know you have a different language being Japanese now, so can you do that?

Student: I feel initially for the SACs not the practice ones I initially write a quick plan in English to decide and then from there I am able to know what I will write about and then it makes it easy to convert it into the Japanese on the paper

*plan in English*

*convert it into the Japanese*

Miki: Ok thank you it was very good, really good thank you very much for that

*plan in English then makes it easy to convert it into the Japanese*

## Appendix 7: Example of visual chart for analysis

①

Data Analysis from the Interviews

CHINESE	FRENCH	JAPANESE
going to Chinese school vce pretty good culture interesting <b>future</b> good opportunity <b>vce score, higher marks</b> society become globalised	get in university in England <b>future</b> another culture, not just not limited view of Australian culture, understanding <b>scaling ater</b> get different skills gets high marks business opportunities exam to get high marks	positive worthwhile learning new opportunities learn, understand culture enjoy vce for communication skills professions <b>in the future</b> <b>vce ater scaling</b> , preparation for end of the exam
<b>not extremely hard but not easy in vce</b> <b>more serious</b>	enjoying writing and reading	feel more difficult than middle school
hard to come up with good idea, content in writing essays essay are more challenging big changes from middle school easy but big jump <b>definitely jump</b> lot more stress, composition pressure	massive jump from middle school <b>step up</b> <b>a lot of work</b> moved away from grammar leaning culture	<b>lot of work, workload are increased</b> <b>time consuming</b> , takes up a lot of time decreased fun factors
teacher doesn't have as much time with each student	take up a lot of time	Look at the mark first
listening is easy	<b>getting back feedback is good</b> <b>sooner the better, a day after feedback quickly helps you improve</b>	Go back and look at main problem areas <i>forget what wrote not improve?</i>
like translation	feel good if not much correction, made difference getting better	You can see weak points are with correction
<b>immediately getting back feedback is good</b> a week is too long to get back it a few days is good takes long will forget what wrote cannot prepare for next sac <b>forget what wrote</b> <b>correct and improve</b> <b>allow me to correct</b> need time to fix your essays up not helpful it takes too long	teacher needs lot of time to mark the essays	Rewrite individual sentences

*future  
result  
VCE  
Scaling*

*Lots  
work  
jump  
from  
middle  
school  
time  
consuming*

*immedi-  
ately  
getting  
back*

to get back annoying a few days after getting back feedback		
teacher is busy we understand	write essays 1,2 during week don't like report writing, like personal writing, journal	
every lesson writing essay	read through everything dumb mistakes, grammatical mistakes, have look at grammar book, note, previous essays look through take notes	would like to know currently where at, actual mark need to know mark, score relation to motivation
prepare for the end of year exam	look more big errors than small errors big errors = whole concept in the grammar small errors = spelling a word	write at least an essay a week
read through don't understand ask teacher	write another essay with previous essay in front of you	Lots of memory work
supposed rewrite don't rewrite whole sentence rewrite specific errors rewrite the part made a mistakes sentence structure the wrong way around rewrite paragraph to remember order in my book	look up the internet if you don't understand	Japanese are different language like French. you must learn new alphabet etc...
small mistakes just practise a few times to remember	structure is easy to improve	read through look at the part that made mistakes and teachers corrected feedback read aloud to know how it sounds let it sink in
usually not rewrite the essay read through it not big mistakes like a few characters mistakes not worth rewriting	generally not rewrite write another new essay	rewrite individual sentences, not rewrite whole essay in genkoyoshi rewrite sentence before and after not whole essay in note pad, accessible, mental note
experienced the most error identification, circle and underlined think myself about a better argument	not much experience peer correction obviously not perfect, fluent in French	little experience with peer correction
it depends on small mistakes with error identification, big mistakes need to know why it	mostly doing error correction (small?)	Peer corrections, need have good skills of that language it is good you will learn from

Small  
↓  
error identification

error correction

big mistakes

<p>is wrong so error correction big mistakes = whole sentence incorrect grammatically content is not interesting enough</p>		<p>others but peer doesn't know everything, not have skills set it is good to discuss with peer about the idea of essay good learning way but not good for everyone, yet have a skills</p>
<p>not really used peer correction</p>	<p>sometimes error identification good for grammar <i>(big)</i></p>	<p>Error identification is the most beneficial Go back myself and find my mistakes. Don't make same errors again</p>
<p>don't want to do peer correction miss out error to correct and not sure about the answers sometimes want to hear about other peoples opinion but don't really want people to read mine. all learning second language everybody learning so not sure about the answer not good skills set</p>	<p>don't like error identification like giving to me what i am supposed to write</p>	<p>Like writing essay</p>
<p>teachers error correction and score don't mind</p>	<p>don't like red pen wasn't as good it is really demoralising</p>	<p>Write out the mistakes and locked in so would not make same mistakes often</p>
<p>red pen, don't mins rather know i did something wrong</p>	<p>error correction is the most beneficial, experienced error identification and peer correction teacher give me what i need to improve, i know what i need to do and make it better for next time</p>	<p>preparing for the end of year exam</p>
<p>error correction is the most beneficial easy for us to know where our mistakes are easy for us to see what not to do next time prefer error correction if not understand ask teacher if teacher is busy ask friends, i know what i did wrong clearly</p>	<p>error correction you don't have to go it and try to find what you were meant to do you might not right when you look at grammar book unsure lot more effective to have is corrected for you</p>	<p>big error = grammatically sentences are completely in correct</p> <p><i>→ big</i></p>
<p>error identification is the most experienced, i cannot figure out what i have gone wrong can make me feel</p> <p><i>experience</i></p>	<p>peer correction is good correcting someone work you help your self but not much experienced</p> <p><i>not much</i></p>	<p>error correction is the best, helping learn from your own mistakes harder to identify the correct</p> <p><i>grammar for big</i></p>

<p>passive to figure out own errors  error identification is the most beneficial, i can have a think about it first then ask teacher  error identification you must ask yourself most of the time you have to explain to yourself what was wrong.</p>	<p>time consuming  forces you what mistakes they are making and you are thinking how to do it right</p>	<p>answer yourself with grammar so better error correction  ↓  small</p>
<p>read through, skim through and take in mind</p>	<p>error identification is good for me, must think myself revise then it gets better. not making same errors again  time consuming process</p>	<p>small error = in correct particles, spelling and characters  error identification is the best</p>
<p>many mistakes rewrite whole sentence out  lot of mistakes in content, structures and grammar not characters.</p>	<p>getting mark is good you will know where you are at this stage, what need to do it with error correction is the most beneficial unsure where you are at the moment if you don't get marks  comments helps you what you can improve on</p>	<p>Immediate don't have to wait to fix getting back feed back helps me  immediately</p>
<p>not many vocabulary mistakes grammar and sentence structure mistakes not much in characters</p>	<p>not only language other subjects has to study, too time is important</p>	<p>error correction, most experiences show a reference go back and correct myself so won't make mistake again, it is the most beneficial</p>
<p>not really do peer correction don't want to do it  teacher has a more experience and we don't really understand each other's writing. don't know how to correct others like teacher</p>	<p>red pen is fine easy to see</p>	<p>error identification is good for learning if you can find out how to fix it, but need time to do and still you are not sure about your correction. need insurance!  First didn't know which sign meant what</p>
<p>don't like error identification not really don't know or recognise what was wrong not sure about it</p>	<p>Peer correction is good. Correcting others</p>	<p>without actual mark promote going back get it better</p>
<p>any pen is fine as long as not same as mine</p>	<p>Error correction is more comfortable  Gives me what I can do next time</p>	<p>can express in writing essays open aspect in the language, express yourself</p>
<p>error correction you don't need to ask your teacher there are already correction error correction is the most</p>	<p>Want to know how you have done overall comments to show you what you can improve</p>	<p>get back feedback immediately is good  remember what you wrote, you can fix it, still remember</p>

5

beneficial for my study like knowing what i get and need to improve for next		your idea
enjoying reading		any colour pen but black Overwhelming there are many mistakes. but want to know all mistakes
like to know score to a criteria like correction and scoring to know which part i need to improve		
don't like in pencil but any colour pen		

## Appendix 8: Semi-formal interview transcripts

### Aaron

Researcher: How do you feel about studying a second language in VCE?

**Student: I feel that whilst it is quite the score via the scaling it also requires an amount of work and I am not sure it reflects the scaling but it does open you to new opportunities in the world when you enter sort of acquired professions in the future.**

Researcher: Your language is Japanese yes?

**Student it is yes**

Researcher : Do you enjoy studying a second language in VCE?

**Student: In VCE it has become more difficult and as such the enjoyment factor has decreased however I still feel it is my entitlement to complete what I have been learning for 6 years and enjoys it in as many ways as possible.**

Researcher: Why do you think it is not enjoyable now?

**Student: I think that the work load increases rapidly as you progress and you are not ready for it after year 10 and year 9 and those lower years and the work load increases massively and it is sort of unexpected and sort of takes you by shock**

Researcher: Work load, what sort of work?

**Student: The amount of SACs is quite daunting we have them kind of regularly at our school and also the amount of regular homework and also the variety you need to complete in Japanese, listening reading writing and speaking as well, it is sort of all of them need ample time and as a result a lot of time is taken up by the language**

Researcher: so the listening reading writing and speaking, everything you have as homework?

**Student: basically yes**

Researcher: and also your class, how many lessons a week do you have it?

**Student: 5 periods a week of 50 minutes each and then a lesson in my spare which is strictly oral practice with another teacher.**

Researcher: ok now do you like receiving feedback on your essay, strictly your essay we are talking about, immediately as you hand it in or the next day

**Student: I feel like that is the best method of correction and it is also good if they give you as level of where you are at for example my teacher gives us a mark out of 20 and we should know, like if we had written that essay for a SAP we should know what mark we are going to get or what we would have got, so it is good to be able to mark yourself of how it would have been as a practice essay if it wasn't a SAC**

Researcher: How often do you write an essay?

**Student: umm predominately my teacher calls for an essay due in during the week and then one over the weekend which is due in Monday morning**

Researcher: So could you describe what you do on receiving feedback and then on your essay like read it through first and then revising or you make notes on it or rewriting or what do you do

**Student: Predominately I would look at the mark that would have been given out of 20 and from there I would go back and look at what my main problem areas were and because it gives you the individual aspects of the marks, grammar concept and all that sort of stuff. You can see your weak point and rather than rewrite the whole essay I feel it is good to just correct individual sentences and sort of rewrite them rather than the whole essay**

Researcher: so you have a rewriting exercise book or what is the option

**Student: I usually just do it on Genko Yoshi cause then it is kind of preparing you for the exam when you are required to write on Genko Yoshi rather than predominate work books**

Researcher: ok, so looking at error correction error identification and peer-correction and which one or how many have you experienced most

**Student: in my class we experience very little peer-correction, however predominately my teacher corrects our errors rather than identifies them which is a different sort of method it depends on the size of the error when it is a big error like if you get the sentence completely wrong I feel that writing the correction and where it was wrong can help however if it is a small correction like a the wrong particle then error identification is more of the method to go with.**

Researcher: what do you feel about peer-correction?

**Student: peer-correction is more difficult because you are never 100 percent sure if it is correct what they are saying so where as if it is the teacher you know it is right cause it is their job to make sure it is right and also as a male we are quite competitive with our scores and as a result the wanting to correct others is minimal and quite often peer-correction does take place occasionally it doesn't take place all the time**

Researcher: ok final one these 3 which is the most beneficial for you?

**Student: I would rate error identification 1 error correction 2 and then peer-correction 3**

Researcher: could you explain more of the identification one?

**Student: I feel that my errors that I make aren't an overall sentence structure it is normally just I spelt a word wrong I put the wrong particle somewhere or I used the wrong verb I feel like it is of benefit to me to go back and find my mistakes so I don't make it again**

Researcher: what about structure and then those content part with identification

**Student: I feel like with content structure if you are given a page reference of your text book where you can learn specific sentences for the type of essay you are doing it**

**doesn't have to be corrected but if you are given a reference you can go to that is a benefit**

Researcher: what about those marking ones then those error corrections where they are correcting for you and then without mark, you know you said out of 20?

**Student: I feel like if it is solid enough feedback for the level you are at then it is ok as long as you can go back, I think if you are without a mark it promotes you more to go back and rewrite the whole essay to try and get it better however if you have a mark you know where you are at already and you are more sure on your essay rather than going back and rewriting the whole thing you can rewrite individual segments that you have gotten wrong**

Researcher: do you like writing essay the most or least

**Student: I like writing essays the most I feel like it is the most open aspect of the language whereas the listening and reading is more narrowed down however you sort of it sounds clichéd but you get to express yourself more in writing, not creatively but you can use the various grammar patterns you've learnt throughout the year whereas you are more restricted with the other 2 segments**

Researcher: when you are writing an essay, can you straight what your thoughts, cause you know you have a different language being Japanese now, so can you do that?

**Student: I feel initially for the SACs not the practice ones I initially write a quick plan in English to decide and then from there I am able to know what I will write about and then it makes it easy to convert it into the Japanese on the paper**

Researcher: Ok thank you it was very good, really good thank you very much for that

## **Brendan**

Researcher: How do you feel about studying a second language in VCE?

**Student: It's interesting it definitely a worthwhile experience, it helps you understand other cultures and how other people talk and communicate**

Researcher: ok but what about VCE Japanese

**Student: ok so VCE Japanese it is difficult to say the least, lots of work, lots of time spent just talking aloud over and over lots of memory work things like vocab so yeah it is good though**

Researcher: Do you enjoy studying Japanese as a second language in VCE?

**Student: Japanese itself is I would say is very different to other languages like French because you have to learn a different alphabet.... and .... Instead of English just translated into French for instance and that is partly one of the hardest parts but the other parts is the speaking in Japanese**

Researcher: so you do french as well? Did you learn French?

**Student: From what I have heard of other students in French. It is different**

Researcher: so talking about your feedback do you like receiving feedback on your essay immediately after you hand it in, do you like it?

**Student: Yes that is good I guess, it is better than getting feedback later than the day you hand it in, in saying that I wouldn't expect them to correct it the day I give it to them.**

Researcher: why do you prefer, or why do you like immediately?

**Student: its good because you know what you have just written and you might think, ok I know this part sort of isn't right and when you read it you think I know how to fix it and mentally you just think about it**

Researcher: and so can you describe, when you get feedback, for example do you rewrite everything or just one sentence mistake what do you do when you get feedback?

**Student: ok, when I get feedback and something isn't right I would mainly look at the mistake and I would write out the sentence and maybe the sentence before and after that just so in that paragraph I know that this happens and I know what happens**

Researcher: why do you write before and after?

**Student: mainly just you know in the essay ok this comes before and then this sentence and you know where it is in that essay so when it comes to writing I know what I have to fix**

Researcher: when you are rewriting are you using Japanese genko Yoshi or somewhere else?

**Student: When I hand it in I write it on Genko Yoshi when I rewrite it, it tends to be in my work book or a note pad**

Researcher: ok why that?

**Student: It's just a preference it is something easily accessible and in genko yoshi you want to save those for when you do essays and things**

Researcher: so why do you want to save it?

**Student: just because you never know how many essays you are going to write I guess**

Researcher: ok, so those are 3 feedback type ok, which one how many have you experienced which one the most which is the least?

**Student: I have probably experienced error identification the most then peer then error correction**

Researcher: do you want to make any comment on one of them? Or all of them how about peer-correction how do you feel like?

**Student: peer-correction only really works when there is someone in the class who is very good or is better than you at Japanese so it works in our class because Andréa is better at Japanese in our class. In saying that error identification is also useful obviously you know what you have to fix but you have to find out how to fix it and it is part of the learning process is guess and error correction is helpful when you are stretched for time like when you don't have much time cause you know what you did**

**wrong and you know how to change it and you might just think about it or write it out a few times or whatever**

Researcher: now this is very last question, these 3 which is most beneficial

**Student: In my opinion error correction is most beneficial**

Researcher: ok why is that?

**Student: mainly because of the way I learn I get the mistake then to fix that mistake I would write out the mistake whether it is a sentence or word or whatever and then it is locked in there I probably wouldn't make the same mistake as often**

### **Christine**

Researcher: How do you feel about studying Japanese as a second language in VCE?

**Student: I feel very good about it I think it is very helpful in the future and helps with travelling to Japan so I think it is good**

Researcher: What about the VCE not about the second language but secondary school as a language in VCE

**Student: I think it is good because it can broaden your horizons and allow you to learn another language which is good for options**

Researcher: Do you enjoy studying VCE Japanese as a second language? Or just the Japanese, see how it is different.

**Student: I do enjoy it I like the style of the VCE and how we have to do SAC's and it prepares us for like the end of year exam I think it is very helpful for the end of year exam and helps us learn the language.**

Researcher: so you which part is really enjoyable in learning a language in VCE?

**Student: I would say learning the culture in VCE so maybe just learning the grammar points and vocabulary and learning how to construct your own sentences and being able to truly understand Japanese culture by understanding passages.**

Researcher: so which part do you like best in learning the language, is it reading writing listening speaking, those are 4 main parts there.

**Student: I like speaking the most because you can speak to other Japanese people and make friends and I think it is very nice to be able to communicate to another foreign country**

Researcher: Do you like receiving feedback from your essays immediately after you submit them?

**Student: I would prefer to get feedback as soon as possible as it can help me as fast as possible**

Researcher: How does it help you?

**Student: if it is immediate I don't have to wait I can fix my problems immediately and then I can just progress**

Researcher: How often do you write essays then?

**Student: every week. Well our teacher makes us write an essay a week.**

Researcher: Can you describe what you do after receiving feedback on your essay so like when you get feedback you just read through it and rewrite everything or you just rewrite one part?

**Student: I just read over what mistakes I have made and see the teachers correction and say his correct version out loud to see how it sounds, just to let it sink in as to how it would sound out loud I wouldn't rewrite the entire passage unless my teacher asks me to and I wouldn't rewrite the entire essay**

Researcher: when rewriting are you using the Japanese genko Yoshi or you use a separate piece of paper?

**Student: I usually use the Genko Yoshi**

Researcher: so why do you want to save it?

**Student: just because you never know how have a whole Genko Yoshi pad so I use all of them.**

Researcher: ok, so when the error correction error identification or peer-correction, which one is the most experienced in learning Japanese?

**Student: what do you mean by most experienced?**

Researcher: do you want to make any comment on one of them? Or all of them how about peer-correction how do you feel like have teacher corrections or identification most of the time or using peer-correction?

**Student: Probably error correction or error identification most of the time so normally you would see outlines outlines around the errors and then the correction above it, so that is mostly what I experience not much peer-correction**

Researcher: Do you want to comment on that, peer-correction what do you feel?

**Student: peer-correction is good because you learn much more from each other as students it can also be bad because if your peer doesn't know then everyone gets it wrong.**

Researcher: what about the both equal are they good?

**Student: ether it be a sentence or word or whatever and then it is locked in there I probably wouldn't make the same mistake as often mainly because of the way I learn I get the mistake then to fix that mistake I would write out the mistake why error correction is good feedback I guess it is helping you to learn from your mistakes**

Researcher: error identification you have to find the answer whereas error correction the teacher puts the correct answer there so these two are a little but different so what do you think is better, to investigate yourself or error correction is already there.

**Student: well when my teacher corrects my work he put like K or P I didn't know what they meant until half way through the year so yeah I didn't know I don't really care about identification I care more about the correction.**

Researcher: VCE criteria is not only the accuracy of grammar or structure but also the content as well so what do you feel about the content or structure with these?

**Student: for content or structure I would say error correction or peer-correction cause for essay writing peer-correction would help you could discuss ideas with your friend and structure your essay better and have interesting comments. Error correction I guess it is good feedback from your teacher because he is marking your essay so it is good feedback.**

Researcher: so overall which one do you think is beneficial for you?

**Student: most likely error correction**

### **Danielle**

Researcher: How do you feel about studying Japanese as a second language in VCE?

**Student: I think it is good I think the VCE has a very good system because it is like specific Kungi you need to know, it is like endless amount of characters and it is also good they have Sac's leading up to the exam.**

Researcher: what and do you enjoy studying Japanese in VCE?

**Student: yes I think it is a good system**

Researcher: what do you enjoy the most?

**Student: probably enjoying the kanji**

Researcher: Kanji?

**Student: Yes they have VCE specific books for like stroke order and all the words you can make out of the kanji.**

Researcher: what about the listening reading speaking?

**Student: yeah they are all good, there are SACs on all of them so it's not like we just learn on reading SAC we also have writing SACs and oral SACs**

Researcher: so of all of those SACs which one do you most like?

**Student: I Probably writing I like the most because when we have a writing SAC's we have learnt about a specific topic so all of the writing questions are focused on that topic so you can always think of things to write about**

Researcher: Do you like receiving feedback immediately?

**Student: yes**

Researcher: why?

**Student: I think it is good to get it immediately because you kind of still have the same thought like you haven't completely forgotten what you have written so it so good to get the feedback to change it before it is seen.**

Researcher: when writing an essay your thoughts can you write straight into Japanese?

**Student: sometimes I can translate it directly but other times I don't have the vocabulary or grammar structures to say what I want so I either ask my teacher or wrote something different.**

Researcher: when so a completely different thought, like forget about it

**Student: yeah just forget about it**

Researcher: can you describe what you do after receiving feedback?

**Student: I read through all the feedback and take note of where I have a mistake like if I have made the same mistake over again like if I have used the wrong partial or drawn the wrong character.**

Researcher: so you have a special note?

**Student: yes a mental note?**

Researcher: what about in a special book or in a notepad or Genko Yoshi again?

**Student: well I have a special folder that my essays go in, I don't really write down the mistakes I have made because they have already been written down so I can just through the folder and see the mistakes**

Researcher: Do you want to comment on that, peer-correction what do you feel ok so those three there is error correction, error identification and peer-correction, which one have you experienced most?

**Student: error correction and error identification second and peer-correction third.**

Researcher: do you have any comment of that, what do you think of error identification?

**Student: I think it is good for simple mistakes like a wrong particle you can go oh ok it's not that one it is this one but I don't think error identification is good for big mistakes like for grammar cause it is harder to identify the correct answer yourself**

Researcher: what about peer-correction then.

**Student: I think peer-correction is good if you've got help from your teacher and then it hasn't really helped you and then they can teach you in a way that you can understand it**

Researcher: so that means after a teacher correction and you don't understand, it can help?

**Student: yep.**

Researcher: so but what about purely just peer-correction

**Student: I think it is good as well in the way that you can learn it in the way they learnt it but not good if everyone**

Researcher: so in the end which one do you think is beneficial?

**Student: error correction**

Researcher: why that?

**Student: because it clearly marks the error you have made and show you the correct way to do it so you won't get it wrong again, whereas error identification there is still a chance you might correct yourself wrong**

Researcher: and error correction it might be the teacher gives comment and sometimes a score as well, do you think you need a score?

**Student: I do like getting a score just to see where I am at but at the same time I don't mind if my teacher hasn't put a score**

Researcher: why's that?

**Student: sometimes it is good to like if it is really bad to not get unmotivated**

Researcher: ok so a score makes you unmotivated

**Student: if it is a bad score but if it a good score I will be motivated**

Researcher: so you don't mind red pen, black pen, blue pen

**Student: I prefer red pen**

Researcher: why's that?

**Student: because it stands out more but because we mainly write in pencil I wouldn't mind blue pen, but I wouldn't like black pen**

Researcher: so when it is error correction you prefer red pen all over you don't mind

**Student: well my teacher will usually underline so not completely cross out just underline where it is wrong and then an annotation on the side so it can be overwhelming if there are a lot of mistake but I think it is good to see all the mistakes you have made rather than some of the mistakes not being pointed out**

## **Edward**

Researcher: How do you feel about studying French as a second language in VCE?

**Student: well for me it is really quite convenient cause I want to get into university in England which is close to France so I can use my skills so that is really the reason did it but I guess it also gives people who do a second language what another culture is like so not tunnel viewed into what an Australian culture is like and I think that is a good thing**

Researcher: is there a difference from 7 and 8 French to now VCE French

**Student: it has moved away from the grammar and writing and the skills we built on the skills in the early part and moved onto learning the culture and having to speak about it in French which is good?**

Researcher: and you are enjoying that

**Student: it yes obviously it is difficult and takes up a lot of time but I do think it is worthwhile and the scaling is pretty good as well**

Researcher: yes of course, how much is scaling?

**Student: I think it is 11 or 12**

Researcher: yes that is right, do you like receiving feedback on the essay immediately after you hand it in and then you get it?

**Student: I yes I find getting feedback really good cause say you write 3 essays and hand them in at the same time you see the same mistakes coming back and you know that is what you need to work on and say you work on that and you see the mistake isn't there then it is quite an immense sense of you feel pretty proud that you made a difference and you are getting better and it takes quite a lot of time for the teachers to mark so I don't feel like I need to get the essay back the next day but it think miss Eakins gets them back pretty quickly I think generally 3 or 4 days**

Researcher: so how often are you writing an essay?

**Student: I try to write 1 or 2 a week, so miss Eakins forces us to write 1 each week as part of the trial exam we have each week and so I try to if I have enough time obviously it is hard with all my other subjects I would have if I hadn't done this but I try to write one but it is difficult and takes time for me to go back and find mistakes**

Researcher: when you get feedback what do you do then so first you read it or rewrite or make notes?

**Student: generally or read through it**

Researcher: everything

**Student: umm yep, so I see all the red and so in my mind say what the mistake was, so if it was just a dumb mistake or a grammatical mistake and from that I then look at my previous essay and see if it a recurring problem and if it is I have a grammar book, just a French book which I go back to and revise that. I don't generally rewrite them for French I just write another one.**

Researcher: so the same topic?

**Student: yeah not the exact same question but a similar question and use the same grammar points I got in the previous one but without I don't just use the same words I use new words which expands the vocabulary**

Researcher: and so when looking the feedback you focus on the grammar part or spelling mistake.

**Student: yeah I know my main problem is grammar so I look at grammar quite a lot cause even in the oral with all the congregation of verbs I do struggle with that sometimes so that is what I focus on then my writing becomes a lot better.**

Researcher: so the 3 there, which is the most experienced most of the time

**Student: mostly it is error correction so it takes a lot of time to go through it and correct it. but there are times where she will just do a triangle with an explanation mark in it like a warning so then we just have to re read that one quickly but we don't do a lot of peer-correction at all cause obviously we are not all fluent in French or perfect not like where we can talk about what we have written**

Researcher: so what do you feel this one or that one or it doesn't matter?

**Student: I think you learn a lot more from this one (error identification) because you have to read it and then you have to find out what is wrong with it whereas with this one (error correction) the answer is given to you and you think oh yeah I know that and then you forget about it. So I mean there is sometimes it is almost this is what is needed for spelling whereas this is better for Grammar**

Researcher: ok so error correction for spelling

**Student: Yeah error correction for spelling and phrases and then error identification for grammar.**

Researcher: usually which colour pen do you feel harsh?

**Student: error yeah I don't like red pen I don't know when you get an essay back that wasn't as good it is really quite demoralising so when teachers use a colour similar to red.**

Researcher: so last question, which one is better for you?

**Student: probably error identification then cause then I f I have to think about what I have done wrong.**

Researcher: why do you have to think?

**Student: well I think if I have to think about what I have done wrong I am less likely to make the error again so every time I make an error and I revise it then it gets better and eventually I am not making errors which is what I want for the exam obviously it takes time and all the time I don't have the time to revise every error cause I have other subjects I=and if I do that then I won't have time to write an essay so that is probably where error correction comes in cause you can see the correction and you don't have to have the time seeing what it is but sometimes you just look at it and think you know what it is but the next time you make the same mistake but I do think getting a mark or grade on it is good because sometime you write a lot of essays and if you don't get a mark on it you don't really know how it is and you think am I doing really bad or well and I find if I get a mark I can gauge how much work I need to do so if I get a mark that is good I know what I am doing where as if it is a bad mark I can write more and get better**

## **Frank**

Researcher: How do you feel about studying a second language in VCE? So your French being the second Language

**Student: I think it is really good to study a second language because it is a different skill and it is something that is quite useful I think and obviously the scaling for VCE is quite useful as well**

Researcher: is there a difference from the middle school to VCE now

**Student: is it a big change?**

Researcher: Yeah is it?

**Student: it is pretty similar to like 3/4 with French so no.**

Researcher: Are you enjoying studying the second language in VCE?

**Student: Yeah definitely**

Researcher: which part are you enjoying?

**Student: I guess specifically the writing is probably the part I enjoy the most**

Researcher: so ok, so you enjoy it more than the speaking reading listening writing

**Student: writing and reading as well**

Researcher: and what is that?

**Student: I don't know exactly probably those are the bits I am better at probably**

Researcher: when you are receiving feedback from your teacher do you like it? Do you like getting feedback? On the essay?

**Student: umm yeah the sooner the better I guess because after you have done it is still in your mind so to have feedback quickly helps you improve better I think**

Researcher: How often do you write an essay?

**Student: umm once a week probably**

Researcher: and then you get it back the next day or the day after.

**Student: yeah normally I would give it in on Friday or Saturday on the weekend and then maybe get it back on Monday maybe Wednesday**

Researcher: so when you receive feedback what do you do after receiving the feedback? Read through it first

**Student: Yeah read through it first so looking at all the feedback and look at the bits like mistakes I could improve on, I look at more the big errors rather than the smaller ones cause I know quite often the smaller ones are a lack in concentration whereas the bigger ones are something I could work on and improve so I guess I look for those ones more**

Researcher: so you mean the bigger ones what is that, is it Grammar or what

**Student: Yeah well I guess if I am getting the whole concept in the grammar wrong rather than just misspelling a word or something like that**

Researcher: what about the content or structure stuff?

**Student: Yeah I think the structure stuff is good to get feedback on cause that is something that is pretty easy to improve on and obviously you get marks for structure and it's not really hard to get it right and by looking at the errors it makes it easy to get those marks**

Researcher: ok so of the 3 there, error correction, identification and the peer correcting one which do you experience most?

**Student: error correction I would experience most**

Researcher: so error correction 1?

**Student: yeah so error correction 1 identification 2 and peer-correction 3**

Researcher: do you want to comment about error correction?

**Student: I think that error correction probably works the best I mean compare to error identification cause you don't have to go in and try to find what you were meant to do and you might go and look something up and see how to do it and what you find might not be right anyway so it's a lot more effective to have it corrected for you I think peer-correction is good as well cause by correcting someone else's work you help yourself as well**

Researcher: how is it helping you?

**Student: I guess it's because it forces you what mistakes they are making and you are thinking how to do it right so it helps you as well**

Researcher: so you don't mind doing the peer-correction?

**Student: No**

Researcher: with the marking you don't mind any colour pen, like red is too harsh?

**Student: Nah I don't mind red is easy to see so whatever**

Researcher: Oh that is good so of them what is the most beneficial for you to learn language

**Student: I think error correction is the most beneficial**

Researcher: with Marks? Cause you know with the correction and marking there or just comments

**Student: I think a mixture of both is important cause I guess when you don't get a mark but you get comments you don't really have an idea of how you have done overall so it is good to have the mark to show you how well you have done and the comments to show you what you can improve on.**

**Grace**

Researcher: How do you feel about studying French a second language in VCE?

**Student: I think it is good to study French because if I where to go over sees and see France and speak the language it is beneficial to understand and also learning French in VCE you learn about the culture so I guess I think it is good if you want to France and it is good for business opportunities as well so**

Researcher: is there any change from the middle school French to the VCE one?

**Student: in my opinion I think there is a massive jump from middle school French to VCE French because we learn like um the standard steps up highly like we just learnt this year the grammar structure that we have to put in to exams to get a high mark and we should learn that earlier cause if people are stuck on it this year it's like hardly any time to learn it**

Researcher: so are you really enjoying it this year the VCE French?

**Student: it's interesting but it is a lot of work I know that but it's interesting but umm I don't know it just really annoys me having this massive step up so last year, year 11 it wasn't this hard in French, in my opinion.**

Researcher: which do you like more, listening reading writing speaking?

**Student: I think it is a mixture between listening and reading cause reading you can use a dictionary as well and listening you can use your use dictionary as well I don't know I think I am just better at listening**

Researcher: what about you're writing essays?

**Student: it is good. Some writing I don't really like, I don't really like writing reports some really structured stuff, yeah I don't really like writing I like writing journal entries**

Researcher: ok, so more personal?

**Student: yeah more personal**

Researcher: when receiving feedback on essays immediately after you hand it in?

**Student: oh feedback my teachers hands me?**

Researcher: yeah do you like it?

**Student: yeah I do like it but sometimes my teacher doesn't hand it back, I like it when she hands it back not straight after but a day after**

Researcher: how often are you writing essays?

**Student: about once a week**

Researcher: once a week?

**Student: yeah**

Researcher: ok now when you do get feedback, first read through it or just a point one read through or everything read through it what do you do with essay with feedback?

**Student: I look through the correction and if there are ticks so I look through the correction and I take note of them**

Researcher: so in a special exercise book or a piece of paper?

**Student: I if I write another essay I have the essay in front of me with the corrections and I write it**

Researcher: so just the incorrect things you rewrite or the whole thing you rewrite again?

**Student: I think I have rewritten my corrections before but also I look it up on the internet if I don't understand**

Researcher: so you look to make sure it is correct

**Student: yeah**

Researcher: so you don't want to ask the teacher?

**Student: well it is probably on the weekend**

Researcher: oh ok that is true too. Ok so now these three error identification error correction peer-correction which is most experienced

**Student: which one do I like?**

Researcher: no which is most of the time that you using or in class

**Student: I think both error identification and error correction my teacher uses both**

Researcher: ok do you want to comment on error identification just line, or a circle

**Student: in my opinion I don't really like error identification**

Researcher: why not

**Student: because I just like them giving it to me like what I am supposed to write**

Researcher: so with error identification with a line or circle it is like what is going on

**Student: yeah exactly**

Researcher ok so what about peer-correction

**Student: I think peer-correction is good because it helps you because you are correcting other people's mistakes but also helps the other person as well but we don't really do that in class**

Researcher: why that

**Student: too time consuming probably**

Researcher: ok so of those 3 which is the most beneficial for you?

**Student: probably error correction**

Researcher: because?

**Student: because the teacher gives me what I need to improve on so I know what I need to improve on so then I can make it better for next time I do wrong**

Researcher: so you are more comfortable the teacher gives you

**Student: yeah not so like explain in detail what I got wrings but gives me what I can do next time to make it better**

**Hayley**

Researcher: How do you feel about studying Chinese in VCE?

**Student: I find it ok but that is because I have been going to Chinese schools since I was 4 years old, it is I don't find it extremely hard but at the same time it isn't easy either**

Researcher: which part isn't that easy?

**Student: I think writing essays I find that hard cause it is hard to come up with ideas and sometimes if you get your structure wrong that is 3 marks.**

Researcher: Do you is there any change from study in middle school to now in VCE is there any change in that?

**Student: I think there is a big change actually because in middle school what we learnt was pretty easy compared with what we learn now. I don't know if it is because my Chinese is ok and that is why I found it easy but there is a big jump.**

Researcher: is it grammatically or character or structure or content or what do you think?

Student: content

Researcher: reading comprehension or what you have to write?

**Student: you have to write and everything in general is much harder.**

Researcher: so you are enjoying VCE

**Student: yeah it's not that bad.**

Researcher: which part do you like?

**Student: I like listening it's easy to do**

Researcher: do you like receiving feedback on your essay immediately?

**Student: yes**

Researcher: when ok, why is that?

**Student: I know what I have done, when a teacher takes a long time to give it back I have forgotten I have done it and I can't prepare for the next SAC or the exam, I want to have my SAC so I know where I have gone wrong and I can improve**

Researcher: so at the moment how often do you write essays?

**Student: right now it is pretty much every lesson**

Researcher: so every lesson?

**Student: just yeah because it is nearly exam time**

Researcher: so once a week or twice?

**Student: before exam time if we had writing SAC we would do writing all the time but if we had a listening SAC then we wouldn't do writing for a while then we would do writing again.**

Researcher: so immediately the next day?

**Student: no so we would finish one SAC and between the time periods of now to the next SAC we would prepare for that**

Researcher: so when you receive the feedback what do you prefer the next day or 2 days max or 3 days is one week too long?

**Student: In yeah 1 week is too long but anything between a day and a week is ok**

Researcher: when you receive feedback what do you do? Do you read through first or rewrite your notes or rewrite everything?

**Student: I read through what my teacher has written and what my mark is and if I don't know then I ask, I don't usually rewrite but I do read through it**

Researcher: and why don't you rewrite it?

**Student: sometimes cause my mistake isn't big it might just be a few characters so it isn't worth rewriting**

Researcher: Those three error correction, error identification and peer-correction, which one is, experienced most?

**Student: umm, error identification then error correction and then peer-correction**

Researcher: so do you want to comment on error identification

**Student: usually just gets circled and underlined I think error correction is the same level, it depends if it is a small mistake then its error identification but if there is a big mistake then there will be a reason as to why it is wrong and how it is wrong and I do like that**

Researcher: and a big mistake you mean..?

**Student: like a whole sentence incorrect grammatically**

Researcher: so not just the tense or something, and you can figure it out as well

**Student: yes**

Researcher: do you have much peer-correction

**Student: we haven't really used peer-correction before**

Researcher: not only this year but

**Student: I am sure we have done it before**

Researcher: do you want to

**Student: not really**

Researcher: ok why

**Student: I feel like I am marking somebody else's I miss out on so many things and find I am circling things that are actually right and same with the person marking mine and then the teacher goes through it and re corrects it and it is circled everywhere and I can't read it, no I don't like it**

Researcher: so error correction when the teacher marks it and writes down a score and everything you don't mind it

**Student: no I don't mind '**

Researcher: and also if a teacher corrects it, it is red everywhere red pen everywhere you don't mind red pen?

**Student: no not really I don't mind I would rather know I did something wrong**

Researcher: so is another colour better

**Student: no, I don't mind red**

Researcher: so for you which one is most beneficial for you?

**Student: error correction**

Researcher: why is that?

**Student: because it is our second language and we don't know peer-correction is not good when a teacher corrects it is easy for us to know where our mistakes are and it is easy for us to see what not to do next time**

## **Isabelle**

Researcher: How do you feel about studying Chinese as a second language in VCE?

**Student: I think it is pretty good at first I thought it was hard but I just practiced and now it is ok and cause I have been doing Chinese since I was 7 so it is naturally pretty smooth**

Researcher: Do you is there any change from study in middle school to now in VCE

**Student: there is definitely a jump it does get harder and the emphasis is kind of different**

Researcher: so which part do you like most in VCE?

**Student: I really like translating**

Researcher: ok so if something is written and then changing t English?

**Student: yeah and I like detailed study my oral is not very good but I think it is interesting to learn about the Chinese culture**

Researcher: so you learn about a lot of culture in your class as well

**Student: just Chinese**

Researcher: yeah yeah?

**Student: yeah because everyone has their own detailed study and I just learnt about the one I did**

Researcher: and you enjoyed doing that this year?

**Student: yes**

Researcher: when you receive the feedback do you lie receiving it immediately after you submit?

**Student: yes, but it is ok after a couple of days**

Researcher: after a couple of days?

**Student: yes**

Researcher: but why not over a couple of days?

**Student: well I understand a teacher is really busy and they have a lot of classes and they have to mark them as well so as soon as possible for a teacher but if it is more than a week it is not very helpful cause I can forget what I have done**

Researcher: ok how long is too long?

**Student: before probably a week and half depending on what the teacher is doing because some teachers are involved in extracurricular activities as well**

Researcher: what do you do when you receive feedback first?

**Student: I read it and I try to understand where I have gone wrong and I know I am supposed to rewrite where I have gone wrong but sometimes I forget to do that**

Researcher: ok so are you supposed to rewrite the whole essay or part of the essay?

**Student: In when I remember I usually only rewrite the part I have made a mistake on cause usually my mistake is occasionally my sentence structure id the wrong way around so I usually just rewrite that paragraph or that sentence so I can remember the order**

Researcher: when rewriting are you using a special exercise book?

**Student: just in my same book as before so I can remember it in my head**

Researcher: which one is you have the most experience in like the number error correction is the teachers commenting then error identification are a coding or a line and peer-correction?

**Student: error identification first and then error correction and we never really never do peer-correction I have never really experienced peer-correction in Chinese**

Researcher: oh ok do you want to

**Student: umm no not really cause for Chinese when the teacher does it is clear and we are all learning and it is a second language and it is not always 100% correct when we are helping each other and it is not just about memorising facts it about how your language is presented**

Researcher: so error identification is it just lined or

**Student: it is usually circled and then for error correction it is usually my sentence structure so he just draws lines under the words that need to be swapped around**

Researcher: ok and error identification because it didn't have the answer there so you have to think about you don't mind

**Student: I don't mind but I prefer error correction because if I can't always read his handwriting in Chinese and then I can ask him**

Researcher: so in the end, overall which one do you think is beneficial for you as a second language?

**Student: yes I think it is error correction because I know what I have done wrong and then I can try and fix it as opposed to error identification sometime I can't always figure out where I have gone wrong and can make me feel passive to figure out my own error**

Researcher: when you are not sure what is wrong what do you do

**Student: I usually just ask my teacher and ether explain my whole essay or the certain parts if I don't understand what he is trying to tell me**

Researcher: do you ask your peer

**Student: if he is busy then I will ask my friend just to see if he can read what my teacher is writing or what he is trying to tell me**

## **Jacob**

Researcher: How do you feel about studying Chinese in VCE?

**Student: I feel that Chinese as a VCE subject is actually very different to what Chinese is because there is a lot more stress, there is a lot more competition and a lot more pressure. Compare to when I did Chinese not as a VCE, just at Chinese school I felt Chinese was a lot more free and a lot more fun and a lot more enjoyable. So I guess now, Chinese is still good but not as entertaining because it is a lot more complex and difficult than before**

Researcher: is that because of the scoring stuff?

**Student: the competition definitely**

Researcher: and in VCE it has the Marking

**Student: yeah I think it is no longer how you want to write it there are a style and a lot more restrained.**

Researcher: ok so actually do you enjoy doing a second language in VCE

**Student: I prefer learning it as not in VCE, but it is definitely an experience that I will not forget**

Researcher: in Chinese school what kind of things did you do

**Student: I think Chinese school is a lot more stressful than school because there are a lot more students and the teacher doesn't have as much time with each student and the things we do we write a lot of essays we practice a lot of oral but it is all about the teacher giving feedback to the student and because we have a lot of students in our class we have 3 teachers actually**

Researcher: oh really?

**Student: yeah**

Researcher: how many students

**Student: around 40**

Researcher: oh, ha ha Do you like receiving feedback on your essay immediately when you submit or not even the next day but a couple of days after

**Student: immediately is definitely better**

Researcher: why that

**Student: because you have more time to change it I remember a teacher would give me feedback on Chinese a few days after and it was really annoying because I didn't have much time to go over it and normally I like to ask my teacher why did I get this wrong what should it be like**

Researcher: when you got feedback what do you do first when you get it read it or what do you do

**Student: normally I skim through it then I look at where the teacher has correction and I ask them why I need to improve and how I need to improve.**

Researcher: Do you write notes in a special exercise book or write grammar notes or rewrite everything what do you do

**Student: what I really do is just take in mind what the teacher has written and if there are a lot of mistake I would rewrite the whole essay**

Researcher: ok so what about a lot of mistake as in character or in Grammar structure is wrong content funny?

**Student: normally it is not from structure normally it is from content and grammar**

Researcher: ok?

**Student: because we can use a dictionary there are not many vocabulary mistake just grammar and sentence the structure is a bit weird**

Researcher: Chinese is same as Japanese a character language I am sure one of those wrong or

**Student: so much**

Researcher: oh ok not so much ok which one you have most experience in error correction or error identification or peer-correction could you put a number

**Student: which one is most, 1 is most?**

Researcher: yes

**Student: it is usually circled and then for error correction it is usually my sentence structure so he just draws lines under the words that need to be swapped around**

Researcher: ok and error identification because it didn't have the answer there so you have to think about you don't mind

**Student: definitely error correction number 1 then error identification and we don't really do peer-correction I haven't really experienced peer-correction**

Researcher: so in do you want it

**Student: with Chinese probably not**

Researcher: why

**Student: because when it comes to Chinese in VCE the teacher has a lot more experience we could probably help each other a bit but when we become the reader we don't really understand each other's writing and we don't really know how to correct each other like the teacher**

Researcher: how do you feel about that identification, you know lines, circles?

**Student: which ones better or**

Researcher: or do you have any comment because this one error correction the teacher writes down what it is about where as error identification is not it is just identified

**Student: so when they circle it I look at the word maybe and maybe it is the wrong word or something so I put, I don't like error identification I like it better when it is corrected and circling is better than highlight cause sometimes I miss it when it is underlined and sometimes they also do the ... so I have to ask what does this actually mean?**

Researcher: so quite often you will ask a teacher what does this mean or what is happening with this, not so much to peers

**Student: sometimes I will ask my peers but not that much.**

Researcher: sometimes when doing the marking you don't mind the red pen, pink pen purple pen.

**Student: any pen is fine really as long as I get the results really**

Researcher: ahh

**Student: as long as it is not the same as I wrote in**

Researcher: yes I understand, so now this is the last question, which one is the most beneficial for you, not the most experience error identification error correction peer-correction, most beneficial

**Student: I like it better when it is error identification cause I can have a think about it and sometimes the teacher will come up and ask me about it or I can ask the teacher they can explain where I went wrong and what I did cause error correction you don't really need to ask the teacher cause the correction is there but error identification you have to ask them most of the time and you have to explain to yourself why it is like this and why it is wrong so I definitely like error identification better**

**Kurt**

Researcher: How do you feel about studying a second language in VCE?

**Student: I think it is a really good opportunity because I can learn a new language and learn about the culture and broaden my knowledge so I think it is really good.**

Researcher: Do you is there any change from study in middle school to now in VCE

**Student: yeah the change is quite big because it is more serious now and then there is the whole VCE structure cause in middle school is just normal essay writing diary writing so it is more serious**

Researcher: serious means, what your score or what? What does it mean?

**Student: yeah score wise and also correction wise highest ended**

Researcher: ok so do you enjoy doing a language in VCE?

**Student: ahh yeah I enjoy doing a language because personally I enjoy language and it is a really big banner for future cause society is becoming more globalised**

Researcher: so you know the listening speaking reading writing the 4 areas there which one is the most enjoyable one

**Student: enjoyable one do reading**

Researcher: which one you like?

**Student: yeah I enjoy reading the most because you can have the information there and you have time to think which information is related to which question so I like reading**

Researcher: ok what about the essay?

**Student: essays are more challenging but still ok but cause sometime I can forget what are the words**

Researcher: so challenging you mean structure wise or character or content what does it mean challenging in an essay?

**Student: for me it is more the content cause my teacher always say oh our essay it needs to be unique and special so it is not the same as everyone else so you can get a higher mark so you have to really think what to put in to make it more interesting**

Researcher: Do you like receiving feedback immediately after you submit do you?

**Student: yes just because it allows me to know what I did wrong immediately and so I can correct it and improve**

Researcher: immediately means how long?

**Student: immediately maybe 2 days 3 days**

Researcher: yeah 2 days 3 days and then getting it back?

**Student: yeah getting it back**

Researcher: ok, so good, when you got the feedback what do you do first, so you get the essay feedback what do you do.?

**Student: I read through it first it and then see how I can change my essay to make it better and if I don't understand the feedback I go and ask my teacher and see if he can give me specific examples of how I can change my essay t make it better**

Researcher: ok so are you rewriting the whole sentences or just the mistake part of it

**Student: for Chinese I don't rewrite the whole sentence I just sometimes I just rewrite the specific error but I don't rewrite the whole essay**

Researcher: so are you using a special exercise book for that one or just writing papier what are you doing?

**Student: so if it is a character mistake I just practice it a few times then I can remember but if it is like the whole structure is wrong then I rewrite it and I give it to my teacher and he can correct it again so depends on how big the mistake is**

Researcher: so your big mistake what is that?

**Student: if the whole structure is wrong or the content is not interesting enough the point is not good enough**

Researcher: so character mistake is a small mistake for you

**Student: yes**

Researcher: so of those 3 there error identification error correction and error identification, which is the most experienced most used

**Student: for me error identification cause my teacher just circles or underlines what I have done wrong and then says go and think about a better argument or better essay**

Researcher: ok so what about peer-correction then

**Student: we don't really do much peer-correction at most we do a random essay and we correct it ourselves but no peer-correction**

Researcher: do you want to

**Student: sometimes I want to cause it can hear more about other people's opinions but I am not rally particular about peers reading my essays**

Researcher: oh why is that

**Student: I don't really want people to read because it is me**

Researcher: ok so it is personal

**Student: yeah**

Researcher: ok so what about error correction then marking as well and the score and everything

**Student: I like the marking according to a criteria so I know which part I need to improve so I like having a score so I do like having correction as well.**

Researcher: so when the teacher corrects you don't mind any colour pen, because it is going to become red or you know.

**Student: I don't like pencil cause it gets smudged and I can't read it clearly, I think any colour pen I like colours**

Researcher: ok so these ones do you prefer, which is most beneficial for you study?

**Student: I think error correction cause I like the idea of having a mark I like knowing what I get and also knowing which part I need to improve on and I sometime like the teacher actually writing the right answer so I get a better idea so error correction is most beneficial**