

WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK: SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND PREFERENCES

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ABSTRAK

Students' perceptions and preferences for Written Corrective Feedback have been discussed in recent years. However, a deeper understanding of the reason behind students' perceptions and preferences for WCF has yet to be presented. This study tried to reveal a more profound understanding of the two perceptions toward WCF from students' points of view. Moreover, their preferences about the application of WCF were discussed. Through the survey study, how the majority of students perceive and prefer WCF would be seen from the questionnaire. This result provides a guideline topic for the interview. The findings revealed that most students perceive WCF positively. Also, they confirmed that WCF gave them confidence and helped them understand the material given. Whereas those with a negative attitude emphasized the importance of providing praise, explaining the error, and using Indonesian in providing WCF. Furthermore, the findings showed that direct metalinguistic and comprehensive WCF were more favoured. In addition, they preferred WCF to be provided digitally. Not only that, students considered paragraph organization as the most crucial aspect to be corrected. In conclusion, students show a positive attitude towards WCF. However, to optimize its function, students' preferences and evaluations must be considered.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The use of Written Corrective Feedback has been a common topic these days. Its application was considered essential in facilitating students' writing improvement since teachers would provide several information about students' errors and how they should correct them (Fan and Ma, 2018; Azwar, 2018; Jazayeri et al, 2019). However, several studies as in Nassaji (2010), Black and Nanni (2016), and Kencana (2020), revealed the gap which exists between the way students and teachers perceive its application. Those gaps existed then revealed to affect the effectiveness of WCF. Thus, considering students' perceptions and preferences toward WCF was considered essential (Han et al, 2015; Irwin, 2018).

An investigation that tried to understand students' perceptions and preferences on WCF has

been done by several previous studies. Related to students' perception, a study by Dawson et al. (2018), revealed that most students perceive WCF as useful, specific, thoughtful, and facilitate their writing improvement.

Similar with Dawson, Sukha and Listyani (2022), also revealed that students perceive WCF given as clear, explicit, useful, efficient, and comprehensive even though they found several challenges sometimes. In addition, Prawira and Kholisna (2019), revealed most students were happy to receive WCF in their writing. Whereas, related to students' preferences, Cheng and Zhang (2021), revealed that most students at the upper secondary level prefer indirect WCF, while those who are in the lower middle level prefer the opposite type. Align with it, Samuel and Akther (2021), identified that most

students prefer indirect feedback so they have a chance to correct the error by themselves. In contrast, Saragih et al. (2021), found direct feedback as the most favored type over metalinguistic, reformulation-CF, and indirect WCF.

Although previous studies had done on understanding students' perceptions and preferences towards WCF, the reasons behind the way students perceive and prefer its application has not been done yet. Also, only a few studies tried to understand how WCF could affect their feelings in revising their writing. In addition, only a few studies are conducted with senior high school students in EFL context as the subject. Thus, to maximize the role of WCF, this recent study was done to find out and understand EFL senior high school students' perceptions and preferences towards WCF.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was done through a survey in order to generalize students' perceptions and preferences on WCF given in their exposition writing. Based on Gurbuz (2017) a survey study is suitable to be applied in measuring perceptions and preferences related to a certain subject. In this study, a questionnaire was administered. Moreover, an interview was also conducted.

The questionnaire enabled the researcher to gain an overview of participants' perceptions and preferences of WCF in their expository writing. Also, it helped the researcher develop more points in the interview. Whereas, the interview enabled the researcher to gain a deeper understanding related to participants' responses in the questionnaires (Cohen et al, 2018).

This study was done in a senior high school in Gresik. The school applied *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum in their learning process. Moreover, this study was in the second semester, where the students were asked to create an exposition writing. Thus, the subjects of this study were 56 eleventh grade senior high school students who already made an exposition text and received WCF in their writing. The questionnaires were then administered to the participants. Moreover, 10 participants were interviewed to understand the reason behind the response of the questionnaire.

Furthermore, two different analysis steps were applied. First, participants' responses of the questionnaire were analyzed through descriptive statistics. The frequency and the mean score were presented. Whereas the result from the interview was analyzed through thematic analysis. Thus, the reason behind students' responses in the questionnaire could be elaborated.

Subject

Purposive sampling was applied in this study. 56 students from the 11th grade of a senior high school in Gresik who received WCF in their exposition text were chosen as the participants. Those students were

from two different classes but taught by the same English teachers. Both male and female students were the participants in this study. All of the 56 students were asked to fill the questionnaire. Furthermore, 5 students who gave a positive attitude on WCF and 5 students who gave a negative attitude on WCF were chosen to attend the interview session.

Instruments

Two instruments were used to gain the data; questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire consisted of several close-ended questions using the Four Likert-Scale. The Four Likert Scale was considered suitable to be applied since it enabled the researcher to know participants' attitudes without being neutral. Thus, the questionnaire was administered to know how most students' perceive and prefer the application of WCF in their exposition writing. The questionnaires were adapted from Marrs (2016), Rowe and Wood (2008); Samuel et al. (2021); Sugiharti (2022) and German and Mahmud (2021). After being arranged and went to some adjustment based on the requirement of this study, the instrument was considered clear and complete by educational experts. Furthermore, the cronbach alpha score was tested using SPSS version 25 to measure the internal consistency. The result was 0,916 which is bigger than 0.7. Thus, the questionnaire was considered valid and reliable.

Whereas, the interview was based on guidelines adapted from Zhang et al. (2021). This guideline was assessed and adjusted by educational experts and considered suitable. Moreover, since the interview was unstructured so the questions being asked were developed based on students' responses to get a clear and deep understanding. Furthermore, students' responses were transcribed, organized, and familiarized before being presented.

Data Analysis

Since methodological triangulation was applied, different data analysis techniques were also conducted. Descriptive statistics using SPSS version 25 were done to analyze participant's responses to the questionnaires. Here the mean score and the percent of frequency were presented. The mean score presented how most participants perceive and prefer the application WCF. Whereas, the percent frequency presented the number of participants with positive and negative responses.

Furthermore, the thematic analysis was applied to analyze the data from the interview. The thematic analysis was done through transcribing, organizing, familiarizing students' responses. Moreover, several codes development and identification were conducted. Lastly, the data interpretation and representation through contextualizing and displaying findings in the form of reports were done.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The research findings were divided into two parts; students' perceptions on WCF and students' preferences on the type of WCF and error types to be corrected. The responses about participants' perceptions and preferences on WCF were divided into several categories.

Table 1
Students' Perceptions on The Clarity and Utility of WCF

	Descriptive Statistics				Mean
	1	2	3	4	
The feedback given was clear	0%	9%	77%	14%	3.05
The feedback given helped me write better in the future	0%	2%	57%	41%	3.40
The feedback given let me know what I had done well in my writing	0%	2%	82%	16%	3.10
The feedback given let me knowing the error in my writing	0%	2%	63%	36%	3.30
The feedback given helped me clarify my misunderstandings about grammar	2%	9%	66%	23%	3.10
The feedback provided helped me clarify my misunderstandings about using the verb tense	2%	5%	80%	13%	3.00
The feedback given helped me reduce spelling errors	0%	5%	70%	25%	3.20
The feedback given helped me reduce my mistakes in punctuation	0%	11%	71%	18%	3.10
The feedback provided helped me reduce capitalization errors	0%	11%	66%	23%	3.10
The feedback given helped me improve my sentence structure	0%	5%	71%	23%	3.20
The feedback given helped me improve paragraph organization	0%	12.5%	70%	18%	3.10
The feedback provided prepared me for higher levels of academic writing in the future	0%	4%	68%	29%	3.30
The feedback given helped me improve my academic performance in English	0%	11%	75%	14%	3.00

Source: Data processed by SPSS version 25

The first table shows participants' perceptions related to the clarity and utility of WCF. Most participants perceive the application of WCF in their expository writing was clear (M= 3.05). In the interview they revealed that the feedback had shown them the specific location of error through several marks such as highlight, circle, and underline. The student explained:

"It told us the errors by showing directly to the location. For example, the capitalization error was highlighted."

"It shows me that I made several errors starting from my thesis until my conclusion."

Moreover, not only perceived the WCF given as clear, the data shows that most participants agreed

that WCF helped them to write better (M= 3.40), helped them to be aware of what they did right (M= 3.10) and wrong (M= 3.30) in their writing. Also, most participants agreed that WCF given enabled them to clarify their error and misunderstanding in several writing aspects such as grammar (M= 3.10), verb tense (M= 3.00) spelling (M= 3.20), punctuation (M= 3.10), capitalization (M= 3.10) as well as improved sentences arrangement (M= 3.20) and paragraphs organization (M= 3.10). Furthermore, most participants confirmed that the WCF given in their exposition writing enabled them to prepare for the higher levels of writing (M= 3.30) and improved their achievement in English class (M= 3.00).

Related to their positive attitude towards the utility of WCF, the students revealed the various reasons. The first reason found was because the feedback provided explanations and suggestions as the student said:

"Not only commenting that is not coherence but it also provided an explanation about what an argument should be and the example of it so I can use it as the reference."

"I made a mistake in the content structure of my thesis, then it explained that it lacks, of connection so I have to rearrange it."

Not only that, the students also revealed the reason why WCF was beneficial to improve their writing was because it concerned all types of errors in their writing. The student explained:

"For all aspects. The feedback commented on all the errors I made."

Moreover, they also confirmed that WCF given was considered beneficial since it helped them get an insight of how a good writing should be:

"It made us understand the text structure and also the writing aspects we should consider."

"Some of us did not use to care about punctuation, but after receiving feedback, we learned to be aware of that."

"It helped me arrange my thesis and argument the most. Previously, they were not cohesive, and I took four days to make it. However, after receiving feedback, I just I need a day to finish it. It was really helpful."

However, although most participants showed a positive attitude towards the clarity and the utility of WCF, several participants found that they disagreed about that. In the interview, they explained that they found it difficult to deal with the feedback since it was provided in English. The student stated:

"I could not understand since I could not understand English."

"It did not work because it was not delivered in Indonesian."

"It is pretty clear. I am just not sure whether I really got the idea."

Table 2
Students' Perceptions on How WCF Affects Their Feeling

	Descriptive Statistics				Mean
	1	2	3	4	
The feedback given made me feel I am a good writer	4%	43%	52%	2%	2.50
The feedback given made me feel confident	0%	27%	70%	4%	2.80
The feedback given motivated me to write better	0%	4%	59%	38%	3.30
The feedback given made me happy	2%	29%	53%	16%	2.80

Source: Data processed by SPSS version 25

The second table shows participants' perceptions related to how WCF affected their feeling in revising their writing. The highest mean score shows that most students' agreed that WCF was motivating them to revise their work (M= 3.30). Also, most participants perceive WCF could boost their confidence (M= 2.80) and made them happy (M= 2.80). Moreover, the table shows that there is no significant difference in the frequencies of those who perceive that WCF made them believe that they were a good writer with those who perceive the opposite (M= 2.50).

The reasons behind their positive attitude were varied. First, they confirmed that it was because the suggestions and corrections were provided directly. As the student explained:

"Since it provided suggestions and corrections, I became more enthusiastic."

"The corrections and suggestions made it clear, so I was not confused anymore."

Second, they also stated that the WCF given made them feel respected and appreciated their hard work. The student said:

"We felt appreciated, I like the feedback, it made me happy."

Third, since they agreed that the WCF given enabled them knowing their errors and how to fix them, they also confirmed it as the reason why they were happy after receiving feedback:

"It enabled us to know where the mistake was. That is why we are motivated to revise it to get a good grade."

"Because, if there was an error, the feedback provided explanation and suggested which word or sentence or idea is suitable."

Fourth, they revealed that the praise and only a few comments given were also the reasons behind their positive feelings. The student stated:

"I do not think I received many comments in my writing. It made me confident."

In contrast, another student stated that the more comments they received, the more confident they were. It was because they believed that their draft was supervised by the teacher already. The student explained:

"Since my draft received a lot of comments, I believe my final text would be better than those with less feedback."

"The more comprehensive feedback, the higher probability that my writing will improve."

Even though most participants WCF brought positive feelings for them, several participants found to feel the opposite. They perceive WCF made them feel that they are bad in writing, dimmed their confidence, and also made them unmotivated. They revealed it was related to several reasons. First, they found it difficult to revise their writing based on the feedback given since they see themselves as lack of English skill:

"I am afraid that it would not meet with the guidance given."

"I am afraid that the result would be just the same."

Second, they stated that the more feedback they receive, the more they lose their self-confidence:

"Since mine got so many comments. I felt down. It made me think I just was not good enough."

"I was not confident. Why did I make so many mistakes."

"I felt surprised because I received so many comments. I thought maybe there will be just some comments in the grammar."

Table 3
Students' Preferences on The Application of WCF

	7				Mean
	1	2	3	4	
The errors should be underlined/circled/highlighted and equipped with providing the correction for the errors	0%	4%	52%	45%	3.41
The errors should be underlined/circled/highlighted and equipped with links/sources of information to correct errors	4%	13%	66%	18%	2.98
The feedback should be written down by indicating with certainty the location of the error and the type of error	0%	5%	52%	43%	3.38
The feedback should be accompanied by a form of correction and an explanation	0%	2%	54%	45%	3.43
The feedback given should be specific	0%	2%	57%	41%	3.39
In providing feedback, the teacher should provide suggestions for better words/phrases to use in writing	0%	4%	59%	38%	3.34
In providing feedback, the teacher should provide authentic suggestions so that the writing can approach the native speaker's version	2%	13%	75%	11%	2.95
The feedback given should correct all the existing errors	2%	4%	68%	27%	3.20
I like when the teacher gives feedback about my grammatical errors	0%	9%	70%	21%	3.13
I like when the teacher gives feedback about my vocabulary errors	0%	4%	71%	25%	3.21

I like when the teacher gives feedback about my spelling errors	0%	9%	66%	25%	3.16
I like when the teacher gives feedback about my punctuation errors	0%	7%	66%	27%	3.20
I like when the teacher gives feedback about my sentence arrangement	0%	4%	70%	27%	3.23
I like when the teacher gives feedback about my paragraph organization	0%	5%	64%	30%	3.25
Feedback should be provided via electronic devices	2%	16%	70%	13%	2.93

Source: Data processed by SPSS version 25

The third table shows the type of WCF and the type of error preferred by the students. From the table, it can be seen that most students favored to receive direct WCF (M= 3.43; 3.41; 2.95), metalinguistic WCF (M= 3.38; 3.34), unfocused WCF (M= 3.20) and electronic WCF.

Related to these preferences, the interview revealed the reasons behind the types of WCF they favored. First of all, most students preferred direct WCF with a metalinguistic explanation since it helped them to finish and improve their writing easily and effectively since they wanted something instant and focused more on their goals. The students explained:

"Direct correction made it easier for us to revise our writing."

"We need something instant. You know, Gen Z."

"Maybe if it provided indirect correction, I would not be able to meet the deadline since I was confused about the feedback given."

Also, students claimed providing feedback without corrections, advice, and explanations was useless since it would cause ambiguity as well as confusion for the students. The students explained:

"In the end, it would not solve the problem. We knew the error but did not know how to correct it."

At this point, providing corrections, advice, and explanations were highly suggested to boost students self-confidence and motivation in revising their draft. As the student stated:

"That kind of feedback helped us to be confident."

"It helped us to know better the things that we should do."

Moreover, students also favored comprehensive feedback. In the interview the variety behind these preferences were revealed. First of all, students perceived comprehensive feedback helps them to create good writing.

"Because I want to write perfectly."

"I wanted to write well to get a good score."

Second, the students preferred comprehensive feedback because they perceived focused feedback would only cause a bigger problem for students' future development. As they stated:

"It will affect our learning progress because a small mistake could be bigger if it is left unchecked."

In addition, comprehensive feedback also made them feel valued for their knowledge and abilities in writing since the teacher paid attention to every writing aspect. The student said:

"That could be an additional point for us who understand about authorship."

Hence, the student confirmed that it was unfair if the teacher only focused on the crucial error.

Also, most participants agreed that they preferred specific feedback for their writing. It was because the students see themselves as still lack of English proficiency so they afraid of being not aware or even misunderstand the feedback given. The student explained:

"Since we still lack of English proficiency, we were not aware enough when we made an error."

"If it did not show the specific location of the error, it would confuse us."

Furthermore, when they were asked about the reason related to their preference on electronic WCF, they stated the reason was simply because it is more up-to-date and considered more efficient. The students said:

"It was easier to be accessed. Also, we can do real-time interaction when."

Not only found the WCF type favored, the data also shows what writing aspects students prefer to be concerned about. From the mean score, the paragraphs organization is shown to be the most preferred aspect to be concerned (M= 3.25) followed by sentences arrangement (M= 3.23), the use of the vocabulary (M= 3.21), punctuation (M=3.20), spelling (M=3.16), and the least favored is grammar (M= 3.13).

Discussion

Understanding students' perceptions and preferences were considered crucial factors that might affect the effectiveness of the learning activities significantly. Sharma (2020) stated that understanding perception enabled teachers to know the appropriate learning activities applied. Whereas, students' preference of learning activity is seen as a part of a student's learning style which could affect their performance in the learning process (Rosita and Familia, 2022). Considering those urges, the findings of this study discuss two main things as the answer of the research question; students' perceptions towards the application of WCF and students' preferences of the WCF to be applied and the writing aspects to be corrected.

Based on the findings, it reveals that most students showed a positive attitude towards applying WCF in their expository writing. The students confirmed that the WCF given was clear and beneficial to facilitate them in improving their writing and their awareness of the errors they made in several writing aspects, preparing them for a higher academic level of writing in the future, and improving their academic achievement in English subjects. These findings align with previous studies that confirmed

WCF as essential for students' writing improvement (Trabelsi, 2019; Suerni et al. 2020; Sugiharti, 2022). Not only that, these findings also confirmed the previous studies by Kisananto (2016); Tawfeeq et al. (2018) that students perceive that WCF given enabled them to gain more understanding about the material and writing aspects. From the students' explanation, the specific comments and explanations provided were the reason behind their positive attitude. Here, it can be seen that since the teacher provided metalinguistic feedback, students were able to understand, improve, and revise their draft effectively (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008 in Zhang et al, 2021). Moreover, students confirmed the other reason was because of the comprehensive feedback which concerns all types of error in their writing. This finding supports the idea of Falhasiri (2021) and Loo (2022), that comprehensive feedback promotes students' improvement because writing aspects are actually varied and teachers could not pay attention to a particular aspect only. Furthermore, direct correction and suggestion were confirmed as the factor behind these positive responses. This finding strengthens previous studies by Fhaeizdhyall (2020); Esmaeeli et al. (2020), that direct correction is more beneficial. However, several factors such as age, students' ability, and gender were found to influence students' perceptions of WCF provided (Dev & Qayyum, 2017).

To go further, the findings also revealed that several students perceive WCF negatively since it was given in English. It was similar to a study by Saragih et al. (2021) where students confirmed there was several confusion when interpreting the feedback. It is also supported by Kristanti (2013), that students might find some challenges in interpreting the feedback given. Thus, a consultation session is considered essential to be conducted to follow up students' writing development as in Gamlem (2013) in Saragih et al. (2021).

Aside from the clarity and utilities, the findings also revealed that most students perceive WCF as motivating and increasing their self-confidence. It supported previous studies by Azizi (2018) and Agustini (2021) that provided WCF boosted students' motivation in writing performance. Based on the findings, the praise and the amount of feedback received were influencing their feelings. Zumbrunn (2016), found that providing praise was considered essential since the feedback with critics only was considered useless and unmotivated by the students. In addition, fewer corrections are also perceived to boost students' self-confidence. It aligns with Iswandari (2016) and Lee (2019), which stated that the less correction, will be less intimidating. However, different perceptions about fewer feedback appeared since this finding revealed the more feedback given, the bigger potential to get a good score. At this point, it emphasizes the importance of giving praise and explaining the objectives of providing WCF. It is because, setting their mind through explanations given

related to the benefits of WCF can increase their satisfaction (Trabelsi, 2019).

Besides those positive feelings, the findings found several students perceive WCF dimmed their confidence and motivation and even made them see themselves as bad writers. The finding revealed that WCF made them not confident since they received so many comments. This finding confirmed the theory by Lee (2019), that the less correction, the better. However, to minimize this case, providing praise can be beneficial since it makes the feedback less intimidating for students and makes them feel appreciated (Wahyuni, 2017).

Whereas, related to preferences of the WCF types, the findings revealed that students were more into direct WCF which is similar with previous studies by Black and Nanni (2016); Kisananto (2016); and Rashtchi and Zulqarnain (2019). The reason behind these preferences were also the same since they perceive direct feedback as more effective and efficient in helping them revise their writing.

Moreover, the students also prefer to receive metalinguistic correction. They perceive metalinguistic feedback which consist of explanations and comments that were constructive for them. Not only that, it is also perceived as useful to prevent them from ambiguity and misinterpretation. In addition, the explanation given is also considered to boost their motivation in revising their draft. It supports a study by Gholaminia et al. (2014), that metalinguistic WCF enhances students' learning process in a more effective and efficient way as well as motivates them to improve their writing. In addition, the explanations given make them become more aware to prevent making errors in their future writing. However, it is important to consider that providing direct metalinguistic feedback might be time-consuming for the teacher (Lee, 2017).

Furthermore, the findings confirmed comprehensive feedback was more favored than focused WCF which is aligned with the findings by Trabelsi (2019); Kencana et al. (2020); Fortunasari et al. (2021). It is also supported by the data that most students agreed that they liked when the teacher gave them several comments related to their grammar, verb tense, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, sentence arrangement, and paragraph organization. This finding supports Loo (2022), that unfocused feedback is more adequate to enable students' writing improvement since the correction given was not limited to a certain type of error. However, the findings revealed organization of paragraphs as the most favorite writing aspect to be corrected, followed by the organization of sentences, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and the last favored one, grammar.

In addition, students were expecting WCF given to be specific so it will be less time consuming which is in line with Dawson et al (2018). This findings confirm previous study by Saragih et al. (2021) that specific feedback is favored since students will realize the error easily and encourage them to

revise it. However, students in different level of education might have different preferences.

4. CONCLUSION

From the results and discussion it can be seen that most participants showed positive perceptions toward applying WCF in their expository writing related to the clarity, the utilities, and the way WCF affected their feelings. Their positive responses were because participants' perception of WCF given was specific, provided several explanations, suggestions, and direct correction. However, several participants who showed a negative attitude revealed the reason was because it was provided in English and considered too much in giving the comments. At this point, several factors are having a possibility in influencing participants' responses such as their English proficiency level and age.

Moreover, most participants were more into direct metalinguistic WCF. They prefer this type since they perceive a lack of English proficiency and need the feedback to provide them the guidance. Also, they favored unfocused WCF to help them deal with all the errors they make since they worry they perceive themselves to not be aware enough about the error in their writing. It was also because their motivation was to create perfect writing. However, the participants considered paragraph and sentence organization as the most crucial aspect to be corrected. Additionally, students were more into electronic WCF since it was considered modern and more efficient.

In addition, the findings confirm the urgency of understanding and considering students' perceptions and preferences. It is because the way students perceive WCF might be influenced by their preferences and vice versa.

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