IMPLEMENTING WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK: CAN IT AFFECT STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL?

Fatmawati[1*], Hartia Novianti[2], Ike Dian Puspita Sari[3]

[1]Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng
[2] Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan PGRI Jombang
[3]Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Budi Utomo Malang
fatmawati11913@gmail.com[1]
hartiakristiawan@gmail.com[2]
ikedianpuspitasari@gmail.com[3]

*Corresponding author

Abstract: Written Correction feedback (WCF) is a form of assessment empirically proven to improve students' writing quality. This study investigated the effectiveness of this type of assessment on students' paragraph writing. In this study, the researchers implemented Focused Written Corrective Feedback (FWCF) in the experimental group. The aspects of feedback were pre-determined on content and organization aspects of writing. A total of 66 EFL students majoring in ELT were the participants in this study. They were divided into an experimental and control group with 33 students, respectively. The results of statistical analysis indicated that the writing score of the experimental group was significantly higher than the control group. This means that FWCF was effective in improving students' writing quality. This study suggested pedagogical implications for EFL writing teachers to focus the feedback on content and organization of writing. Other aspects, such as grammar and vocabulary, can be learnt independently with the help of technological improvement.

Keywords: Written Corrective Feedback, Focused Written Corrective Feedback, Writing Skill

INTRODUCTION

Written Correction feedback (WCF) is one of the assessment techniques used by teachers to improve students' writing skills and writing accuracy. However, teachers worldwide acknowledge that most CF instruction is time-consuming and stressful. Teachers tend to provide feedback on all grammatical errors in student writing. It can be assumed that this occurs since most teachers employ comprehensive WCF rather than focused WCF. Abalkheel & Brandenburg's (2020) synthesis of quasi-experimental studies from 1986 to 2011 revealed that three out of ten studies applied comprehensive corrective feedback to students writing. In addition, seven studies provided students with direct corrective feedback on their work. It implies that the instructor identifies and corrects student errors. According to another study by Lim & Renandya (2020), 16 out of 35 studies used direct corrective feedback, while 13 used unfocused corrective feedback. These findings indicate that teachers continue to practice the traditional belief that the more corrections a teacher offers, the better and more competent the teacher is (Lee, 2019). This type of behaviour will result in yet another serious issue. Comprehensive WCF consumes instructors' time, saps their energy, and, most importantly, leaves them with little time to focus on other aspects of student writing and other crucial aspects of their role as writing teachers (Lee, 2020).

According to a previous study by Purnomo et al.(2021), 80% of university EFL teachers believed that one of the writing teacher's responsibilities was to identify and correct students' writing errors, and 68.77% of respondents provided corrections or comments near the error. In this line, teachers not only identify errors in students' work but also provide corrections (Lee, 2019). This method of providing feedback is even worse when large classes are involved. Time constraints and difficulties in assessing

many students are among the challenges of teaching large classes (Moghal et al., 2019). To avoid these issues, teachers must be knowledgeable about the theory and best practices for providing CF to students and understand that feedback is a tool that students can use to improve their writing skills and learning autonomy. So students will not be dependent on the teacher. Therefore, teachers are not recommended to provide students with everything.

The quality of corrective feedback provided to students is targeted and serves a particular function. This WCF method will increase students' motivation and confidence to produce high-quality texts, and teachers will devote more time to non-language issues (Lee, 2019). Nonetheless, numerous studies appeared to concentrate solely on grammar rather than writing or grammatical accuracy in student writing (Bitchener & Knoch, 2015; Guo & Barrot, 2019; Jiang & Xiao, 2014; Khanlarzadeh & Nemati, 2016). Abalkheel & Brandenburg (2020) found that seven of the ten experimental studies conducted in writing classes provide corrective feedback on grammatical issues, and five provide focused feedback on referential 'a' and 'the'. Lim & Renandya (2020) conducted an additional meta-analysis of 35 research articles with publication dates ranging from 2001 to 2019. All 35 studies provide feedback on grammar, which has a positive effect on the writing accuracy of students. The studies demonstrate that written corrective feedback can enhance L2 learners' written grammatical accuracy.

Regarding writing skills, teachers must pay more attention to content and organization, among other essential aspects. Unfortunately, these elements are notably absent. In order to fill this need, this study aims to investigate the efficacy of focused written corrective feedback (FWCF) on students' writing skills. Thus, the research question is: Do students who are taught using focused written corrective feedback outperform those who are not?

METHOD

This study was quasi-experimental and employed a post-test design only with a control group. Focused written corrective feedback was deemed an independent variable, whereas students writing performance was the dependent variable. 66 participants majoring in English language teaching at a local university in Indonesia were the participants of this study. They were taking a Paragraph writing course. The homogeneity test was first done to ensure that the students had similar writing abilities. Then, the two intact classes were assigned as experimental and control groups. Both groups consisted of 33 students.

In implementing the FWCF in the experimental group, the Correction Feedback Model of Butler and Winne (1995), as cited in Patra et al. (2022), was employed. The focus of the corrective feedback was the pre-determined aspects of students writing content and organization. In this sense, the teacher ignored students' linguistic issues. If students have problems with grammar, the teacher only gives general comments on it, such as *mind your grammar* or *check your grammar using the Grammarly app* and show them how to do it. The procedures were as follows.

Step 1: At the beginning of each topic or session, the instructor establishes objectives and criteria for students to meet.

Step 2: The teacher identifies the subject areas and techniques for accomplishing the goals.

Step 3: The instructor clarifies the methods (of study) that students must have in order to reach their goals.

Step 4: the instructor clarifies the students' tactics for achieving the goals.

Step 5: The teacher describes the outcomes of students' internal learning (whether they enjoy learning or not?).

Step 6: the instructor determines the observable external implications (behavioral and functional) of learning for students.

Step 8: involves conducting FA and offering students feedback from the teacher. The instructor provides feedback on student progress and performance. These feedbacks are not only valuable but it also prompts students to reassess their learning practices.

In the conventional technique of providing feedback, the teacher gave the lesson materials in a lecture format with questions and answers and conventionally provided feedback.

In analyzing the significant difference between the experimental and control groups' writing scores, a T-Test analysis was conducted using SSPS 24.

RESULT

In analyzing the data, the researchers first analyze the normality of data to ensure that the research data, which was the students' scores was normally distributed (Table 1.)

Table 1. Normality Test

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Control	0,158	33	0,036	0,889	33	0,003
Experimental	0,165	33	0,024	0,909	33	0,009

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The result reveals that the Sig. value of Shapiro-Wilk is 0.009> 0.05. The conclusion that can be drawn from the outcome was that the data had normal distribution.

Table 2. Mean of Experimental and Control Group

Group Statistics					
Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control	1	33	71,36	12,007	2,090
Experimental	2	33	84,24	8,937	1,556

According to the statistical analysis of the groups' scores, the experimental group's mean was significantly higher than the control group's mean. This shows that the written corrective feedback helped the students improve their writing skills. The average score for the experimental group was 84.24, whereas the average score of the control group was 71.36.

Table 3. The result of the T-Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Writing	Equal variances assumed	3,721	0,058	-4,943	64	0,000	-12,879	2,606	-18,084	-7,673
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,943	59,130	0,000	-12,879	2,606	-18,092	-7,665

A T-test is carried out to test the research hypothesis. The value of Sig. (2-tailed) was determined to be 0.000. Taking into

consideration the criteria for rejecting the null hypothesis (Sig. p > 0.05), this indicates that the null hypothesis (Ho), which states that there is no significant difference in the writing scores between students who receive WCF and students who do not receive WCF, is rejected. In addition, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) claims no significant difference in the writing scores between students who receive WCF and students who do not receive WCF is accepted.

DISCUSSION

The study results indicate that the experimental and control groups had significantly different writing scores. It indicated that the application of FWCF improved students' writing skills. This study's findings supported the previous studies into the use of WCF (Abalkheel & Brandenburg, 2020; Elfiyanto & Fukazawa, 2021; Ferris et al., 2013; Guo & Barrot, 2019; Jiang & Xiao, 2014; Kang & Han, 2015; Lee et al., 2021; Li & Vuono, 2019; Nemati et al., 2019; Patra et al., 2022; Tsao, 2021). However, the focus of these works' investigation is different from the present study. Most WCF implementations in the initial study focused on grammatical accuracy in students' writing, but the current study focused on two writing elements, content and organization. Writing feedback must concentrate on these two aspects because we thought that other components, like grammar, vocabulary, and writing mechanisms, can be learned independently by students. The advancement of technology can help students learn and correct their grammatical errors in written work. Students can utilize free web applications such as Grammarly, Google Translation, and Quilbot to address these concerns. These applications have been proven to be effective as students learning tools. Students given access to GT have better syntactic complexity and veracity (Cancino & Panes, 2021). Teachers need to instruct students on how to use the applications

successfully. However, technology cannot replace the elements that necessitate critical thinking.

According to the researchers' ten years of teaching expertise, content and organization were two components of writing that students cannot learn alone. The aspects require guidance from more capable individuals to complete the task successfully. The content and organization parts of writing require systematic ways of thinking to consider what material should be included and how it should be organized. When writing was required, students had so many thoughts to communicate. This resulted in the writing paragraphs that lacked coherence because they frequently struggled to focus the information they needed to convey in a single paragraph, let alone the entire essay. Students tend to insert irrelevant information in their work regularly. The teacher's comments on this aspect were crucial in determining which concepts must be developed and which are not. Occasionally, teacher recommended students to explore additional related ideas to bolster their topic sentences.

In addition to the subject matter, students struggled with the organization of material in their writing. Typically, students have difficulty integrating their ideas into meaningful paragraphs. Occasionally, students structured their ideas without regard to the conventions of each text form. This made the flow of thoughts challenging to comprehend. When concepts are not structured systematically inside a paragraph or the entire document, readers will find it challenging to comprehend. In conclusion, by focusing on these two factors when providing students with feedback, their writing skills improved. Based on the types of paragraphs they generated, they could choose suitable material for their writing and follow the correct order of thoughts.

CONCLUSION

The research findings suggested that Written Corrective Feedback effectively improves students' writing skills. Content- and organization-focused written corrections were beneficial in improving the writing quality of students. Students were able to determine what material to include in their paragraphs. In addition, teacher input on paragraph organization assists students in organizing their ideas into logically developed paragraphs based on the text type conventions.

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