

What every student is saying about written corrective feedback (WCF): EFL learners' voice

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Abstract: While recent research on writing has highlighted the importance of feedback for students' improvement, little research has investigated the students' affective engagement with written corrective feedback in EFL writing classes. To address this gap, data drawn from a qualitative case study were analyzed to investigate what learner affective engagement with WCF. This study has explored how 22 Indonesian learners engaged affectively with teacher WCF in EFL writing. It examines data collected from students' draft, teacher written corrective feedback, students' reflective journal and semi-structured interviews. The study has found that while the participants' affective engagement was relatively positive, but due to its practical, situational, and emotional attachment between teacher and students, several students were aware that there was an absence of cognitive and communication factor trigger them to perceive negatively on WCF.

Keywords: affective engagement, feedbacks, WCF.

1. INTRODUCTION

In teaching writing, the role of written corrective feedback has been the subject of discussion among writing researchers and practitioners (Aghajanloo, 2016 & Jokar & Soyoof, 2014). A commentary feedback in writing or Written Corrective Feedback has been investigated by some researchers that it helped learners demonstrate much greater on writing ability, grammar instruction and error correction techniques (Marzban & Arabahmadi, 2013; Fazilatfar et al., 2014; Hosseiny, 2014).

One of the most interesting feedback in this era to be applied in teaching writing is "Computer-Mediated Corrective Feedback". It is a comment, symbol, or information to the learners or students regarding a linguistic errors they make in students' work by using computer (MS.Word). According to Yeh & Lo (2009), corrective feedback or error correction provided via written computer-mediated communication could play an important role in developing learners' metalinguistic awareness, especially marking up text with colored annotations and focusing the learners' attention on limited information. This makes corrective feedback an efficient way to draw learners' attention to the error and the feedback about it in the written text. As the use of computer-mediated corrective feedback method has become more common in writing classes, different studies have looked for more innovative ways to aid learners in developing their writing abilities (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

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It was mostly believed that written corrective feedback (WCF) helped learners demonstrate much greater on writing ability, grammar instruction and error correction techniques (Marzban & Arabahmadi, 2013; Fazilatfar et al., 2014; Hosseiny, 2014). A plethora of previous studies have examined the effectiveness of WCF through computer-mediated improving students' writing accuracy especially in reducing grammatical errors, learners' knowledge of the target forms, organization and development ((Tafazoli et al., 2014; Rassaei, 2019 & El Ebyary & Windeatt, 2019). Although, researchers have explored the effect of Written Corrective Feedback on the enhancement of writing quality, little attention has focused on learner's affective perception toward written corrective feedback.

In a target university where this study was conducted, Indonesia especially in English education, during the pandemic of COVID-19, the school had been closed and the learning process conducted online since August, 2020. Writing course which has been taught by the author also has switched from paper-based to computer-based. When correcting the students' draft, the teacher of this course mostly provided the feedback using computer or through Microsoft word. The way teacher provides feedback is utilizing the track changes on Microsoft word along with the correction symbol in writing feedback. As an initial step in filling this void, the present study was conducted in Indonesian EFL students to investigate how are the learners' affective perception on teacher WCF through Microsoft word program. This study is of great significance as the beliefs students hold can affect their judgements and perceptions, in which in turn could influence their motivation and engagement in classroom.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Truscott (1999) paper stimulated controversy on the concept of written corrective feedback. As put by Bitchener et al., (2005), Truscot proposed that there was no research that could convincingly underpin the veracity of the argument that written corrective feedback mostly leads to enhancing the accuracy of students' writing in later writing assignments. Ferris (1999) in response to Truscot's (1996) paper maintained that his argument was far from being true, given the increasing body of research indicating the effectiveness of error correction on some learners' linguistic accuracy. Regarding the affective perception, it is generally associated with one's attachment (positive or negative) to people, object, ideas, etc., and ask the question "How do I feel about this knowledge or information?(Baumeister et al., 1998). For example of this aspect is students perceive that they like studying or writing by receiving feedback especially WCF from the lecturer on their work or writing. To get students' affective perception, the researcher adapted the indicators of students' perception from (Arnold, 1999).

Aspects of affective perception	Indicators	Representation
Feelings : refers to emotion perceived, and known by the individual	Positive	Like,happy,comfortable
	Negative	Dislike, unhappy, uncomfortable

3. METHOD

The student participants were second-year University' students enrolled during the spring semester of 2021 in one section of a course called Basic Writing at a private university in Kendari, Sulawesi, Indonesia. The section was taught by an experienced EFL writing teacher with a Master degree in TESOL. All of the students in the sections were invited to volunteer for the project. There were 22 (17 females, 5 males) students volunteered and these volunteered students came from varied level of English: low, average and high level.

The data collected included students reflective journal with 12 guided questions. The questions were adapted from Zheng & Yu (2018) and written in Indonesian language. The retrospective questions was distributed to the students as soon as they got first and second feedback from their teacher using Microsoft Word. The participants were given about 40 minutes to complete their reflective journal.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analyzed using Miles and Hubberman (1994). Once the reflective journal had been collected through Whatsapp group, the researcher created files for each of 22 students that included their draft that had been given feedback and their reflective writing. Their reflective were then sorted manually through Microsoft excel, in which each sheet was divided based on the questions and participants responses. Each response of the participants were coded and categorized and given a theme based on the aspect of affective perception indicator proposed by Arnold (1999).

5. FINDINGS

General patterns in student data.

Although teacher feedback can take various forms, the feedback provided by the teacher was all similar in format. The teacher graded the first and second draft and gave both content and language feedback on the original texts in red color and utilize comment. The content feedbacks were sometimes provided both in English and Indonesian because she believed it would be more comprehensible to her students. Example 1 is an original copy of teacher WCF on a student’s first draft (Fig. 1).

The city of Raha is the capital of Muna (Regency)predicate. Like the largest city in Indonesia, the city of Raha is by the sea or by the sea. (The city of Raha)subject (is)predicate on (the seashore of the Buton Strait, a strait that connects Muna Island and Buton Island)complement.

Once you will be anchored at the Raha Nusantara Port, you will immediately see the beauty of (the city of Raha)subject from the middle of the sea. The (icons)predicate of the city of Raha will immediately be seen, (because indeed almost all of the icons of the city of Raha were built on the waterfront)complement.

(The iconic city of Raha)subject that (is) predicate (very phenomenal today is the Al Markaz Al Islami Al Munajat mosque)complement.

The beauty of (the city of Raha)subject, not only depends on these icons, but no less fun is also a view on the edge of the city of Raha. The enchanting view of the seaside city of Raha, is designed as a tourist spot that is very suitable for sports, "walking" or "sitting" while waiting for the sunset in the afternoon. (The charm of the beauty of the city of Raha will be a very pleasant moment for tourists)complement, before visiting other interesting tourism objects in Muna (Regency)predicate.

Note: dibuat dalam per satu kalimat sj dan identifikasi subject, predicate and complement dari setiap kalimat tsb. Jangan digabungkan dengan kalimatnya. Misalnya

- Raha is the Capital city of Muna.
(S) (P) (Comp)

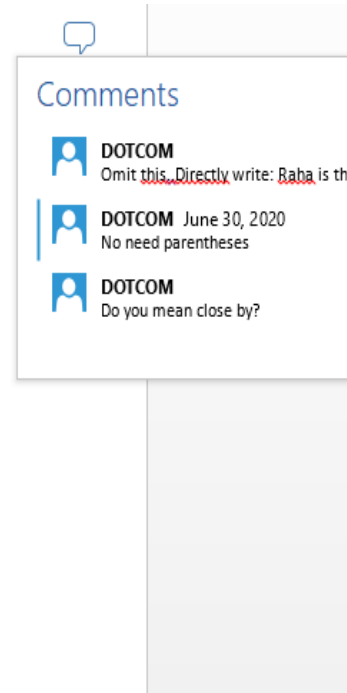
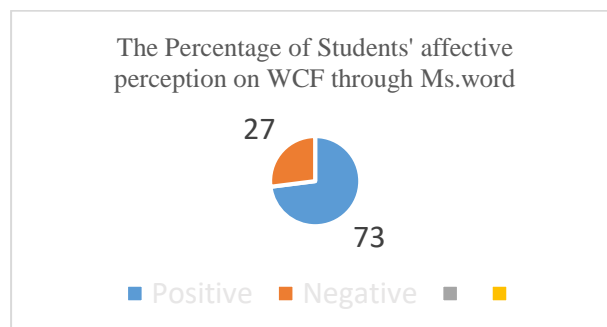


Fig 1. Example: an original copy of teacher WCF on student’ draft.

With respect to the provision of WCF, the teacher provided a mixture of direct and indirect feedback in her WCF on all the draft. The teacher provided corrections on some errors, but for others she only advised that an error had been made and the student was left to solve it.

Student affective perception with WCF

According to the conceptual framework described in this paper, affective engagement can be explored by looking at students’ affect, judgement, and appreciation. Affect concerns the feelings and emotions students express when receiving WCF and changes in these feelings and emotions in making revisions. In this study, students mostly were willing to receive WCF with the percentage of student was 73%. However, there was 27% students indicated that they were unwilling with the WCF. The chart shows the result of students’ affective engagement on WCF, presented in the percentage.



Based on the percentage of students' affective perception, it was found that the student dominantly perceived positive the WCF provided by the lecturer. The number of students who gave positive responses on the WCF was 16 students of 22 students. However, there were 6 students who responded negatively on the feedback.

Positive affective perception

Not surprisingly, the researcher found that mostly students felt **happy** when receiving the feedback from the teacher using Ms. Word. Based on student's reflective writing, the students obtained a positive feeling to computer-mediated corrective feedback. It was supported from participant's reflective writing.

"I feel happy because the feedback given by lecture with using a computer is very clear and easy to understand" (p. 1).

Besides being very clear and easy to understand, some students also responded that feedback using a computer was very helpful to find out the errors in their writing. It was supported from his reflective writing.

"I was excited getting the feedback because I easily find out my error and try to correct my writing as much as possible" (p.2)

Another aspect of affective perception is **like** feeling. Based on the reflective journal most of students like this type of feedback because it fits with the current situation in Indonesia during the pandemic situation. It was supported from her reflective writing.

"I like it, because in this pandemic, giving computers using feedback is the best way to keep staying at home while waiting for the feedback from the teacher" (p. 3)

Similar statements also stated by another student. It was supported from her reflective writing:

"I prefer the feedback provided through computer because it made me easier to save and recheck if I encounter the same problem next time" (p. 5).

Another feeling that students feel when they are given feedback using a computer is **comfortable**. Based on these data it can be concluded that most students feel comfortable with this type of feedback because it is simple and friendly-user.

"The feedback given was very helpful. When I got the feedback I just needed to copy and paste it on my computer. Teacher used to give us feedback on paper, and it took my time to rewrite and revised and I broke my paper for many times." (p 6)

Then, student stated that feedback using computer is friendly used. It was supported from her reflective writing

"I feel comfortable with the way teacher gave me the feedback because when she sent us the feedback, I can revise it anytime and anywhere" (p 10)

Based on the student statements, it can be concluded that students feel comfortable with computer-mediated corrective feedback due to its function. Teacher-related beliefs were also linked to emotions induced by WCF. Participant 5 revealed his worries about being judged by an authority figure. This is in accordance with the statement below. That is supported by his reflective writing.

"I'm a shy person and always get nervous to talk directly to my teacher, so when I took the feedback from computer, I feel safe."(p. 17)

Another participant also considered WCF given by the teacher via computer as an indicator of teacher attention and care. She did not suffer from negative emotions when receiving the feedback.

"When my teacher corrected my draft and gave some optional answers, I feel like taking so much attention from her. I felt she wanted us to be better in writing" (p.19, first response on her reflective journal).

Her statement was further elaborated in her reflective journal.

"Taking the feedback from the teacher, less or more feedback, it helps me to understand my failure in writing".

Negative affective perception

Although most students give positive responses to the use of computers in providing feedback, there are also students show negative responses. This was revealed from 6 students responded on their reflective journal when the researcher asked her feeling on the feedback given through Microsoft word. The representative word appeared on their reflective were **dissatisfied, confused, unhappy, worry, and difficult**.

"I feel a little disappointed because I don't understand the feedback given via a computer" (p4).

He further explained on his reflective journal the reason why he got dissatisfied when receiving the feedback.

"Since I got many comments and coded on my drafts, I got confused how to revise it, because I didn't understand the coded used by the teacher, eventough she had actually provided us the correction symbol, but I still couldn't acknowledge it"

He further elaborated in his reflective journal related how he solve the problem by asking his friend to help him revise his draft.

"I asked my friend to help me to revise my draft".

Similarly, other student clarified on her response why she dislike the feedback given via Ms.Word due to the unclear explanation from the teacher.

"I am not happy because there are some codes that I don't understand when using a computer". (p20)

Similar statements were stated another student. It was supported from her reflective writing.

"I am a bit confused because sometimes the feedback given is clear but I have difficulty correcting my mistake" (p14)

Another aspect of affective perception appeared on students response was feeling uncomfortable on the feedback provided via Ms.Word. This is supported by his reflective writing.

"I was a little bit worry when I got the feedback from my teacher via computer because I got many errors" (p.11)

Another participant responded on his reflective journal relating to the question whether he prefer or not the way teacher provided the feedback.

"I felt difficult to understand on the feedback. I felt bad when I got my full-corrected draft. But, luckily the teacher gave more time to revise and she invited us to ask via Whatsapp group (p.12).

According to the three student statements, it can be concluded that some students feel uncomfortable with computer-mediated corrective feedback due to the knowledge of students on the feedback.

6. DISCUSSION

The result of this study showed that the students had positive feeling toward direct corrective feedback. It indicated that the students felt happy after receiving feedback. The participants were aware about their error and it helped them not only to revise their draft but also to improve their writing. Because if teachers did not provide explicit (direct) correction students may confused and got some problem in revising their text and it is the fastest and easiest for students to revising their text (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010 in Beuningen, 2010; Chandler, 2003; Ellis,2009).

The result of the present study contradictory with some previous studies (Chung, 2015; Rosdiana, 2016; Han, 2002; Chen et al, 2016). On the contrary, the finding of the present study is the same both with a study carried by Listiani's (2017) which claims that the feedback provided them with written problem identification, commentary and suggestion which assisted them to remember the feedback and to learn writing easily. While this study also found that the student claimed they were able to know the error located in their essay. Therefore, they can avoid the same thing in their error.

According to Ellis (2009) teachers could provide direct corrective feedback. Lee (2008) adds that direct feedback may be appropriate for beginner students or in a situation when errors are 'untreatable' that are not susceptible to self-correction

such as sentence structure and word choice, and when teachers want to direct student attention to error patterns that require student. Ferris (1999) states feedback was beneficial for students to improve the quality of their writing. It was true because it can improve the quality of student's writing, focusing on grammar, lexis, and content. So, it can improve the students' writing production and accuracy. On the written feedback teacher can give direct or indirect corrective feedback.

Ashwell (2000) also found clear support for developing grammatical accuracy in written compositions. He conducted evaluation of feedback an adult learners' written essays in which feedback involving underlining or circling grammatical, lexical, or mechanical error, as well as content-related suggestions for improvement, was provided on the first and second draft of a composition. So, it can improve the students' writing accuracy. Feedback on writing can be selected as a means of helping students to make revision and improve their writing skills. From the data, the researcher knew that use of teacher's direct feedback by revise directly their grammatical, lexical, or mechanical error written of the students was very useful in writing process. The students can indicate their mistakes so that the students can correct them. The students were happy because their teacher gave them solution how to revise their writing.

Furthermore, the reasons of why the subject felt happy with direct written corrective feedback are in line with Chandler's study (2003). He found that direct feedback is easy to correct and takes less time. He described that many students prefer accepting the indications and the corrections of their errors to only receiving the indications. The students also consider that direct feedback is the easiest correction because they know the correct form directly. By knowing the correct form directly, automatically the students get faster to rewrite their draft.

7. CONCLUSION

Mostly students seemed to demonstrate their complexity in affective perception on WCF provided by the teacher through Ms. Word. Students who responded positively on WCF through Ms. Word due to its practical, situational, and emotional attachment between teacher and students, while students who negatively responded on the feedback was caused by an absence of cognitive and communication factor.

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