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Investigating EFL children's task motivation concerning the use of models as written corrective feedback

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Abstract

This study investigated how the inclusion of model texts as a feedback technique affected students' task motivation and engagement in writing tasks. Adopting a longitudinal design, 60 English as a foreign language (EFL) children (aged 11-12) were divided into three groups: a treatment group, a long-term treatment group, and a control group. The treatment groups received feedback that incorporated model texts as examples of proficient writing, while the control group self-corrected their texts. Task motivation was assessed through self-report questionnaires and focus group interviews. The findings showed that the children responded positively to the use of model texts, particularly those children who had been exposed to this type of feedback over a longer period. While some expressed a preference for more explicit error correction, their overall enjoyment, improvement, as well as enthusiasm for collaborative work highlight the value of integrating model texts into the EFL classroom. Based on these findings, pedagogical implications will be discussed.

Keywords: EFL children; longitudinal design; task motivation; model text; collaborative writing

1. Introduction

Task motivation refers to the specific motivational dispositions that students exhibit towards a particular task, influenced by various affective factors that drive their engagement and effort during the activity (Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000). Unlike general motivation, which pertains to a broader desire to learn, task motivation is dynamic and context-specific, significantly impacting students' performance on specific tasks (Dörnyei, 2002; Muñoz, 2017). Investigating task motivation in primary school students is especially significant, as their engagement is often linked to the enjoyment they find in second language (L2) activities (Muñoz, 2017). Studies indicate that when tasks are seen as fun and engaging, young learners are more likely to be motivated, improving both their performance and learning experience (Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023). Accordingly, Dörnyei's (2005) motivational theories stress the need to integrate engaging tasks into lesson plans, particularly for young learners who respond well to enjoyable activities. Therefore, understanding and nurturing task motivation in primary education can lead to more effective and pleasurable learning experiences, establishing a strong foundation for future academic success (Muñoz, 2017). Although several studies have demonstrated the direct influence of task motivation on task performance (e.g., Al Khalil, 2011; Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000), task motivation remains an underexplored construct in task-based research (Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023).

Writing and written corrective feedback (WCF) play a crucial role in language learning (Manchón, 2011; Manchón & Coyle, 2022). However, the task of writing in a foreign language (FL) can be particularly challenging and daunting because learners have to master different writing skills (Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023; Murtiningsih, 2016), even more so in the case of children attempting to write in a FL, given that their writing skills are still developing (Michel et al., 2019). As a matter of fact, Al Khalil (2016) highlights that when learners are motivated to write, they are more likely to invest effort and time in their writing tasks, which leads to improved performance and language proficiency. In this sense, collaborative writing (CW) tasks have been recognized as an effective way to enhance not only (child) FL learners' motivation to write (Azkarai & Kopinska, 2020; Storch, 2019; Villarreal & Munárriz Ibarrola, 2021), but also their writing skills, by providing them with opportunities to work with their peers, share their ideas, and experiences, as well as receiving feedback from their classmates and teachers (Storch, 2019).

In recent years, model texts, a type of feedback which consists of providing learners with native or native-like texts that they compare with their original draft, have emerged as a popular technique for providing feedback and improving writing skills in EFL classrooms (Coyle et al., 2018; Coyle & Roca de Larios, 2020; Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2021). However, the impact of these techniques on learners'

performance has mainly focused on the improvement of formal language aspects, and very few studies have addressed the influence of WCF on motivation with regard to the task being undertaken (Al Khalil, 2011; Roothooft et al., 2022; Villarreal & Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2022). Additionally, there is a widespread demand for longitudinal research focusing on L2 acquisition by children. Scholars such as Muñoz (2017) have emphasized the need for extensive empirical studies to observe the progression of children's interlanguage, and to determine potential fluctuations in motivation over time. However, most research has primarily concentrated on adult populations, overlooking the significance of employing a longitudinal design in studies with primary school children.

Against this backdrop, the current study examines the task motivation of 60 EFL children concerning both the immediate and sustained use of collaboratively worked model texts. The goal is to enhance our understanding of how CW and model texts influence young English as a foreign language learners' task motivation over a six-month period. This exploration includes investigating shifts in students' intrinsic motivation, such as their curiosity and self-perceived competence, as well as extrinsic factors like their interactions with peers during collaborative tasks. Understanding these dynamics can provide insights into fostering a supportive and engaging classroom environment that promotes enduring enthusiasm and proficiency in English language acquisition.

2. Background

2.1. Task motivation in writing tasks with EFL children

Writing is one of the most challenging skills to develop in an EFL context, requiring extensive cognitive effort and proficiency in multiple areas, such as grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and cohesion, and genre knowledge. This complexity often makes writing tasks daunting for young learners, leading to a greater need for sustained motivation to maintain engagement and improve performance (Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023; Murtiningsih, 2016). Actually, studies have shown that higher levels of task motivation are essential to keep students involved in writing activities, which are typically seen as difficult and less enjoyable compared to other tasks like speaking (Csizér & Kormos, 2009).

For EFL children, the importance of task motivation is amplified as they are in the early stages of developing self-regulatory behaviors and are more likely to engage with tasks they find enjoyable (Kim, 2005; Ushioda, 2009). Grounding studies on task motivation within theoretical frameworks, like Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self system (L2MSS), provides a comprehensive understanding of how

motivation can be influenced by specific tasks and learning contexts. The L2MSS emphasizes the dynamic nature of motivation, incorporating factors related to the learning environment and specific tasks, which are crucial for young learners whose motivation is highly susceptible to classroom conditions (Dörnyei, 2005). Empirical studies consistently support the notion that task-specific motivation plays a pivotal role in language learning outcomes. For instance, CW tasks have been found to generate higher motivation and better engagement among young learners, leading to improved writing skills and overall language proficiency (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Villarreal, 2021). This highlights the need for further research on task motivation in various writing contexts to better understand its impact and develop strategies to enhance it, thus contributing to both theoretical advancements and practical applications in EFL education.

Research on L2 motivation has evolved independently of the predominant task-based approach in second language acquisition (SLA) research. The key findings from studies on L2 motivation or L2 writing have done little to inform the interpretation of results from task-based studies, often merely suggesting whether motivation plays a role or not (Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023). This gap persists because L2 motivation theories typically take a macro perspective on language acquisition (Kormos & Dörnyei, 2004), aiming to understand students' overall motivation toward L2 learning. While this broader perspective is crucial, it needs to be complemented by a consideration of the specific motivational factors that influence performance on individual tasks. It is precisely the task-specific level of motivation that could provide insights into task outcomes (Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023).

As a consequence, our understanding of the motivational development of young learners remains limited. A review of research on L2 motivation spanning from 2005 to 2014 (Boo et al., 2015; Bryfonski et al., 2024) revealed a significant underrepresentation of secondary school students and a virtual absence of primary school pupils in studies tracing systematic trajectories of young learners' motivation. By focusing on task motivation, educators can design more effective writing tasks that not only engage EFL children but also sustain their interest and effort, ultimately leading to better learning outcomes and more enjoyable learning experiences.

2.2. Enhancing language learning: Model-based feedback and collaborative writing

Current research in SLA influenced by a writing-to-learn perspective (Manchón, 2011; Manchón & Coyle, 2022) is rooted in the cognitive strand which posits that learners require feedback on the accuracy and appropriateness of their written texts to advance their knowledge of the L2 (Ferris, 2010). Feedback provision serves as a means to activate cognitive processes like hypothesis formation,

testing, attention, metalinguistic reflection, noticing, and problem-solving strategies (Williams, 2012). By testing their hypotheses, learners become aware of their strengths and weaknesses in the target language (TL), identifying "gaps" between their interlanguage and the TL, a crucial step in the language acquisition process (Schmidt, 2001). Consequently, WCF has garnered substantial attention in recent decades due to its potential in promoting language acquisition (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009). Considering this potential, investigating the impact of WCF on language learning by children appears to be a promising area of study.

In the traditional approach to feedback, the teacher takes a central role by providing corrections and suggestions for improvement. In recent years, however, model texts have emerged as a feedback technique that is an alternative approach to traditional feedback. In EFL classrooms, models are often used as a form of feedback to provide learners with a clear understanding of the features of good writing, and to guide them in improving their own writing skills (Martínez Esteban & Roca de Larios, 2010). Instead of explicitly highlighting individual errors, this feedback approach takes a more comprehensive view by addressing the text as a whole. It offers suitable language choices, organizational suggestions, improvements in mechanics, style enhancements, and relevant ideas specific to the given context. Overall, previous research has demonstrated that incorporating model texts as feedback can yield positive outcomes for learners' writing skills, particularly in terms of improving lexical diversity and discourse organization (e.g., Cánovas Guirao et al., 2015; Coyle et al., 2018; Coyle & Roca de Larios, 2020; Criado et al., 2022). However, relying solely on model texts as feedback may not be sufficient to enhance children's motivation and engagement in writing. For instance, Lázaro-Ibarrola (2023) suggests that learners anticipate and value feedback, especially when it is explicit. Therefore, balancing model texts with explicit feedback may be more effective than using either technique alone. Additionally, although existing studies are limited, they indicate that positive course attitudes (Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000; Kormos & Dörnyei, 2004; Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023) and collaborative efforts (Azkarai & Kopinska, 2020; Calzada & García Mayo, 2020; Kopinska & Azkarai, 2020; Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023) also play a role in enhancing young learners' motivation during tasks.

CW involves learners co-constructing a written text, either in pairs or in groups (Storch, 2019). This approach to writing has also been associated with numerous advantages for language learners, such as improved language proficiency, and enhanced social skills (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007). Given the advantages associated with CW, most studies exploring model texts have incorporated collaborative work into their research design. What these studies (e.g., Coyle et al., 2018; Coyle & Roca de Larios, 2020; Luquin & García Mayo, 2020, 2021) have consistently shown is that the combination of models and collaborative work

has proven effective in enhancing various aspects of children's language acquisition, including increased awareness, improved writing skills, enhanced learning, and the successful integration of new language features. Additionally, recent studies by Lázaro-Ibarrola and Villarreal (2021) and Villarreal and Lázaro-Ibarrola (2022) have specifically highlighted the effectiveness of collaboration in fostering motivation and engagement among EFL children. The cumulative findings highlight the valuable impact of integrating CW and model texts in supporting children's language learning, and underscore the need for further exploration in this area. Although the importance of writing skills in the EFL context has been well-established, it is apparent that children often hold negative ideas about writing, lack motivation to engage in it, and demonstrate subpar writing proficiency in EFL (Bae & Lee, 2012).

2.3. Children's task motivation and model texts as feedback

According to Bitchener and Storch (2016), children should find learning enjoyable in such a way that they can develop a sustained level of motivation necessary for long-term achievement. Lack of motivation, on the other hand, is an important barrier to academic success, productivity, and wellbeing over time (Legault et al., 2006). For quite some time, scholars have acknowledged the significance of learners' motivation in determining the success of L2 learning (Dörnyei, 2019). Despite their importance, the literature on WCF has not extensively delved into the exploration of individual differences in these beliefs (Kang, 2023). Therefore, gaining a deeper understanding of the factors that underlie differences in learners' motivation and performance in WCF tasks is of paramount importance. In Waller and Papi's (2017, p. 55) words, "it is hard to imagine learners with little or no motivation for writing in a second language to care about learning from WCF."

Five studies have examined the perspectives of adult and adolescent learners on the use of model texts and, to the best of our knowledge, only three have focused on child EFL learners. Hanaoka (2007) asked undergraduate participants to rate their level of enthusiasm for reading the models on a scale of 1 to 5. The results revealed a mean score of 4.3, indicating a strong motivation to engage with the models. Similarly, Yang and Zhang (2010) requested university participants to provide written comments and also interviewed them to ascertain their motivation regarding this approach. The findings indicated that students highly valued the authenticity of the models, and appreciated how this type of feedback facilitated deeper reflection beyond their own written texts.

These researchers, however, did not explore how the participants' motivation could influence their performance in subsequent revisions. To address this gap, García Mayo and Loidi Labandibar (2017) conducted a study where

they administered a background questionnaire to adolescent participants, assessing their use and perceived effectiveness of model texts. They then compared the drafts of motivated and less motivated students and reported that highly motivated students tended to incorporate more features into their subsequent revisions than the ones who had low motivation. The questionnaire responses indicated that while the participants found the models useful, they did not particularly enjoy using them. The researchers concluded that the negative motivation for modeling and writing among the participants could be attributed to the emotional changes experienced by adolescent learners. Similarly, Kang's (2020) study with adolescent learners revealed that while the participants perceived modeling as somewhat helpful in improving their overall writing, some students expressed the opinion that the models alone were insufficient for error correction, and they would have preferred to receive explicit corrections. More recently, Kang (2023) analyzed both the rewritten drafts and new drafts of 66 adult EFL learners divided into a model group and a control group, and also explored how learners' motivation for model-based feedback influenced the effectiveness of this approach. The results revealed that the model group outperformed the control group, but this difference was only significant in the rewriting task. Moreover, in the rewriting task, there was a noteworthy correlation between learners' motivation for the models and the effectiveness of model-based feedback, but this relationship was not evident in the new writing task.

In the first two studies conducted with children and using the same database, Lázaro-Ibarrola and Villarreal (2021), and Villarreal and Lázaro-Ibarrola (2022) recruited a total of 12 and 13 pairs of EFL children, aged 10-11. The participants were divided into a model group (MG) and a task repetition group (TRG) for the former study, and a MG and a control group (CG) for the latter. The writing tasks were carried out over three sessions. During the first session, all pairs composed a text. In the second session, the MG received model texts, while the TRG revised their initial drafts, and the CG received no feedback. In the final session, all learners wrote the same text again. Before and after each task, the students rated their motivation on an individual thermometer scale from 1 to 10 and provided a reason for their rating out of a list of choices. The results of both studies were quite similar. The overall motivation of the children was high. However, the TRG maintained that motivation throughout the tasks, while the MG learners in both studies experienced a decrease in their positive attitude. According to the authors, the use of model texts had a demotivating effect on the children, maybe due to the perception that incorporating the observed features from the model into their own writing was challenging. Additionally, they might have felt that the model's exceptional quality set a high standard they could not match. Interestingly, however, the children greatly enjoyed collaborating with their peers, which played a significant role in their high motivational ratings.

Task motivation was also assessed by Roothooft et al. (2022) in a cohort of 75 learners aged between 10 to 12 years who were participating in a model-based task comprising three stages. The participants were categorized into three distinct groups: a TRG, a group provided with feedback through direct corrections, and a group given feedback through model texts. The findings indicated that task motivation remained consistently high across all stages of the writing process within the TRG, wherein students perceived the task as being uncomplicated. However, there was a minor decline in task motivation when feedback was given through direct corrections, and particularly before the final draft when feedback was provided through model texts. Although students regarded model-based feedback as beneficial for learning, they found it challenging.

As evidenced in the literature, writing poses a significant challenge, particularly for children, due to its complexity and time-consuming nature. A burgeoning body of research on model texts has emerged over the last decade, with some studies exploring their impact on task motivation. However, to our knowledge, none has investigated children's long-term task motivation through the sustained use of model texts. This gap underscores the pressing need for studies that delve into how model texts, when integrated with CW practices, can foster enduring motivation among young language learners. Our study aims to fill this void by investigating the effectiveness of model texts as feedback and CW as motivational strategies in an EFL context. By adopting a longitudinal approach, we aim to provide comprehensive insights into the developmental trajectory of children's motivation over time. This research is pivotal in advancing our understanding of effective pedagogical approaches to support children's writing skills and sustain their motivation in language learning environments. With that goal in mind, this study aimed to answer the following research question:

> How does the use of model texts as WCF, in collaboration with peers, influence EFL children's task motivation compared to self-correction over both short and long periods?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

A total of sixty (*N* = 60) Spanish children, aged 11 to 12 (mean age 11.32), participated in this study. The sample consisted of 33 girls and 27 boys who were enrolled in three EFL classes. They had been learning English for approximately 7 years and received a total of 3.5 hours of English classes per week, along with 3.5 hours of content-based instruction in English. Their proficiency level in the target

language was A2 as determined by the Cambridge Young Learners English Assessment (2018). The average score obtained by the children was 6.09 out of 10. The classes were homogeneous as the mean differences were not statistically significant ($F_{(2.57)}$ = 0.846, p = .654). Before data collection, the children also completed a language background questionnaire to avoid potential outliers and informed consent was obtained from the school principal and the children's parents.

3.2. Design

The study is part of a larger research project that examined the long-term effects of using model texts in EFL writing (Luquin, 2025). The typical research procedure involving model texts includes a three-stage writing task. In the first stage, learners engage in writing a story based on a given picture, and identify any problems they encounter. In the second stage, they compare their initial drafts with the model text provided by a native speaker, which may offer solutions to their identified problems. In the third stage, which serves as an immediate post-test, learners rewrite their original texts. For the current study, an additional delayed post-test was conducted to determine whether learners could transfer their acquired knowledge to a new piece of writing.

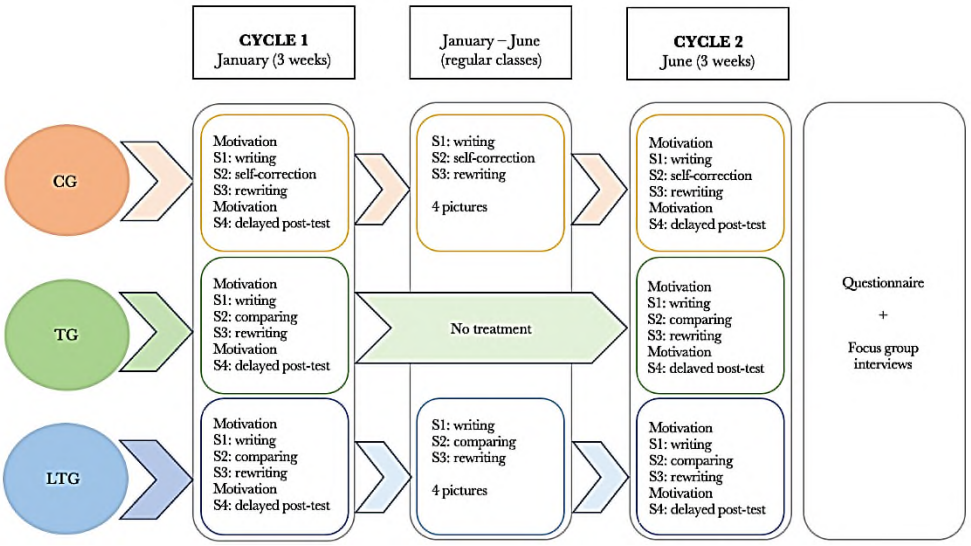

Figure 1 Research design and procedure

The longitudinal design involved two cycles of writing tasks, each lasting three weeks, with a four-month gap between them (see Figure 1). The three intact

classes were randomly assigned to different groups: The treatment group (TG) consisted of 22 children (11 pairs) who received models in January and June; the long-term treatment group (LTG) comprised 20 children (10 pairs) who received models from January to June; and the control group (CG) included 18 children (9 pairs) who did not receive any treatment, but self-corrected their texts. Within each group, the children were paired based on their proficiency levels as measured by the Flyers placement test (Cambridge Young Learners English Assessment, 2018). According to Storch (2019), if the difference in the students' proficiency is too big, we are likely to get a dominant/passive relationship. Therefore, she recommends pairing students with similar proficiency levels. The high proficiency learners will benefit from each other's expertise; the low proficiency ones will more likely feel less intimidated and participate more in resolving language-related episodes (LREs).

3.3. Data collection

Data collection took place in two cycles: Cycle 1 in January and Cycle 2 in June. Each cycle consisted of the four stages mentioned above, which lasted three weeks. From February to May, the pairs in the LTG received four picture prompts and their corresponding models, and completed Stages 1, 2, and 3. The same procedure used in the first cycle was repeated in the second cycle, except that different picture prompts were used. Stage 1 occurred on the first day (Monday), Stage 2 on the following day (Tuesday), and Stage 3 took place one week later (Monday) to avoid memorization effects. The final stage or Stage 4 (see below) served as a delayed post-test, and was conducted one week after Stage 3 (Monday).

In addition to the written instructions on the composition sheet, further instructions were provided in English. The children were accustomed to the language due to both their regular classes and the content-based program. Accordingly, participants were encouraged to use English as much as possible during the tasks, though the use of Spanish and/or Basque was permitted if they were unable to express themselves otherwise. Nevertheless, the use of their first languages was practically non-existent. In order to provide a distraction-free environment for the learners during the sessions, the school designated three quiet, separate rooms for the researchers and two assistants, each working with a different pair of students. This setup allowed three pairs to work simultaneously in different rooms. As soon as one pair finished the task, the next pair was brought in. While these dyads were engaged in their tasks, the remaining students continued with their regular classes. All discussions at every stage were video- and audio-recorded in the presence of the researcher and her assistants.

At Stage 1, in order to measure their pre-task motivation, each child completed a *motivation thermometer* questionnaire (see Appendix A), adapted from Al Khalil (2016). This tool featured a scale for students to rate their motivational dispositions. Al Khalil enhanced this by adding a qualitative element, enabling students to explain their scores to provide deeper insights into their motivational states. Drawing inspiration from these studies, empirical research on young learners has incorporated the construct of task motivation (e.g., Dörnyei, 2002; Kormos & Dörnyei, 2004) and used the motivation thermometer as the main research instrument (Al Khalil, 2011). Accordingly, the children rated their motivation on a 10-point scale (where ten represented the highest motivation possible), selected reasons from a provided list, and could add their own reason. This activity took them about five minutes and was conducted in Spanish to ensure understanding. Afterwards, the children from all three groups were asked to engage in a writing task where they had to compose a story in pairs based on a visual prompt illustrating a girl rushing to school. The story prompt, originally used by Lapkin et al. (2002) in black and white, was colored by the first author to make it more appealing. The learners were free to complete the task using English as they best knew, without specific vocabulary, discursive devices, or verb tense instructions. After completing their first draft, they were invited to proofread their compositions to avoid self-correctable errors.

At Stage 2 (comparison stage), the pairs in the two treatment groups received the stories they had written, along with a colored cartoon strip and its corresponding model text selected to suit the children's L2 level. The texts were taken from Lapkin et al. (2002) and Cánovas Guirao (2017), or written by native speakers. They were then reviewed by the children's teachers and adapted if the level was excessively high for them. During this stage, the students were instructed to compare and discuss the differences and similarities between their original drafts and the native version. In contrast, the pairs in the CG were asked to self-correct their collaborative text and explain the changes made. While it is not traditionally considered a formal WCF technique, we chose to incorporate it into our study with children. This decision stems from the fact that self-correction has received limited attention in existing literature, and we were intrigued to explore its effects. Additionally, using self-correction aligns with ethical considerations as it empowers learners to take an active role in their own language development.

Moving on to Stage 3 (rewriting stage), each pair in all three groups was provided with the picture prompt again, but they were not allowed to revise either the model or their initial drafts. The children were instructed to rewrite the story, incorporating the items they noticed during the feedback the previous week. The students were not informed of this task in advance to prevent memorization of the corrections. After completing the rewriting phase, the participants filled in the

post-task motivation questionnaire to provide a broader perspective on potential variations in their ratings.

During Stage 4 (delayed post-test), held one week after Stage 3, the students were required to produce a new text based on a different visual prompt that narrates a story similar to the first one with the same number of cartoons. This new task aimed to assess how much of the indirect feedback they could retain in the short term, and to distinguish between task-repetition effects and actual learning from the model. The visual stimulus was specially designed for this study by an illustrator to offer the children the opportunity to use newly learned material in a different context.

Between February and May, the LTG and the CG were provided with one picture prompt per month and completed stages 1, 2, and 3 with their teachers. The CG received no treatment, while the LTG benefited from four model texts. The presence of the CG served as a control for potential task-repetition effects; if the CG performed better than the TG, it could be attributed to task repetition. On the other hand, if the LTG outperformed both the CG and TG, it would indicate that task repetition alone could not account for the improved performance. During this period, the children in the TG did not receive any treatment but attended their regular lessons, while the CG and LTG took part in their corresponding feedback approaches.

Upon completion of Cycle 2, qualitative data was collected through individual questionnaires (see Appendix B) and focus group interviews (see Appendix C) in order to gather insights into the children's motivation regarding self-correction and models. Six randomly selected students from each group participated in the surveys, ensuring that none of their partners were included to avoid bias. The questionnaires and interviews were conducted in Spanish for understanding and participant comfort. The questionnaire aimed to gather qualitative data on the children's motivation to compare their text with a model, or engage in self-correction. It included specific items related to the comparison or self-correction stages and an open-ended item for additional comments. Afterwards, focus group interviews were conducted with the same six students. Group interviews can elicit different responses from children compared to individual interviews, and generate a wider range of answers (Lewis, 1992). The interviews were both audio- and video-recorded to ensure clearer capture of the children's responses, as they tend to speak softly, making audio recording particularly useful. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. Participants were encouraged to speak honestly as their identities would remain confidential. The interviews aimed to gather more comprehensive answers and address aspects not covered in the previous thermometer or survey.

3.4. Data analysis

This study used a mixed-methods research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data were collected through motivation thermometers, which involved Likert-scale questions and reasons provided by each student before and after the task. The anonymous questionnaires also contained closed-ended questions, which were designed to elicit responses in the form of "yes" or "no" or multiple-choice options. These closed-ended questions were included to facilitate quantitative analysis of the data. A mixed ANOVA was conducted to integrate elements of both a between-subjects and within-subjects design, as the assumption of normality was met, confirmed by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ($p > .05$). Bonferroni post-hoc tests were conducted to determine the specific sources of the differences, with the alpha level adjusted according to the number of comparisons to minimize the risk of Type 1 error. For related variables, the assumption of sphericity was assessed using the Mauchly test. When this assumption was violated, the Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied to adjust for the lack of sphericity. A significance level of $\alpha = .05$ was maintained throughout the analysis.

Qualitative data were gathered from open-ended questions in the survey and information obtained from the interviews. The surveys and interviews were transcribed and coded using NVivo (https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/home), where word frequency queries were conducted, and thematic nodes were created to identify recurring patterns and key concepts. NVivo's advanced features, such as text search and coding comparison, were used to ensure consistency and depth in the analysis. After coding, the data were further explored through the generation of visual models. This comprehensive approach enabled the identification of nuanced insights that might not have been captured through quantitative methods alone.

4. Results

4.1. Motivation thermometer

4.1.1. Scoring

To examine the initial motivation level of the learners and any changes in each of the two cycles for the three groups, we analyzed and compared the motivation scores provided by each child. Table 1 features the summary statistics for the scores given by each participant in the motivation thermometers.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics on means and standard deviations of the pre- and post-task motivation scores per group and cycle

	CG[1] (*N* = 18)		TG[2] (*N* = 22)		LTG[3] (*N* = 20)	
	Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*
CYCLE 1						
Pre-task	6.94	1.63	7.82	1.30	7.2	1.01
Post-task	7.44	1.58	8.55	1.18	7.9	1.55
CYCLE 2						
Pre-task	6.61	1.97	7.73	1.24	7.3	1.22
Post-task	8.11	1.41	8	1.54	8.05	1.19

Note. [1] Control group; [2] Treatment group; [3] Long-term treatment group; scores are based on a ten-point scale

As evident from the data, the motivation thermometers indicated that all learners initially had a positive attitude towards the task (*M* = 6.94 for the CG, *M* = 7.8 for the TG, and *M* = 7.2 for the LTG). Furthermore, the post-task scores for all three groups were higher in both cycles. These increases suggest that the tasks had the potential to enhance the learners' initial motivation, regardless of the feedback condition. However, to confirm this assumption, statistical analyses were conducted.

The results of the mixed ANOVA for the pre- and post-task thermometers revealed significant effects for Group ($F_{(2,57)}$ = 27.31; p = .001; η_p^2 = 0.24), Cycle 1 ($F_{(1,57)}$ = 6.37; p = .046; η_p^2 = 0.15), and the interaction between Cycle 1 and Group ($F_{(2,57)}$ = 6.12; p = .049; η_p^2 = 0.08). There were also main effects for Cycle 2 ($F_{(1,57)}$ = 33.83; p = < .000; η_p^2 = 0.37), Cycle 2 x Group ($F_{(2,57)}$ = 15.4; p = .001; η_p^2 = 0.11), and Cycle 1 x Cycle 2 x Group ($F_{(2,57)}$ = 3.99; p = .048; η_p^2 = 0.10) interactions.

Pairwise comparisons indicated that the observed upward trend was statistically significant for the CG in Cycle 2 (p = .037, 95% CI [-1.45, -1.05], d = 0.58) and for the treatment groups in Cycle 1 (p = .027, 95% CI [-0.09, -1.9], d = 0.58 for TG; p = .003, 95% CI [-0.25, -1.2], d = 0.58 for LTG). However, the treatment conditions did not show significant increases in motivation in Cycle 2. When comparing the learners' motivation from pre-task in Cycle 1 to post-task in Cycle 2, only the CG (p = .002, 95% CI [-1.17, -0.28], d = 0.58) and the LTG (p = < .000, 95% CI [-1.47, -0.54], d = 0.58) showed significant differences. In other words, only these two groups exhibited significantly higher motivation at the end of the study compared to the beginning. Therefore, while all three groups displayed a positive shift in motivation, the greatest variation was observed in the groups that had been exposed to their respective feedback for a longer duration, namely, the CG and the LTG.

When comparing motivation ratings between groups, the analysis revealed that the three groups had similar motivation ratings at the beginning of Stage 1 in both cycles ($F_{(2,57)}$ = 0.536; p = .381). There were no significant differences in motivation scores at the post-task of Cycle 2. However, a significant difference

was observed at the post-task of Cycle 1, where the TG rated their motivation as being higher than the CG (p = .036, 95% CI [0.17, 1.38], d = 0.58). Based on these findings, we can conclude that, except for the TG compared to the CG when writing the picture story for the second time, no group exhibited significantly higher or lower motivation than the others.

4.1.2. Motives

Regarding motives, the majority of the children provided positive reasons for their high motivation both before and after the task, as indicated by the pre-task (25 negative answers vs. 150 positive answers) and post-task (10 negative answers vs. 194 positive answers) thermometers (Appendices D and E summarize the reasons selected by the children before and after the task in each cycle, respectively). In Cycle 1, before the task, 50% of the students in the CG expressed their desire to work with their partners, 44% anticipated that the task would be easy, and 28% expected to have fun. In the TG, the majority of students (41%) highlighted the expectation of having fun, while "I want to work with my peer" (32%), and "I want to do an activity in English" (32%) were also among the most chosen options. In the LTG, 45% of the students indicated high motivation because they wanted to work with their peers, 35% believed they would have fun, and 30% expressed their desire to do the task. Consequently, at this initial stage, there were no noticeable differences between the groups as all three groups of children provided positive justifications for their motivation, such as enjoying the task and working with peers.

In Cycle 2, before the task, the CG once again expressed their desire to work with their peers (44%), and believed the task would be easy (33%). However, instead of choosing the fun aspect, they preferred the option "I want to do an activity in English" (33%). As for the TG, it is noteworthy that none of the students perceived the task as difficult (as they had already done it before), and they selected the task's easiness (36%) as the main reason for their positive disposition, followed by "I want to work with my peer" (27%). Furthermore, no negative answers were chosen this time. In the LTG, 35% expressed their desire to work with their peers, 30% wanted to do an activity in English, and 30% anticipated that the task would be difficult, in contrast to the TG students who did not choose this option.

Regarding the children's reasoning after completing the task, the responses collected in both cycles were overwhelmingly positive. In the CG, after the children had self-corrected their texts for the first time, the most common reason for their positive feedback was enjoying working with a peer (61%), followed by liking the task (39%), and enjoying doing the task (33%). This indicates that

the initial expectations of the children regarding working with their partners and having fun were met. Similar to the CG, the TG also emphasized working with their peers as the main reason for their positive experience (50%), both before and after the task. Other common motivations included finding the task easy (36%), liking the task (36%), and enjoying doing an activity in English (36%). The findings were consistent with the pre-task justifications of the TG. Likewise, the children in the LTG highlighted the enjoyment of working in collaboration (40%), along with considering the task easy (35%), and enjoying doing an activity in English (20%) and the task itself (20%). Thus, the main motivations before and after the task were consistent across the CG, TG, and LTG.

In Cycle 2, the CG maintained a positive attitude toward the task, expressing enjoyment of working with peers (56%), finding the task easy (39%), and enjoying doing the task (39%). In the TG, 59% reported enjoying working with their peers, while 23% stated that they liked the task. Contrary to their initial concerns, the LTG found the task easy (55%) and also highlighted enjoying working with peers (45%), liking the task (25%), and enjoying doing the task (25%).

Apart from selecting one or more motives from the list, some children took the time to write down their own reasons for their positive disposition. We considered it important to treat these separately as they can provide valuable information about motives not present among the available options or reinforce some of those already provided. Accordingly, Table 2 shows the justifications added by some learners in the three groups at pre- and post-task in both cycles. Each motive presented was provided by only one student. Although some of them could be merged with the previously listed motives, we preferred to include them all to provide a faithful and accurate picture.

Table 2 Additional reasons provided at pre- and post-task in Cycles 1 and 2

Task	Group	Cycle	Motive
PRE	CG	1	To learn to work in a team
		1	Because I'm good at English
		1	Because it's fun
		2	Because I know I can do it
		2	Because it's quick to do
	TG	1	Because I like English
		1	Because I get along with my peer
		1	Because I want to learn
		1	Because I have a good time doing tasks
		1	Because I'm going to have a peer to help me
		1	Because if I can't find a word, my peer reminds me of it
		1	Because I'm curious to know what the task is going to be like
POST	LTG	1	Because I have improved my English

Table 2 reveals several key insights. First, all but one of the reasons were provided at pre-task, with the majority corresponding to Cycle 1. This reflects the high expectations and motivation the children displayed before undertaking the task for the first time. Another interesting aspect of the data, supporting the results obtained earlier, is the emphasis on the value of peer work as a motivating force. Among the remaining reasons, two relate to having fun and enjoying the tasks, two pertain to being proficient in and enjoying English, and one is linked to curiosity. The only motives shown in Cycle 2 were provided by the CG and related to task management. This suggests that self-correction was not considered a challenge for the CG, aligning with the pre-task motives in Cycle 2, where 33% of the learners anticipated that the task would be easy. Lastly, another noteworthy aspect is the post-task motive. Although only one learner from the LTG provided this justification, it is significant that the reason relates to learning. This indicates something positive about the long-term treatment these children received, suggesting that those from the LTG may have indeed improved their English.

Overall, the justifications for their task motivation provided after the task were predominantly positive and aligned with those given before the task. These reasons indicated that the children perceived the task as easy, enjoyable and motivating, primarily due to the opportunity to collaborate with their peers. As a matter of fact, working with their peers was the only motive present in all the motivation questionnaires administered to the three groups and the most common justification added willingly by the children.

4.2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire requested participants to express their opinions on the comparison or self-correction stage by responding to a series of questions. As for the question "Do you usually do activities of this type in your English classes at school?"[1], opinions varied regarding the implementation of self-correction into their classes, with half of the CG stating "sometimes" and the other half answering "no." We can thus infer that some of them were familiar with the task, and had engaged in self-correction of their own texts at some point during their English classes. In contrast, nearly all children in the treatment groups confirmed that models had been used as a feedback technique by their teachers at times, something that we verified with the teachers.

Concerning their enjoyment of the corresponding activity, the CG's opinions were divided. Half of the CG respondents indicated that they did not enjoy

[1] The sentences and phrases in bold represent items from the questionnaire.

the activity much or at all, while the other half chose the options "so-so"[2] and "quite a lot." In contrast, the use of models sparked motivation and garnered positive responses. Most of the TG responses ranged from "so-so" to "quite a lot," and one child from the TG expressed complete enjoyment. Regarding the LTG, the majority expressed that they greatly enjoyed the task. This supports the answers given in the previous sections, indicating a growing fondness for the activity. In conclusion, the monotonous nature of self-correction resulted in an overall negative feeling toward the task, while the incorporation of models in both cycles generated positive responses from the learners, especially among those who were exposed to models for a longer period. Once again, the children in the CG commonly expressed the perception that the activity was dull, and one learner even mentioned that they were accustomed to receiving correction from the teacher. On the positive side, a range of perspectives were shared by the learners in the three conditions: working collaboratively, having fun, missing a class, feeling at ease, experiencing enjoyment, and learning. These insights were captured in the open-ended items of the questionnaire, providing a comprehensive view of their experiences.

On the topic of the usefulness of modeling and self-correction, the majority of learners, regardless of their assigned feedback condition, considered both techniques beneficial for improving their English. This finding suggests that even though many participants, particularly from the CG, reported not enjoying these activities, they recognized their usefulness in language learning.

Moving on to the final and most revealing question, the students were asked whether they wanted their teacher to continue conducting the corresponding activities, and their responses varied significantly. While all participants in the treatment groups agreed on the implementation of models into the classroom, 67% of the learners in the self-correction group held a different perspective. All the arguments put forth in support of maintaining both techniques were centered around learning and enjoyment. On the contrary, those who opposed the continued use of self-correction stated their dislike for the task and expressed a preference for receiving feedback instead.

The final part of the questionnaire enabled our 18 participants to freely add comments or share their thoughts on any aspect they wished to mention. This question proved to be particularly interesting as it provided the children with complete freedom to express themselves, allowing us to gain genuine insights into their perspectives. For instance, the first respondent from the CG (Example 1) indicated feelings of boredom, fatigue, and frustration toward these tasks, suggesting a preference for engaging in more useful activities. In contrast, the learner in Example 2 did not entirely condemn self-correction but expressed

[2] The multiple-choice options for the answers were as follows: not at all, not so much, so-so, quite a lot, very much.

a reluctance to engage in the activity again. Regarding the TG, a participant (Example 3) expressed their desire for more frequent engagement in the activities, while another child expressed satisfaction with the task (Example 4). Two learners from the LTG also provided their thoughts in this comment section, each highlighting a different aspect. One learner emphasized their enjoyment of the task (Example 5), while another student (Example 6), similarly to the TG, expressed a desire for more frequent participation in the activities.

(1) This activity is a real drag. It annoys me a lot when we are interrupted in class. Besides, we always do the same and I'm so tired! (CG)
(2) I wouldn't like to repeat it again, but it is not bad to improve our English, or to learn more and know how to correct our mistakes (CG)
(3) I liked the task a lot and it should be done more frequently (TG)
(4) Well, I think it's fine the way it is (TG)
(5) I liked it a lot (LTG)
(6) We should do this more often (LTG)

4.3. Focus group interviews

In the final part of the motivation survey, the three focus groups were interviewed, which enabled us to gain deeper insights into some of the aspects discussed earlier and to discover new ones. One question of particular interest was related to the concept of learning. When asked about the perceived task usefulness, the responses varied. In the CG, the answers tended to be more general, such as "it's another activity to practice English," "to acquire more knowledge of English," or "to learn how to write texts." The TG participants also provided somewhat vague responses like "to learn more" or "to improve our English," but one interviewee offered a more specific explanation: "to enhance our English skills and learn vocabulary," a response that resonated with their peers. In contrast, the children in the LTG provided more elaborate and detailed answers, delving into the subject matter more deeply, as can be seen in the following excerpt (Example 7):

(7) Excerpt of conversation (LTG)

CHI57: We have learned how words are pronounced, spelling . . .
CHI55: And knowing how to express yourself, right?
CHI51: Learning how to write what you see
CHI57: And also talking to our peers and helping each other. In general, I think I have improved my English.
CHI48: But overall, my vocabulary

The next question aimed to gather information about the learners' preferences for correction. All the participants in the CG expressed their dislike for self-correction and their preference for the teacher to mark the mistakes without providing the correct form. In response to the question "Would you like to receive a native model as a feedback technique?," they all responded positively. Aligning with the CG, when presented with the choice between receiving models or explicit correction, the TG preferred the latter option (Example 8):

(8) Excerpt of conversation (TG)

CHI19: This way (explicit correction) you learn more.
CHI22: You can immediately see the mistake on the paper, and you don't need to be comparing . . . which gets you a little confused.

Similarly to their classmates, the LTG's responses were in line with the previously mentioned answers on this issue (Example 9):

(9) Excerpt of conversation (LTG)

CHI41: Actually, I prefer the teacher to circle the mistake and let us think.
CHI48: Otherwise, we don't learn . . . If they tell us everything . . .
CHI43: But the models were pretty good. And they were easier because you can remember some things for the next text.
CHI55: It's easier, because if you don't know how to say something, it will most likely appear in the text.

The subsequent question inquired about their preferences and dislikes regarding the activities. For the CG, the most appealing aspect of the task was working with a peer. On the other hand, negative feedback centered around the perceived repetitiveness of the task. Similarly, the children in the TG enjoyed collaborating with their partners and also mentioned finding the task enjoyable (Example 10):

(10) Excerpt of conversation (TG)

CHI19: Well, I liked it because I have been working very well with my partner and I have had a good time.
CHI32: Yes, I liked it because I worked with my friend.

In terms of their dislikes, there appeared to be a common feeling of shyness among the children as they unanimously expressed discomfort with being recorded. Additionally, one participant expressed disapproval of the need to repeat their written work.

The participants in the LTG also reached a consensus that working collaboratively was the most enjoyable aspect ("And . . . well . . . yes, working with our partner

and helping each other"). While no negative feedback was provided, the learners made suggestions to start the task from the beginning of the course for two reasons: (i) feeling more fatigued in the second term, and (ii) believing it would better prepare them for the subsequent educational stage.

We were also curious to discover the areas in which the children believed they had made progress. Most participants in the self-correction group mentioned improvements in their spelling and a few in expanding their vocabulary, as well as improving their speaking skills. As for the treatment groups, most children highlighted advancements in vocabulary, while others mentioned improvements in grammar and writing skills.

The final query sought to determine whether the children's motivation remained consistent from the initial motivation questionnaire, or if it diminished as the study unfolded. Thus, when asked if they had maintained the same level of motivation throughout the entire process, responses varied based on the feedback condition. Participants in the CG undoubtedly experienced a decline in their motivation at some stage. The learners in the treatment groups offered more positive responses, although a few of them acknowledged occasionally experiencing a decrease in enthusiasm toward the activity.

5. Discussion

The study aimed to investigate whether model texts and self-correction influence learners' motivation in different ways, as well as how these effects change over time. To address the research question in greater depth, the following sections will present key findings related to learner motivation and the effectiveness of feedback techniques, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data sources.

5.1. Motivation thermometer

Consistent with previous research (Lázaro-Ibarrola & Villarreal, 2021; Villarreal & Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2022), the motivational ratings obtained from the thermometers indicated an overall positive attitude toward the task in all three groups. The participants showed higher levels of post-task motivation compared to pre-task motivation, in both cycles, as highlighted by Lázaro-Ibarrola (2023). Specifically, statistically significant differences were found between the pre- and post-task ratings for the treatment groups in Cycle 1, and for the CG in Cycle 2. These increases in motivation for the model groups suggest that the three-stage task was effective in enhancing the learners' initial motivational disposition in the

short term, which aligns with the findings in Lázaro-Ibarrola and Villarreal (2021). On the other hand, the increase in motivation observed in the CG in Cycle 2 may be attributed to the conclusion of the treatment, assuming that the participants in this group were not particularly motivated, as explained in more detail later. Similarly, when comparing the first pre-task ratings in Cycle 1 with the last post-task ratings in Cycle 2, significant differences were found for the CG and the LTG. The increase in motivation observed in these two groups in the last post-test can be attributed to the fact that these children had been exposed to their respective treatments for a longer time period (six months).

When comparing motivation ratings between groups, no group displayed significantly higher or lower motivation than the others, except for the TG in comparison to the CG when they wrote the picture story for the second time in Cycle 1. For some reason, the TG showed higher motivation than the CG in this particular instance. It is challenging to explain why the LTG was not as enthusiastic as the TG at this point, even though both groups exhibited a significant difference across tasks. However, what is evident is that the introduction of models was a surprising element during the first round, resulting in high levels of motivation.

Despite the overall positive trend observed in the motivation ratings, it became evident that this upward shift did not accurately reflect the true disposition of all participants. Both the anonymous questionnaire and the focus group interviews revealed a discrepancy between the high scores and the actual responses provided, shedding light on the genuine thoughts of the children. Specifically, the self-correction group displayed a decline in motivation over time, while the treatment groups, particularly the LTG, exhibited a more enthusiastic attitude as the study progressed. This inconsistency observed in the responses can only be interpreted in one way: Children tend to disclose more honest and sensitive information when anonymity is ensured (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2022). In this study, participants were required to write their names on the motivation thermometers, while the remaining surveys were anonymous. The non-anonymous condition may have led the children to feel the need to please the researcher, teacher, or their parents.

When it comes to the motives behind the learners' motivation, the majority of reasons provided on both the pre-task and post-task thermometers were positive. Negative motives were relatively minor, with only a small number of students (typically five or six) selecting them. Among the popular reasons for high motivation, themes such as having fun, perceiving the task as easy, and being eager to engage in English activities emerged. However, the most frequently chosen motives were social in nature, specifically the opportunity to work collaboratively. It appears that collaborative work primarily explains the increase in motivation levels observed across all groups. Interestingly, this justification emerged

consistently across all three questionnaires, providing further support for children's preference for collaborative work, which has been highlighted in previous studies (Kopinska & Azkarai, 2020; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Villarreal, 2021; Villarreal & Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2022; Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021). These findings reinforce the notion that collaborative work and the use of model texts are effective approaches to engage children in their L2 learning (Kopinska & Azkarai, 2020), and they underscore the co-construction of motivation (Villarreal & Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2022).

5.2. Questionnaire and focus group interviews

The following section of the survey involved a questionnaire and a focused interview, and by considering the responses and comments some interesting conclusions can be drawn. When asked about their previous experience with feedback, the participants in the CG reported being familiar with the task, and nearly all of the respondents from the treatment groups acknowledged that models had been used as a feedback technique by their schoolteachers. In contrast, García Mayo and Loidi Labandibar (2017) found that the use of models was completely new to their adolescent participants, which they interpreted as a contributing factor to the negative attitude toward modeling, along with the students' lack of interest in writing, motivation to learn English, low self-efficacy beliefs, and the perception of writing as having a secondary role in L2 development. In our study, it is possible that the positive disposition of our participants is influenced by their younger age. Additionally, collaboration may serve as a foundation for a positive attitude and, consequently, better performance, which is consistent with previous research (e.g., Azkarai & Kopinska, 2020; Calzada & García Mayo, 2020; Kopinska & Azkarai, 2020; Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023). Given that working collaboratively in writing is still a relatively new concept for teachers, students who are not accustomed to joint work may find the task enjoyable and feel eager to receive feedback.

As for the learners' level of enjoyment, we observed a divergence of opinions within the CG. Half of the CG respondents stated that they did not enjoy the task or barely enjoyed it, while the other half held slightly more positive views. On the other hand, the use of models sparked motivation and generated positive responses, aligning with findings reported for adult learners (Hanaoka, 2007; Yang & Zhang, 2010). Consequently, the repetitive nature of self-correction contributed to an overall negative feeling toward the task, whereas the inclusion of models in both cycles evoked positive responses from the learners, particularly among those who had been exposed to models for a total of six months. The results from the longitudinal study by Kopinska and Azkarai (2020) on dictogloss tasks also come

to mind as they revealed a consistently positive disposition among children that appeared to strengthen over time.

In general, most participants in the self-correction condition recognized the potential usefulness of this form of feedback in improving their language skills and learning how to correct mistakes, as was evident in the larger project (although to a lesser degree compared to the performance of the model groups). However, there were also some who regarded self-correction as an ineffective activity and placed greater value on more direct feedback approaches. All participants in this group shared the feeling that self-correcting their own texts was monotonous, tedious, and exhausting. Due to these reasons, they made it clear that they did not want their teachers to incorporate this type of feedback into their teaching practice. The combination of having to correct their own work without a clear purpose and receiving any form of feedback significantly diminished their motivation for the task. These results contradict the scores obtained with the motivation thermometer, highlighting the importance of data triangulation. By using multiple data sources, we can obtain corroborating answers that strengthen the credibility of the study. On the other hand, the treatment groups, particularly the LTG, viewed the use of models positively. This positive perception extended beyond just learning, as observed in the studies by García Mayo and Loidi Labandibar (2017) with teenagers and Kang (2020) with adults. The treatment groups also expressed enjoyment and a desire for their teachers to implement models into the EFL class.

5.3. Summary of the findings

The research aimed to answer the question: How does the use of model texts as WCF, in collaboration with peers, influence EFL children's task motivation compared to self-correction over both short and long periods? The findings indicate that self-correction, while recognized for its effectiveness in improving spelling, vocabulary, and other language skills, led to an overall pessimistic attitude among learners due to its tiresome and unrewarding nature. This waning motivation suggests the need for a more engaging approach, such as peer correction, as suggested by one learner. In contrast, the use of model texts elicited more positive responses, especially from learners exposed to this form of feedback for an extended period. Despite some learners expressing a preference for more explicit error correction, the enjoyment they experienced, along with their improved lexicon, grammar, and writing skills, underscores the effectiveness of model texts as a feedback tool. The collaborative nature of working with peers also contributed to higher motivation and engagement, highlighting the value

of models as an occasional but powerful pedagogical approach in the EFL classroom. Taking into account individual and contextual factors is crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between feedback and L2 learning. Listening to the children's perspectives has provided valuable insights into the effectiveness and appropriateness of the feedback techniques employed in this study.

The findings of this study align with the theoretical insights presented in the introduction and literature review, particularly the significance of task motivation in enhancing the engagement of EFL children in writing tasks. The dynamic nature of task motivation, as discussed by Dörnyei and Kormos (2000), is evident in the students' positive responses to model texts, which shifted their motivation from pre- to post-task and varied among individuals. This underscores the context-specific nature of task motivation, which is crucial for young learners (Muñoz, 2017).

The integration of model texts as a form of WCF has proven effective in not only improving linguistic skills but also in sustaining students' interest in writing tasks. This aligns with the concept that when learners enjoy tasks, their motivation and performance increase (Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023). Additionally, the collaborative use of model texts accords with the benefits of CW highlighted in the literature, where peer interaction and shared learning experiences enhance motivation and writing proficiency (Azkarai & Kopinska, 2020; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Storch, 2019). Furthermore, the longitudinal design of this study addresses the call for extensive empirical research to observe motivational fluctuations over time (Muñoz, 2017).

Overall, while L2 motivation theories traditionally adopt a macro perspective on language acquisition, focusing on students' general motivation towards learning a second language (Kormos & Dörnyei, 2004), our study underscores the importance of complementing this approach with an examination of specific motivational factors impacting engagement with tasks. Understanding the task-specific levels of motivation, as highlighted by Lázaro-Ibarrola (2023), can offer valuable insights into task outcomes and guide the development of targeted instructional strategies in EFL contexts. This nuanced understanding is essential for advancing both theoretical frameworks and practical applications aimed at enhancing language learning experiences for young learners.

6. Conclusion and pedagogical implications

As mentioned in the literature review, learners' response to feedback is influenced by various factors related to the learner and the learning context. Therefore, consideration of individual and contextual factors is important for a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between feedback and L2 learning, especially in the case of children. Shak (2006) emphasized the significance of

motivation in early childhood education, particularly in classroom settings where children face challenging tasks on a daily basis. This study has demonstrated the positive impact of using model texts and CW on EFL children's task motivation. Through a longitudinal design involving treatment and control groups, the research highlights several key pedagogical implications and suggests important directions for future research.

To begin with, teachers are encouraged to systematically integrate model texts into EFL curricula to enhance students' understanding of proficient writing. Model texts should be used not only as examples but also as tools for comparison and self-assessment, helping students internalize writing standards and improve their own work. To increase student engagement, interactive activities where students annotate model texts, compare them with their own writing, and participate in collaborative tasks that encourage peer discussion can be particularly effective. However, balancing the use of model texts with explicit error correction is also crucial to addressing the diverse needs and preferences of students. Providing explicit feedback alongside model texts can help students identify and correct specific errors, and scaffolding techniques can gradually transition students from relying on explicit feedback to independently using model texts for self-correction. This approach builds students' confidence and autonomy in their writing.

Integrating model texts and collaborative writing over the long term has been shown to sustain student motivation for tasks. Embedding these approaches into a year-long curriculum, with periodic assessments to measure progress and adjust strategies, is recommended. Structured CW activities, such as assigning specific roles within groups, ensure active participation from all students. This approach not only improves writing skills but also enhances social and communication skills. Effective feedback mechanisms, such as peer review sessions guided by model texts, can further enhance the CW process and improve student outcomes.

Our work has certain limitations but they can also serve as a starting point for future research in this field. Firstly, although our study included a substantial number of participants, dividing sixty children into three groups and pairing them up resulted in a reduced sample size. We are aware that a larger number of pairs would have provided more representative results. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this study was conducted in a real school setting, limiting the number of learners who could participate. Despite the small sample size, the results are likely to hold greater pedagogical significance for instructors compared to more controlled laboratory-based studies with larger cohorts. Furthermore, the study was influenced by external circumstances, such as the proximity of the summer break during Cycle 2, which might have impacted the children's performance at different stages of data collection. Consequently, it is uncertain whether the findings reported in this study would hold true in a real classroom

context where learners typically engage in their daily work. Another drawback is that the thermometer used to gauge motivation was not anonymous, potentially affecting the learners' authentic emotions, which should have been addressed during the interviews to confirm the existence of researcher effect. Finally, it would be beneficial to include a short-term CG to compare with the short-term TG. This additional CG would provide a clearer baseline, allowing for more accurate assessments of the intervention's impact. Such a comparison would help further validate our findings, identify any potential confounding variables, and enhance the overall robustness and reliability of the study design.

Future research should explore the effects of model texts and CW across different age groups and proficiency levels to determine the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, investigating how cultural contexts influence the effectiveness of these pedagogical strategies can provide valuable insights. Comparative studies across different countries or educational settings are recommended. Another area of potential research, more attuned to current times, is the analysis of the impact of digital tools on delivering model texts and facilitating CW. This includes exploring online platforms, digital annotations, and interactive feedback systems. The impact of blended learning environments, where digital tools and traditional classroom activities are combined, on student task motivation and writing proficiency should also be investigated. Extended longitudinal studies that track the impact of model texts and CW over several academic years are necessary to capture long-term trends and effects. Future research should also focus on fluctuations in student motivation over time, identifying key factors that sustain or hinder motivation and how they can be managed effectively.

All in all, while it is important to acknowledge that some participants expressed a preference for explicit error correction, the enjoyment, improvement, and eagerness to collaborate with peers demonstrate the benefits of integrating model texts as pedagogical feedback into the EFL classroom, at least periodically. These findings support the value of collaborative work, which should be taken into consideration by EFL instructors, as well as the effectiveness of model texts as motivating classroom tasks. Given the dynamic nature of motivation, it is the responsibility of teachers to bring useful and engaging tasks to the classroom for children. Writing tasks may pose greater challenges as children often respond less positively to writing activities compared to oral activities, due to the perceived lack of dynamism. However, we continue making writing tasks more appealing, effective, and engaging over time. To ensure the effectiveness and appropriateness of our tasks and assessments, teachers need to listen to their learners' needs and beliefs.

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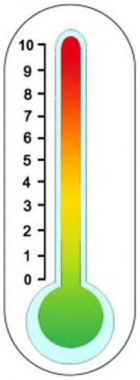
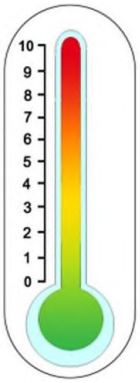
APPENDIX A[3]

Motivation thermometer

Pre-task Motivation thermometer

*¿How do you feel **before** doing the task? Please, indicate on this thermometer.*	Why have you chosen this level? Please, indicate.
	**Because I think the task is going to be easy.** **Because I want to work with my peer.** **Because I want to do the task.** **Because I want to do an activity in English.** **Because I think I´m going to have fun doing the task.** **Because I think the task is going to be difficult.** **Because I don't want to work with my peer.** **Because I don't want to do the task.** **Because I don't want to do the activity in English.** **Because I think I'm going to get bored doing the task.**

Post-task Motivation Thermometer

*¿How do you feel **after** doing the task? Please, indicate on this thermometer.*	Why have you chosen this level? Please, indicate
	**Because the task was easy.** **Because I enjoyed working with my peer.** **Because I liked the task.** **Because I enjoyed doing an activity in English.** **Because I enjoyed doing the task.** **Because the task was difficult.** **Because I didn't enjoy working with my peer.** **Because I didn't like the task.** **Because I don't like doing activities in English.** **Because I got bored.**

(Taken from Kopinska & Azkarai, 2020, adapted from Al Khalil, 2016)

[3] The material in the appendices was administered in Spanish.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Please answer the questions ***by choosing the right answer*** *or* ***by explaining your thoughts as fully as possible****, where necessary. Remember that the questionnaire is* ***anonymous****.*

1. Give your opinion on the following activity: **Writing a text in response to a picture**

   a. Do you usually do activities of this type in your English classes at school?

   Yes ◯ Sometimes ◯ No ◯

   b. Did you enjoy the activity?

Not at all	Not so much	So-so	Quite a lot	Very much
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

   Why? _____

   c. Do you think it might be useful to improve your English?

Not at all	Not so much	So-so	Quite a lot	Very much
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

   Why? _____

   d. Would you like your teacher to continue doing this type of activity?

   Yes ◯ No ◯

   Why? _____

2. Give your opinion on the following activity: **Comparing your text with a model/self-correcting your text.**

a. Do you usually do activities of this type in your English classes at school?

Yes ◯ Sometimes ◯ No ◯

b. Did you enjoy the activity?

Not at all	Not so much	So-so	Quite a lot	Very much
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Why? _____

c. Do you think it might be useful to improve your English?

Not at all	Not so much	So-so	Quite a lot	Very much
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Why? _____

d. Would you like your teacher to continue doing this type of activity?

Yes ◯ No ◯

Why? _____

Write here anything else you would like to add -suggestions, comments, etc.:_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your collaboration

APPENDIX C

Interview questions

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

1. Have you ever done this activity? Would you like to do it in class?
2. What did you think this activity was going to be like?
3. Do you find it useful? For what?
4. How would you like to be corrected?
5. Did you like doing this activity? What did you like? What did you not like? Would you change something?
6. Do you think your English is better now? In which ways?
7. What is your opinion on comparing your text with a model/self-correcting your text? Do you think it is useful to improve your writing?
8. Have you been motivated throughout the whole process, or have you lost your motivation at some point?
9. Did you like working with your partner? Why?
10. Would you have preferred to do it alone? Why?

APPENDIX D

Mentions and percentages of reasons for motivation selected by the three groups at pre-task in Cycles 1 and 2

MOTIVES	CG (*N* = 18)		TG (*N* = 22)		LTG (*N* = 20)	
PRE-TASK Because I…	C1	C2	C1	C2	C1	C2
think the task is going to be easy	**8 (44%[1])**	**6 (33%)**	4 (18%)	**8 (36%)**	3 (15%)	5 (25%)
want to work with my peer	**9 (50%)**	**8 (44%)**	**7 (32%)**	**6 (27%)**	**9 (45%)**	**7 (35%)**
want to do the task	2 (11%)	1 (6%)	6 (27%)	3 (14%)	**6 (30%)**	4 (20%)
want to do an activity in English	1 (6%)	**6 (33%)**	**7 (32%)**	4 (18%)	5 (25%)	**6 (30%)**
think I´m going to have fun doing the task	**5 (28%)**	2 (11%)	**9 (41%)**	3 (14%)	**7 (35%)**	2 (10%)
think the task is going to be difficult	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	4 (18%)	0	5 (25%)	**6 (30%)**
don't want to work with my peer	0	1 (6%)	0	0	0	0
don't want to do the task	0	2 (11%)	0	0	1 (5%)	0
don't want to do the activity in English	1 (6%)	0	0	0	0	0
think I'm going to get bored doing the task	0	1 (6%)	0	0	1 (5%)	1 (5%)

[1] The percentages presented in the tables were calculated based on the total number of children in each group, considering that learners could provide more than one reason from the available choices.

APPENDIX E

Mentions and percentages of reasons for motivation selected by the three groups at post-task in Cycles 1 and 2

MOTIVES	CG (*N* = 18)		TG (*N* = 22)		LTG (*N* = 20)	
POST-TASK Because…	C1	C2	C1	C2	C1	C2
The task was easy	5 (28%)	**7 (39%)**	**8 (36%)**	4 (18%)	**7 (35%)**	**11 (55%)**
I enjoyed working with my peer	**11 (61%)**	**10 (56%)**	**11 (50%)**	**13 (59%)**	**8 (40%)**	**9 (45%)**
I liked the task	**7 (39%)**	3 (17%)	**8 (36%)**	**5 (23%)**	3 (15%)	**5 (25%)**
I enjoyed doing an activity in English	3 (17%)	5 (28%)	**8 (36%)**	4 (18%)	**4 (20%)**	4 (20%)
I enjoyed doing the task	**6 (33%)**	**7 (39%)**	7 (32%)	2 (9%)	**4 (20%)**	**5 (25%)**
The task was difficult	1 (6%)	0	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	0
I didn't enjoy working with my peer	0	0	0	0	0	0
I didn't like the task	0	0	0	1 (5%)	0	0
I don't like doing activities in English	0	0	0	0	1 (5%)	0
I got bored	0	0	0	0	2 (10%)	0