

Turkish EFL Learners' Perceptions and Preferences of Written Corrective Feedback

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Abstract: Written corrective feedback (WCF) has gained significant attention from both scholars and teachers in English language teaching (ELT). Although a large bulk of research on WCF has focused on the link between different feedback types and language development, more research is needed to understand how language learners perceive written corrective feedback and what practices they favor when it comes to receiving it. Therefore, this quantitative study aims to investigate Turkish EFL learners' perceptions and preferences of written corrective feedback in terms of the feedback strategies employed in their classrooms as well as their revision practices upon getting feedback. 90 Turkish Intermediate EFL undergraduates from a public university in Türkiye completed a 21-item Likert-scale questionnaire online. Using descriptive statistics, the questionnaire data were analyzed. The findings showed that the learners' perceptions and their teachers' feedback practices mostly aligned, and most learners preferred to receive comprehensive and indirect feedback that focuses on grammatical, mechanical, and lexical errors rather than organization and content. These findings highlighted the importance of learner expectations in relation to the perceived efficacy of feedback practices.

Keywords: *L2 writing, written corrective feedback, error correction, learner perceptions, learner preferences*

INTRODUCTION

For students of higher education, writing ability is one of the most essential skills as they are often required to search for and present information. This ability is also crucial because it enables college students to improve their self-expression and academic achievement (Graham, 2006; Liao & Wong, 2010). However, most learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) struggle with writing in a second language (L2) because it requires a process of transferring ideas into the written mode in a completely different language and ensuring that readers can make sense without any misinterpretation. That is why the writing process should be facilitated to help EFL learners to master this challenging skill. One way to achieve this is to provide learners with written corrective feedback (WCF) so that they can easily revise and edit their pieces of writing.

In the L2 writing literature, extensive research has been done on the efficacy of WCF, also called error correction, in increasing L2 learners' grammatical accuracy (Ashwell, 2000; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Chandler, 2003; Ellis et al., 2008; Van Beuningen et al., 2012). However, the majority of L2 researchers who investigated the effectiveness of feedback versus no feedback reached mixed results. For example, Truscott (1996, 1999) claimed that WCF is useless in L2 writing practices and so

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should be neglected, while other scholars, who challenged this idea, suggested that correcting errors is helpful (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 1997; Lyster et al., 1999). Following this debate, a considerable bulk of research has been carried out to understand whether and to what degree WCF fosters L2 writing, and many earliest studies reported positive effects of WCF on L2 writing accuracy (Ashwell, 2000; Chandler, 2003; Ferris & Roberts, 2001). However, these studies were later criticized for their limitations such as lacking a control group and focusing only on immediate revision but not delayed accuracy.

To overcome prior design flaws, more recent WCF studies have investigated both the efficacy of getting feedback and the effect of receiving different kinds of feedback by involving a control group and/or measuring the accuracy of revised papers as well as new pieces of writing. These studies have often focused on what types of WCF are more effective than others (Ekanayaka & Ellis, 2020; Ellis et al., 2008; Karim & Nassaji, 2020; Kim & Bowles, 2020; Sinha & Nassaji, 2021; Zhang & Cheng, 2021). The two most common feedback types mostly explored were direct feedback (i.e., supplying the target form for an error) and indirect feedback (i.e., pointing out the error but not offering the correct form).

Although there seems to be a consensus on the benefits of WCF, the comparison of direct vs. indirect feedback still leads to inconsistent findings. Some studies, for instance, have concluded that direct feedback is more productive as it offers sufficient information to figure out grammatical errors, especially complicated ones, and helps L2 learners deal with any confusion in processing the feedback (Benson & DeKeyser, 2019; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Ellis et al., 2008; Kim & Bowles, 2020; Lim & Renandya, 2020; Sheen, 2007; Shintani & Ellis, 2013; Van Beuningen et al., 2012). However, other studies have pointed out to an advantage for indirect feedback as it involves students in discovery learning and thus promotes learner autonomy (Ferris 2003, 2006; Sheppard, 1992).

However, most studies that have found an effect for WCF (direct or indirect) have only tackled a limited number of linguistic errors (i.e., focused/selective feedback) rather than providing feedback on a wide range of errors (i.e., unfocused/comprehensive feedback). Although focused feedback has yielded better accuracy gains in many studies (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Sheen, 2007; Shintani et al., 2014; Suzuki et al., 2019), such a practice has been found to have little pedagogical value in the classroom context since L2 writing teachers do not generally correct only one type of error. Because students often produce various errors in their writing, teachers are more inclined to use an approach that thoroughly responds to this problem. That is why providing comprehensive WCF might be a better practice because it reflects the nature of most L2 writing classrooms. Still, it is not possible to make a valid conclusion about the positive effect of comprehensive WCF as the number of studies comparing it to focused feedback is relatively scarce (Frear & Chiu, 2015; Sheen et al., 2009; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2010; Truscott & Hsu, 2008; Van Beuningen et al., 2008, 2012).

Despite a large bulk of research on different variables affecting the efficacy of WCF (e.g., the scope of feedback, its explicitness, its short-term/long-term effects), one factor still seems to be underexplored: EFL learners' perceptions and preferences of WCF. As Lee (2008) suggested, "feedback is a social act" (p. 146). It is a reciprocal activity in which feedback is not only about the product but also about the interaction between the teacher and the student. Ferris (2011) also stressed that learner preferences should not be underestimated as the goal of giving feedback is to encourage learners to benefit from it. Otherwise, feedback might be perceived useless and thus ignored (Armhein & Nassaji, 2010). However, only a handful of studies have looked at L2 learners' perceptions and/or preferences of the WCF they receive from their teachers (Kim et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021; Saragih et al., 2021; Sinha & Nassaji, 2022). To fill this gap, the present study aims to explore Turkish EFL learners' perceptions and preferences of their teachers' written feedback practices in a public university in Türkiye. The findings will help EFL teachers to gain a deeper understanding of their feedback practices and to accommodate them to meet the unique needs of their classrooms.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Written Corrective Feedback

Written corrective feedback refers to the corrections L2 teachers provide for their learners' linguistic errors in writing. It is a crucial aspect of L2 writing (Ferris, 2014). Although some scholars (e.g., Hedgcock, 2005; Liu & Brown, 2015) were in doubt about whether learners notice and attend to the feedback if they just read through their corrected papers without any revision, WCF is still a commonly used approach to increase L2 writing accuracy (Han & Hyland, 2019; Lee, 2020).

Although there was an ongoing discussion in the 1990s and early 2000s about the impact of WCF, which was initiated by Truscott's (1996, 1999) claim that WCF is not only unproductive but also detrimental to L2 writing, there is now a consensus that WCF is beneficial (Bitchener, 2008; Chandler, 2003; Ellis et al., 2008; Ferris, 2006; Sheen, 2007). However, due to this initial debate, a considerable amount of preliminary research merely explored the part WCF plays in increasing L2 accuracy. Many of the earliest studies mostly compared the effects of feedback vs. no feedback and concluded that WCF significantly improved L2 grammatical accuracy regarding errors in first drafts (e.g., Ashwell, 2000; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Kepner, 1991; Polio et al., 1998; Semke, 1984). However, these studies were criticized because revising a first draft does not guarantee the correct usage of target forms in a new written text (Truscott, 1999). Therefore, more recent studies have started to investigate the efficacy of WCF not only on revised drafts but also on new texts and reported that WCF can be productive depending on the feedback type (Ekanayaka & Ellis, 2020; Karim & Nassaji, 2020; Kim & Bowles, 2019; Kim et al., 2020; Sinha & Nassaji, 2022; Suzuki et al., 2019; Van Beuningen et al., 2012).

Effects of Direct and Indirect WCF

Since the value of feedback provision was acknowledged, studies have begun to look at different types of WCF. This line of research has addressed whether some types of WCF have greater benefits for L2 learners than others. Depending on the feedback explicitness, two commonly investigated types of feedback are direct WCF and indirect WCF.

Direct feedback enables learners to explicitly see their error corrections as the teacher points out the error and then supplies the correct form (by presenting it directly after crossing out the wrong form, deleting the redundant form, or adding a missing form). It is advantageous as there is no need for learner training, and it does not lead to any confusion, which might facilitate the internalization of the correct forms (Chandler, 2003). However, it might trigger only shallow processing (i.e., just transferring the corrections to another draft) and learners may not grasp the rules in the end. On the other hand, indirect feedback involves highlighting the error (e.g., underlining, using correction codes/symbols, or giving a metalinguistic clue/explanation) and leaving it to the learner to think about how to fix it. Therefore, it requires deeper processing, which might contribute to long-term development (Ferris & Roberts, 2001), but learners may not possess the grammatical competence necessary for making the corrections on their own.

The research findings that have compared direct WCF to indirect WCF are mixed. Some studies have found greater effects in favor of direct feedback (Benson & DeKeyser, 2018; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007; Shintani et al., 2014; Suzuki et al., 2019). For instance, Bitchener and Knoch (2010) examined three kinds of WCF: direct metalinguistic explanation, circled errors (indirect), and direct metalinguistic feedback with oral form-focused instruction. The results suggested that direct WCF was more effective than indirect feedback. Shintani et al. (2014) also looked at the effects of direct WCF and indirect metalinguistic explanation on the use of two linguistic forms: indefinite article and the hypothetical conditional. It was revealed that direct feedback accompanied by revision was most productive. In a more recent study, Suzuki et al. (2019) investigated four kinds of WCF: direct metalinguistic explanation, direct WCF only, indirect



metalinguistic explanation, and indirect WCF only. The findings indicated that both kinds of direct WCF resulted in greater short-term effects than indirect WCF.

Other studies have reported an advantage for indirect feedback (Lalande, 1982; Shintani & Ellis, 2013). For example, Shintani and Ellis (2013) compared direct feedback to indirect metalinguistic explanation (ME). In their study, ME was provided via a handout about how to use definite and indefinite articles in English. The comparison of the two feedback types showed that the ME group improved from their initial to revised drafts but not to their new writings, while the direct WCF group did not progress over time. Their findings suggested that indirect feedback enhanced the learning of the article rules.

Although studies comparing direct vs. indirect feedback have yielded contradicting results, a meta-analysis performed by Kang and Han (2015) concluded that direct WCF ($g = 0.60$) has a larger effect size than indirect WCF ($g = 0.33$) with respect to increasing L2 accuracy writing.

Effects of Comprehensive and Focused WCF

Although many studies have focused on the effects of the feedback that only corrects specific errors (i.e., focused/selective), very few ones have targeted a wide variety of linguistic forms (i.e., comprehensive/unfocused). Focused feedback has been assumably more productive because it draws learner attention specifically to a pre-selected item (Nassaji, 2015). However, its pedagogical value has been open to discussion as teachers are often expected to give feedback extensively on almost all kinds of errors in real classrooms (Karim & Nassaji, 2020).

As comprehensive WCF might better portray the reality of L2 classrooms, many studies have tried to compare its impact to that of focused WCF (Frear & Chiu, 2015; Hartshorn et al., 2010; Liu, 2008; Sheen et al., 2009; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2010; Truscott & Hsu, 2008; Van Beuningen et al., 2012). However, their findings are contradictory. For example, Sheen et al. (2009) examined the effects of comprehensive vs. focused feedback on the learning of some linguistic structures. Target forms consisted of definite and indefinite articles for the focused WCF group, and copula 'be', regular and irregular past tense, and prepositions for the comprehensive WCF group. The results showed no difference between the two conditions. Similarly, Frear and Chiu (2015) compared the effect of WCF provided on the use of 'weak verbs' to that of WCF provided on all error types. It was found that both focused and comprehensive feedback resulted in accuracy gains.

The number of studies on the differential effects of comprehensive and focused feedback is still rather limited to make a valid assumption since various factors might lead to the inconsistent findings. Kang and Han (2015) have put forward such factors as the setting, linguistic competence, the type of the target form, and the operational definition of feedback to further explain the complexity of WCF and why these studies have yielded mixed results.

Learner Perceptions and Preferences of WCF

Although research on the focus and explicitness of WCF is abundant, a few studies have looked at EFL learners' perceptions and preferences of WCF at the tertiary level (Chen et al., 2016; Nguyen et al., 2021; Saragih et al., 2021; Trabelsi, 2019; Uzun & Köksal, 2020). For example, in a study with EFL undergraduates from Oman, Trabelsi (2019) found that WCF was preferred to be comprehensive, indirect, and teacher-initiated. In another study, Saragih et al. (2021) investigated Indonesian EFL college students' perceptions and preferences of the WCF strategies employed in their writing classrooms and found that most of the learners preferred to receive direct WCF because they felt encouraged to see what they did wrong. Metalinguistic, reformulation, and indirect strategies were favored too. The learners also wanted to receive WCF that focuses on specific but major errors (i.e., focused feedback). The correction of all errors was found to be messy and discouraging. On the other hand, Nguyen et al. (2021) found that Vietnamese EFL college students preferred to receive



comprehensive and indirect feedback that focuses on higher order skills such as organization and content.

Within the Turkish undergraduate context, a few studies have also been conducted to find out EFL tertiary-level students' perceptions and preferences of WCF (Atmaca, 2016; Üstünbaş & Çimen, 2016). For instance, Atmaca (2016) conducted a study with 34 EFL teachers and 34 EFL students to find out the similarities and differences between their perceptions about WCF. She concluded that while some students expected all their errors to be marked and corrected, others expressed a need for more autonomous learning with teacher guidance. With low level preparatory school students, Üstünbaş and Çimen (2016) also investigated EFL learners' preferences for the most effective feedback type and found out that the majority of the learners preferred to receive WCF with teacher comments for all errors, especially in grammar and vocabulary. All these results suggest that cultural and contextual factors might affect EFL learners' perceptions and preferences of WCF.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study adopted a quantitative survey design. The reason for choosing this design was that it “provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (Creswell, 2014, p. 203). It helps researchers to gain a greater understanding about the perspectives related to a particular topic of interest. As this study also intended to explore Turkish EFL learners' perceptions and preferences of their teachers' written feedback practices, the survey design suited for this aim. As a result, the following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are Turkish EFL learners' perceptions of the scope of WCF they receive and their preferences about the scope of WCF?
2. What are Turkish EFL learners' perceptions of the focus and explicitness of WCF they receive and their preferences about the focus and explicitness of WCF?
3. What revision practices do they employ upon receiving WCF?

Participants and Setting

Participants consisted of 90 (41 male and 49 female) Turkish undergraduate EFL learners enrolled in an English program at a preparatory school of a public university in Türkiye. They were young adults ranging from 18 to 22 in age. Only one participant was 27 years old. At the time of the study, they had been attending general English classes for about three months for either mandatory or voluntary purposes. Their level of language proficiency was Intermediate based on the placement test initially administered at the beginning of the academic year and the subsequent institutional examinations. In the following year, the participants were going to be Engineering, Business Administration, International Relations, Translation and Interpreting Studies, or Architecture students. Convenience sampling was used for participant selection. As the researcher was not teaching any EFL writing lessons at the time of the study, she asked her colleagues at the same institution to invite their students to participate in the study. Prior to data collection, consent was taken from the participants, and ethical approval was granted by the Research Ethics Committee of the university.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected in three months via an online questionnaire with four parts that was adapted from Leki (1991), Lee (2004), and Diab (2005). The items which were appropriate for the context of the study and likely to be an effective tool to gather the data were selected from these previous studies. The first part asked the participants to indicate their sex, age, language proficiency, and major. The second part consisted of eleven 5-point Likert-scale items that ranged from (1) never to



(5) always and addressed the participants' perceptions of the scope, focus, and explicitness of the feedback they receive from their teachers. The third part involved eight 5-point Likert-scale items that ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree and explored the participants' preferences for the scope and focus of feedback. With two multiple-choice items, the last part asked the participants to indicate their preferences for the explicitness of feedback and their revision practices (i.e., what they do when they do not know how to correct an error). Considering that the participants might not be proficient enough to answer the questionnaire items in English, the items were presented only in Turkish.

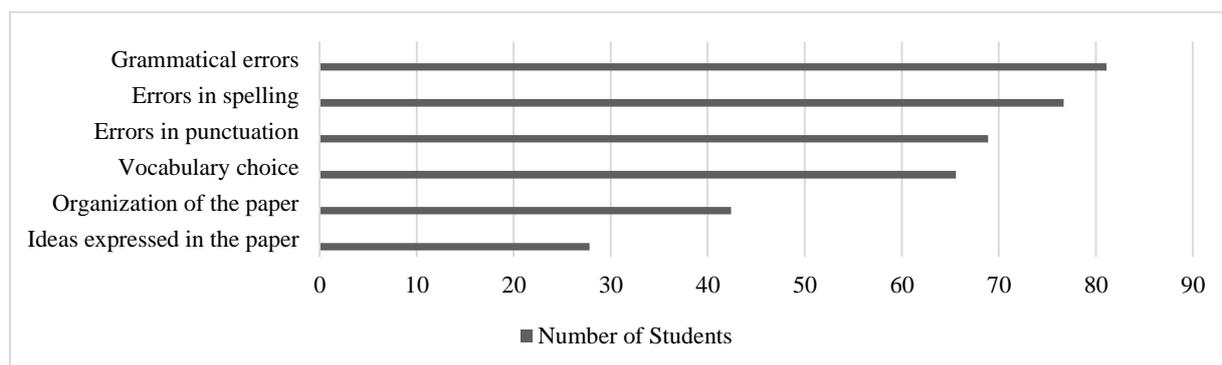
Data analysis was performed through the quantitative analysis of the items in the questionnaire. Google Forms was used to send the link to the questionnaire. It automatically collected, calculated, and provided frequencies and percentages as well as visual representations (bars and graphs) for the data.

FINDINGS

Turkish EFL Learners' Perceptions and Preferences of the Scope of WCF

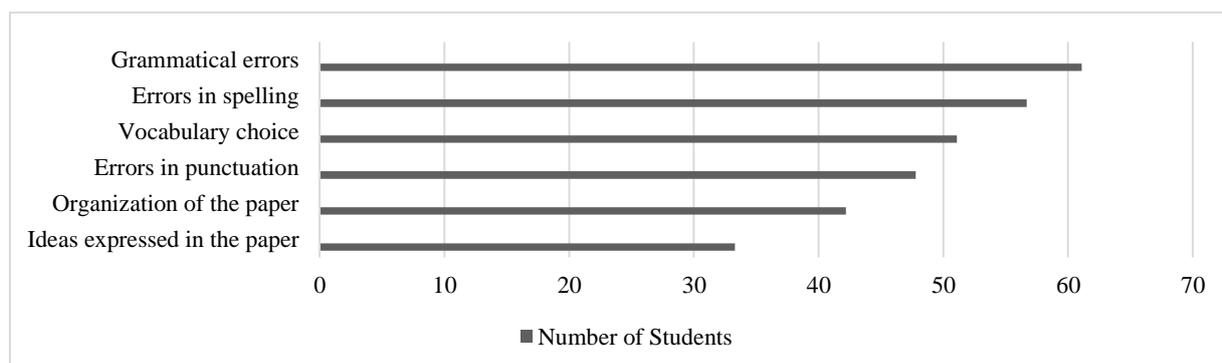
The first research question of this study investigated Turkish EFL learners' perceptions and preferences of the scope of the WCF they receive from their teachers. Based on the questionnaire data, the following figure summarizes the responses of the learners' perceptions of the scope of the WCF their teachers provide for them.

Figure 1. Learners' perceptions of the scope of WCF



As shown in Figure 1, the WCF the learners received from their teachers focused more on grammatical (81,1%), mechanical (76,7% for spelling and 68,9% for punctuation), and lexical (65,6% for vocabulary choice) errors than the errors in the organization of the paper (42,2%) and the ideas expressed in the writing piece (27,8%).

Figure 2. Learners' preferences of the scope of WCF



Based on the questionnaire data, Figure 2 above shows the Turkish EFL learners' preferences of the scope of the WCF they receive from their teachers. Most of the learners preferred to get feedback on their errors in grammar (61,1%), spelling (56,7%), and vocabulary choice (51,1%). In addition, they reported that they wanted to receive feedback on their errors in punctuation (47,8%), organization (42,2%), and the ideas they expressed in their writing (33,3%). It should be noted here that some learners were unsure about whether they would want to obtain feedback on their organizational (17,8%) and content-wise (26,7%) errors.

Overall, the findings revealed that the learners' perceptions of the scope of the WCF they receive from their teachers mostly aligned with their preferences for the scope of WCF. Both learners and their teachers gave more importance to the correction of linguistic, mechanical, and lexical errors than the errors regarding organization and content.

Turkish EFL Learners' Perceptions and Preferences of the Focus and Explicitness of WCF

The second research question of this study investigated Turkish EFL learners' perceptions and preferences of the focus and explicitness of the WCF they receive from their teachers. Based on the questionnaire data, it was found that 81,1% of the learners reported that their teachers always or usually mark all their errors (major and minor) in their first drafts. When asked whether their teachers mark some major errors but not the minor ones in their papers, 83,4% of the learners disagreed, indicating that their teachers always or usually mark not only the major errors but also the minor ones. These findings showed that most of the learners always or usually received comprehensive (unfocused) WCF targeted at various errors they make in their written texts.

When asked about their preferences of the focus of the WCF they receive from their teachers, 88,9% of the learners reported that they always or usually want to receive feedback on all their errors (major and minor). Similarly, 78,8% of the learners disagreed that their teachers should always or usually mark their major errors but not the minor ones. These findings showed that most of the learners favored comprehensive WCF, which focuses on a wide range of errors, over focused WCF, which corrects only specific errors.

In terms of the explicitness of the WCF they receive from their teachers, the findings showed that 28,9% of the learners stated that their teachers always correct all their errors for them, while 54,4% of them reported that their teachers always point out their errors and give a clue about how to correct them, such as using correction symbols. However, 16,7% of the learners stated that their teachers only point out the errors without providing any clues about how to correct them and leave the corrections to the students.

When asked about their preferences of the explicitness of the WCF they receive from their teachers, 27,8% of the learners preferred all their errors to be corrected by their teachers, whereas 63,3% of them wanted their teachers to point out their errors and give them clues about how to correct the errors. Interestingly, 8,9% of them preferred to see their errors highlighted but wanted to receive no clues about how to correct them.

Overall, the findings revealed that the learners' perceptions of the focus and explicitness of the WCF they receive from their teachers were mostly in line with their preferences for the focus and explicitness of WCF. Both learners and their teachers favored comprehensive and indirect feedback.

Turkish EFL Learners' Revision Practices upon Receiving WCF

The third research question of this study investigated what revision practices Turkish EFL learners employ upon receiving WCF from their EFL instructors. The findings showed that 41,1% of the learners usually go to their teachers to ask for help if they do not know how to correct an error, while 27,8% of them use the Internet to learn how to correct that specific error. Asking a classmate to



help with the error is also preferred by 18,9% of the learners. Very few learners stated that they consult a native speaker friend (only 8 people) or a grammar handbook (only 3 people) to figure out what the error is about.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to explore how Turkish EFL learners perceive the WCF they receive, what kind of WCF they prefer to receive, and what revision practices they employ after receiving feedback. In terms of the scope of feedback, it was found that these learners' teachers tended to provide feedback more on linguistic, mechanical, and lexical errors than errors in organization and idea development. This finding is in line with the findings of the study conducted by Nguyen et al. (2021). In their study, teacher feedback also focused more on the linguistic end of the form-meaning continuum than the organizational component of the language. In the present study, the heavy reliance of the WCF on grammatical, mechanical, and lexical forms might be because it is relatively easier for teachers to give feedback on such forms than attending to the flow of ideas in a piece of writing (Leki, 1991). When teachers additionally focus on the coherence and cohesion of the ideas expressed in a paper, they might have to spend more time on error correction. Considering that teachers often need to mark many first drafts in a limited time before returning them to the learners, checking the organization and content of the paper is not very practical compared to correcting the errors in grammar, mechanics, or vocabulary choice only.

The findings also revealed that the learners' preferences for WCF also focused more on grammatical, mechanical, and lexical aspects of the language than the organization and idea structure of their written texts. This finding contrasts with Nguyen et al.'s (2021) study because the learners in their study favored teacher feedback directed at both form and overall problems related to content/idea development and writing style, the latter being preferred more than the former.

However, the fact that the learners in this study wanted to receive feedback more on linguistic aspects of the language than organization or content is in line with the findings of several other studies (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Halimi, 2008; Hammouda, 2011; Schulz, 1996; Üstünbaş & Çimen, 2016; Zacharias, 2007). In these studies, learners tended to value their teachers' comments and corrections on grammatical, lexical, and mechanical features more than those on content and genre. This might be attributed to learners' desire to obtain concrete and observable results when it comes to learning a foreign language. Learners often associate higher linguistic competence with full mastery of the language, so when they expect to make immediate progress in language learning, they value grammatical accuracy over content and organization in their writing. That might be the reason why the learners in this study favored the feedback that points out their linguistic errors more than the feedback that focuses on their idea development.

As for the focus of WCF, the learners in this study reported that they almost always receive comprehensive (unfocused) WCF targeted at a wide range of errors they make in their pieces of writing, and they preferred to continue receiving their corrective feedback in this manner. This finding is in line with the findings of earlier research (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Atmaca, 2016; Diab, 2005; Lee, 2004; Trabelsi, 2019; Üstünbaş & Çimen, 2016; Zhu, 2010). In several other studies, learners also thought that the larger the quantity of WCF is, the more helpful it will be. There might be a few reasons why learners want their teachers to mark all the errors (major and minor) in their written texts. First, when learners see all their errors identified on the paper, they might feel quite satisfied to see the areas that they need to work on. Second, because comprehensive feedback has a greater potential to reflect the real classroom practices (Karim & Nassaji, 2020), learners might value it over focused feedback. Also, as focused feedback involves correcting only a pre-selected set of errors, learners must write as many papers as possible to receive enough feedback on all their errors, which does not seem very plausible considering the limited time for classroom instruction. For all these reasons, comprehensive feedback might seem a better choice for the learners in this study.



It was also found that the teachers in this study preferred to give their students comprehensive (i.e., unfocused) feedback that focuses on a wide array of errors rather than selective (i.e., focused) feedback that targets only a set of predetermined errors, which tends to be less time-consuming compared to the former. There might be a few reasons for their choice of comprehensive feedback. They might favor this feedback type over focused one because teachers usually expect their students to learn from their mistakes too. Therefore, if they only mark specific errors, they might think that their students do not get enough opportunities to work on the linguistic forms that are not marked. Also, comprehensive feedback enables learners to see all the grammatical forms that are still problematic for them. If these forms go unmarked, learners might not be able to notice them and may mistakenly assume that they have mastered these structures, which leads to their fossilization. Without noticing, it gets more difficult to acquire these forms accurately (Schmidt, 1990). With their errors highlighted or corrected, learners will notice the gaps in their interlanguage, make cognitive comparisons between what they already know and what they need to learn, and use their linguistic resources to write more accurately. The knowledge they acquire from comprehensive feedback might remain dormant for some time but will probably be activated later (a phase which Gass (2003) defined as the incubation period). Moreover, teachers might prefer to give comprehensive feedback because feedback in this form is not subjected to the limited attentional span of the learners as opposed to oral feedback since learners can take time to study their errors whenever they like (Williams, 2012). All these reasons might persuade teachers to continue their practice of giving comprehensive feedback.

In terms of the explicitness of WCF, most of the learners mentioned that their teachers almost always highlight their errors by giving a clue about how to correct them without any explicit corrections. More than half of the learners also preferred to receive their written corrective feedback in this way. This finding is in line with the findings of several previous studies (Nguyen et al., 2021; Trabelsi, 2019), but it also contradicts the findings of a few others (Chen et al., 2016; Saragih et al., 2021). In those studies, learners preferred different techniques of error correction. While some of them stated that explicit (direct) types of WCF allowed them to understand their errors and later remember to fix them in a new piece of writing, others reported that as they themselves had to figure out how to correct their errors, indirect WCF enabled them to process these errors more deeply, thus leading to greater language gains. This might be the reason why the learners in this study also wanted to receive indirect WCF from their teachers. They probably preferred indirect feedback because they believed that it results in greater language development in the long term if they themselves work on their errors instead of asking their teachers to correct them. Also, learner autonomy might be another factor for choosing indirect feedback. As the participants of this study are university students, they are probably mature enough to understand that they should take responsibility for their own learning. Through discovery learning and hypothesis testing, they can find out how to correct their own errors. These factors might motivate them to ask for mere guidance from their teachers (i.e., giving a clue about the errors) instead of explicit error correction.

Finally, when asked about their revision practices, most of the learners reported that they ask their teachers for help when they cannot correct an error by themselves. The other remaining majority stated that they use the Internet or ask a classmate to fix their challenging errors. Very few learners mentioned getting advice from a native speaker friend or looking through a grammar handbook. These findings implied that learners value their teachers' guidance more than other sources of information. Therefore, teacher feedback is appreciated more than peer feedback for these learners. Trabelsi (2019) also reached the same conclusion with Omani learners who favored teacher-initiated feedback over peer feedback. This might be attributable to Asian cultures in which the teacher is often perceived as the ultimate source of knowledge in the classroom. That might be the main reason why the learners in this study first thought about seeking advice from their teachers.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings of the present study showed that Turkish EFL learners prefer to receive comprehensible and indirect feedback that focuses primarily on the linguistic aspects of the language, and these learners' preferences for WCF mostly align with the feedback practices their writing



teachers employ in the classroom. This congruency is essential for the perceived efficacy of the feedback practices because giving feedback is social in nature (Lee, 2008). It is an interpersonal activity since teachers interact with their students through their comments (written or oral) to foster language development. If learner expectations are ignored during this process, feedback might be regarded as an ineffective practice. Understanding learner preferences is also crucial because there might be individual differences regarding the type of feedback EFL learners desire to obtain. As the primary goal of WCF is to assist learners to enhance their L2 accuracy (Ferris, 2011), their preferences should be prioritized too while choosing specific feedback strategies. In this way, learners can perceive feedback as useful because it will answer to their unique needs and expectations in that classroom context.

Several implications can be made from this study. First, although the heavy focus of the WCF on the grammatical, mechanical, and lexical elements of the language is favorable by EFL learners, the findings imply that L2 writing teachers might need to reconsider their feedback practices in order to highlight other important components of the writing skill. To do that, they can sometimes shift their feedback scope from linguistic aspects of the language to content-related and organizational features of writing. Receiving training on form-focused and content-oriented feedback strategies might be helpful in raising awareness among L2 writing instructors. Thus, they can learn how to balance the scope of the feedback they provide in their writing classes. Otherwise, giving feedback merely on grammar, mechanics, or vocabulary might lead learners to think that good writing equals higher accuracy. In that case, learners may disregard the importance of writing coherent and cohesive papers with well-chosen ideas.

In addition to written corrective feedback, L2 writing teachers might try to employ different feedback practices in their classrooms to increase learner engagement. Solely depending on the same type of written corrective feedback might ultimately lead to boredom among learners, thus resulting in learner indifference to that feedback type. However, if teachers make use of various feedback strategies (e.g., oral feedback, audio and video feedback, technology-enhanced feedback, peer feedback, etc.), it will help maintain learner attention. As learners will be involved in more engaging error correction practices, they will feel more motivated to learn too. Such deeper cognitive involvement will also enhance the efficacy of the feedback they receive.

Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that L2 learners need guidance with respect to their revision practices. It is obvious that revision is an indispensable component of L2 writing. Without revising a first draft, it is not very logical to expect learners to acquire the target forms. However, this study reveals that learners do not entirely know what to do when they cannot figure out how to correct an error other than asking their teachers' help. This implies that learners should be taught what revision practices they can employ upon receiving feedback because it would not be very practical for teachers to frequently deal with such situations in which learners always go to their teachers for all their challenging errors.

The present study has some limitations. Due to the nature of convenience sampling used in selecting the participants of the study, the sample group was limited to a single university in Türkiye. Therefore, the findings might not be generalizable to other settings. Future research might include a broader range of teaching contexts by investigating different variables that affect the efficacy of WCF. In addition, although the sample size was kept large, additional methods of data collection could have been used to increase the reliability of the study. Qualitative data could have been obtained if semi-structured interviews had been conducted with volunteer students, and the students' written works had been collected from the teaching staff with their corrections made using various WCF techniques. Future studies might employ these methods for data triangulation. Finally, the present study has examined the concept of written corrective feedback entirely from the learners' perspective. Further research can be conducted to compare the learners' perceptions and preferences of WCF practices to those of many other active members of the learning process such as teachers, curriculum developers, and school administrators.



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