

Evaluating the effectiveness of soft data-driven learning: A process-oriented analysis of error correction in second language writing in Chinese Higher Education context

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Data-driven learning (DDL), which uses corpus data as the learning material, is a way of inductive and learner-oriented learning. Research on relevant topic reveals that DDL is effective on lexico-grammatical errors (Crosthwaite, 2017) and the indirect DDL can lead to higher error correction rate (Yoon & Jo, 2014). However, in China, DDL is new to teachers and students due to lack of evidence to show its effectiveness.

The current research aims to answer to what extent the indirect DDL can be effectively applied to correct the four most frequent lexico-grammatical errors in EFL writing (errors of articles, prepositions, verbs and word choices), and how the feedback, the concordances and other consulting resources (e.g. online dictionaries, textbooks) interact with students in error correction activities, in a Chinese university. This study adopts the mixed classroom intervention design to evaluate students' outcome of error correction, under three conditions (without DDL, DDL only and the combination of common consulting resources and DDL). This study also evaluates the actual process of error correction, where students are free to choose material for error correction, with error correction spreadsheet and stimulated recall. Lastly, the questionnaire and interview will be conducted for both students and their teacher to know about their perception and difficulties of DDL application in EFL writing class.

The study revealed that through a series of cognitive strategies, DDL material supported activation of students' prior knowledge and encouraged them to correct errors, especially article errors. Participants highly appreciated the advantages of online DDL-mediated writing activities during the pandemic, although some reservations were made about their practices which warrants further investigation.

References:

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