

DIRECT VS INDIRECT CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK FOR WRITING IMPROVEMENT: STUDENTS' PREFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

This research presents the students' preference for feedback in deciding what specific feedback will be valuable and positively affect the students' writing performance. There might be a mismatch between students' preferences and lecturer's practice from a few past studies. A quantitative research design was utilized in this study. It was conducted in Muhammadiyah Malang University with 70 English Language Education Department students as the participants. A data set of 10 questions in the survey for students was adjusted from Aridah et al. (2017). Further, the data were scored using the "Feedback Scale" with a scale ranging from 0 to 1. The finding showed that the feedback preference of the students is direct corrective feedback, in which the mean score was higher (M=6.53) than indirect corrective feedback. The students believed that direct corrective feedback gave more additional clearness. Therefore, this study recommended that the lecturer give feedback based on the students' preference which is direct corrective feedback to improve their writing skills easily and effectively.

Keywords: *Direct Corrective Feedback, Indirect Corrective Feedback, Writing Corrective Feedback (WCF).*

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the important English skills which the learners should learn well. It is also known as a complicated skill since there is a complex process of thinking in the writers' mind about an issue that expresses in the written form. Moreover, the students often face some difficulties in composing writing, such as inappropriate grammatical used as well as diction, ambiguous sentences, free sentences constructions, less of generating ideas, wrong spelling, articles, and even having difficulties with paragraph structure, coherence, and cohesion (Sajid & Siddiqui, 2015; Adas & Bakir, 2013). Therefore, in solving those problems, the teachers should give corrective feedback on their writing to show their writing errors so that their writing would improve well.

Corrective feedback refers to providing corrections of the information relating to linguistics errors (Paris, Ngokum, & Nazaruddin, 2017). It is also one of the teachers' responses regarding the output of students to improve the accuracy of the targeted language (Nassaji & Kartchava, 2017 as cited in Karim & Nassaji, 2019). Moreover, corrective feedback can be done in responding implicitly, for

instance, indirect corrective feedback which gives correction without giving the correct form and direct corrective feedback in which it provides feedback that needs the correct form. Thus, the educators can use those feedbacks to develop their writing performance.

In this study, the researchers focus on written corrective feedback (WCF), in which it is expected to improve the quality of EFL writing where teachers indicate the errors and help correct the errors properly (Budianto et al., 2020). Besides that, written corrective feedback also has a crucial role in helping the students in learning, especially in improving their writing accuracy. It had been proved by Birtchener and Knoch (2010) that the students who received written corrective feedback from the teacher better performed in producing writing than those who did not obtain any feedback, Hence, it is undeniable that written corrective feedback is crucial for the learners in acquiring the target language.

Several studies had been conducted in the same field with this study such as Kharusi & Mecklafi (2017), Aridah, Atmowardoyo & Salija (2017), Irwin (2017), and Cohen & Cavalcanti (2017) who had already brought up that even though the students gave positive responses toward the use of written corrective feedback, they showed a contradiction towards the feedback preferences that can be applied effectively. In other words, there is a dissimilarity regarding what types of feedback the students like to have on their papers (Irwin, 2017; and Aridah et al., 2017). Therefore, because of the contradiction showed by previous scholars, in this study, the researchers had in mind to research with the aim is to explore students' preferences about teachers' feedback used in order to help teachers in deciding what particular feedback will be beneficial or influence the students' performance in writing positively.

Regarding the background of the study, the researchers formulate the research questions, as follows:

1. What are the students' preferences about using direct and indirect written corrective feedback for writing improvement?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Feedback in writing is elaborated as an input that the writer receives from readers in the form of information which helps the writer in revising and improving the written text. According to Arifin, Zaim & Ningsih (2018), the students' feedback from the teacher in the writing learning process is not to take them down because of their errors but it is to encourage them. It is in line with what Miza & Yunus (2020); Paris, Ngonkum & Nazaruddin (2017) revealed that giving correction and feedback to the students has become one of the routines and norms in exploring students' potential in acquiring the language since those indicate their language errors in writing. One of the feedbacks that can be delivered to the students in the writing classroom is corrective feedback.

As stated by Budianto, et al. (2020) corrective feedback is one of the alternative techniques among other feedbacks to make better learning outcome. It is also used to improve the EFL/ESL learners' writing ability as well as quality because corrective feedback is not only informing the students' errors but also requires them to use appropriate language features. Moreover, Arifin, Zaim & Ningsih (2018) asserted that corrective feedback can be conducted in both oral and written form. Hence, the current study focuses on written corrective feedback that be able to develop their writing performance. Written corrective feedback (WCF)

is a kind of providing corrections towards the writing errors made by the students in the form of written. It is one of the issues in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) that needed by the language teaching and learning process as positive reinforcement or correction. It is because EFL learners view that improving writing is one of the most challenging and complicated skills. Moreover, Ferris & Bitchener (2012) pointed out that WCF allows the students in acquiring the target language since the students can improve their skills and easily reach the target language by knowing their errors from feedback. Therefore, both the teacher and the students feel that they need the teacher's written feedback in the writing process (Ataman & Mirici, 2017).

Regarding the importance of applying feedback in the classroom, the teacher can also choose the appropriate written corrective feedback based on the students' needs and the material given. As it is known, written corrective feedback includes several types, as stated by Budianto et al. (2020). WCF can be direct CF, indirect CF, metalinguistic, reformulation, etc. Whereas, Wicaksono (2017) classified the written corrective feedback into direct correction. It provides the feedback explicitly since the teacher shows the error location and provides the correct answer. Next, coded feedback refers to the feedback which only shows the error location and also elicitation without providing the correct answer. Then, encoded feedback deals with feedback that marks error location without any elicitation. In this case, the teacher usually uses highlighting in showing the error. Last, marginal feedback refers to the number of errors written by the teacher on their paper without any clues so it required the learners in reading and analyze their overall writing and revise it by themselves.

With a similar point, Paris, Ngonkum, & Nazzarudin (2017), and Ellis (2009) argued that corrective feedback is divided into some types in which the teacher can choose one or more of them in giving corrections relating to the students' work. First, direct corrective feedback in which the teacher gives feedback explicitly with the correct form for the students. For example: when the student writes, "*I is happy*", the teacher will give correction by showing and replacing it with the correct form like "*I ~~is~~ am happy*". Next, indirect corrective feedback which deals with the teacher gives the feedback implicitly for the students. It means that the teacher only shows the error without providing the correct form. For example: when the student writes, "*I is happy*", the teacher just crosses or circles the error form without giving the correct answer. Then, metalinguistic corrective feedback refers to some clue or the explicit comment of the errors given by the teacher. When the students write, "*She is laughing because you*", the teacher will give correction, "*She is laughing because (prep."because of") you*, for instance. It can be seen that the teacher shows the missing part by writing the part of speech which is 'prep' which means preposition before the word 'because'.

They additionally declared with regards to focused and unfocused corrective feedback where the educator attempts to address all (or the majority) of the understudies' blunders or chooses a couple of explicit sorts of mistakes to correct. Fifth, electronic feedback alludes to the educator showing an error and gives a hyperlink to a concordance record that gives instances of right utilization. Last, reformulation manages the technique of adjusting a mistake when a local speaker recreates a subsequent language writer's text to make it sounds local like just as keep up with the author's thought as could be expected. For example: when the

student writes: “*It is a highly recommend movie to watching.*”, then, the teacher gives the correction like “*It is a highly recommended movie to watch.*”

It is clear to clarify that there are 7 types of WCF. Nonetheless, with the end goal of this review, the kinds of feedback are restricted to just two sorts that are direct feedback and indirect feedback whose viability is as yet bantered by numerous researchers to be applied in the writing classroom. As it is pointed out by Karim & Nassaji (2019) direct feedback deals with the feedback that provided the correct form, while indirect feedback refers to indicating the error without correcting. It is in line with Kharusi & Mekhlafi (2019) who stated that direct WCF is corrective feedback in which the error and provide the correct form directly from the teachers to the learners, whereas indirect WCF is corrective feedback in which the teacher asked the students to do self-correction to fix their own errors learners. Direct WCF comes from various methods, including crossing out of a superfluous word/state/morpheme, the inclusion of a missing word/express/morpheme, and giving the right structure straightforwardly close to the blunder structure. In the interim, indirect WCF utilized sort of procedure that can be executed is underlining or circumnavigating the mistakes in the edge of the line (Bitchener and Knoch, 2010). These two kinds of input are differentiating because occasionally, how understudies' feedback preference does not match what instructors practice in giving feedback. It has been demonstrated by many examinations showing various discoveries.

Furthermore, Ferris (2013) expressed that indirect feedback is more advantageous because it can push understudies to participate in speculation testing to address their blunders. Consequently, the understudies will have further inward handling which assists them with disguising the right response. Moreover, Ferris (2013) additionally brought up that indirect feedback can assist the understudies for long-term learning improvement as indirect feedback permits the understudies to tackle the issue without anyone else and it upgrades the understudy's consideration regarding the structure. Meanwhile, according to Ellis (2009), direct feedback gives benefits for the understudies in light of the fact that direct feedback gives express direction to tackle or address the blunders to give the students. The instructor will show the blunders to direct the understudies in addressing the mistakes, then, at that point, the understudies will know their blunders without any problem. Likewise, Chandler (2003) added that direct feedback is the effective feedback for improving the understudies' writing accuracy. It is because the instructors give them the right structure to the understudies so they can know their mistake and how to change it without pondering the right one without anyone else.

Meanwhile, the two feedbacks likewise have a few disservices to the understudies as expressed by Ellis (2009) that direct feedback requires negligible handling for students. It likewise centers around the instructor focused on talking about the blunders (Lee, 2008). Consequently, the understudies can't be free students in obtaining the objective language. In the interim, Alimohammadi and Nejadansari (2014) expressed that indirect feedback has no unequivocal elaborations. It additionally drives the understudies' admission about the educators' code in amending the errors (Ferris, 2003).

Those advantages and disadvantages make the mismatch between students' preferences and teachers' practice in applying feedback, especially in the writing classroom. Some studies, for instance, Leki (1991) showed that the students prefer to

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have indirect feedback than direct feedback since they can get the correction to all of their errors, including acquiring comments on ideas and content as well as on their grammar and surface structure from the teachers. It is supported by Kharusi & Mecklafi (2017) who revealed that the teachers' feedback that was used in correcting the students' work was indirect feedback and also unfocused feedback in which those were liked by the students since the students can know what they have to correct based on the feedback. This type of feedback also brings advantages to the teachers because they can correct all of the students' work at the same time in the classroom so they will not waste their time only correcting.

In contrast, Aridah et al. (2017) found that the students prefer to have direct feedback but the teachers always used indirect feedback since the type of feedback was unclear and the teacher focused on using symbols in correcting their work in the classroom that made the students still do not understand with the feedback. It is in line with what Chandler (2003) stated that direct feedback was commonly preferred by the students since they find it helpful for them to improve their writing drafts by having clear and easy corrections from the teachers. However, this type of feedback can create teachers' frustration because they need much time to correct every single word of students' writing.

Regarding the review of previous studies, it is clear to clarify that the researchers still found the divergence between the students' preferences and teachers' practices in using writing corrective feedback. The teachers might fail to give feedback that is following what the students want or expect so it causes the students to feel unsatisfied with the writing performance. However, the teachers' feedback either direct or indirect feedback is believed to provide improvement to the students' writing skills.

METHOD

This research used a quantitative method to know the students' preference about the use of written corrective feedback. In this study, the responses from the students were scored. Further, the score was calculated to determine the student's expectations about the written corrective feedback (WCF). Moreover, this study was conducted in Muhammadiyah Malang University with 70 students of the English Language Education Department as the participants. The cluster sampling was used for the students' participants since there were groups in English Language Education Department students which grouped in different classes. The research subjects in this research were the students who were from the academic year from 2015 to 2017. In the academic year 2017 as well as the academic year 2015, those had 5 classes which were A, B, C, D, and E. Meanwhile, the academic year 2016 only had 4 classes which were A, B, C, and D. Each class had approximately 40 students. Therefore, the population was approximately 560. However, the students who were in the academic year 2018 were excluded because they did not have a writing subject yet and they did not know about the WCF.

Furthermore, in collecting the data, the questionnaire from Aridah, et al (2017) about the "Feedback Scale" was used as the instrument. It consisted of ten questions which provided two options (A and B) for each question. Each option

was coded in the beginning to know the types of WCF which were direct corrective feedback for option A and indirect corrective feedback for option B. Furthermore, the scale ranged from 0 to 1. Point 1 for the type that they most preferred, and point 0 for the type that they never preferred. The highest score was 10 which meant that it was a perfect type of WCF to be used for the students and the lowest score was 0 which meant that it was a type of WCF which less perfect type to be used for the students. Then, to analyze the obtained data, the ranked item that has done by the students was summed of direct and indirect corrective feedback from the questionnaire. After getting the score of direct and indirect, it was analyzed by using the Normality Test and Independent T-Test in SPSS to test whether there was a significant difference between direct and indirect corrective feedback.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The findings of the present study included the results of independent sample T-test analyses to figure out the students' preference for written corrective feedback. Notwithstanding, before addressing the examination questions, the researchers determined measurably the survey results from understudies. For this situation, the normality test of data acquired was introduced by the researchers to know whether or not the data is distributed typically. It can be seen from Table 1 below.

Table 1. Normality Test
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		direct corrective feedback (students)	indirect corrective feedback (students)
N		70	70
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	6.53	3.47
	Std. Deviation	2.041	2.041
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute Positive	.144	.144
	Absolute Negative	.144	.136
	Positive	-.136	-.144
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.209	1.209
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.108	.108

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

A normality test was conducted to ensure whether the data drawn from all groups were normally distributed. Furthermore, it was needed before doing the parametric test, since it could give the influence to conclude whether the conclusion

was wrong from real life or not. The normality was checked by using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. Based on Table 1 above, it can be seen that the significance value (p-value) was more than 0.05 which was 0.710 and 0.108. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data were normally distributed.

Furthermore, after knowing that the data were distributed normally, the researchers presented the information which can answer the research questions about the students' preference of written corrective feedback that is used in the writing classroom. It can be seen from Table 2, as follows:

Table 2. Independent Sample T-test results

Variable	Variable	N	Mean	t_{score}	Db	Sig.	Result
Students	Direct	70	6.53	6.266	69	0.000	Significant different
	Indirect	70	3.47				

Information: $t_{table (5\%; 8)} = 2.306$; $t_{table (5\%; 69)} = 1.995$

From the table above, it can be seen that the result showed that the mean score of direct corrective feedback was higher than indirect corrective feedback. Besides, the result between direct corrective feedback and indirect corrective feedback showed that t_{score} was 6.266 with the sig score of 0.000. Furthermore, $t_{score} > t_{table (1.995)}$ or the sig value was less than 0.05, so it can be concluded that the difference between direct and indirect corrective feedback was significant. In other words, the students prefer to get direct corrective feedback rather than indirect corrective feedback because they believe that direct corrective feedback can help them to correct their mistakes easily.

Discussion

The purpose of the current study is to boost some past similar research by carrying out a study on the difference between learners' preferences at Muhammadiyah Malang University about writing corrective feedback (WCF). This study gives a few questions connected with understudies' preferences of written corrective feedback (WCF), to be specific direct corrective feedback and indirect corrective feedback. These kinds of feedback are usually involved by the lecturers for further developing the understudies writing execution. Therefore, this study is surely expected to give knowledge about the kinds of corrective feedback that students prefer to produce better writing.

To investigate the students' preferences for selecting the most preferred technique of written corrective feedback, the mean score for each type was determined. The findings of the research showed that a large number of the students value the corrective feedback on direct corrective feedback ($M=6.53$) as the most preferred type, followed by indirect corrective feedback ($M=3.47$). Furthermore, $t_{score} > t_{table (1.995)}$ or the sig value was less than 0.05, so it can be clarified that the difference between direct and indirect corrective feedback was significant.

Besides, it showed that direct corrective feedback score was higher than indirect corrective feedback. It means that this result answered the research question that direct corrective feedback was the most students preferred in learning writing skills.

This current result was in line with Chandler (2003) who states that direct feedback is preferred by students as it is the fastest and easiest way to help them correct their writing drafts. Not only that, but direct corrective feedback was also the most effective technique for promoting the improvement of students' writing accuracy (Bitchener & Knoch (2010); Sarvestani (2015); Van Beuningen, et al (2008)). The finding of this concentrate likewise matched with the study by Aridah et. al (2017) who brought up that the learners' preferences on direct feedback got higher in writing score than indirect feedback. It happened since the students received muddled corrections when they used indirect corrective feedback. Subsequently, the students have more preferences in receiving direct corrective feedback than indirect corrective feedback. Furthermore, Tursina and Chuang (2016); Tursina et. al (2019) also confirmed in their review that there is a different performance between the low proficiency students who received direct corrective feedback and the low proficiency learners who received indirect corrective feedback. Whereas, no matter whether direct or indirect corrective feedback was received by the high proficiency students, they performed equally well. Moreover, no matter low or high proficient writers, they had a positive attitude toward the teacher's feedback and most of them preferred to receive direct corrective feedback to further develop their composing execution both in content and structure.

On the other hand, the study investigated by Choi, Kang, Kim, and Yun (2020) stated that although direct SWCF was more useful in helping students produce accurate writing, both feedback types were compelling in advancing the learning of new etymological elements through cooperative composition. As far as understudies' insights, there appeared to be no contrast between the two feedback conditions. It implies that those kinds of feedback can further develop their writing ability. Furthermore, the current finding also contradicted Kharusi & Mecklafi's (2017) study where the students prefer to have unfocused since they can know what they have to correct based on the feedback. This sort of feedback additionally gives benefits to the educators since they can address all of the understudies' work simultaneously in the classroom so they will not burn through their time just adjusting. It was additionally not the same as Jahbel et. al (2020) discoveries that there were no measurably huge contrasts among males and females connected with their decisions of corrective feedback types. In addition, the results demonstrated that form feedback is the most preferred type among students, followed by unfocused feedback, while content feedback is considered the least preferable type.

Besides, the previous study which had been investigated by Westmacott (2017) also stated that most EFL learners prefer indirect corrective feedback to direct corrective feedback. It is because they believe that indirect corrective feedback can help them in understanding the material. Furthermore, they believe

that indirect corrective feedback can support them in having deeper cognitive processing and learning. Moreover, the study also provides evidence that indirect corrective feedback can help the students in strengthening their grammatical knowledge and it can help the students to have autonomous learning behavior. In addition, Rahmawati (2017) also stated that the statistical analysis test from her investigation mentioned that indirect corrective feedback was more effective rather than direct corrective feedback in improving students writing skills. It is similar to the other previous study that also stated that indirect corrective feedback can receive the students autonomous learning (Shirotha, 2016). Hence, it can be said that some previous studies were not in line with this study which showed that students believe that direct corrective feedback was useful for them in learning and understanding the material in a writing context. Then, these feedback preferences suggest that the students pay more attention and appreciate teachers' feedback as a way of improving their writing accuracy.

To sum up, no matter whether students were in the direct corrective feedback or indirect corrective feedback, whether they are male or Ssfemale, low or high proficiency as stated in the previous and current research, the students all appreciated the lecturers' feedback. Besides, although some previous studies stated that indirect corrective feedback is useful for students in learning, this study showed that most of the students prefer direct feedback to indirect feedback. They believed and agreed that direct corrective feedback gives clear correctness which can help them to produce a better piece of writing since the students can know their mistakes easily by knowing the correct answer from the lecturer. Furthermore, turning to the finding of the students' questionnaire, there were many indications that feedback, as expected, was highly appreciated by students because they believe that receiving lecturers' feedback improved their writing performance. Even though the lecturers use both corrective feedback or even use other kinds of corrective feedback, the result of the study was showed that they like receiving direct feedback since it is clearer and helps the students to find their mistakes and revise them easily. Thus, the lecturers should also give what the students need which is direct corrective feedback or the lecturers can combine those kinds of feedback in the writing classroom so that the feedback that was got by the students is not monotonous.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Direct and indirect feedback are two sorts of written corrective feedback that were ordinarily utilized in the writing classroom. In light of the consequences of the review, the researchers observed that the average score of direct corrective feedback was higher than indirect corrective feedback. It implies that the understudies like to have direct corrective feedback than indirect corrective feedback. In other words, the students expected that the teachers could provide direct corrective feedback to correct their mistakes in writing because it is the simplest way for the students to correct their mistakes in writing the draft.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are suggested to be a reference for the lecturers in giving feedback, especially in writing skills. In this case, the lecturers can consider the students' needs based on the findings, since the students prefer to have direct corrective feedback to make them easily in learning and correct their errors in writing. This study also can be a reference for the students to know the types of written corrective feedback, such as direct and indirect corrective feedback that can be used by the lecturers so that the students can know what kind of feedback is given by their lecturers and also it can enrich their knowledge about the kinds of written corrective feedback. Lastly, it is suggested for further researchers to do a deep investigation about direct corrective feedback and indirect corrective feedback or another written corrective feedback that is related to writing skills. So that, it can give more contribution knowledge in education especially in giving feedback in the writing classroom.

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