

## EFL Learners' Attitude towards Teacher's and Peers' Written Corrective Feedback

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**Submission History:**

Submitted: July 05, 2022

Revised: February 16, 2023

Accepted: February 19, 2023



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### Abstract

This research aimed to reveal English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL) learners' attitudes toward the written corrective feedback (WCF) from their peers and their teacher during their composition in the context of EFL writing. Fifty-nine students were involved in this research and were required to fill in the questionnaire to collect the research data. Additionally, the analysis of the data showed that: (1) students generally have a positive attitude toward both the teacher's and their peers' WCF; (2) they felt challenged and encouraged to have better writing when their teacher or peers always corrected the errors they had made in their writing composition; (3) they had a more positive attitude toward direct WCF than indirect WCF; (4) they expected the most pervasive errors in their composition to be corrected; (5) they preferred global errors to be corrected instead of local errors. Based on the findings, it is possible to conclude that EFL learners generally require WCF when learning to write a composition. It must include considerations such as the types of correction techniques used (direct and indirect), which errors are prioritized for correction (the most common), and who should correct the errors (teachers are preferred against peers).

**Keywords:** Student's attitude, written corrective feedback, direct-indirect feedback, EFL writing

### INTRODUCTION

Finding effective ways to help students enhance their writing skills is commonly still a primary concern for any writing teacher. Corrective feedback has long been regarded as an effective method for teaching students to master particular linguistic forms and structures, according to researchers in the field of writing instruction and teachers of second or foreign languages (Benson & DeK Geysers, 2019; Janah et al., 2021; Ranalli, 2018; Sherpa, 2021). They have thus been preoccupied with figuring out the best ways to offer corrective feedback so that students' writing accuracy increases. According to research findings, providing students with written corrective feedback improves their writing skills (Kitchener & Knoch, 2010; Ranalli, 2018); the socio-interactive SWELL writing method (Teo, 2006); and an interactional approach to the teaching of writing (Ravand & Rasekh, 2011; Wahyuni, 2021).

Some studies related to written corrective feedback in EFL writing classes have been demonstrated in the literature. The accuracy of students' editing and rewriting during the current school year was examined by Sinha and Nassaji (2022) for the effect of both the direct and indirect WCF. Additionally, they investigated the connection between how students perceived WCF and the efficiency of all feedback forms. The 56 participants were split into three groups: the direct WCF group (n = 18), the indirect WCF group (n = 18), and the control group (n = 20), from which data were collected. Each group produced narrative texts based on visual cues, edited the original texts, and wrote new writing compositions based on feedback from the teacher. Both treatment groups completed an observation-reaction survey. The results revealed that the two feedback groups significantly outperformed the control group regarding revision and rewriting. However, no significant correlation was discovered between student perceptions and the two feedbacks' efficacy.

Furthermore, various strategies for improving the effectiveness of written feedback have been proposed. These strategies, which include direct and indirect strategies, are used to help students improve their writing skills (Facullo, 2022). As an illustration, consider how written comments (as it is called written corrective feedback) can affect students' writing and attitudes toward writing by establishing a personal connection between a teacher and a student. Written comments from teachers are preferred by students as opposed to oral or peer feedback (Cinkara & Galaly, 2018; Zahroh et al., 2020). However, which type of written corrective feedback—direct or indirect—is better for accuracy improvement is a valid question. When a student makes a linguistic error, the teacher directly corrects them by pointing out the proper linguistic form or structure, as it is defined as direct written corrective feedback (Eslami, 2014; Tursina & Chuang, 2016). It may consist of removing an unnecessary word, phrase, or morpheme, inserting a missing word, phrase, or morpheme, or providing the correct form or structure. In contrast, indirect corrective feedback indicates that an error has been made somehow (Mafulah & Basthomi, 2022; Tursina & Chuang, 2016). One of four methods can be used to highlight or circle the error, count the errors in a line in the margin, or use a code to indicate the location and type of the error.

Arguments for both approaches (direct and indirect written corrective feedback) have been advanced over time (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Tang & Liu, 2018). On the one hand, Indirect feedback proponents contend that their method is the best because it forces students to participate in guided learning and problem-solving, which encourages the kind of reflection most likely to result in long-term language acquisition, especially in writing. On the other hand, those who favour direct feedback claim that it is better for students because it lessens the confusion that students may experience when they do not comprehend or remember, for example, the meaning of error codes used by teachers. Implementing direct written corrective feedback gives learners enough information to resolve more complicated errors in, for example, syntactic structure and idiomatic usage; it gives more immediate feedback on hypotheses that may have been misunderstood. (Sabarun, 2020; Wauningsihyh, 2020; Zheng & Yu, 2018)

Rashtchi and bin Abu Bakar (2019) revealed that students preferred direct and explicit feedback and expected teachers to correct their errors as much as possible. In fact, most teachers correct all of their students' errors and spend all of their time marking their students' writing assignments. However, Damanik (2022) emphasizes that WCF can be useful as a revision tool but not for long-term learning. The time spent correcting mistakes

can be used for more productive learning activities. Furthermore, Wang and Jiang (2015) contend that WCF is ineffective in improving L2 learners' writing ability and may even harm the learning process. Many researchers have sought to define students' perceptions of written corrective feedback in the teaching-learning process since it is critical to improving students' linguistic accuracy (Benson & DeKeyser, 2019; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Mao & Lee, 2020). However, current studies primarily focus on written corrective feedback from teachers. Studies on students' attitudes toward written corrective feedback from teachers and peers still need to be completed. In a nutshell, this study aims to describe (1) the learners' attitudes toward their teacher's written corrective feedback on their composition and (2) the learners' attitudes toward their peers' written corrective feedback on their composition. This study concerns students' perceptions about receiving written corrective feedback for their writing compositions in the EFL writing classes.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Context and Participants**

This study surveyed students' attitudes toward implementing written corrective feedback from their teachers and peers. Fifty-nine undergraduate students, ages 20 to 22, were chosen randomly from those taking and/or taking the Essay Writing course, which focused on essay writing. These students were chosen based on their participation in the prerequisite writing courses - Paragraph Writing, focusing on paragraph development - and were thus assumed to have received corrective feedback treatments. Students completed their previous writing course (called Sentence Building). They were expected to have good sentence-level writing skills in their previous class. They proceeded to Paragraph Writing Course as they were also demanded to write paragraphs effectively with excellent grammatical rules.

### **Research instrument, data collection and data analysis**

A questionnaire survey was used in this study. Survey research is used to learn about population groups and their characteristics, opinions, attitudes, or prior experiences (Abahussain, 2020; Wei & Cao, 2020). A three-point Likert scale questionnaire with the choices agree (A), neutral (N), and disagree (D) was used to gather the data for the study. (D). In essence, each of the 25 survey items was a statement of attitude with a corresponding Likert scale (see Table 1). The questionnaire was split into two categories: (1) attitudes of students toward written feedback from teachers; and (2) attitudes of students toward written feedback from peers. Students' attitudes toward direct, indirect, and local, global written corrective feedback from teachers were further broken down in the former. In contrast, in the latter, students' attitudes toward direct, indirect, and local, global written corrective feedback from peers were subdivided. Two methods were used to present the data from the students' completed questionnaires. The overall distribution of questionnaire responses was first summarized using descriptive statistical analysis (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Second, to display the number and percentage of responses from each student who selected one of the three possible response options—agree, uncertain, or disagree—frequency data analysis was used.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Before discussing the main findings related to the student's perception toward the written corrective feedback from their peers and their EFL writing teachers, the reliability of the questionnaire is presented to ensure the credibility of the findings in the following session.

### The Reliability of the Questionnaire

In terms of the instrument used in this research, effective questionnaires require high reliability. Some respondents could have answered questions perfunctory or not seriously. Regardless of the group, there are always opportunities where the respondent needs to read the question. Based on the responses collected, this study found (table 1 of the questionnaire results) that each question was read carefully and showed high internal consistency based on the responses indicated. The percentage score for items with opposite words is indicators. If the response reveals the reversed valued score, it becomes more credible that the respondent read and understood the comparable item similarly, regardless of the wording. Three item pairs -items 12 and 13 (100% and 94.44%, respectively); 23 and 24 (94.44 and 83.33%, respectively), and 14 and 25 (83.33%, respectively, for items with reverse wording) that were written backwards provide evidence that the respondent responded in a way that could be entrusted. Furthermore, the questionnaire results are shown in the following sections (Table 1 and Table 2).

### EFL Students' Attitude regarding the Teacher's Written Corrective Feedback

All students preferred their mistakes in their writing projects to be corrected (Item 1, Agree = 100%), as shown in table 1, regarding their opinion of their teacher's written corrective feedback. It shows that students have a good attitude towards written remedial from the teacher. Students hoped the teacher would point out their mistakes in their writing assignments and how they should be corrected (Item 2, Agree = 100%). Furthermore, students asked their teacher to indicate where their writing errors were formed (item 3, Agree = 88.89%). They show a good attitude toward indirect written corrective feedback by doing so. In addition, there was a marked tendency for students to anticipate that their teacher would not only point out the problem they made in their writing assignment but also offer hints on how to fix it (item 4, Agree = 94.44%). However, students prefer direct written corrective feedback to indirect written corrective feedback when compared with the percentage of students who like direct and indirect written corrective feedback. The detailed responses are illustrated in the following table.

**Table 1.** The Questionnaire result regarding the learners' attitudes toward written corrective feedback from their teachers

Item	Question	D %	N %	A %
1.	Whenever my teacher assigns me to write, I want him/her to correct the errors I have made in my writing tasks.			100
2.	I hope my teacher indicates the presence of the errors I have made in my writing tasks.			100

3.	I hope my teacher indicates the location of the errors I have made in my writing tasks.	11.11		88.89
4.	I hope my teacher provides clues or tips on how I should correct the errors I have made in my writing tasks.	5.56		94.44
5.	I hope my teacher only gives general comments in my writing tasks.	88.89		11.11
6.	I hope my teacher only gives scores in my writing tasks.	88.89	5.56	5.56
7.	I hope my teacher only discusses our writing tasks in class.	83.33	5.56	11.11
8.	I hope my teacher does not always correct the errors I have made in my writing tasks.	83.33		16.67
9.	I hope my teacher only corrects the most frequent errors I have made in my writing task.	5.56		94.44
10.	I hope my teacher only corrects the global errors I have made in my writing task.	88.89	5.56	5.56
11.	I hope my teacher does not correct the local errors I have made in my writing task.	94.55		5.56
12.	I feel challenged or encouraged when my teacher always corrects the errors, I have made in my writing task.			100
13.	I feel embarrassed or discouraged when my teacher always corrects the errors, I have made in my writing task.	94.55		5.56
14.	I like my writing errors to be corrected by my teacher rather than by my classmate.	5.56	11.11	83.33
15.	I feel embarrassed when my teacher uses my writing errors as an illustration for class explanation.	50	11.11	38.89

Then, for teachers who only provided general feedback and graded their writing projects, students tended to disagree (items 5 and 6, each scored 88.89 % for Disagree). It shows that students value their teacher's more thorough criticism, so they can better understand how to correct their mistakes. Students disagreed with their teacher, who only sometimes corrected the mistakes they made in their writing assignments, regarding the frequency of written corrective comments (item 8, Disagree = 83.33%). They prefer that their teachers always point out their mistakes. Learners anticipated that their teacher would correct only the errors they made the most frequently in their writing assignments (Item 9 = 94.44% for Agree), in terms of which errors deserved correction input. It is because students consider receiving corrected essays with lots of crossed-out words, new words inserted, and lots of comments, usually written in red ink, to be burdensome. If their writing is corrected this way, many children feel humiliated and lose confidence. The students wanted their teacher to wait to immediately address their global and local errors (items 10 and 11 = 88.89% and 94.44% of disagreement, respectively) of this type of error. It implies that correcting errors that prevent students from understanding phrases or messages should take precedence over those that do not.

In addition, from their answers, students have a positive attitude towards written corrective feedback, feeling challenged or motivated when the teacher always corrects the mistakes, they have made in writing assignments (Item 12 = 100% for agreement). They would choose their teacher (Item 14, Agree = 83.33%) when asked to ask a friend or teacher to correct their mistakes. It proved they were more confident in their teacher's ability to

provide written corrective feedback on their assignments. Finally, using students' mistakes as examples is still a contentious issue among students because when asked about feelings of embarrassment when teachers use their writing mistakes as examples in class, 50% disagree, 11.11% are neutral, and 38.89 agree (item 15). However, on the other hand, this can show that the number of students who do not want to lack their composition is suspended in public for fear of being embarrassed.

### **EFL Students' Attitude regarding their Peer's Written Corrective Feedback**

The results show that respondents have friendly perceptions toward written corrections made by peers: When using the error reduction method, students rely on their peers to point out the errors they make in their work. Furthermore, they hoped that their classmates would not only point out their writing errors but also offer tips or suggestions on correcting them (items 16, Agree = 88.89%; item 17, Agree = 83.33%; and item 18, Agree = 88.89%, respectively), as shown in Table 2. It would allow them to benefit from the corrections of their peers.

Furthermore, 55.56% disagreed, and 44.44% agreed when asked about general comments in their assignments given by classmates. It meant there was a matter of disagreement among students regarding their colleagues' written corrective feedback in general comments. That is, some students see the use of general comments in writing assignments, and others see them as useless. Students do not expect their colleagues to correct the most common mistakes when asked about errors that need to be corrected (item 20 = 72.22%). They may believe that their colleagues do not know which are considered the most common mistakes. Students prefer to correct local rather than global errors that must be corrected (each response, item 22, Disagree = 72.22% and; item 21, Disagree = 66.67%).

It can be interpreted that students need more confidence in their partner's ability to identify mistakes that impede the understanding of sentences. Finally, on the question of feeling challenged or motivated when their colleagues consistently corrected mistakes, they made in their writing assignments (Item 23, Agree = 94.44%), students' positive attitudes toward corrective feedback became apparent. Students do not have a psychological barrier to receiving written feedback from their peers. Based on current research findings, students (item 25, Disagree = 83.33%) always prefer to have their mistakes corrected by their teacher. The reason is that students can lose confidence if their work is corrected excessively. Negative attitudes such as fear of making mistakes, hopelessness, and frustration in learning can result from a lack of self-confidence. Budianto et al. (2020) found the same thing; namely, students and teachers both believed in the benefits of WCF in increasing the accuracy of students' writing. In addition, direct, specific, and comprehensive feedback is preferred by students to indirect feedback. However, researchers found inconsistency between students' priorities and teachers' practice in composition class in the amount, type, and need for feedback with students who required more significant amounts of WCF than what their teachers provided. Teachers and students need to ensure the effectiveness of the WFC provided by the teacher to adjust the disorientation that occurs. Those, as highlighted by Khoiriyah (2021) in her research, teachers are suggested to implement collaborative writing. By receiving feedback from teachers and exchanging ideas with group members, students can develop their writing through collaborative writing and produce better writing.

**Table 2.** The Questionnaire result regarding the learners' attitudes toward written corrective feedback from their peers

Item	Question	D %	N %	A %
16.	I hope my classmate indicates the presence of the errors I have made in my writing tasks.	5.56	5.56	88.89
17.	I hope my classmate indicates the location of the errors I have made in my writing tasks.	11.11	5.56	83.33
18.	I hope my classmate provides clues or tips on how I should correct the errors I have made in my writing tasks.	5.56	5.56	88.89
19.	I hope my classmate only gives general comments on my writing tasks.	55.56		44.44
20.	I hope my classmate only corrects the most frequent errors I have made my writing task.	72.22		27.78
21.	I hope my classmate only corrects the global errors I have made my writing task.	66.67	5.56	27.78
22.	I hope my classmate does not correct the local errors I have made my writing task.	22.22	5.56	72.22
23.	I feel challenged or encouraged when my classmate always corrects the errors, I have made my writing task.		5.56	94.44
24.	I feel embarrassed or discouraged when my classmate always corrects the errors, I have made my writing task.	83.33		16.67
25.	I like my writing errors to be corrected by my classmate rather than by my teacher.	83.33	11.11	5.56

Regarding error types, the findings revealed that learners would rather have their global errors corrected than their local errors. Furthermore, when it came to which errors required corrective feedback, the learners strongly expected that their teacher would only correct the most common errors they had made in their writing tasks. Lee (2019) and Yeo (2018) appear to support these findings, arguing that "more is not better" and thus "less is better." Lee (2019) argues that more WCF does not benefit teachers and students. This treatment can have a negative impact on teachers' professional status, making them feel like "marking machines" (Lee, 2021) who do the same tiring job day after day, as they frequently have piles of students' work. According to Hyland (2010), this exhaustive work is "reflexive" in the sense that teachers respond to errors habitually and unthinkingly. Receiving papers full of error correction confuses and even discourages students, especially when this treatment is repeated over time (Cinkara & Galaly, 2018; I. Lee, 2019)

According to Brutt-Griffler (2021), providing less WCF is more beneficial to teachers and students. Teachers can pay attention to errors in content, organization of ideas, and other essential components of writing when WCF focuses only on some written errors. Furthermore, providing focused corrective feedback makes them more likely to return feedback to students on time. With fewer underlines, circles, and error markings, WCF is less perplexing and threatening to students. Students are more likely to make hypotheses (e.g., trying out new expressions to convey meaning rather than using grammatically acceptable forms that do not necessarily reveal they are genuinely intended meaning) and, as a result, build self-confidence in writing. In line with Lee (2021), Bitchener (2021) argued that with

WCF, students have a better chance of being aware of and understanding feedback or correcting their errors because there are fewer grammar items to pay attention to.

In summary, correcting one global error in a sentence will clarify the intended message more than correcting several local errors in the same sentence. Furthermore, errors that occur frequently in students' writing should be corrected first. This is because if not corrected promptly, such errors have a high chance of becoming fossilized. The fossilization of errors will lead to more complex problems when learning the target language.

Other results reveal that students prefer direct corrective feedback to indirect corrective feedback. It was congruent with the research of Eslami (2014). In order to find this out, Eslami (2014) compared two WCF methods with 60 lower-middle-level EFL students in Karaj, Iran. He suggested using direct and indirect written feedback when dealing with student composition. The former can show whether a fault is present or where it is precisely. When a teacher believes that a student can self-report an error or find an appropriate solution by consulting the right self-help resources, they will use this treatment.

Additionally, students prefer teachers over classmates to point out their mistakes. In order to effectively correct mistakes, the teacher must be a reliable source of knowledge about the target language. The purpose of teacher corrections is to confirm students' assumptions (i.e., error correction experience) about the target language by giving data and examples, explaining and describing as needed, and most importantly, verifying their assumptions. While many students find asking the teacher to correct their mistakes helpful, this may only sometimes be a successful teaching method. For some teachers and students, it can be more advantageous in terms of time and effort to correct errors for friends or self-correction under the guidance of a teacher (Kuyyogsuy, 2019; S.M. Lee, 2020; Lopez-Pellisa et al., 2021). Hence, this finding suggests that the effectiveness of an instructional strategy should be confirmed through a series of experiments because there is little empirical research to test these hypotheses.

## **CONCLUSION**

According to the research findings, EFL learners generally had a positive attitude toward the teacher's and their peers' written corrective feedback. When teachers or peers consistently pointed out their writing errors, they were even more challenged or encouraged. They specifically stated that they preferred direct written corrective feedback over indirect written corrective feedback. Additionally, there was a significant tendency for students to anticipate that their most common writing errors would be fixed. Then, they preferred that those global errors be fixed rather than local errors. They then preferred that their teacher, not their classmates, correct their errors. Based on the findings, it is possible to conclude that EFL learners require WCF when learning to write a composition. It must include considerations such as the types of correction techniques used (direct and indirect), which errors are prioritized to correct (the most common), and who should correct the errors (teachers are preferred against peers). Using written corrective feedback during writing activities will be more effective and in line with the needs of the students.

The survey's results have been analyzed, and some crucial points regarding using WCF for composition tasks for learners are presented. The teacher must also consider the attitudes of the students when administering correction. One aspect of being a successful language learner is the ability to use and make errors in a foreign language. Since making



mistakes is a natural part of learning any new skill, including foreign languages, the teacher should foster a positive learning environment where students understand that making errors is a part of learning. Lastly, due to the limitation of this research, other researchers strongly suggested investigating the comparison of peers' written corrective feedback and teachers' corrective feedback in enhancing the EFL learners' writing competence.

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