UNNES

College students' preferences for written corrective feedback

Lucia Geneviave Bella Shinta✉1, Utari Praba Astuti1, Nova Ariani1

1Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

Article Info

Abstract

Although written corrective feedback (WCF) is provided to give students information about their writing which intends to help them make improvement, students may have different expectations of how WCF should be delivered. This study was focused on investigating English Language Education (ELE) students' preferences for the WCF covering the preferences for amount of feedback, writing aspects to focus on, correction techniques, and tones of feedback. A number of 188 ELE students participated in this study. Using mixed-methods design to collect data, the study revealed that the students expected to always have WCF on their errors as they have desire to always make improvement. Having WCF is considered essential as some students had difficulty analyzing errors independently. Besides believing the importance of all aspects of writing, the students mentioned some reasons related to their weaknesses that require focuses on all feedback. Most of the students preferred direct feedback and indirect feedback with location and indication of error types as they valued detailed feedback. The students saw feedback in negative tone and suggestive tone as the source of improvement, while one in positive tone increased positive feelings towards writing. The findings suggest the importance of increasing the students' awareness of how to get benefits from different WCF techniques while still accommodating their preferences.

✉Correspondent Address:
Universitas Negeri Malang
Jl. Semarang 5, Kota Malang, 65115
E-mail: luciabellashinta@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The benefit of WCF is supported by some studies that investigated the effectiveness of WCF (e.g. Marzban & Arabahmadi, 2013; Saeb, 2014; Zareil & Rahnama, 2013). As defined by previous researcher (Leng, 2014), written feedback is an action of writing comments on students' compositions as responses to students' efforts as well as a guide for them to improve as writers. Specifically to written corrective feedback (WCF), it is a written response that provides information on students' writing performance, mainly in the form of comments and also corrections on mistakes and/or errors so that the students can make changes for the betterment of their writing.Saeb (2014) found experimental groups that received WCF on all errors and feedback only on the use of verbs got improvement on their writing, while the results from group that did not receive the feedback were not significantly different. Another study by Marzban and Arabahmadi (2013) found that direct WCF was significantly effective for students' writing accuracy. It was supported by Zareil and Rahnama (2013) that direct feedback was significantly more effective for students' improvement on writing than indirect feedback using coded correction. The result of students' grammar accuracy after receiving indirect uncoded feedback was also better than the control group. These studies reflected how WCF, though it is delivered in different ways, can contribute to students' improvement compared to if students do not receive any inputs from teachers on their works.

However, there are still debates over how feedback should be provided so that it may be advantageous for students' improvement. For instance, many researchers agreed with the idea that teachers should give feedback on content and organization before any comments on grammar (Tom et al., 2013). In contrast, there also has been evidence that numbers of errors decreased on students' writing which received feedback on grammar (Diab, 2015), and that correcting grammatical errors on students' writing promoted better writing skill (Sarvestani & Pishkar, 2015).

Along with the arguments about what constitutes effective feedback, the socio-cultural theory believes that corrective feedback is beneficial when it is tailored to students' needs in their development (Sheen, 2010) since what is perceived as a benefit for one student may not be for others. Consequently, the problem is not about whether to deliver the WCF, but rather about how the WCF can give students access to learn from their errors during the writing process (Wan Mohd Yunus, 2020). This is the students' preferences that are also considered as the foundation of students' attitude that may drive the way they response to the feedback (Riemer et al., 2014). There is a possibility that students will appreciate feedback they wish to receive and ignore the one that they do not expect. For instance, if students prefer indirect feedback where the teacher underlines the errors and give some clues, they may pay more attention and use that type of feedback in writing more than the type that they do not expect. It has also been proven that students who received their preferred type of feedback were more successful at eliminating errors than the students who did not (Rummel & Bitchener, 2015).

Nevertheless, since teachers have their own beliefs and the students also have their preferences for the feedback, there might be a gap between teachers and students' expectations of the feedback to be provided that should be bridged (Diab, 2005). When there is mismatch between what teachers provide and what the students expect to obtain, it can result to students' confusion on how to handle the feedback in the revision process. Thus, the implication of this problem is students' dissatisfaction that can affect their motivation in learning process (Brown, 2009, as cited in Black & Nanni, 2016; Mungungu-Shipale & Kangira, 2017).

The researchers went from feedback provision where ELE students in a state university in East Java were involved in regular writing tasks. The representative from cohort 2019 reported they frequently got feedback that was provided differently by different lecturers. Some of the students received feedback personally after they finished the essays, while some others received it at the pre-writing stage after they submitted the topic, thesis statement, and supporting points, and it was only about the content they were about to discuss. In contrast, others from cohort 2018 said that they rarely received feedback on their written tasks. A student from one class said that they got feedback on content, and it was delivered generally through Google Classroom, while another student said they sometimes got feedback on all errors in the assignments of one course, and it was sent personally. Similarly, some students from cohort 2017 received feedback that is given generally to all members of the courses they attended or sometimes without feedback at all.

Relevant to this issue, many researchers have conducted research on students' WCF preferences in the scope of EFL (e.g. Al Hajri & Al-Mahrooqi, 2013; Chen et al., 2016; Irwin, 2017; Mungungu-Shipale & Kangira, 2017; Orts & Salazar, 2016). However, in Indonesia, the researcher

found limited recent research-based articles that reported investigation on ELE students. Previous studies mainly focused on feedback provision for students in high school level and major other than ELE. The available studies on students' preferences are also limited to preferences for particular types of feedback. The examples are ones conducted by Iswandari (2016), Tursina and Chuang (2016), and Aridah et al. (2017). The research conducted by Aridah et al. (2017) aimed to investigate preferences of 54 ELT students for types of WCF that was limited to direct, indirect, focused, and unfocused feedback. Previously, Tursina and Chuang (2016) and Iswandari (2016) had conducted research on the same topic to explore ELE students' preferences, and it was also limited to preferences for direct and indirect feedback.

Therefore, based on the issues on limited studies and the real application of WCF provision that varied, there has been an urgency to conduct a study that focused on preferences of ELE students viewed from different aspects of preferences. It was relevant to the importance for the lecturers to be aware of the students' expectations and also the possible consequences if these were not in accordance with their own expectations (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010). Furthermore, referring back to Diab (2005) about the gap between teacher and students' expectations regarding feedback provision, failing in obtaining information on students' preferences for WCF might cause mismatch between the two parties in providing and responding to WCF, which may result to problems in the revision process.

After reviewing previous studies on WCF (e.g. Al Hajri & Al- Mahrooqi, 2013; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Fithriani, 2017; Iswandari, 2016; Orts & Salazar, 2016; Raza, 2019), four aspects of preferences for WCF were identified, namely preferences for the amount of feedback, preferences for aspects of writing to focus on, preferences for correction techniques, and preferences for tones of feedback. The amount of feedback refers to how many errors and/or mistakes the students expect to get mark on and how frequent students expect to receive feedback from the lecturers. Aspects of writing are components that are important to be focused on writing; correction techniques refer to different ways that are used to locate or indicate errors and/or mistakes; and tones of feedback refer to how lecturers' opinion or responses towards students' writing are expressed through comments. These aspects were also based on the dimension of WCF in Nakamura (2016), namely types, focus, scope, and tone of feedback that respectively refer to correction techniques, amount of feedback, writing aspects to focus on, and whether the comments are delivered in positive or negative tone. There is also the suggestive tone where comments are in the form of suggestions that direct students to know how they should improve their writing (Ghazal et al., 2014).

Besides contributing as complements for previous studies on EFL students' preferences for WCF in Indonesian EFL context, the explanation about preferences for WCF of ELE students can be a reference for the lecturers to achieve the balance between students' preferences and their practices. It will help them to consider how they should provide the feedback in future writing courses or any writing assignments.

This study was conducted specifically to investigate students' preferences for the amount of feedback, for writing aspects to focus on, for correction techniques, and for tones of feedback.

METHODS

Concerning the needs of investigating students' preferences for WCF as well as the reasons behind those preferences, this study utilized mixed-method research design to provide better, more meaningful understanding of the phenomena to be obtained (Cohen et. al, 2018; Creswell, 2013). To be specific, explanatory sequential design was chosen in which the quantitative data were collected utilizing questionnaire, and it was followed by qualitative data that were collected from interview. This design was selected as the researchers wanted to first obtained and analyzed the quantitative data on students' preferences so that they could identify which parts of the data that needed further explanation, how the data needed to be explained, and who from the participants that should be interviewed (Cohen et. al., 2018).

Respondents

The subjects of this research were students of the ELE study program of a state university in East Java, Indonesia who were involved in different courses in which the main activity was writing. The writing activities were considered because they include frequent feedback provision during the process, which was in line with the focus of this research on WCF. The students were taking the

Argumentative Writing (Cohort 2019), Thesis Proposal (Cohort 2018), and were also in the process of writing undergraduate thesis (Cohort 2017). To have the appropriate sample size, the researchers used Slovin's formula (Fadilah et. al., 2017) for the calculation, in which the N represents population and e is the level of significance of .05 or 5%.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

From the result of calculating the sample size, a number of 188 out of 356 students became the participants of this research. This process was followed by stratified sampling procedure to have the participants from the three cohorts mentioned previously. The students were proportionally chosen using the following formula that was cited from Demokrawati (2014). Nh in the formula represents the members of each year; N represents the population; and n represents the sample size. The calculation resulted to participants comprised of students from cohort 2017 (63), cohort 2018 (62), and cohort 2019 (63).

$$nh = \frac{Nh}{N} \times n$$

Instruments

The questionnaire focuses on preferences for tone of feedback, preferences for feedback amount, preferences for correction techniques, and preferences for writing aspects where the items were adapted with modification from Al Hajri and Al- Mahrooqi (2013), Orts and Salazar (2016), Iswandari (2016), and Fithriani (2017) respectively. It consists of 2 multiple-choice items and 21 Likert-scale items that range from 1 to 4 with descriptors Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree and Not Useful At All to Very Useful for some numbers. The adaptation was done by carefully analyzing and matching the item formations from the aforementioned scholars with the dimension of WCF in Nakamura (2016) and the definition of suggestive feedback in Ghazal et. al. (2014) to be arranged in accordance with the preferences for amount of feedback, for writing aspects to focus on, for correction techniques, and for tones of feedback.

In addition to the questionnaire, follow-up interview was also conducted to elicit reasons for the students' preferences reported through the questionnaire. The instrument validity was ensured through expert validation by an ELE lecturer whose expertise is in writing courses. The instrument items of the questionnaire were revised based on the feedback on the item clarity and the appropriatness of the wordings. After getting validation, the questionnaire reliability was also tested and showed Cronbach Alpha value .799, which means that reliability is considered strong (Jackson, 2009).

Data collection procedures

The distribution of online questionnaire was done in four days. As the number of participants reached more than 150, the researcher reviewed the data and listed some names as the candidates for interview after reviewing their responses. As data from all participants was collected, the data percentages were re-reviewed and the names were sorted. Eight students from the three cohorts were selected as the interviewees. These students were selected because their questionnaire responses showed that they chose the scales on items that needed further explanation due to the high-percentage rating as it brought up questions of why the scales that were chosen. This number of participants was also taken after considering the minimum number of qualitative research participants proposed by Morse (1994, as cited in Omona, 2013), which is a minimum of six. After being contacted, the interviewees responded positively to the invitation and agreed to provide more information on the interview through WhatsApp call.

Data analysis

To analyze data obtained from the questionnaire, the researchers utilized descriptive statistical analysis by calculating the frequency, percentage, and also the mean of the responses to each item as what has been suggested by Brown (2011) to include these results of calculation for individual Likert items. The means were included so that the interpretation of the results would not be based on too

heavy interpretation of only one particular response. For the purpose of data interpretation from the means, interval computation was done based on the 4-point Likert scale. The use of mean range and interpretation table was adapted from Jinowat and Wiboolyasarin (2022) and adjusted to the scale used in and the focus of this research—preferences. The range was first obtained by subtracting the lowest scale from the highest (4-1). This value was then divided by the highest scale (3/4), which resulted to obtaining a value of .75 as the final range. Each of the mean range with its interpretation is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2.How frequent WCF is expected to be provided

Mean Range	Interpretation
1 – 1.75	Very low preferences
1.76 – 2.50	Low preferences
2.51 – 3.25	High preferences
3.26 – 4	Very high preferences

It was followed by the analysis of data from the interview. The researchers used thematic analysis, which aims to identify, analyze, and reporting themes—similar ideas or patterns of meaning that appear repeatedly—of participants' responses that are found in collected qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Interview data were read and reread to clearly understand the ideas delivered by the participants, which then was followed by color-coding the key words and phrases that are relevant to the interview questions. These codes that were found similar or reflected the same ideas were grouped into categories. These categories were then reread and analyzed to create the appropriate themes that could represent the main reasons behind students' preferences.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Preferences of the Amount of Feedback

The first two items in the questionnaire aim to answer the first research question about preferences for the amount of feedback. In response to item 1 whether the students always wanted to receive written corrective feedback, most of the participants have shown how they would like to always have their errors and mistakes marked by the lecturers (M=3.7). This finding is supported by the interview result where the participants explained their reasons behind this preference.

Table 2. How frequent WCF is expected to be provided

Item	Responses				
	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4	Mean
I would like to always receive my lecturers' written corrective feedback whenever there are mistakes and errors in my writing.	1 (0.5%)	6 (3.2%)	44 (23.4%)	137 (72.9%)	3.7

Desire to Make Improvement for Future Writing

The result of interview from five students revealed that they wanted to always receive written corrective feedback for their writing improvement.

"If lecturers do not give feedback on the errors, I will not know whether it is already right or not. Anything from the feedback is important for me. I use it to improve my writing." (Student 2)

Following the first item, in the next question where the participants were asked about how many errors they expected to be marked, and the response has shown that most of them reported high preference for mark all errors (70%, N=132). Others also indicated their preferences for few marks on only some errors (16%, N=30) and marks on only errors from one language component (14%, N=26).
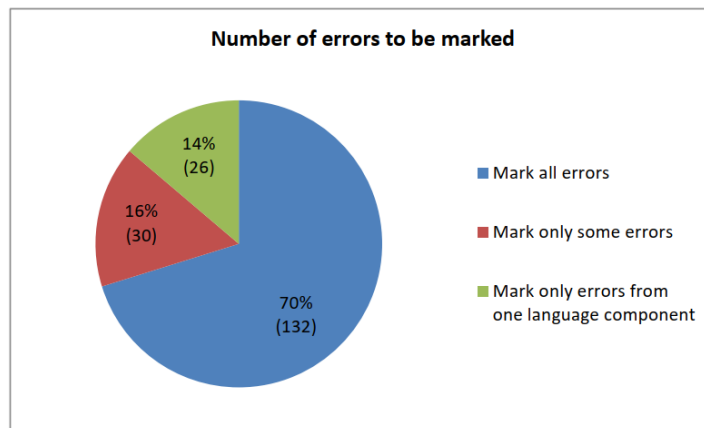

Figure 1. Number of errors to be marked

Marks Mean 'Something Is Wrong'
From the interview, it was found that students who expected all errors to be marked tended to focus on only the marks without trying to find other parts of their writing that may contain mistakes and/or errors.

> "By marking all errors and mistakes, it can help me to understand where I have made mistakes in my writing. If only mark some, I tend to revise only the errors being marked, and I don't revise other mistakes that may be there in my writing." (Student 3)

Desire to Learn Autonomously
As for those who chose to mark only some or only errors from one language component, they reported that they wanted to have opportunity to learn and improve their knowledge and skills by themselves. Three students agreed that by having only particular errors marked, there would be more space for them to find mistakes and analyze errors on their own.

> "I want to learn more independently. Sometimes when we find what mistakes we made by ourselves, it is more likely for us to remember the types of errors and how to correct them. The feedback is important, but not all should be given feedback." (Student 4)

Preferences for Writing Aspects to Focus on
To answer the second research question about students' preferences for writing aspects to focus on, the researcher analyzed the responses on the 3rd to the 14th item. As presented in Figure 2, the means for each writing aspects range from 3.0 as the lowest and 3.9 as the highest mean score. These scores has clearly shown that students' preferences for writing aspects to be prioritized by the lecturers starts with focus on grammatical errors (M=3.9), followed by organization (M=3.7), mechanical errors (M=36), and vocabulary choice (M=3.6). The participants also showed their high preference for writing styles (M=3.4) and content of writing (M=3.0), although they apparently should be the latter focus during feedback provision.
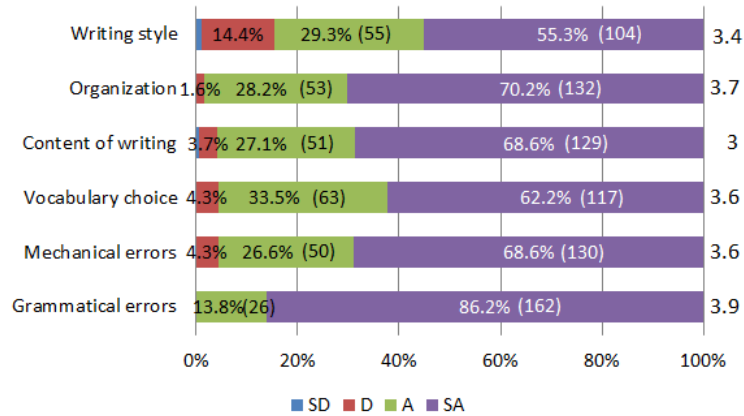
Figure 2. Writing aspects to focus on by lecturers

To see whether what the students expected from the lecturers is in line with the aspects that they personally focus on, another similar item was also provided. The results that are presented in Figure 3 show the consistency of students' very high preferences for WCF on grammatical errors (M=3.7) that is followed by organization (M=3.6) and mechanical errors (M=3.6). However, there is switch of position between preferences for content of writing (M=3.6)—that in the previous item ranked the lowest—with vocabulary choice (M=3.5). As for the WCF on writing style (M=3.3), it is still in accordance with the result of previous item that the students had high preference for it although it is put as the last aspect for them to pay attention to.
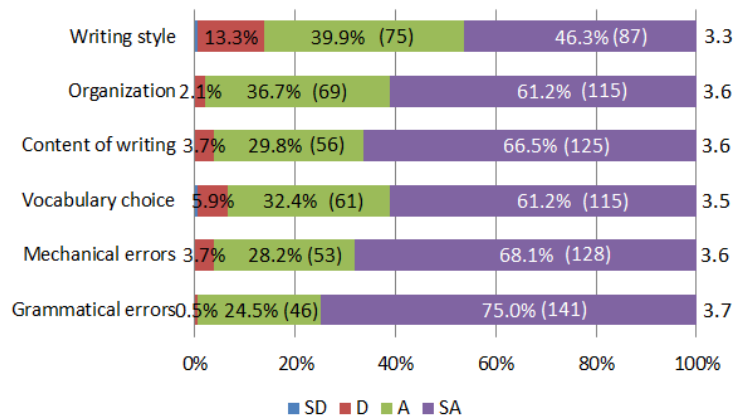

Figure 3. Writing aspects that the students focus on

The Importance of Each Aspect for Writing
From the interview, the students addressed the importance of paying attention to written corrective feedback on all writing aspects for processing their writing. Two students answered the interview questions with explanation that the aspects listed in the questionnaire are all needed to write and rewrite a good piece of writing text.

> "I think when we write, we also think about the content we want to write and also the grammar and the vocabulary, so all aspects are important for our writing. When lecturers give feedback on grammar, I always pay attention to the feedback, and when it is about vocabulary, I also focus on it. So whatever writing aspects are given feedback on, I always pay attention to it." (Student 3)

Student's Weaknesses-Related Factor
Besides acknowledging the importance of all writing aspects to produce a good piece of writing, four students explained how their weaknesses on particular aspects contributed to the way they focus on

written corrective feedback from the lecturers. Three students reported how they felt that their knowledge about grammar, vocabulary, and other aspects were still lacking and needed more improvement. Two of them said how they usually forgot to use particular punctuations and right spelling of words. They also found it difficult to focus on the topics they were discussing.

"I think my ability using the aspects is very low. I still don't understand the right way to use correct grammar, vocabulary, and others. That's why I think all aspects are important and I focus on all of them." (Student 7)

Preferences for Correction Techniques

In response to the question on preferred correction techniques, 46.8% (N=88) of participants chose direct WCF, followed by indirect WCF that locates and indicated erros (37.2%, N=70). The three least preferred correction techniques are indirect WCF that only locates errors (10.1%, N=19), the one that indicates errors at the margin (3.7%, N=7), and questions as clues (2.1%, N=4).
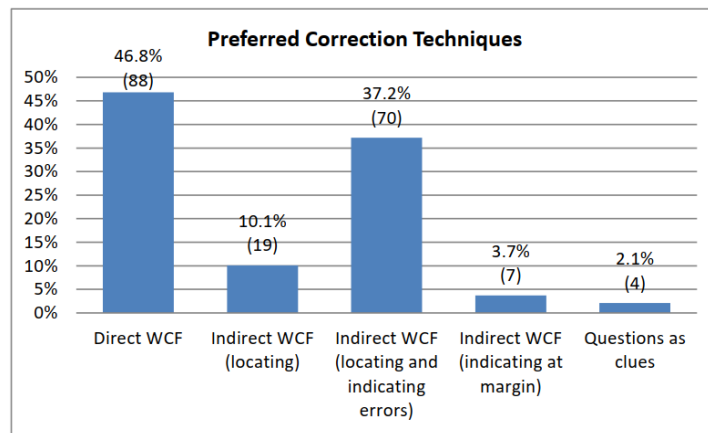

Figure 4. Preferred Correction Techniques

The preferences for correction techniques are also seen from the participants' responses on the usefulness of each technique. In Figure 5, the means range from 1.9 showing the least preferred correction technique to 3.7 as the most preferred one. The participants showed a very high preference for Direct WCF (M=3.7). This technique was followed by indirect WCF that locate and indicate the errors (M=3.0), which still represents a high preference for it. Indirect WCF that only locate the errors (M=2.6) still belongs to a high preferred technique, while indirect WCF that indicate errors in margin (M=2.1) and questions as clues (M=1.9) are the least preferred strategies.

Table 3. Correction techniques and the examples

| Correction Techniques	Examples used in the questionnaire
Direct WCF	Since she arrived, we ~~did not talk~~ to each other. have not talked
Indirect WCF (locating the errors)	Since she arrived, we <u>did not talk</u> to each other.
Indirect WCF (locating and indicating the errors)	Since she arrived, we <u>did not talk</u> to each other. wrong tense
Indirect WCF (indicating errors at the margin)	wrong tense Since she arrived, we did not talk to each other.
Questions as clues	Since she arrived, we did not talk to each other. what do you mean?
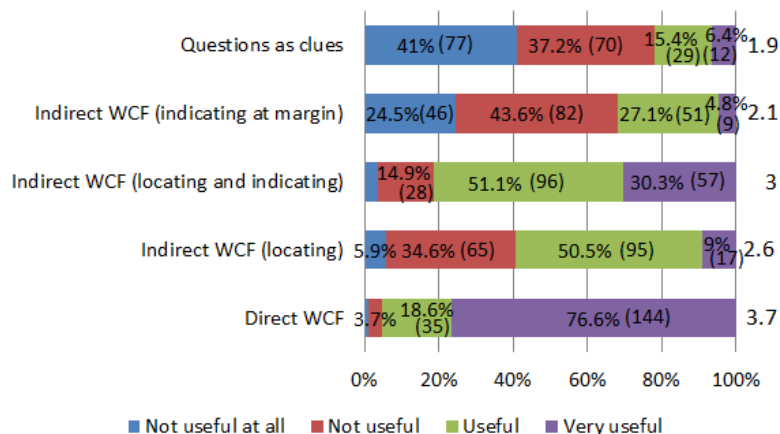
Figure 5. Students' opinion of the usefulness of correction techniques

Feedback that Allows Students to Learn

From the interview sessions, the students explained the reasons behind preferring and considering direct feedback and indirect feedback that locates and indicates the errors useful. These two correction types are considered helpful because they show the error location and give reason why that particular part is wrong. Besides, with direct feedback that directly provides the students with correct forms of the errors, the students felt that these attributes allow them to learn from the feedback given.

> "When I'm learning, I think it is best for me to know why I'm wrong rather than finding what I did wrong because finding stuff doesn't make me learn anything, but looking for the reason, that's gonna make me open my grammar book, my dictionary, and that is much more helpful." (Student 1)

Needs for Clear and Detailed Feedback

Interview revealed that five students have similar opinions regarding the needs for having feedback that is clear and detailed. It is because the students find it difficult to identify their own errors with indirect feedback that only locate, indirect feedback that only indicate, and feedback in form of questions. Clues that are actually given by underlining, indicating the errors, and questioning are considered not enough to make the students make use of the feedback for their learning and improvement.

> "It is because what my lecturer means with just the underline? I don't know the mistake is about grammar or … I even don't know why it is wrong, whether only about grammar or any aspects. It's just not clear for me." (Student 2)

Preferences for Tones of Feedback

In response to items on preferences for tones of feedback, the students reported very high preferences for all the three tones. Suggestive tone became the feedback tone that most of participants preferred (M=3.8). Suprisingly, suggestive tone has been followed by negative tone (M=3.7) that was preferred more than the positive tone (M=3.5). The reasons behind it are presented in the form of interview excerpts below.
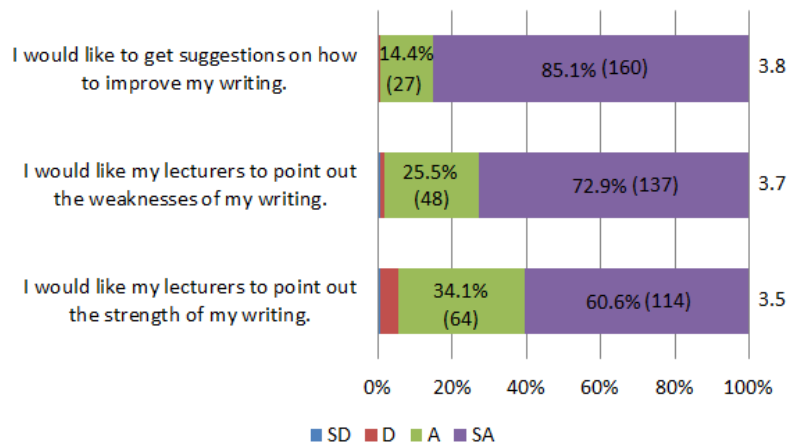
Figure 6. Students' Preferences for Tones of Feedback

Increasing Positive Feelings towards Writing

When being asked about the reasons of expecting the lecturers to give positive comments, the students expressed similar opinions related to the positive feelings they received towards writing. Four students told the researcher how the comments are perceived as rewards and the reasons why they feel motivated, happy, and confident about their writing.

> "I think the comment on strength of my writing helps me to be motivated. It helps me to know the characteristic of my writing or in what part I am good at writing." (Student 4)

The Sources of Improvement

Based on the interview, the students found that comments on weaknesses of writing and suggestions are interrelated as both are the sources of their improvement on writing. Not only do the comments with negative tone show what are still insufficient from students' works but also function as motivation for the students to always improve. The suggestions are also important for the students to support them in this process as they allow the students to know what step they need to do after receiving notes on their weaknesses. Six students gave their opinions, one of which can be seen as follows.

> "If the lecturers keep telling me "you need to do this to make it better", basically it means that I still have so much to learn and I still need to improve myself more and more." (Student 1)

Discussion

Preferences for Amount of Feedback

Based on the findings presented in Table 2, the fact that the students value lecturers' written corrective feedback by expecting to always have it on errors and mistakes found in their writing is supported by previous study (see Irwin, 2017). They addressed the importance of having WCF to identify which parts of their writing contain errors so that they can avoid making similar errors and/or mistakes in the future writing. The reason for this preference is also in line with what Gredler (2016) and Irwin (2017) found that students have desire to improve their writing skills from the feedback given. The majority of the students, as presented in Figure 1, also showed how they preferred unfocused feedback to focused feedback, which means that feedback on all errors was more favored. Focused feedback is feedback focusing only on certain type of errors in a time (e.g. only errors in grammatical aspect), while the unfocused feedback is feedback given on all types of errors that are found in the writing. Students in this study reported how they had difficulty to locate their own mistakes and errors, and they had tendency to focus only on the marks. Without marks on other parts of writing, the students will be unsure whether the writing is already fine or not because mark can be seen as the sign of mistakes and/or errors. Thus, when the WCF is on only some errors,

other errors left are hard to identify. A similar pattern of results was obtained in previous studies (Alkhatib, 2015; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Hamouda, 2011; Orts & Salazar, 2016; Shahrani, 2013).

Students' reason behind this preference confirmed what Alkhatib (2015) found in her study that the marks could make the students think that the marked ones are the only errors, which also affected their improvement to be slower. From the findings of this study, it can be inferred that majority of the students are still reliant on the lecturers for pointing out their errors. They may also share similar thought that the more written corrective feedback means the more useful it is for their learning (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010). Similar to what Rashtchi and bin Abu Bakar (2019) found, the students seem to not place high value on learner autonomy when it comes to the amount of feedback.

While this feedback is found beneficial by the students, marking all mistakes and errors will be very time consuming. Furthermore, if all repeated errors in students' writing are marked, there will be very little room for the students to self- correct, which would be unfortunate since the students also need to be able to deal with less direct feedback as the indication of their L2 development (Storch, 2018). Some students that wanted to receive feedback on some errors believed that by giving them chance to analyze their own errors, they would be more independent. They would also more likely remember the errors and feedback; thus, the benefits of the WCF may exist for longer time. Previous researchers, according to Al Hajri and Al- Mahrooqi (2013), agreed that focusing on particular errors at a time can have better results for short-term and long-term accuracy in writing.

Preferences for Writing Aspects to Focus on

In this study, the students, in Figure 2, has shown how important lecturers' feedback on all writing aspects is, and they also reported on Figure 3 that they always focused on each feedback that was provided. This result is in the contrary with the result of other studies where students mainly valued feedback on particular aspects, namely errors on grammar (Hamouda, 2011; Kagitci, 2013; Mungungu-Shipale & Kangira, 2017; Panhwar et al., 2016; Shahrani, 2013; Tom et al., 2013) and vocabulary (Kahraman & Yalvaç, 2015; Irwin, 2017) more than other writing aspects. It was proven by the percentages of participants in those studies that chose grammar and vocabulary much higher than other aspects such as mechanics and content. It might be because feedback on grammar is perceived to be more important as students see it helpful in making sentences and composition clearer (Tom et al., 2013). The findings that indicated slightly similar result with what is found in this current study is by Fithriani (2017) which indicated that students took feedback on all aspects seriously although they expected teachers to focus more on giving feedback on ideas and organization.

In this current study, some students explained how their weaknesses on all writing aspects contributed to their decision not to choose only one or some but all of them. Although the percentages of students that rated Strongly Agree on grammatical aspects are the highest among others, the overall results of students who chose other aspects indicated high preferences for each. Students being interviewed told that their problems in using grammatical aspect and their limited vocabulary were the main causes of the importance of WCF on these two aspects. Some of them also addressed how frequent mistakes on mechanics, their inability to constantly focus on one topic, and their overall low ability to integrate these aspects in writing made them cannot ignore one of these aspects when the lecturers provide feedback. This result is in line with the finding in previous study (Horbacauskiene & Kasperaviciene, 2015) that students' confidence of their writing skills in overall contributed to their preferences on what kind of feedback is important. Besides, instead of just acknowledging grammar as the most important part of writing like what some students in other studies did (e.g. Kagitci, 2013; Tom et al., 2013), the awareness that all writing aspects are essential and inseparable parts to produce a quality writing may be a factor that contributed to students' preferences in this study.

Preferences for Correction Techniques

Most of the students, as reported in Figure 4, preferred direct feedback and indirect feedback that locates and indicates the types of errors. Direct feedback got the highest percentage of being preferred, which is consistent with studies (Aridah et al., 2017; Irwin, 2017; Mungungu-Shipale & Kangira, 2017; Shahrani, 2013; Tom et al., 2013) showing that most of the students chose direct feedback for their writing. Direct feedback is provided on students' works with the correct forms of the errors, while the indirect feedback is given using some clues to help the students find the errors

by themselves. Indirect feedback with location and indication of error types, however, was found by the students in this research to be more beneficial than the other types (see Figure 5). The fact that these feedback techniques provide the students with correct form and more information on the errors is the main reason why they are favored. With the nature of these techniques, the students said that they were allowed to learn and get benefit from the feedback.

It seems that although there is no exact type of WCF that suit all students, their views of what they think useful are usually defined by the same principles (Al Hajri & Al-Mahrooqi, 2013). For instance, although some of the students were not able to use feedback that only underlines errors, some others may still consider it useful. As proven in this study, the students shared similar point of view of how clarity and details of the feedback are crucial. Their responses to the indirect locating feedback, indirect indicating feedback, and also questions showed that these types of correction could not let most of them revise, learn, and improve the writing independently, which was consistent with previous study by Ferris (2006). The students expressed how these types of correction techniques made them confused and questioning on what was actually wrong and why it was wrong. It corresponds with what students in Wan Mohd Yunus (2020) reported that mostly they could not understand the reasons behind indirect feedback that underlined their sentences. The need to be assisted with clear explanation proved that students in this study found indirect feedback challenging. This may support students' self-reflection that they had problems in using particular writing aspects or all writing aspects in general. Black and Nanni (2016) also said that this might be a sign that students might have lack of confidence in the ability to identify their own errors and make corrections of indirectly corrected errors independently.

Furthermore, when the students said that they would like to receive feedback that allowed them to learn (i.e. direct feedback and indirect locating and indicating feedback), it somehow revealed that the students focused only on learning from their lecturers. Although WCF is provided to help the students identify which part of their writing works that contains errors, why the part is incorrect, and how they can revise, it should be highlighted that feedback is also provided to build students' awareness, knowledge, and strategic competence to develop skills to monitor their own writing (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Thus, it is believed that to actually learn from the feedback, students' participation is needed by allowing them to find out their own errors and make guesses about the correct form (Atmaca, 2016).

For this issue, previous researcher suggested that types of feedback should be varied according to different types of errors by paying attention to whether the errors are "treatable" or "untreatable" (Ferris, 2006). He explained that "treatable" means that errors can be corrected based on fixed rules (e.g. subject-verb agreement, run-ons), while the "untreatable" errors refer to ones that do not have set of fixed rules to consult (e.g. word choice). This point was in line with Van Beuningen et al. (2012) that grammatical errors and non-grammatical errors benefit from different techniques of corrections. Direct feedback is better for grammatical errors, while the indirect one is better suited to the non-grammatical errors. Based on this idea, lecturers can be more selective in providing feedback on students' errors to address both students' preferences and their learning needs.

Preferences for Tones of Feedback

When explaining their responses for preferences for feedback tone that was presented in Figure 6, the students conveyed that comments on the strength of their writing were essential and needed as rewards of what they did in their writing. It helped them develop positive feeling towards writing, and gave them a sense that they could actually perform well in parts of their writing after processing it for some time. This is in accordance with the result of Ghazal et al. (2014) that encouraging comments from lecturers made students feel good and that what they wrote was not so bad. It hints that positive comments may help the students to grow their self-confidence and interest in writing as the comments also show the students in which aspects or part they do well. The use of positive tone in WCF is also considered important by previous researcher (Amara, 2015) that the feedback can be a learning channel where lecturers tell the students about their performance and praise them for their good work in writing.

While Ghazal et al. (2014) found how students did not like criticism on their writing, and MacDonald (1991) said that students tended to get disappointed and ignored the negative feedback, this study found the opposite result in which students highly valued comments with negative tone. They saw it as motivation for them to improve their skills and performance in processing their writing. Students' questionnaire responses and interview results did not indicate any disagreement

about comments with negative tone on their writing, yet they found it helpful as the source for their improvement. From their responses, the students pointed out the first thing that made comments with negative tone was essential was that they helped the students to find what they actually had to improve from their writing and drove them to process future writing in a better way.

Nakamura (2016) said that negative comments might cause negative emotional reaction and lead to lower motivation of continuing learning. It is the reason why the tone needs to be balanced by providing students with comments on the strength of their writing. However, after analyzing the students' responses, the researcher in this study interpreted that the balance are more between comments with negative tone and suggestive tone as they were seen by the students as interrelated and inseparable. It is because comments that point out the weaknesses of students' writing are perceived as more beneficial when students know what they should do next for the improvement. Suggestion helps students by providing them with new ideas and new ways to rewrite as it functions as guidance to organize better writing draft (Tom et al., 2013). When the lecturers provide only what is lacking in students' writing, it seems that the students will less benefited from the feedback given. On the other hand, when negative comments and suggestions are included there, it can be more constructive, and the openness to constructive criticism needs to be promoted to the students so that errors and mistakes are recognized as opportunities for improvement (Brookhart, 2017, p. 79).

CONCLUSION

As ELE students in this study may have various preferences for WCF provided by the lecturers, it is essential to investigate how the feedback delivery is expected. An important insight served by the findings of this research is that, although the students view lecturers' WCF for the betterment of their writing, they are somehow very reliant on the WCF, and it is proven by their preferences for unfocused feedback, all writing aspects to be focused on by the lecturers, as well as direct feedback and indirect feedback with location and indication as the highly-preferred correction techniques. This suggests that the lecturers should increase the students' awareness of how they can actually get benefits from different WCF techniques, and at the same time accommodating their preferences so to motivate them in writing process. Increasing students' awareness can be done by providing students with different forms of WCF and giving them opportunity to make their own efforts for understanding the feedback given. What is also found unique is that the students viewed negative tone of WCF as motivation to make improvement, while some studies pointed out negative impacts of this tone of feedback. Thus, the lecturers may focus on facilitating the students with this feedback tone along with the other tones to create motivating, constructive WCF. Although this study have uncovered the ELE students' preferences for WCF, the researcher did not include students' characteristics (e.g. gender and proficiency level) to be analyzed whether they contribute to the preferences or not. Since some of the students also related their preferences to their writing skills in general or in some writing aspects, it will be beneficial to conduct further study to reveal whether students with different proficiency levels or writing achievement also have different preferences for WCF.

FUNDING STATEMENT

REFERENCES

Al Hajri, F., & Al-Mahrooqi, R. (2013). Students' Perceptions and Preferences Concerning Instructors' Corrective Feedback. *The Asian EFL Journal*, *70*, 28– 53.

Alkhatib, N. I. M. (2015). *Written Corrective Feedback at a Saudi University: English Language Teachers' Beliefs, Students' Preferences, and Teachers' Practices* [University of Essex, Colchester]. http://repository.essex.ac.uk/15382/1/THESIS 6Oct..pdf

Amara, T. M. (2015). Learners' Perceptions of Teacher Written Feedback Commentary in an ESL Writing Classroom. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, *3*(2), 38–53.

Amrhein, H. R., & Nassaji, H. (2010). Written Corrective Feedback: What Do Students and Teachers Prefer and Why? *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *13*(2), 95–127.

Aridah, A., Atmowardoyo, H., & Salija, K. (2017). Teacher Practices and Students' Preferences for Written Corrective Feedback and Their Implications on Writing Instruction. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, *7*(1), 112. https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v7n1p112

Atmaca, C. (2016). Contrasting Perceptions of Students and Teachers: Written Corrective Feedback. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, *12*(2), 166– 182.

Bitchener, J., & Ferris, D. R. (2012). *Written Corrective Feedback in Second Language Acquisition and Writing*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203832400

Black, D. A., & Nanni, A. (2016). Written Corrective Feedback: Preferences and Justifications of Teachers and Students in a Thai Context. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, *16*(3), 99– 114.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brookhart, S.M. (2017). *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students* (2nd ed.). ASCD

Brown, D.B. (2011). Likert items and scales of measurement?. *SHIKEN: JALT Testing & Evaluation SIG Newsletter, 15*(1), 10-14.

Chen, S., Nassaji, H., & Liu, Q. (2016). EFL learners' perceptions and preferences of written corrective feedback: a case study of university students from Mainland China. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, *1*(1), 5. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-016-0010-y

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research Methods in Education* (8th ed.). Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Steps in Conducting a Scholarly Mixed Methods Study* (No. 48; DBER Speaker Series). https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dberspeakers/48

Demokrawati, F. A. (2014). *Analisis Quick Count dengan Menggunakan Metode Stratified Random Sampling* [Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung]. http://repository.upi.edu/15528/1/S_MTK_1003117_title.pdf

Diab, N. M. (2015). Effectiveness of written corrective feedback: Does type of error and type of correction matter?. *Assessing Writing, 24,* 16-34. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2015.02.001

Diab, R. L. (2005). Teachers' and Students' Beliefs about Responding to ESL Writing: A Case Study. *TESL Canada Journal, 23*(1), 28-43.

Fadilah, A. E., Anugerahwati, M., & Prayogo, J. A. (2017). EFL Students' Preferences for Oral Corrective Feedback in Speaking Instruction. *Jurnal Pendidikan Humaniora, 3(2), 76-87, 3*(2), 76–87.

Ferris, D. (2006). Does error feedback help student writers? New evidence on the short- and long-term effects of written error correction. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Eds.). Feedback in Second Language Writing: Contexts and Issues (pp. 81-104). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524742.007

Fithriani, R. (2017). *Indonesian Students' Perceptions of Written Corrective Feedback in Second Language Writing* [The University of New Mexico]. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/160273284.pdf

Ghazal, L., Gul, R. B., Hanzala, M., Jessop, T., & Tharani, A. (2014). Graduate Students' Perceptions of Written Feedback at a Private University in Pakistan. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *3*(2), 13–27.

Gredler, J. J. (2016). *Postsecondary Online Students' Preferences for Instructor Feedback* [Walden University]. https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3641&context=dissertations

Hamouda, A. (2011). A Study of Students and Teachers' Preferences and Attitudes towards Correction of Classroom Written Errors in Saudi EFL Context. *English Language Teaching*, *4*(3). https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v4n3p128

Horbacauskiene, J., & Kasperaviciene, R. (2015). Learners' preferences towards Corrective feedback in writing assignments in tertiary education. *ExELL*, *3*(2), 70–83. https://doi.org/10.1515/exell-2017-0002

Irwin, B. (2017). Written Corrective Feedback: Student Preferences and Teacher Feedback Practices. *IAFOR Journal of Language Teaching*, *3*(2), 35–58.

Iswandari, Y. A. (2016). Written Corrective Feedback in Writing Class: Students' Preferences and Types of Errors. *Jurnal Penelitian*, *20*(1), 1–9.

Jackson, S. L. (2009). *Research Methods and Statistics* (3rd editio). Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Jinowat, N., & Wiboolyasarin, W. (2022). Investigating Learner Preferences for Written Corrective Feedback in a Thai Higher Education Context. *TEFLIN Journal, 33*(2), 386-402. http://dx.doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v33i2/386-402.

Kagitci, B. (2013). *The Relationship between Students' Preference for Written Feedback and Improvement in Writing: Is the Preferred One the Best One?* [Middle East Technical University]. http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.632.6525&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Kahraman, A., & Yalvaç, F. (2015). EFL Turkish University Students' Preferences about Teacher Feedback and its Importance. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *199*, 73–80. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.489

Leng, K. T. P. (2014). An Analysis of Written Feedback on ESL Students' Writing. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *123*, 389–397. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.1437

MacDonald, R. B. (1991). Developmental Students' Processing of Teacher Feedback in Composition Instruction. *Review of Research in Developmental Education, 8*(5).

Marzban, A., & Arabahmadi, S. (2013). The Effect of Written Corrective Feedback on Iranian EFL Students' Writing. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *83*, 1000–1005. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.06.186

Mungungu-Shipale, S. S., & Kangira, J. (2017). Lecturers' and Students' Perceptions and Preferences about ESL Corrective Feedback in Namibia: Towards an Intervention Model. *World Journal of English Language*, *7*(1), 11. https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v7n1p11

Nakamura, S. (2016). Insights from Written Corrective Feedback Research. *REFLections*, *22*, 89–102. https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/reflections/article/view/112330

Omona, J. (2013). Sampling in Qualitative Research: Improving the Quality of Research Outcomes in Higher Education. *Makerere Journal of Higher Education*, *4*(2). https://doi.org/10.4314/majohe.v4i2.4

Orts, S., & Salazar, P. (2016). EFL Students' Preferences Towards Written Corrective Feedback: An Exploratory Study on Age and Level of Proficiency. *The Grove - Working Papers on English Studies*, *23*. https://doi.org/10.17561/grove.v23.a8

Panhwar, A. H., Ansari, S., & Umrani, T. (2016). Students' Perceptions and Preferences for Teacher Feedback : A Case Study of the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan. *Grassroots*, *50*(1), 189–206.

Rashtchi, M., & bin Abu Bakar, Z. (2019). Written Corrective Feedback: What Do Malaysian Learners Prefer And Why? *International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology*, *8*(5C), 1221–1225. https://doi.org/10.35940/ijeat.E1173.0585C19

Raza, K. (2019). Learner Preferences for Teacher Corrective Feedback: A Survey Study of Arab Students from Qatar. *Language Teaching Research Quarterly*, *11*, 43–53.

Riemer, H., Shavitt, S., Koo, M., & Markus, H. R. (2014). Preferences don't have to be personal: Expanding attitude theorizing with a cross-cultural perspective. *Psychological Review*, *121*(4), 619–648. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037666

Rummel, S., & Bitchener, J. (2015). The Effectiveness of Written Corrective Feedback and the Impact Lao Learners' Beliefs Have on Uptake. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics, 38*(1), 66-84. https://doi.org/10.1075/aral.38.1.04rum

Saeb, F. (2014). The Effects of Focused And Unfocused Written Corrective Feedback on The Grammatical Accuracy of Beginner EFL Learners. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, *3*(2), 22–26. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.3n.2p.22

Sarvestani, M. S., & Pishkar, K. (2015). The Effect of Written Corrective Feedback on Writing Accuracy of Intermediate Learners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 5(*10), 2046-2052. https://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0510.10.

Shahrani, A. A. Al. (2013). *Investigation of Written Corrective Feedback in an EFL Context: Beliefs of Teachers , Their Real Practices and Students' Preferences* [University of Melbourne]. https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/bitstream/handle/11343/38637/307913_the thesis.pdf?sequence=1

Sheen, Y. (2010). Introduction: The role of oral and written corrective feedback in SLA. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *32*(2), 169–179. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263109990489

Storch, N. (2018). Written corrective feedback from sociocultural theoretical perspectives: A research agenda. *Language Teaching, 51*(2), 262-277. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444818000034

Tom, A. A., Morni, A., Metom, L., & Joe, S. (2013). Students' Perception and Preferences of Written Feedback in Academic Writing. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2013.v4n11p72

Tursina, P., & Chuang, M.-T. (2016). Direct and Indirect Corrective Feedback on EFL Students' Writing Performance. *Proceedings of the 1st EEIC in Conjuction with the 2nd RGRS-CAPEU between Sultan Idris Education University and Syiah Kuala University*.

Van Beuningen, C. G., De Jong, N. H., & Kuiken, F. (2012). Evidence on the Effectiveness of Comprehensive Error Correction in Second Language Writing. *Language Learning*, *62*(1), 1–41. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467- 9922.2011.00674.x

Wan Mohd Yunus, W. N. M. (2020). Written corrective feedback in English compositions: Teachers' practices and students' expectations. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, *3*(2), 95. https://doi.org/10.12928/eltej.v3i2.2255

Zareil, A. A., & Rahnama, M. (2013). The Effect of Written Corrective Feedback Modes on EFL Learners' Grammatical and Lexical Writing Accuracy: from Perceptions to Facts. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*, *1*(3), 1–14.