Exploring learner's experiences of teachers written corrective feedback: basis for an intervention program

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Abstract: This study explored the experiences of Grade 12 senior high school learners with teachers' written corrective feedback (WCF) on their English writing compositions. The participants of this study comprised of 85 grade 12 learners and 2 English teachers. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were used. This study revealed that written corrective feedback (WCF) improved the learners' writing skills in their mechanical errors, followed by grammatical and vocabulary errors. Also, study shows that teachers employed different kinds of feedback strategies namely; direct feedback which is the most used, followed by indirect feedback and metalinguistic feedback. Moreover, learners perceived WCF as an important tool for improving their writing skills, particularly capitalization.

Keywords: Teachers, Written corrective feedback, Errors, Intervention program

INTRODUCTION

The importance of English has always been recognized in the South East Asian (ASEAN) region. English has been the language used in all programs offered in which the country's educational standard is meeting the requirement.

Tracing back the history, the American colonized the Philippines during the 1900. During their colony, US president MCKinley mandated to make English as a medium of instruction in the Philippines. That is why, the position of the English language, be it in the field of entertainment, business, or science, is undeniably dominant. English is an international language with speakers all over the world (Jenkins, 2003).

With the above scenario, Filipinos are of edge for English is considered as a second language unlike the other Asian countries such as: Korea, Thailand, Japan, China, and etc. who consider English as a foreign language.

To make a strong basis, In the Philippines Constitution 2003, Article XIV of Section 7 states that, "For purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and English until otherwise provided by law, English."

However, in more recent years, there has been an alarming decline in English language proficiency in the country, with the Philippines falling from the 20th to the 27th spot in the 2020 English Proficiency Index (Baclig, 2020). This is a sad reality that studies are showing that the Filipinos' grasps of the English language is slipping while other Asian countries are fast catching up. In connection to this, teacher's correction and feedback plays a vital role in honing the students' language learning especially in the aspect of writing. Lizzio and Wilson (2008) advocate that WCF plays a fundamental function in supporting students to minimize their errors. WCF is a significant area of teachers' work and researches sho that students value their teachers' WCF and find it helpful to improve the process of writing (Chen, Nassaji, & Liu, 2016; Karim &

Nassaji 2015; Nakamura, 2016; Raza, 2019; Sritrakarn, 2018). Research constantly shows that learners give importance to teachers' WCF and find it most useful among other types (e.g. oral and electronic conferencing) feedback (Ekholm, Zumbrunn, & Conklin, 2015; Yang, Badger, & Yu, 2006; Zumbrunn, Marrs, & Mewborn, 2016).

However, there is no universal agreement on the relevance of corrective feedback to student learning for the reason that although feedback is considered vital, it is also believed that students show disengagement from teachers' WCF (Robinson, Pope, & Holyoak, 2013). Some students do not value corrective feedback if they do not like the comments given by their teachers and the marks they get as a result of that (Marrs, 2016; Weaver, 2006). Teachers complain that students give superficial attention to even a fastidiously composed corrective feedback (Carless, 2007; Gibbs & Simpson, 2004). Teachers grumble that they spend a lot of time for correcting errors in students' drafts but it appears wastage of time and energies (Crisp, 2007). The views regarding lack of concern of students towards WCF are intriguing. Research shows differing views of learners and teachers about WCF in terms of its function in improving students' writing.

Here is another issue of difference between teachers' purpose of giving WCF and learners' views about that (Robinson et al., 2013). A lot of students are not even able to understand their teachers' WCF and act accordingly (Chanock, 2000; Ganapathy, Tan, & Phan, 2020; Orsmond, Merry, & Reiling, 2005). They do not understand the comments and cannot interpret them properly. Students' ability to understand teachers' WCF to improve their learning in English is another area which needs attention (Higgins, Hartley, & Skelton, 2010). Student perception is an important factor which actually influences the function of WCF in their learning. To make WCF useful for the students, the teachers must be aware of their students' perceptions and preferences for the following reasons: firstly, a disconnect between students' understanding of different teaching strategies and teachers' expectations from their students can lead to an impairment in learning process (Amrhein & Nassaji 2010).

Conversely, students' approving views evidenced by already conducted research studies for WCF help the teachers to choose the best practices of instruction. This situation can offer a stronger supportive confirmation of the role of WCF in a continuing academic debate of the effectiveness of WCF (Ferris 2012; Saragih et al., 2021; Schulz, 2001; Srichanyachon, 2012; Taylor et al., 2011; Trabelsi, 2019).

Corrective feedback refers to strategies that indicate to learners that their output is erroneous in some way, and be provided on oral, written, and technology-mediated output, and in response to a range of errors, including linguistic, content, organization, discourse, and pragmatic errors (Nassaji & Kartchava, 2017).

In the second or foreign language learning classroom, refers to different pedagogical strategies, providing feedback in any form written/oral, to assist language learners in developing L2 writing skills (Al Hilali & McKinley, 2021; Barrot, 2021; Cheng & Zhang, 2021; Mao and Lee, 2020; Lee et al., 2021). Among these instructional strategies, written corrective feedback employs L2 writing effectiveness, which may vary in form and content and types and features.

Given the importance of giving corrective feedback and its challenges, investigating how students prefer feedback is considered essential to research. Many studies were conducted by Ellis (2009) regarding students' preferences of WCF strategies elaborated (e.g.: direct, indirect, metalinguistic, focused, unfocused, reformulation, electronic). Unfortunately, they focused only on certain strategies or comparing two strategies that are commonly applied in the learning process.

In connection to this, since many students have varied backgrounds such as ethnicity, dialect and the way they prefer feedback are different. As per Zhang, et al. (2021) the results of follow-up interviews showed that the linguistic features of learners' first language, existing knowledge of the target language, affective feelings, and teacher's role were the main factors contributing to variation inlearners' preferences. Thus, the study seeks to explore the learners experiences of written corrective feedback to inform educational practices and improve language learning outcomes, with a focus on the effectiveness and delivery of feedback in English language teaching and to determine the basis of intervention that should be proposed.

Statement of the problem
This research paper determined the effectiveness of written corrective feedback among grade 12 learners.
Specifically, it sought to answers the following questions:
1. What are the errors found in written compositions of the learners?
2. What type of written corrective feedback is employed on learners?
3. What is the perceived effect of written corrective feedback on the writing performance of the learners?
3. What intervention program should be proposed to improve written compositions of the learners?

METHODOLOGY

Research design
The researcher employed a mixed-method which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. A quantitative survey method was used in determining the perceived effects of written corrective feedback among learners. Meanwhile, a qualitative method was used in determining the type of written corrective feedback employed by the teachers on learners by getting the corrected compositions of learners in the conduct of this study. The study gathered information through survey questionnaire and interview since it best describeD the learners' experiences in written corrective feedback.

Respondents and locale of the study
The respondents of this study were 85 grade 12 students coming from the two different senior high schools in Lubuagan, Kalinga namely: Saint Theresita's School of Lubuagan (23) and Senior High School in Lubuagan (62). These are the grade 12 students who were enrolled in the two schools for the Academic year 2024-2025. The corrected English compositions were gotten from the two different English teachers from these senior high schools. Furthermore, in order to identify the perceived effect of written corrective feedback from the learners, the researchers conducted a follow-up interview that involved fifteen (15) senior high school individuals that were randomly chosen from the 85 learners.

Research instrument
In order to determine the errors found in the writing compositions of the learners, and explore the written corrective feedback employed by the teachers, the researcher requested for the corrected writing compositions of the learners from their English teachers. The writing composition collected were 85 writing compositions, one writing composition activity in one learner.

Meanwhile, to explore the learners' perceived effects of teachers corrective feedback, this study adapted the survey questionnaire developed by Samuel (2021), modifying the original 5-point Likert scale to a 4-point Likert scale. The neutral option was removed to encourage respondents to take a clearer stance, resulting in a scale that ranged from 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree, 4-strongly agree. Also, the researcher made a modification in the statement to suit the research context. Specifically, the original framework was expanded to include "in English writing" in statement number 2, "Written corrective feedback is helpful in improving my performance in English writing". This modification enabled a more comprehensive analysis of the perceived effect of learners in teachers written corrective feedback and provided a richer understanding of the findings which was followed by a distribution of self-accomplished interview questionnaire with 3 open ended questions.

Treatment of data
For the quantitative part of this paper, the following were used to treat and analyze the data:
　　1. Weighted mean- this was used to determine the average of perceived effect of teachers written corrective feedback among learners.
　　For the qualitative part, a content and thematic analysis were used. Content analysis was used by the researcher in analyzing the corrected papers of the learners in order to examine the errors found in the written compositions of the learners and to examine the types of written corrective feedback (WCF) employed by the teachers. The analysis involved systematically coding and categorizing the WCF into different types, such as grammatical, lexical, and syntactical corrections.
In analyzing the perceived effect of written corrective feedback (WCF) to the learners, it was examined through the following stages: (1) transcription of recorded statements so that a thorough written account of specific issue is provided. (2) Coding and Thematic Analysis by Broun and Clarke, (2006). Codes serve as 'labels' than sum up or bookmark brief passages of text, aiding in the organization and sorting of the data. (3) Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data, often using a two-step methodology (Silverman 2006; Wong 2008), by both providing a straightforward, descriptive interpretation of the data and a theoretical interpretation. (4) Determining the validity and dependability. Participants do not need to agree with all of the researcher's findings or conclusions (and vice versa) , but respondent validation can increase or decrease confidence in the findings, lead to fresh perspectives, and encourage the researcher o change or revise their conclusion.
Furthermore, in conducting the content analysis of written corrective feedback (WCF), the researcher analyzeD the written compositions of the learners through Elli's (2008) framework, which categorizes WCF into three types:
1. Direct Feedback- this approach involves providing students with the correct form by explicitly correcting errors. Specifically, the teacher directly addressed mistakes related to word choice, spelling, capitalization, tense of verb, and article usage, offering students a clear model for improvement.
2. Indirect Feedback- this type of written corrective feedback indicates that an error exist but correction is not provided. In this type of WCF, It means that the students must carefully correct their own errors.
3. Metalinguistic Feedback- this kind of corrective feedback provides metalinguistic clue to the error.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Errors found in written compositions of the learners

Mechanics which includes spelling, punctuation, and capitalization got the highest form of errors committed by the learners whereas Grammar which includes verb tenses, subject verb agreement, pronoun usage, clause and sentence structure came second and vocabulary got the lowest error found in the compositions of the learners.

Types of written corrective feedback that the teachers employ

The direct written corrective feedback was the most used feedback from the teachers in their English writing followed by Indirect written corrective feedback while the least feedback that was employed was the metalinguistic feedback . This table indicated that the teachers employed a direct corrective feedback more than indirect and metalinguistic written corrective feedback which definitely help students in correcting their errors in writing such as correcting their capitalizations spellings, etc.

Perceived Effects of Written corrective feedback

The Grade 12 learners perceive their teachers' written corrective feedback as beneficial, with the highest mean score of 3.02 indicating that they find it "helpful in reducing my errors in capitalization" followed by "I understand what I have to do to improve my writing when I read my teacher's written corrective feedback" (3.01), "Written corrective feedback is helpful in improving my performance" (3.0), "Written corrective feedback helps in noticing my errors in English writing" (2.99), "Written corrective feedback prepares me for higher levels of academic writing" (2.98), and "Written corrective feedback has helped me to learn spelling" (2.98). However, the statements "Written corrective feedback is helpful in improvement of my writing in English" received the lowest mean scores, with a value of 2.62, followed by "Written corrective feedback has helped me to learn punctuation" (2.88), "Written corrective feedback makes me more conscious of my errors in writing" (2.94), "Written corrective feedback has helped me to learn grammatical rules" (2.96), and "Written corrective feedback has helped me to improve my academic achievement in English" (2.99), compared to the other statements. It showed that teachers' written corrective feedback has the least impact on preparing students for higher levels of academic writing. In contrast, the table revealed that secondary school learners perceived WCF as beneficial in various ways like: Improving their writing performance; reducing errors in capitalization; raising awareness about errors in English writing and providing guidance for improvement in writing. Overall, the findings highlighted the value of WCF in supporting students' writing development, although with varying degrees of impact.

Effects of teachers written corrective feedback to the learners

Learners feel a mixed of emotions when receiving WCF

Mixed emotion refers to a complex and contradictory emotional state characterized by the simultaneous experience of two or more emotion that are opposite or conflicting, such as both

happy and sad, frustrated and grateful, or anxious and hopeful. There are instances that learners often feel mixed emotions such as frustration and happiness whenever they received WCF. In this regard, it is essential for teachers to provide WCF in a supportive, specific, and actionable manner.

T# 1: " I usually feel a bit disappointed but also motivated to improve"

T# 3: "When I received my papers with corrections, I usually feel mix of emotions. At first, I might feel a little nervous or disappointed if I made a lot of mistakes. However, I also see it as an opportunity to learn and improve."

T# 8: "My reaction to seeing correction on my papers varies. Sometimes I feel encouraged to improve while other times I feel frustrated or discouraged. It depends on the nature of the corrections and my overall mood"

T# 10: " I would feel relieved, grateful, and motivated. Relieved that I could learn from my mistakes, grateful for the teachers feedback, and motivated to improve and apply the corrections to future work."

T# 11: "Receiving corrected papers from a teacher is always a moment of learning for me, I feel a bit disappointed and sad if I made a mistake especially if I see a lot of corrections but instead of feeling bad, I choose to use the feedback as motivation…"

T# 14: "When receiving corrected papers, I often feel a mix of disappointment and relief recognizing the need of improvement while also feeling motivated to learn from my mistakes."

Learners experience range of emotions, from frustration and disappointment to gratitude and encouragement. This emotional state can significantly impact learners motivation, self-perception, and overall learning experience. Through acknowledging and addressing this learners attitude toward WCF, educators can create a more supportive and effective learning environment.

Direct corrective feedback makes learners feel grateful and disappointed but takes it as an opportunity to learn and improve

T# 1: " I'm extremely grateful to my teacher for providing correction on my paper directly. I see this as an opportunity to learn and improve my skills and accept my teacher's corrections with an open mind."

T# 5: "I usually feel grateful at the same time I am motivated because my teacher clarified my errors or mistakes, so that next time I will double check my paper and avoid errors or mistakes."

T# 6: " If my teacher gave corrections directly on my paper, I'd feel both thankful and a little nervous. I'd be happy because it helps me understand what I need to fix, but I might also feel a bit upset if there were a lot of mistakes. However, it would help me learn and get better at my work next time."

T# :10: " I would appreciate it because it helps me see exactly what I need to improve. It makes learning easier since I don't have to guess where I went wrong."

T# 13: " As a student, I would appreciate the teacher correcting my error directly because it shows me exactly where I went wrong and how to improve."

Indirect written corrective feedback causes learners to feel confused and frustrated

T# 3: " If my teachers only circled or crossed out errors without providing corrections, I would feel frustrated and confused..."

T# 6: " When my teacher just encircles or crosses out my errors without providing any corrections, I might feel confused or frustrated. It's had to know exactly what I did wrong and how to fix it.."

T# 10: " I might feel frustrated since just marking the errors doesn't tell me how to fix them. I'd prefer if my teacher gave some guidance so I could improve my writing."

T# 11: "I would feel confused because I wouldn't know what the correct answer is. I would be more helpful if my teacher explained my mistakes so I could learn from them."

T#14: "I would feel confused and a little frustrated because I wouldn't know how to fix my mistakes. I want to learn and improve, so it would help me more if my teacher explained what was wrong and how to correct it."

Metalinguistic written corrective feedback makes learners feel frustrated and unsure

T# 1: " I feel frustrated because I don't know what specific corrections I need to ask my teacher to clarify their comments and provide specific corrections."

T# 3: " Receiving general comments without specific corrections would leave me with a sense of ambiguity…"

T# 7: " If my teacher only writes general comments without giving specific corrections, it can feel unclear or even frustrating especially if the feedback is vague."

T# 10: " I would feel a bit lost because I wouldn't know exactly what to change. A written comment is helpful, but without specific corrections, it's harder to improve my work properly."

T# 13: " When my teacher writes comments on my paper without giving specific corrections, I feel a bit confused. I appreciate the feedback, but without clear corrections, and I am not sure how to fix my mistakes…"

WCF Improves over-all writing (mechanics, grammar, and vocabulary)

This refers to the process of enhancing written content to make it more effective, clear, and engaging. Learners perceived written corrective feedback as helpful in their writing skill.

T# 1: "Written corrective feedback helps me identify error and enhances my writing skill."

T# 3: "Written corrective feedback helps me become more aware of my errors especially in grammar, sentence structure, and word choice."

T# 9: "The aspects of my writing that has been most affected by written corrective feedback is my grammar and sentence structure."

T# 11: "Among the many aspects of writing, my writing that has been affected most by WCF are grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary use."

T# 13." Written corrective feedback significantly improves my writing skills and performance, It helps me identify my weakness and areas for improvement, such as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and clarity."

T# 15: " Written corrective feedback has had a major impact on my writing, particularly in improving grammar, organization, and clarity. By carefully analyzing and applying them to future works."

Learners perceived written corrective feedback as an effective tool to improve their writing skills and performance. Effective written corrective feedback is essential for learner's growth and development.

CONCLUSIONS

Since learners committed many errors on their mechanics, teachers written corrective feedback plays a vital role in the improvement of the learners writing skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Firstly, teachers should provide written corrective feedback (WCF) all the time whenever they require written activities to their learners since they find it helpful for their writing skills and they should teach seriously on the language essentials as it found out that mechanics, grammar and vocabulary were the common errors found in the written compositions of the learners.

Secondly, teachers should also do a one on one coaching to address individually the lacking and needs of the learners.

Thirdly, heads of the school should also provide enough teaching and learning resources to support an effective learning and teaching strategy. In-service training of teachers may be arranged to train teachers and make them more aware of various methods of WCF and their usefulness to improve their classroom practices.

Moreover, the present study was conducted on learners views about WCF at secondary level particularly senior high school learners, so it is suggested for future researchers to conduct studies at junior high level.

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