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THE EFFICACY OF WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN IMPROVING ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' WRITING

Abstract

This study investigates the efficacy of written corrective feedback (WCF) in enhancing the writing skills of university students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The study aims to determine the overall effectiveness of WCF, identify the most beneficial types, and explore students' perceptions and attitudes towards receiving WCF. Existing research predominantly focuses on short-term impacts, neglecting long-term effects and individual differences such as learning styles and motivation, particularly in non-Western educational settings. Addressing these gaps could lead to more effective and personalized feedback strategies. The study employs a survey design to collect data from sixth-semester students in the Scientific Writing class at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. The questionnaire, developed through a thorough literature review and expert consultations, was divided into five sections to ensure comprehensiveness and relevance. The findings indicate that students perceive WCF as effective in improving various aspects of their writing skills, particularly appreciating clear and specific feedback. Despite some challenges such as variability in feedback frequency and individual differences, students reported high satisfaction with the detailed and constructive nature of the feedback. The study concludes that WCF significantly enhances EFL students' writing proficiency, emphasizing the importance of personalized, timely, and accessible feedback. Future research should explore the long-term effects of WCF and the potential of technology in delivering effective feedback.

Keywords: Written Corrective Feedback, English As A Foreign Language, Writing Proficiency, Student Perceptions, Personalized Feedback.

INTRODUCTION

Writing proficiency is a crucial component of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education for several reasons, each contributing to the overall development of language skills and facilitating effective communication in English. Writing is the activity of expressing ideas, concepts, and self-creativity in a series of words and sentences to form a structured writing (Andika et al., 2022). Many university students struggle with writing due to issues such as unclear expression, poor organization, and grammar mistakes. Students found that they spent less time writing. They are more likely to choose to improve speaking, reading, and listening in the English learning process (Simamora et al., 2024). Teachers can motivate students to improve their writing skills by providing instructions on the writing process and rules, including grammar and exercises (Durga 2018). To overcome these challenges, students can benefit from outlining their ideas, seeking feedback on their work, and practicing proper citation techniques. With dedication and persistence, students can improve their writing skills and become more confident in their academic pursuits.

Writing skills serve as a foundation for communication. It enables EFL learners to express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions clearly and accurately. Through writing, learners can organize their thoughts logically, which is essential for coherent communication. This expressive capability is fundamental not only in everyday interactions but also in academic and

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professional contexts. Writing is the primary mode of communication, surpassing any other medium. As a result, students must have strong writing skills in order to meet academic and professional obligations (Durga 2018). Many assessments, such as essays, reports, and research papers, rely heavily on a student's ability to write well. Proficiency in writing is often a key determinant of academic success. Moreover, writing tasks frequently require critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis of information, which are vital skills for academic achievement and intellectual development. By honing these skills, learners can perform better in their studies and develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

From a professional standpoint, writing proficiency can significantly enhance career opportunities. Developing strong writing skills is crucial for career advancement. In other words, employees with strong writing skills are seen as a "hot commodity". Furthermore, it is one of the most important abilities to acquire in higher education (Selvaraj 2019). In many professions, the ability to write effectively in English is crucial for tasks like drafting emails, reports, proposals, and documentation. As English is the global lingua franca, proficient writing skills enable EFL learners to communicate effectively in international business and professional settings, thus opening doors to career advancement and professional growth. Writing well can set candidates apart in a competitive job market and is often a prerequisite for leadership roles.

Improving writing skills can build confidence in using English. As learners see their progress, they gain confidence, which can positively impact other language skills such as speaking and reading. Writing also provides an outlet for creativity, allowing learners to explore different forms of expression, from storytelling to poetry, thereby enriching their personal growth. To strengthen Students' writing skills, allow them to investigate, explain, and communicate their ideas using their own words (Fahmi 2021). This creative exploration can make language learning more enjoyable and fulfilling. Moreover, writing proficiency is closely linked to other language skills. Reading extensively in English exposes learners to diverse writing styles and ideas, which can improve their own writing. Similarly, writing can support speaking and listening skills by providing a foundation for discussions, presentations, and debates, creating a well-rounded language learning experience. This integration of skills ensures that learners develop a comprehensive command of the language.

Students with strong writing skills tend to outperform those who lack it (Nasser 2018). Writing assignments are valuable tools for assessment and feedback. They enable teachers to gauge learners' progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and provide targeted feedback. Writing encourages learners to reflect on their learning process and language use, promoting self-awareness and independent learning. This reflective practice helps students become more effective and autonomous learners, capable of identifying and addressing their own learning needs.

Feedback plays a critical role in language learning and writing improvement by providing learners with valuable information about their performance, helping them recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and guiding them towards better proficiency and accuracy. It aids in the identification of grammatical, syntactical, and stylistic errors, enabling learners to become aware of recurring issues and learn how to correct them. Positive feedback reinforces correct usage, building confidence and motivating learners to keep improving their language skills. Effective feedback often includes explanations and clarifications, helping learners understand why something is incorrect and how to correct it, which facilitates long-term learning and retention of language rules and structures. Providing process-oriented feedback is a key technique for developing advanced writing skills in educational contexts (Celik 2020). Feedback provides specific suggestions for improving writing, such as better word choices, improved sentence structure, and more coherent organization of ideas. Through feedback, learners also develop metacognitive skills, becoming more aware of their learning processes and learning to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own writing and language use more effectively.

There are two types of corrective feedback direct and indirect (Sari 2019). In corrective feedback, there are two main types: direct and indirect. Direct corrective feedback involves explicitly providing the correct form or solution to the learner. This type of feedback is clear and straightforward, making it easier for the learner to understand their errors and how to correct them. On the other hand, indirect corrective feedback involves giving hints or clues that

an error has been made, without providing the correct form directly. The learner is encouraged to identify and correct their own mistakes, which can promote deeper cognitive processing and greater learner autonomy. Both types of feedback have their own advantages and can be effective in different contexts.

Despite extensive research on written corrective feedback (WCF) for improving English Foreign Language (EFL) university students' writing, several key gaps exist. Most studies focus on short-term effects, lacking research on long-term impacts over semesters or years. Corrective feedback is utilized in writing classrooms for both first and second language students to promote peer learning (Sari 2019). There's also a need to explore how individual differences like proficiency, learning styles, and motivation affect WCF effectiveness. Research often looks at types of WCF separately, with little understanding of how combining them might work better. The potential of technology in delivering WCF is underexplored, and more insights are needed on students' perceptions of WCF types and how these affect their writing. Additionally, most studies are in Western contexts, leaving a gap in understanding WCF in non-Western settings. Addressing these gaps could lead to more effective, personalized feedback strategies for diverse learners.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of written corrective feedback (WCF) in improving the writing skills of students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Specifically, the study aims to determine how effective WCF is in enhancing students' writing abilities, identify which types of WCF are the most beneficial, and explore students' perceptions and attitudes towards receiving WCF. The findings from this study will offer valuable insights for educators to refine their teaching methods and enhance the effectiveness of EFL writing instruction.

METHODE

This research utilizes a survey design, which involves collecting data from a sample of individuals through standardized questionnaires, interviews, or other data collection instruments. Surveys aim to gather information about opinions, behaviors, attitudes, or characteristics of a target population. They are chosen for their efficiency in collecting data from a large number of respondents within a short period, making them ideal for studies requiring broad reach and generalizability. The standardized format of surveys ensures data consistency and reduces researcher bias, while their quantitative nature facilitates statistical analysis to test hypotheses effectively. Moreover, surveys are cost-effective and offer flexibility in administration, whether conducted remotely or in-person, catering to diverse research needs and respondent preferences (Groves et al., 2019).

The participants in this study are sixth-semester students enrolled in the Scientific Writing class at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu. As third-year students, they have completed foundational coursework and are now delving into more specialized subjects, including the intricacies of scientific writing. These students come from various academic disciplines where research and academic writing play a crucial role, suggesting a diverse range of expertise and interests. They possess a moderate to advanced understanding of their fields but are still developing their proficiency in scientific writing, a skill critical for their academic and professional success. The participants in the questionnaire included Muhammad Muammar, Bayu Anugrah, Anggun Dwi Lestari, Della Adelia, M. Rizqi Maulana Al-Bariq, Aprilia Dwi Putri, Via Ingrid Anda Resta, Desliana, Yoza Fitria, Akbar, Santri Muslima Abila, Nurfadillah, Tiara Veronica, Fetri Novita Indah Lestari, Muhammad Parli, Erza Kurnia Zahari, Muhammad Dwiki Saddam Hafiz, and Muhamad Gyan Refhisan.

Participants for the questionnaire were selected through a purposive sampling method to ensure a diverse and representative sample relevant to the study's objectives. Initially, a call for participation was distributed via email and social media platforms, targeting individuals who met specific inclusion criteria such as age, occupation, or area of expertise pertinent to the research topic. Additionally, professional networks and academic institutions were leveraged to reach potential respondents. This approach allowed the researchers to gather a well-rounded and comprehensive dataset, capturing various perspectives and experiences essential for the study's analysis and conclusions. This approach allowed the researchers to gather a well-rounded and

comprehensive dataset, capturing various perspectives and experiences essential for the study's analysis and conclusions (Palinkas et al., 2019).

The questionnaire was meticulously developed through a multi-step process to ensure its comprehensiveness and relevance in assessing the impact of written corrective feedback on students' writing skills. The initial step involved a thorough review of existing literature on language acquisition and feedback methodologies, which provided a theoretical foundation for the questionnaire's structure and content. This review highlighted key areas of interest such as demographic information, writing experience, and the nature of feedback received by students.

Next, a series of brainstorming sessions were conducted with educational experts and experienced language instructors to identify specific aspects of written feedback that significantly influence writing improvement. These sessions resulted in the formulation of detailed questions aimed at capturing various dimensions of the feedback experience, including the frequency and clarity of feedback, the types of errors addressed, and the perceived effectiveness of the feedback.

The questionnaire was then divided into five distinct sections: Demographic Information, Writing Experience and Habits, Written Corrective Feedback, Impact of Written Feedback, and Perception and Suggestions. Each section was carefully crafted to elicit specific information relevant to understanding how written feedback affects students' writing development. For instance, questions in the Writing Experience and Habits section focus on the duration and frequency of English writing practices, while the Written Corrective Feedback section delves into the types of errors commonly corrected by instructors and the clarity of the feedback provided.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted with a small group of students who provided feedback on the clarity and relevance of the questions. Based on their responses, minor adjustments were made to improve the wording and structure of the questions. This iterative process helped refine the questionnaire, making it a robust tool for gathering meaningful data.

Finally, the questionnaire was reviewed and approved by a panel of academic experts to ensure it met the necessary standards for research in educational settings. The end result is a comprehensive questionnaire designed to provide valuable insights into the role of written corrective feedback in enhancing students' writing skills, thereby contributing to the ongoing discourse in educational research.

The distribution of the questionnaire was conducted using a two-step approach to ensure maximum reach and convenience for the participants. First, the questionnaire was created using Google Forms, a versatile and user-friendly platform that allows for easy collection and analysis of responses. The Google Form link was then shared with the participants through the class group chat on the WhatsApp application. WhatsApp was chosen as the primary distribution channel because it is widely used among the participants for communication and coordination purposes, ensuring that everyone would receive the link promptly. By leveraging the instant messaging capabilities of WhatsApp, we were able to efficiently disseminate the questionnaire link to all class members, encouraging timely and widespread participation. This method not only facilitated easy access to the questionnaire but also allowed for quick follow-ups and reminders to ensure a high response rate. Pada dasarnya bagian ini menjelaskan bagaimana penelitian itu dilakukan. Materi pokok bagian ini adalah: (1) rancangan penelitian; (2) populasi dan sampel (sasaran penelitian); (3) teknik pengumpulan data dan pengembangan instrumen; (4) dan teknik analisis data. Untuk penelitian yang menggunakan alat dan bahan, perlu dituliskan spesifikasi alat dan bahannya. Spesifikasi alat menggambarkan kecanggihan alat yang digunakan sedangkan spesifikasi bahan menggambarkan macam bahan yang digunakan.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The study surveyed a diverse group of university students enrolled in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses. The participants included both males and females, aged between 17 and 24 years. Their duration of studying English varied significantly, ranging from

1-3 years to more than 10 years. This demographic spread provides a comprehensive view of the impact of written corrective feedback across different levels of English proficiency and experience.

Participants reported varying frequencies in their writing habits. Some students wrote in English every day, while others did so only rarely. The types of writing most frequently undertaken included academic essays, research reports, formal letters, and casual texting. This variety indicates that students engage in both academic and informal writing practices, offering a broad context for assessing the impact of written feedback.

Several students from diverse backgrounds have varying frequencies of writing in English. Anggun Dwi Lestari and Della Adelia are among those who write daily, primarily for academic essays and casual texting. Muhammad Muammar and Yoza Fitria engage in writing several times a week. In contrast, Bayu Anugrah and Nurfadillah write in English infrequently, typically restricted to academic contexts. These patterns highlight the diverse habits and purposes for which students use the English language in their daily lives.

Students demonstrate a diverse range of writing types based on their preferences and needs. Tiara Veronica and Muhammad Gyan Refhisan are notably active in academic essay writing, reflecting a commitment to scholarly expression. Aprilia Dwi Putri and Erza Kurnia Zahari engage in the meticulous craft of research reports, emphasizing their dedication to structured and informative writing. Meanwhile, Muhammad Muammar and Muhammad Dwiki Saddam Hafiz specialize in the formal style required for composing letters, underscoring their proficiency in professional communication. In contrast, Anggun Dwi Lestari finds enjoyment in the casual and expressive nature of texting, showcasing a versatile use of language across different communication mediums among students.

Students experience varying frequencies of receiving written feedback from their instructors, which significantly impacts their writing development. Della Adelia and Muhammad Parli benefit from consistent feedback, receiving comments on every piece of writing they submit. Others, like Anggun Dwi Lestari and Via Ingrid Anda Resta, receive feedback intermittently, relying on occasional insights to refine their work. In contrast, Bayu Anugrah and a few others receive feedback less frequently, potentially limiting opportunities for detailed critique and improvement. These diverse experiences underscore the importance of personalized feedback in nurturing effective writing skills among students.

Instructors address a variety of writing errors to help students refine their skills across different dimensions. Grammar emerges as a primary concern, as noted by students such as Muhammad Muammar and Desliana, reflecting a strong emphasis on accuracy in language usage. Sentence structure receives dedicated attention, with participants like M. Rizqi Maulana Al-Bariq and Tiara Veronica receiving feedback aimed at enhancing clarity and coherence in their writing. Vocabulary enrichment is highlighted in feedback given to students like Santri Muslima Abila and Muhammad Parli, indicating efforts to enhance lexical precision and variety. Additionally, feedback on content, as reported by students such as Bayu Anugrah and Aprilia Dwi Putri, underscores the importance of relevance and depth in conveying ideas effectively. These targeted approaches illustrate how instructors support students in addressing specific writing challenges across various aspects of composition.

Feedback clarity plays a crucial role in student writing development, with varied perceptions among recipients. The majority of students, such as Muhammad Muammar and Anggun Dwi Lestari, generally rated their feedback as clear or very clear, indicating a positive reception and effective communication of improvement areas. However, a minority, including Della Adelia and Fetri Novita Indah Lestari, occasionally encountered feedback that they found unclear. This diversity in perception highlights the importance of instructors' precision and coherence in providing constructive feedback, ensuring that all students can effectively apply suggestions for enhancing their writing skills.

Students overwhelmingly found written feedback to be instrumental in enhancing their writing proficiency across various dimensions. Many, including Anggun Dwi Lestari and Akbar, noted substantial improvements in grammar, highlighting the constructive impact of feedback on language precision. Feedback also significantly enriched vocabulary skills for students like Santri Muslima Abila and Muhammad Gyan Refhisan, facilitating greater lexical

diversity and precision in expression. Improvements in sentence structure were reported by participants such as M. Rizqi Maulana Al-Bariq and Erza Kurnia Zahari, underscoring the feedback's role in enhancing clarity and coherence in their writing. Additionally, feedback was credited with improving the substantive aspects of writing, as observed by Bayu Anugrah and Aprilia Dwi Putri, indicating deeper insights and more compelling content. Overall, students, including Yoza Fitria and Muhammad Parli, reported notable advancements in their overall writing skills, affirming the value of tailored feedback in fostering comprehensive writing proficiency.

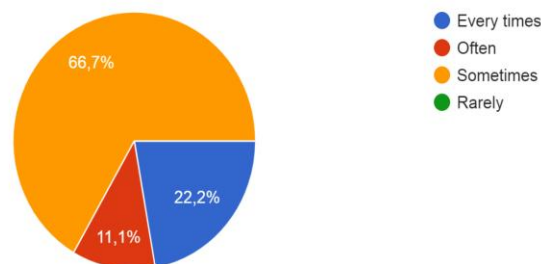
Students expressed high overall satisfaction with the written feedback provided by instructors, acknowledging its role in improving their writing skills. Suggestions for enhancing feedback effectiveness were diverse and insightful. Anggun Dwi Lestari and Fetri Novita Indah Lestari recommended using simpler and clearer language to enhance comprehension and application of feedback. Desliana and Nurfadillah emphasized the importance of detailed and specific feedback, advocating for concrete suggestions tailored to individual writing needs rather than general comments. Aprilia Dwi Putri and Via Ingrid Anda Resta highlighted the benefits of instructor patience and punctuality in feedback delivery, fostering a supportive learning environment. Additionally, Della Adelia and others suggested occasional use of the students' native language to ensure better understanding of nuanced feedback nuances. These recommendations underscore the importance of personalized and accessible feedback in maximizing its impact on student writing development.

Qualitative responses from the students provided deeper insights into their perceptions and preferences regarding written feedback. Key themes included the need for specificity and clarity in feedback, the importance of constructive and detailed comments, and the preference for feedback to be communicated in a way that is easy to understand.

The study faced several challenges and limitations. The variation in the frequency of feedback and the types of writing tasks could influence the perceived efficacy of the feedback. Additionally, individual differences in language proficiency and learning styles may affect how students respond to feedback. These factors need to be considered when interpreting the results.

The findings indicate that written corrective feedback is generally perceived as effective in improving various aspects of students' writing skills. Students appreciate clear and detailed feedback and believe that it significantly contributes to their writing development. The positive impact of feedback on grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, content, and overall writing skills was evident from the responses.

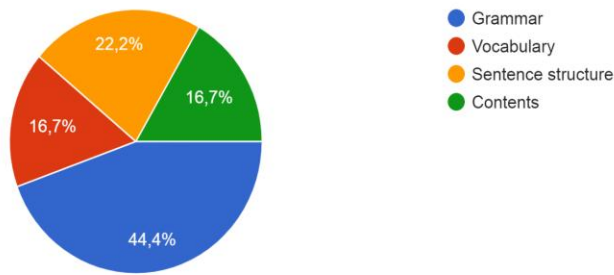
How often do you receive written feedback from your instructor on your writing?
18 jawaban



pict 1. Chart of Response Results on the Frequency of Writing Feedback.

What types of errors most frequently receive written feedback from your instructor?

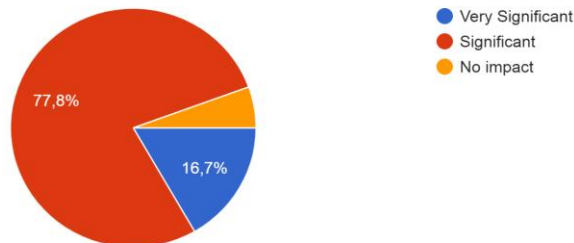
18 jawaban



pict 2. Chart of Response Results for Types of Errors Common in Writing.

How significant is the impact of written feedback on improving the Overall of your writing?

18 jawaban



pict 3. Chart of Response Results for Effect of Writing Feedback on Improving Writing.

Discussion

The data collected through the questionnaire reveals several significant insights into the efficacy of written corrective feedback in improving the writing skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university students. The diversity in the participants' backgrounds, their varying levels of English proficiency, and their different writing practices provide a comprehensive understanding of how written feedback impacts their learning.

Impact on Different Aspects of Writing

The majority of students reported significant improvements in grammar due to written feedback. This suggests that corrective feedback is particularly effective in addressing grammatical errors, which are often more concrete and easier to correct through explicit instruction. For example, Muhammad Muammar and Akbar noted substantial improvements in their grammatical accuracy.

Students like Santri Muslima Abila and Muhammad Parli indicated significant improvements in vocabulary. Written feedback likely helps students become aware of their lexical choices and encourages the use of more varied and precise vocabulary. This finding aligns with previous research that highlights the role of feedback in expanding students' lexical resources.

Participants such as M. Rizqi Maulana Al-Bariq and Erza Kurnia Zahari reported substantial improvements in sentence structure. This indicates that feedback focusing on syntactical aspects helps students construct more coherent and complex sentences, contributing to overall writing quality (Ferris, 2019).

Feedback on content, as mentioned by Bayu Anugrah and Aprilia Dwi Putri, was perceived as significantly improving the substance of their writing. This type of feedback helps students develop their ideas more thoroughly and coherently, enhancing the argumentative or descriptive quality of their work (Zhang, 2019).

The general consensus among students, including Yoza Fitria and Muhammad Parli, was that written feedback had a significant impact on their overall writing quality. This holistic improvement reflects the cumulative benefits of addressing various aspects of writing through corrective feedback.

Most students found the feedback clear and very helpful. This clarity is crucial for the efficacy of feedback, as it ensures that students can understand and implement the corrections and suggestions provided. However, a few students, such as Della Adelia and Fetri Novita Indah Lestari, noted instances of unclear feedback, highlighting the need for feedback to be consistently clear and straightforward.

Overall, students expressed high levels of satisfaction with the feedback they received. They appreciated the detailed and specific nature of the feedback, which helped them understand their mistakes and learn from them. Suggestions for improvement included providing feedback in simpler language, being more patient and punctual, and using the students' native language to ensure better understanding.

The findings of this study align with previous research on the efficacy of written corrective feedback. Studies have consistently shown that feedback helps students identify and correct errors, leading to improved writing skills. This study reinforces these findings and adds to the understanding of how different types of feedback (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, content) contribute to various aspects of writing proficiency.

The insights gained from this study have several practical implications for instructors. Firstly, feedback should be clear and specific, focusing on particular errors and providing concrete examples of correct usage. Secondly, feedback should be timely, allowing students to apply corrections while the writing task is still fresh in their minds. Thirdly, instructors should consider the language proficiency of their students and provide feedback in a way that is accessible and comprehensible, possibly using the students' native language when necessary.

The study faced several challenges and limitations. The variation in the frequency of feedback and the different types of writing tasks could influence the perceived efficacy of the feedback. Additionally, individual differences in language proficiency and learning styles may affect how students respond to feedback. These factors need to be considered when interpreting the results.

CONCLUSION

The study on the efficacy of written corrective feedback (WCF) in improving the writing skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university students concludes that WCF significantly enhances various aspects of writing proficiency, including grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, content development, and overall writing quality. Students generally perceive WCF as clear, detailed, and instrumental in their learning process. Despite some challenges such as variability in feedback frequency and individual differences in language proficiency and learning styles, the research highlights the importance of personalized, timely, and accessible feedback. Moreover, the study suggests that feedback clarity and specificity are crucial for effective communication and student satisfaction. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of WCF and the potential of technology in providing feedback.

Future research could explore the long-term effects of written corrective feedback on writing skills, examining whether the improvements observed are sustained over time. Additionally, studies could investigate the impact of different types of feedback (e.g., direct vs. indirect, focused vs. unfocused) on various aspects of writing. Exploring the role of technology in providing written feedback, such as automated feedback systems, could also be a valuable area of research.

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