

Language Teaching Research Quarterly



2021, Vol. 25, 29-65

Investigating EFL Teachers' Beliefs and Practices about Written Corrective Feedback: A Large-scale Study

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Received 25 October 2020

Accepted 16 October 2021

Abstract

An increasing number of studies have examined teachers' beliefs and practices regarding written corrective feedback (WCF) in recent years. However, the sample size in these previous studies tends to be small. Through questionnaires and teacher interviews, the present study explored the WCF beliefs and practices of 2,012 EFL teachers in Beijing, China. It found that the majority of teachers regarded error correction as a responsibility shared by both teachers and students, and they preferred selective WCF and integrative use of direct and indirect WCF methods. Also, they tended to have confidence in the effectiveness of their WCF. As for their practices, they would mostly underline the errors and point out the types or underline all errors with types indicated. In addition, most teachers would give feedback directly, and the number of teachers for and against delivering feedback on recurring errors seemed to be even. This study indicates the necessity of offering in-service EFL teachers training on WCF.

Keywords: *Written Corrective Feedback (WCF), Teacher Belief, Teacher Practice, Chinese EFL Teachers*

Introduction

The past decades have witnessed a growing body of research on English as a Foreign language (EFL) / English as a Second language (ESL) teachers' beliefs and practices regarding written corrective feedback (WCF). Research in diverse contexts have examined their WCF beliefs and practices through various research methods (e.g., Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Ferris, 2014; Hyland, 2013; Junqueira & Payant, 2015; Lee, 2003, 2004, 2008, 2009; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019), all of which shed light on EFL/ESL writing instruction as well as writing teacher education and development. However, no consensus has been reached in terms of the alignment of EFL/ESL teachers' beliefs and practices on WCF, particularly considering the varied purposes, functions, and appropriateness of using WCF (e.g., Alshahrani & Storch, 2014; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). Moreover, there is a paucity of research conducted in mainland China, especially in its basic education field, with more than one million EFL school teachers who have a great impact on students' experience of learning English. To contribute to this domain, the present study explored the WCF beliefs and practices of 2,012 primary and secondary school teachers in Beijing via questionnaires and teacher interviews.

EFL/ESL Teachers' WCF Beliefs

Teachers' beliefs in the current study are defined as their "suppositions, commitments, and ideologies" (Calderhead, 1996, p. 715). The previous research on EFL/ESL teachers' WCF beliefs has centred on teachers' perceptions, philosophy, preferences, or attitudes towards WCF issues such as the purpose and function of WCF, direct/indirect WCF¹, WCF on global/local errors², comprehensive/selective WCF³ and the usefulness/effectiveness of their WCF practices. As for the purpose and function of WCF, most studies have uncovered teachers' positive attitudes on WCF; that is, they tend to regard WCF as an essential learning tool for students and believe effective WCF could build students' confidence as well as facilitate their writing competence (e.g., Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Ferris, 2014; Junqueira & Payant, 2015; Li & Barnard, 2011). For example, through survey, teacher interview, think-aloud protocol and stimulus recall sessions, Li and Barnard (2011) investigated 44 untrained and inexperienced part-time academic tutors' WCF beliefs in New Zealand and found that all the participants recognized the purpose of WCF as promoting students' writing competence. By analyzing reflective journals and teacher interview, Junqueira and Payant (2015) also discovered that Kim, the participant, tended to

¹ When teachers offer the correct linguistic form for students such as rewritten sentence, deleted word(s)—this is called direct feedback. Indirect feedback, however, occurs when the teacher indicates an error but leaves it to the student to self-correct (Ferris, 2011).

² Errors that interfere with the comprehensibility of a text are referred to as global errors while minor errors that do not impede understanding are called local errors (Burt & Kiparsky, 1972).

³ The distinction between comprehensive (or unfocused) and selective (or focused) refers to "whether teachers should respond to all errors in student writing or whether they should be more selective in their approach" (Lee, 2017, p. 67).

regard WCF as a significant instrument that could help students increase their confidence and become better writers.

Other scholars have explored teachers' preference towards direct or indirect feedback as well as their perceptions on different indirect feedback forms, and the findings are not yet conclusive (e.g., Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Lee, 2009; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). For example, via questionnaire and teacher interview, Mao and Crosthwaite (2019) investigated five university English writing teachers' WCF beliefs in China and found that most of them preferred direct feedback due to their previous educational experience and individual beliefs. Regarding indirect feedback, they considered error identification methods such as underlining and circling as the most effective and efficient approaches to inform students of their errors. In addition, Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) discovered that the majority of the participants expressed their preferences towards "clues or directions on how to fix an error" and "error identification" for they believed in the function of WCF and the necessity of student autonomy, that is, students could develop their self-correction capacity by learning from the indirect WCF.

With reference to teachers' attitudes towards WCF on global and local issues, the past research has also presented conflicting findings (e.g., Junqueira & Payant, 2015; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Nemati et al., 2017). For example, Mao and Crosthwaite (2019) found that all five participants expressed a general preference for providing feedback on global aspects of ideas and organization. Conversely, Montgomery and Baker (2007) surveyed the WCF beliefs of 13 writing instructors at the Brigham Young University English Language Center, and many teachers indicated that students needed to work on local issues, such as spelling, grammar, and mechanics. What's more, there were some studies describing teacher's neutrality on global and local aspects. For instance, Nemati et al. (2017) found that participants highly prioritized grammar and organization, which belonged to local and global issues, respectively.

As for the amount of WCF, numerous studies generally agreed that teachers tended to hold positive views on selective WCF (e.g., Lee, 2003; 2009; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). For example, Lee (2003) interviewed 19 secondary teachers in Hong Kong and found that 12 of them favoured selective WCF, while some others deemed selective WCF useless, or they were unaware of how to go about it. Five years later, most of the secondary teachers in Hong Kong still preferred selective WCF (Lee, 2000). Mao and Crosthwaite (2019) also discovered that due to time constraints, most teachers supported offering feedback on major errors.

Some researchers examined teacher and student responsibility for WCF and found that most of the teachers appreciate student autonomy regarding error location and correction (e.g., Lee, 2004; 2009). For example, Lee (2004, 2009) investigated 206 secondary teachers' WCF beliefs

by means of survey and questionnaire and found that predominant teachers seemed to contradict themselves for claiming that to locate errors for their students was their responsibility (60%) while expecting their students to learn to pinpoint (96%) and self-correct errors (99%) at the same time, reflecting that the teachers were more concerned with the immediate goals of helping their students avoid the same mistakes rather than long-term goals such as scaffolding students to learn to edit and proofread their writing independently.

Fewer studies have touched upon teachers' perception of the usefulness or effectiveness of WCF, and they have shown positive results seemingly (e.g., Lee, 2004). For instance, Lee (2004, 2009) discovered that 61% of the participants believed their practices brought progress to their students' writing accuracy, while 9% of them witnessed their students' "good" progress from students. It could be seen that most of the teachers believed in the usefulness or effectiveness of their WCF practices but to a various extent.

To conclude, most teachers seem to acknowledge the importance of WCF in enhancing students' writing competence or the effectiveness or usefulness of WCF. As for the WCF amounts, most of them seem to appreciate selective feedback. However, they have dissimilar attitudes towards WCF issues such as global/local aspects and direct/indirect feedback, though most teachers recognize the function of indirect feedback in developing students' self-correction capacity. As to the issue of responsibility, most of the teachers expect their students to take responsibility for error location and correction while find themselves in a dilemma by claiming that teachers should also provide feedback for their students.

EFL/ESL Teachers' WCF Practices

The previous research on EFL/ESL teachers' WCF practices has addressed issues such as direct/indirect WCF, global/local aspects and comprehensive/selective WCF. Studies on direct/indirect WCF have yielded inconclusive findings (e.g., Alshahrani & Storch, 2014; Junqueira & Payant, 2015; Lee, 2003, 2004, 2008; Li & Barnard, 2011; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019; Nemati et al., 2017). For example, Mao and Crosthwaite (2019) found that 68.07% of the participants employed various indirect feedback forms such as underlining errors and using code. Alshahrani and Storch (2014) investigated 3 EFL university writing instructors' WCF practices in Saudi Arabia and discovered that they mainly employed indirect feedback due to the university policies. Likewise, by analyzing teachers' written feedback, Lee (2003) discovered that direct error feedback was mostly used, such as "indicating and correcting errors", and "indicating, categorizing and not correcting errors". Conversely, Nemati et al. (2017) found that a majority of the teachers embraced comprehensive direct WCF. Similarly, Lee (2008) also found that the participants employed direct error feedback like "locating and correcting errors". In

addition, there are other studies revealing a balanced proportion of direct and indirect feedback utilization. For example, after analyzing student essays, Junqueira and Payant (2015) found that the participant Kim, though favouring contextualized feedback, that is, offering explanations or “models” to students, was constrained by time and workload and hence offered primarily direct and indirect feedback without explanation on local issues. Lee (2004) also noticed her participants’ limited error correction strategies since they mainly employed direct feedback and indirect coded feedback. In addition, some scholars have revealed teachers’ practices of error codes. For example, Lee (2004; 2009) found that required by their schools, 87% of her participants used error codes when marking students’ writing, though codes failed to be applied to syntax level occasionally.

With regard to global and local issues, most of the research discovered that teachers tended to focus on local aspects such as form (e.g., grammar and lexis) and mechanics (e.g., Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Alshahrani & Storch, 2014; Ferris, 2014; Junqueira & Payant, 2015; Lee, 2008; Li & Barnard, 2011; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Nemati et al., 2017). For instance, Junqueira and Payant (2015) discovered that Kim (the participant) offered more direct feedback on local issues in spite of her beliefs that global aspects like organization and content were more essential due to the stipulated learning objective of the first-year writing program, which put much emphasis on the two aspects. Moreover, Nemati et al. (2017) went further and found that teachers mostly offered local issue feedback on tense, voice, modal and articles, leaving content and organization aside. Montgomery and Baker (2007) also found that their participants rarely attended to global issues such as organization but focused on grammar and mechanics instead. Similarly, Alshahrani and Storch (2014) discovered that most of their participants offered feedback on mechanics (52.5%), and the least on language expression (12.6%). There are still few studies yielding different results, such as Ferris (2014), which found that the participants provided a balanced amount of feedback on content and language based on students’ needs.

Regarding comprehensive and selective WCF, most previous studies discovered that teachers tended to implement comprehensive feedback (e.g., Alshahrani & Storch, 2014; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Lee, 2003; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). For example, Mao and Crosthwaite (2019) found that four out of five Chinese participants offered feedback on most errors. Their findings are in line with Amrhein and Nassaji (2010), which found 45.2% of the teachers marked all errors, and relatively fewer teachers (25.8%) only marked errors interfering with communication. In addition, Alshahrani and Storch (2014) also found that all three participants offered comprehensive feedback due to university policies. Likewise, Lee (2003) discovered only a minority of secondary teachers in Hong Kong practised selective feedback because of their concerns on teacher responsibility regarding error treatment.

In summary, the previous research resulted in inconclusive findings regarding teachers' direct/indirect feedback practices due to various contextual factors such as school policy or requirements in terms of feedback practices (e.g., Alshahrani & Storch, 2014; Lee, 2004; 2009). Some studies revealed more teachers' choice of providing direct feedback, while others claimed that the majority of participants offered more indirect feedback, and few studies presented teachers' frequent utilization of error codes. In terms of WCF on global/local issues and comprehensive/selective WCF, the predominant research has discovered that teachers tend to offer feedback on local issues and give comprehensive feedback.

The above research has presented us the complexity of EFL/ESL teachers' WCF beliefs and practices mediated by a hybrid of contextual components. However, since classroom writing instruction could also influence how teachers conduct WCF practices, discussions on whether and how teachers' teaching impacts their provision of written feedback seem to be indispensable. In addition, despite the wealth of studies on teachers' WCF beliefs and practices, few studies have taken place in the school context, and attention to the teachers in mainland China, especially those working in basic education, has been limited as well. As China has a vast number of EFL learners and teachers, voices from a larger population could contribute to the burgeoning scholarly efforts into EFL/ESL teachers' beliefs, and practices, considering most previous studies acknowledged their weakness regarding sample size (e.g., Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Lee et al., 2016). To fill these gaps, this large-scale study explored the EFL teachers' WCF beliefs and practices with the following research question:

RQ: What are the beliefs and practices of school EFL teachers regarding WCF in mainland China?

The Study

Context and Participants

This study recruited primary and secondary school EFL teachers in Beijing to investigate their beliefs and practices on WCF. First, we made primary contact with some teaching research officers¹ in Beijing and asked them to send an online questionnaire link to their colleagues or the EFL teachers within our target participant pool. The teachers then chose to complete the online questionnaire voluntarily. The last item in the questionnaire was set for recruiting the participants who were willing to be interviewed either face-to-face or online to explore the issues raised in the questionnaire in more depth.

The teachers participating in the present study varied in their backgrounds in terms of gender,

¹Teaching research officers work full-time in education departments at various government levels in China. Their main duty includes supervision, evaluation, support, and study of teaching practices in China through frequent and regular contact with schools, teacher training institutions, and educational research centers.

age, educational background, teaching experience and so on, thus allowing for a higher degree of generalizability. The vast majority (more than 90%) of the participants were female, whose age ranged from 30 to 50 years old. About 30% of teachers had taught English for 11 to 20 years, and about 34% of teachers had 20 to 30 years of teaching experience. Notably, most of the participants were middle school (grade 7-9) EFL teachers (about 68%), while the primary school (grade 1-6) and high school (grade 10-12) EFL teacher accounted for 14% and 18%, respectively.

Data Collection and Analysis

To explore EFL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF, we designed a questionnaire (see Appendix A) based on Lee (2009) and Amrhein and Nassaji (2010). The original items were translated and modified in order to match the local context. The survey was composed of 49 items in total, aiming to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Moreover, the findings from Lee (2009) and Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) were intentionally transferred into narrative answers and then as categories for some items. For example, the first question in Lee's (2009) teacher questionnaire is, "In your opinion, what is the main purpose of providing feedback on students' errors in writing?" And her participants gave answers relating to language problems, content, organization and so on, based on which we provided categories such as "to provide students with suggestions on language errors" and "to provide students with suggestions on content" (see item 12 in Appendix A). The questionnaire consisted of four types of items: multiple choice with a single answer, multiple-choice with multiple answers, Likert-5 scale and open-ended questions, aiming to collect information including 1) the teachers' background information, 2) teachers' beliefs on WCF, 3) teachers' WCF practices and 4) contact information.

Before the questionnaire was put into use, we conducted a pilot study by inviting ten researchers and teachers outside of our participant pool to fill in it. The aim was to 1) gather comments on the appropriateness and clarity of item design, such as problematic and overlapping questions, and 2) provide an estimated time for completing the survey. After that, we discussed and modified the survey based on their feedback and set an acceptable range of time for valid samples.

The final questionnaire was distributed and collected through the online survey platform *Wenjuanxing* (<https://www.wjx.cn>) for a duration of 101 hours. A total of 2,310 samples were collected. After excluding invalid samples from the source, time and repeated answers, we finally obtained 2,012 valid samples, with an efficiency rate of 87.1%.

The data of the questionnaire were recorded in an excel spreadsheet and then analyzed using SPSS 22.0 for statistical analysis and Nvivo 12 for thematic coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The reliability coefficients were calculated first to determine whether the data was reliable. The

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was $0.816 > 0.8$, indicating the data was qualified for further analysis. Regarding quantitative data, the descriptive analysis mainly included the calculation of frequencies, percentage, mean scores, and standard deviation. In addition, variance analysis was used to find out whether there was a statistically significant difference between nominal data (e.g., teachers' background information such as teaching experience) and teachers' beliefs and practices.

Qualitative analysis was firstly conducted on the participants' explanatory responses to the items in the questionnaire. With the researchers' repetitive reading and constant comparison (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) of these textual responses, factors including learners (motivation, English proficiency, English competence, learning needs, learning tools), teachers (responsibility, workload), teaching (teaching objective, teaching strategies, teacher-student relationships) and assessment (accuracy, meaning, testing) were respectively identified and the high intra-coder and inter-coder reliability were achieved both in the pilot study period and in the data analysis period for the large-scale information.

To further explore teachers' WCF beliefs and practices, we reached four secondary school EFL teachers (Dong, Xi, Feng and Xing; all pseudonyms) according to the contact information provided in the questionnaire based on the convenience sampling principle. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, our semi-structured interviews with them were conducted via telephones following Lee (2009)'s outline (see Table 1 for their demographic information). The four interviews lasted for 218 minutes, and the working language was Chinese for the convenience of communication. We first transcribed the interviews verbatim and then examined them thematically while referring to the interview questions.

Table 1

Summary of the Four Interviewees' Background Information

| Participants | Gender | Educational background | Years of teaching | Times of interview |
|--------------|--------|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Dong | Female | MA | 23 | 1 (1h24min) |
| Xi | Female | MA | 21 | 1 (35min) |
| Feng | Female | MA | 1 | 1 (1h9min) |
| Xing | Female | MA | 2 | 1 (30min) |

Results

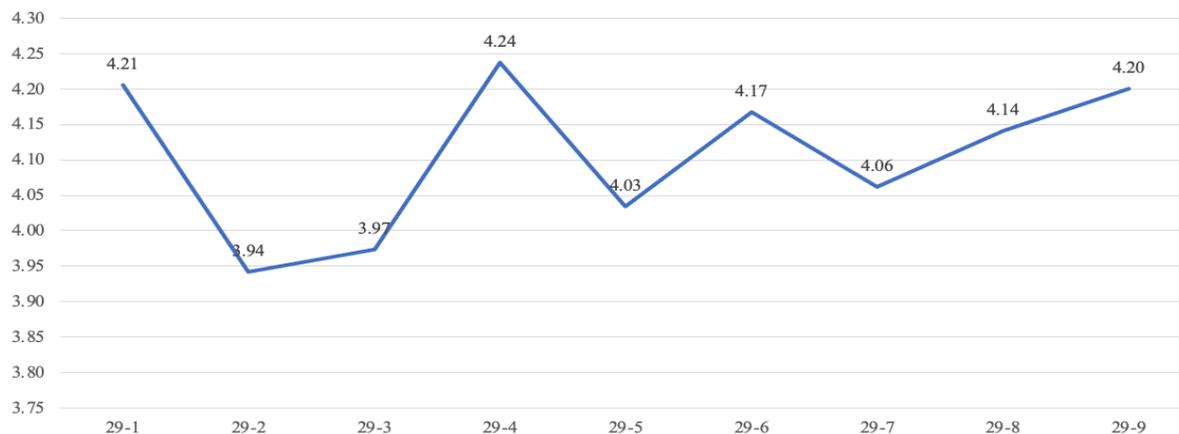
EFL Teachers' WCF Beliefs

EFL Teachers' Overall Attitudes

Item 29 of the questionnaire is a Likert-5 scale matrix with the intention of measuring teachers' overall attitude towards written corrective feedback. Figure 1, as shown below, presents a relatively balanced picture, and no outlier appears. The three statements with the highest mean score were “teachers should vary their error feedback techniques according to the type of error”, “teachers need to provide feedback on student errors in writing”, and “students should learn to analyze their own errors”. The two items with relatively low scores were “teachers should provide feedback on student errors selectively” and “it is the teacher’s job to locate errors and provide corrections for students”. The results of items 29-3 and 29-9 showed that teachers generally believed that the responsibility of error correction was not solely on teachers. However, it is worth noting that item 29-2 has the highest standard deviation, indicating that the data fluctuates widely and that teachers’ opinions polarize on this issue.

Figure 1

Averages of Teachers' Overall Attitudes



29-1 Teachers need to provide feedback on student errors in writing.

29-2 Teachers should provide feedback on student errors selectively.

29-3 It is the teacher’s job to locate errors and provide corrections for students.

29-4 Teachers should vary their error feedback techniques according to the type of error.

29-5 Coding errors with the help of a marking code is a useful means of helping students correct errors for themselves.

29-6 Marking codes should be easy for students to follow and understand.

29-7 Students should learn to locate their own errors.

29-8 Students should learn to locate and correct their own errors.

29-9 Students should learn to analyze their own errors.

As for the item “teachers should vary their error feedback techniques according to the type of

error”, Dong mentioned in the interview that if her students made too many mistakes or severe mistakes, she would mark a code “*ctm*” (come to me), and arrange a face-to-face conference. However, the low scores of “Teachers should provide feedback on student errors selectively” seems not consistent with Dong’s philosophy. That is, she claimed that she always offered selective corrective feedback on students’ written products in accordance with the learning content, leaving other errors unmarked.

But Feng’s interview presented a different picture, as indicated below. She was convinced that the type of student and performance of writing should be the guiding principle of her attitudes regarding giving feedback. Usually, she would adjust her feedback methods in accordance with the quality of student writing.

I feel that how I use feedback techniques would depend on the students. For students who basically have no mistakes, I will pick out all his/her mistakes directly. But for those who make too many mistakes, I will only point out the typical mistakes. (Feng).

Teachers’ Attitude towards Different Methods of WCF

Item 30 of the questionnaire examined teachers’ views on amounts of errors occurring in students’ writing. As Table 2 shows, more than half (51.09%) of respondents agreed with the treatment method of “mark all major errors but not the minor ones” or selective written corrective feedback. A very small number (less than 3%) of teachers reported that they should “mark only a few of the major errors” or “mark no errors and respond only to the ideas and content”.

Table 2

Teachers’ Attitudes towards WCF Amounts

| Item | Categories | frequency | Percentage |
|--|---|-----------|------------|
| | mark all errors | 372 | 18.49 |
| | mark all major errors but not the minor ones | 1028 | 51.09 |
| If there are many errors in an intermediate to advanced ESL student’s writing, what do you think is the most useful to do? | mark most of the major errors, but not necessarily all of them | 271 | 13.47 |
| | mark only a few of the major errors | 57 | 2.83 |
| | mark only the errors that interfere with communicating your ideas | 242 | 12.03 |
| | mark no errors and respond only to the ideas and content | 42 | 2.09 |
| | total | | 2012 |

The above results were also reflected in Xi's interview. Constrained by time pressure and workload, they both mentioned marking only major errors. Xi said, *It's extremely difficult to mark all errors, because I teach two classes now, and have more than 80 students...So it's impossible to mark all errors, and now my strategy is that I will mark at least three major errors for each student, and I will circle the three errors. I call it "circle method", and I will tell my students that they need to correct them, but that doesn't mean they don't have other errors (Xi).*

The qualitative analysis of teachers' textual responses to the above-mentioned results demonstrated that our participants would generally consider four factors, that is, learner, teaching, teacher and assessment factors¹ when they made choices on their WCF. However, amongst our participants' explanation of focused WCF, "mark all major errors but not the minor ones", the teaching factors (for example, teaching objectives, teaching strategies, operationality, effectiveness) stood out. Specifically, most of these teachers viewed that marking all major errors was one type of their teaching strategies which "might correspond with the features of learners' writing development". That is, selective WCF could help both teachers and students focus on the major errors in student writing and thus nurture students' confidence in writing. Moreover, the participants mentioned that comprehensive WCF might negatively affect students' learning motivation: "If we mark all the errors in students' writing, their confidence will be definitely damaged".

Questions 31-44 of the questionnaire listed seven different ways of dealing with individual errors and surveyed teachers' perceptions of their usefulness and relevant reasons. As Table 3 shows, "teacher corrects errors and makes comments" was the most popular method, with an average score of 3.845 and a smaller difference among respondents (SD=0.825). The participating teachers put more emphasis on the possible benefits brought by "comments" to students' writing improvement. That is, comments could help students know why and how to correct errors.

Table 3

Teachers' Attitudes towards WCF Methods

| Categories | Mean ± SD | Main reasons* |
|--|-------------|--|
| The teacher gives clues or directions on how a student can | 3.088±1.153 | a. It is important for students to know how to self-correct so they remember their errors. (popularity rate =61.98%) |

¹ These influencing factors were sequenced according to their frequencies (from the highest to the lowest) appeared in the participants' narrative responses to the items in questionnaire.

| | | |
|---|-------------|---|
| correct his/her work without correction | | b. Clues are only useful for high-level students. (popularity rate =32.90%) |
| The teacher points out where the errors occur, but no errors are corrected | 3.378±1.020 | a. It can guide students in self-correction. (popularity rate =69.83%) b. Error identification is useful for students to see where errors occur. (popularity rate =35.88%) |
| The teacher corrects errors and makes comments | 3.845±0.825 | a. Comments can help students realize the reason why they have such errors. (popularity rate =61.73%) b. Comments can help students know how to correct errors. (popularity rate =49.70%) |
| The teacher corrects errors | 3.582±0.931 | a. Teacher correction provides students with an opportunity to learn from errors. (popularity rate =47.27%) b. Teacher correction is useful for students to identify their errors. (popularity rate =45.83%) |
| The teacher gives feedback by making comments about errors, but no errors are corrected | 2.792±1.098 | a. Comments only work when students are dedicated and motivated. (popularity rate =54.17%) b. Comments are too confusing; students do not always understand them. (popularity rate =38.62%) |
| The teacher provides no feedback. | 1.591±0.916 | (open-ended) |
| The teacher provides only comments based on meanings. | 2.761±1.200 | (open-ended) |

n=2012 for popularity rate calculation

Moreover, “teacher corrects errors” and “teacher points out where the errors occur, but no errors are corrected” were also welcomed by teachers, with average scores of 3.582 and 3.378, respectively. According to the main reasons chosen by our participants, both the “marking” and “correcting” acts of teachers’ WCF might play a guiding or facilitating role in student writing development. Thus, their students could have “more and better opportunities” to discover their writing problems and thus improve their writing. Notably, teachers’ choices of “marking” and “correcting” errors always varied based on the frequency of errors and students’ English proficiency. For example, Xi, a middle school teacher, said she would correct the errors for the first time and then if there were similar errors in the same text, she would resort to the “marking” WCF strategy.

In addition, “teacher provides no feedback” was an outlier with an average of as low as 1.591, demonstrating that it was not recognized by the participants, and the result was consistent with the data in item 29-1. The qualitative analysis of teachers’ textual responses revealed that the participants’ choices on “not useful at all” and “useless” of not providing any feedback were mainly constrained by learner factors like learners’ English proficiency, English competence, learning attitudes and so on. In most cases, our participants thought their students were “unable to recognize the errors” or “unable to realize that they’ve made errors”. Xing also mentioned that her WCF techniques depended upon error types as well as student’s proficiency in the interview. She said,

I now teach middle school students, and sometimes when you mark the errors for them, they still don't know how to avoid them in their future writing. As for the same types of errors, I will correct them for my students in the first time, and just mark them the next time. But for those lag-behind students, I may correct all the error for them (Xing).

It is also worth noting that “teacher provides only comments based on meanings” (See item 43 in Appendix A.) had the highest standard deviation. In other words, some teachers were for this method while others objected to it. A close examination of qualitative responses demonstrated teachers’ conflicted recognition towards functions of providing comments based on meanings. For teachers who partially or completely disagreed with this form of WCF, learner factors like English proficiency and competence were their major concerns because they thought that “students could not understand the meaning of teachers’ comments”, “students cannot grasp the purpose of teachers’ comments”, or even “the teachers’ comments might be a learning burden for students”. Or, we might say it is the teachers’ worries about students’ English competence that influences these teachers’ beliefs.

On the contrary, those taking a partial or complete agreement with solely using meaning-based comments paid more attention to their interpersonal functions. Most of those teachers regard meaning-based comments as a teaching strategy that might contribute to their intimate relationship with the students. For instance, the textual responses in the questionnaire highlighted that “it would make students recognize the teachers’ efforts invested in his/her writing”, and “it could facilitate the emotional interaction between the teacher and students”.

Xing also expressed her happiness when she noticed writing commentary helped promote emotional communication with her students and build up their writing confidence. She said, *One of my students once told me that the comments I wrote were the longest. I always write very long paragraphs because I want to take this opportunity to communicate with my students. Sometimes I may not be able to conduct face-to-face conversations with most students, so for those who take writing seriously, they may be able to get something from my commentary. For*

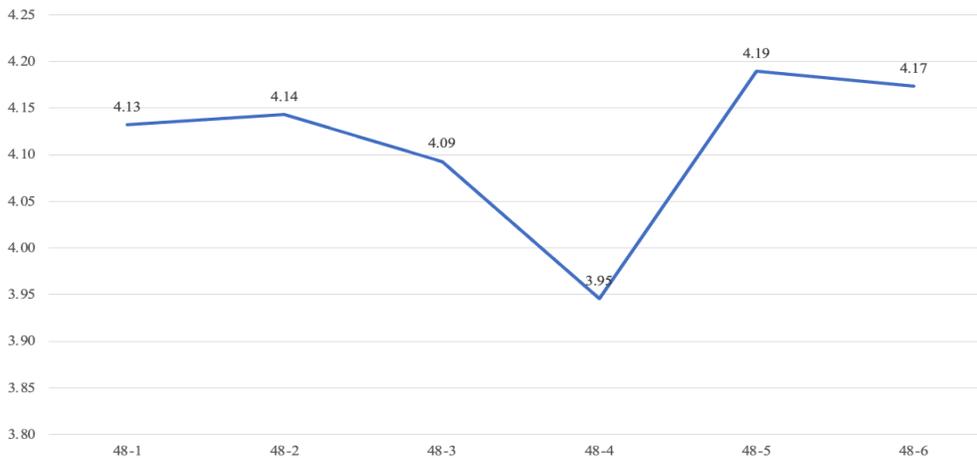
example, I will write a few encouraging words, and then I can see some students will say “Thank you, teacher!” to me because they really got encouraged, and some may want to communicate with me more after class. I really like writing comments (Xing).

Effectiveness of WCF

Question 48 measured the teacher’s conception of the effectiveness of error-correcting feedback on different aspects (global and local issues) in the form of a 5-point Likert scale matrix (see Figure 2). The teachers showed no significant preference for particular dimensions. The mean scores were generally close (4.13-4.19) except for spelling and punctuation errors (consistent with the result of item 12).

Figure 2

Effectiveness of Different WCF Aspects



48-1 How useful is it to point out grammatical errors in students’ written work?
 48-2 How useful is it to point out vocabulary errors in students’ written work?
 48-3 How useful is it to point out spelling errors in students’ written work?
 48-4 How useful is it to point out punctuation errors in students’ written work?
 48-5 How useful is it to point out organization errors in students’ written work?
 48-6 How useful is it to point out content/idea errors in students’ written work?

Item 28 dealt with how teachers would evaluate the overall effectiveness of their existing corrective feedback practices in promoting students’ accuracy in writing (especially correct use of grammar). The data (see Table 4) showed that the majority of teachers (61.63%) believe their students make “some progress”, while some (about 25%) consider students making “a little bit progress”. And very few participants selected “good progress” or “no progress”. It suggested that most teachers had faith in their current feedback practices, though not particularly confident. In our interview with Feng, she also expressed her confidence in the effectiveness of her WCF practices as she witnessed her students’ progress though with different degrees. She said,

I think my feedback is effective because I have indeed devoted a lot of time and energy, and I have also seen the progress of my students. Of course, everyone's progress is different because their learning competency, time arrangement, and also learning motivation are different. But on the whole, I think my feedback is effective (Feng).

Table 4*Effectiveness of WCF*

| Categories | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Good progress | 237 | 11.78% |
| Some progress | 1240 | 61.63% |
| A little bit of progress | 517 | 25.70% |
| No progress | 18 | 0.89% |
| Total | 2012 | 100.0% |

Teacher Practices*Teachers' Overall WCF Practices*

With respect to the teachers' overall WCF practice, the data (see Table 5) showed that many teachers would "mark students' errors selectively and indicate the type of errors" and "mark ALL students' errors and indicate the type of errors", accounting for 35.19% and 29.92% respectively. The results in the current study indicated no significant difference between teachers giving comprehensive and selective feedback. Very few (0.55%) teachers did not mark errors in students' writing work.

Table 5*Teachers' Overall WCF Practices*

| Item | Categories | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|--|-----------|------------|
| Teachers' existing error feedback practice | I don't mark students' errors in writing. | 11 | 0.55% |
| | I mark ALL students' errors. | 336 | 16.70% |
| | I mark ALL students' errors and indicate the type of errors. | 602 | 29.92% |
| | I mark students' errors selectively. | 355 | 17.64% |
| | I mark students' errors selectively and indicate the type of errors. | 708 | 35.19% |
| | Sum | 2012 | 100.0% |

The Use of Marking Code in WCF

As Table 6 shows, the vast majority (more than 71%) of teachers reported that they would not use a marking code such as “vb” to indicate errors. For teachers who used codes in practice, about half (47.67%) of them were required by schools, administrators, or other policymakers, and the rest did it out of personal preference. The qualitative data revealed why some teachers chose not to use marking codes in error feedback: limited time and uselessness.

I think if I have enough time, effective feedback should have general comments. And then you should mark out all the errors in students' compositions, and you should have a distribution of error types indicated by marking codes. At the beginning, you should tell students what the symbol means, such as “dic”. Then students should look it up in the dictionary and learn about how to use the word, what may be wrong with it and so on... But I think this is too idealistic. In the current situation, it is impossible for teachers to do that. (Feng)

We as teachers learned to use some codes, such as “s” for spelling, to help students identify what the error is. But I don't think it's very useful. We even bought relevant books and studied them. I personally feel that students will not correct just because of the marking codes. Even if I just circle it out, students could identify the errors. (Dong)

Table 6

Use of Marking Code in WCF

| Item | Categories | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------|-----------|------------|
| Do you use a marking code for providing error feedback on student writing? (For example, to use “vb” to indicate an error about verb mistake.) | Yes | 581 | 28.88% |
| | No | 1431 | 71.12% |
| Total | | 2012 | 100.0% |

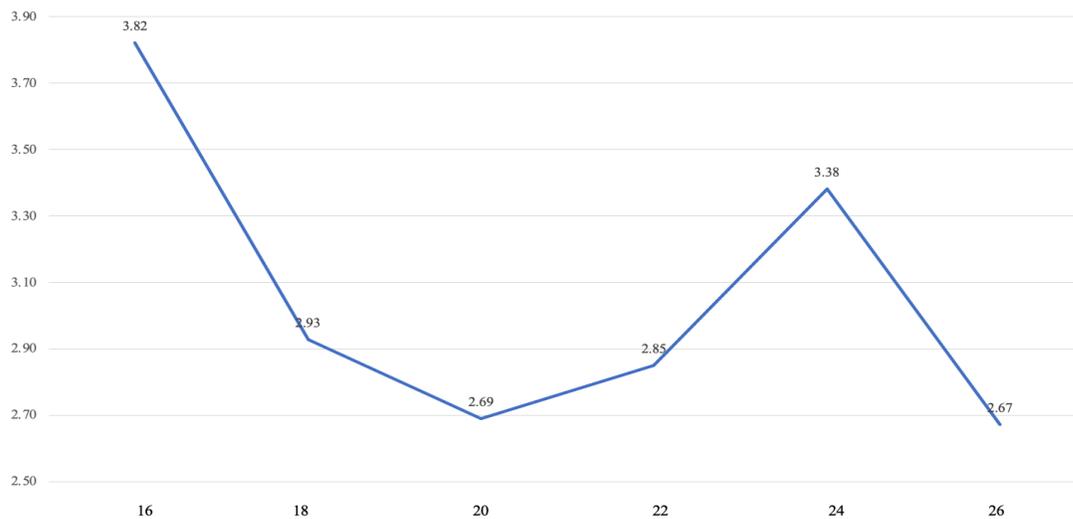
Methods of WCF

An obvious difference could be seen from teachers' different methods of WCF (see Figure 3). The two most frequently used and least controversial methods among participants are “indicate (underline/circle) errors and correct them” (M= 3.821, SD= 0.873) and “hint at the location of errors” (M= 3.38, SD= 0.948). On the other hand, few teachers in practice “indicate (underline/circle) errors and categorize them without correcting” (M= 2.69), or “hint at the location of errors and categorize them” (M= 2.672). This pattern of distribution is consistent with the results of the previous sections of the analysis. In addition, for teachers who “always” or “frequently use” these six types of feedback methods, only the first one (i.e., indicate errors and correct them) has the highest population of teachers who was required by schools or institutional

regulations (12.28%).

Figure 3

Methods of WCF



16 I always indicate (underline/circle) errors and correct them.

18 I always indicate (underline/circle) errors, correct them and categorize them.

20 I always indicate (underline/circle) errors and categorize them, but I don't correct them.

22 I always indicate (underline/circle) errors, but I don't correct them.

24 I always hint at the location of errors, e.g., by putting a mark in the margin to indicate an error on a specific line.

26 I always hint at the location of errors and categorize them (with the help of a marking code), e.g., by writing 'Prep' in the margin to indicate a preposition error on a specific line.

Treatment of Repeated Errors

As Table 7 illustrated, no significant difference between teachers who corrected repeated errors each time and teachers who did not, with the percentage at 57.65% and 42.35% respectively was located. For teachers who always corrected, the majority of those who always correct students' errors (more than 69%) reported that students could be reminded of their errors and thus figure out the patterns of their errors via teachers' error correction. Meanwhile, those teachers who did not always correct repeated errors believed that students should make error correction themselves and think independently.

Table 7*Treatment of Reported Errors*

| Item | Frequency (percentage) | Main reasons |
|---|---------------------------|---|
| If an error is repeated in student's writing more than once, I will mark it each time it occurs. | 1160 (57.65%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. so students can be reminded and get an overview to see patterns(response rate=69.68%) b. the teacher must be consistent(response rate =28.22%) |
| If an error is repeated in student's writing more than once, I won't mark it each time it occurs. | 852 (42.35%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. just mark an example and students should do the rest(response rate =34.80%) b. students should think about it and do it themselves(response rate =32.45%) c. it is better to give students a chance for self-correction(response rate =31.94%) |

Discussion

This study explored teachers' beliefs and practices in WCF. As for teachers' beliefs, the findings revealed that most teachers considered providing WCF to students as their responsibility and largely rejected not providing feedback to students' writing. This study partially agrees with Lee (2004)'s findings that almost 60% of teachers believed that it is their responsibility to locate and correct errors for students. However, Lee (2004) also figured out (99%) teachers' beliefs in students' initiative-taking to locate and correct errors. Situated in an EFL teaching context, the primary, middle, and high school teachers in the present study tended to doubt students' self-correction ability to notice or uptake WCF because of their limited language proficiency and learning competence. Vattøy (2020) found that teacher beliefs about EFL students' self-regulation, self-efficacy and language competence are important factors affecting their beliefs about providing feedback practice. This might add an explanation to the reasons why EFL teachers in mainland China in this study did not demonstrate much belief in students' responsibility to locate and correct errors.

Teachers' focused attention on major errors in student writing was found as the most welcomed WCF method in the present study, which might provide strong evidence for Lee's (2019) argument on "less is more"—giving selective WCF rather than comprehensive WCF. Besides the error correction time (Lee, 2003, 2009), the primary, middle, and high school teachers were found taking a long-term view on WCF treatment. That is, errors are always

treated “in a gradual and incremental manner” (Lee, 2019, p. 529) in responding to the learning content and teaching objectives in a particular period. In this view, selective WCF is likely to play an instrumental role in facilitating students’ writing learning, knowledge internalization and motivation preservation.

A combination of error correction and individual conferences in WCF, or the integration of direct and indirect WCF, is prevalent among the teachers investigated in this study. They attached importance to the facilitating and complementary role of comment (Lee, 2008; Li & Barnard, 2011), from which the rationale and methods of error correction (Tien, 2021), or contextualized feedback (Junqueira & Payant, 2015), can be unveiled before learners. However, comments need to be used with caution, especially in the written texts produced by the lower-proficiency English learners, unless the comments are provided in Chinese.

The integrated use of indirect and direct WCF was also revealed in teachers’ preferences for both indicating and correcting errors (see 3.1.2, 3.2.3) in student writing. Compared with indirect feedback, teachers prefer to direct feedback for its directness in allowing students to notice the errors obviously. This might meet most of the EFL learners’ expectation in receiving teachers’ WCF, as revealed by Tian and Zhou (2020). However, teachers in this study also acknowledged the effectiveness of the indirect WCF method (Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019) and its function in fostering learning autonomy (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010). Interestingly, taking learners’ needs and time into consideration (Lee, 2003), the teachers’ preferences varied across the extent of indirectness among the indirect WCF methods. Like Lee (2014), teachers rarely or never utilized techniques such as “hinting at the location of errors” and “hinting at the location of errors and categorizing them” for they deemed too demanding for the students.

Moreover, the current study found that the participants paid attention to both global and local issues in feedback. However, there was still an inconsistency between their beliefs and practices, that is, the proportion of local feedback provided is still of greater weight, which is consistent with the contradiction between teachers’ WCF beliefs and practices demonstrated in the previous studies. For instance, some teachers reported that they concentrated more on global issues while, in practice, local issues somehow became the focus (Junqueira & Payant, 2015; Lee, 2008, 2009; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019; Montgomery & Baker, 2007). Likewise, Nemati et al. (2017) found that the amount of local feedback detected in students’ writing presented a completely different picture, though the participants stated equal attention to global as well as local feedback. The above studies showed that teachers’ WCF beliefs and practices may not always be consistent. Interestingly, the current study found another possible cause—classroom teaching. As the participant Feng said in the interview, despite their acknowledgement of the importance of both global and local feedback, teachers still focused more on local dimensions in their feedback, as

the key points of global-related issues had already been discussed several times in class. In fact, teachers need to consider both student-related factors and their classroom instruction (e.g., content and objective). Moreover, the interview data suggested that teachers hoped to improve students' language accuracy by providing WCF. This also explains part of the reasons why the teachers always focus on local problems in practice.

In terms of the evaluation of WCF effectiveness, the findings of this study are consistent with Lee (2004), in which most teachers reported that WCF is beneficial to students' writing. Close examination revealed that less confident teachers had general doubts about their teaching practices, students' competency, or they were concerned about whether students were familiar enough to gain adequate knowledge from WCF.

Regarding teachers' self-reported practices, the present study revealed that most teachers would selectively underline errors and point out the error type or underline all errors and indicate the error types. This may not concur with Lee's studies (2003, 2004, 2009), in which the participants tended to mark errors comprehensively in reality, though they claimed they preferred selective feedback, mediated by factors such as school stipulation, student preference and teacher responsibility. This study also revealed that teachers' error coding behaviour was heavily influenced by their school requirements, and some even employed error codes developed by themselves. This is congruent with Lee's (2009) finding, in which some teachers would provide error codes because of their belief in the thought-provoking and autonomy-initiating function of error codes.

Regarding the students' repeated errors, teachers were more likely "to correct" the repeated errors each time than "not to correct" them. Those who correct the errors put more emphasis on their responsibility in reminding students of learning content, whereas those who do not correct the errors give priority in nurturing learners' ability of autonomous error correction. In this case, the responsibility of error correction is shared between the teacher and the students for the co-existence of teachers' WCF and students' scaffolded error correction, which is in line with findings of teachers' WCF beliefs in the present study (see 3.1.1, 3.1.2). Moreover, it could be a long-term goal for these teachers to foster an independent and critical self-corrector, writer, and thinker (Lee, 2004). We need to acknowledge the alignment between teachers' practices in treating the repeated errors and their beliefs in shared responsibility with students, even if slightly more teachers choose to correct all the repeated errors in this study due to their beliefs in the role of WCF in orienting students to the language accuracy issues.

Conclusion

The present study surveyed current primary, middle, and high school teachers' WCF beliefs and

practices in the Chinese context. The results revealed that most teachers believed that both teachers and students should share the responsibility of correcting errors. The most prevalent WCF technique is marking major errors or selective WCF. That is, the teacher preferred selective to comprehensive WCF. In addition, most teachers supported error correction with commentary, for they believe that commentary could empower students towards writing competence growth. As for the effectiveness of WCF, most teachers reported that their WCF brought progress for their students. Regarding their WCF practices, this study suggests that most teachers will selectively underline the errors or underline all errors while indicating the error types. With reference to direct and indirect WCF, the majority of EFL teachers mark and correct errors directly. For those repeated errors, the number of teachers for or against correction seemed to be even.

Pedagogically, this study suggests that more training on WCF needs to be arranged for the in-service teachers. All the four interviewees in this study admitted their lack of WCF training, and their WCF practices tended to stem from their prior educational experience, personal reflections and their communication with colleagues. Lack of training may leave the teachers with limited access to more scientific, evidence-based and effective WCF practices. For example, some scholars proposed that indirect feedback be more beneficial in terms of students' long-term writing competence (e.g., Ferris, 2011). Thus, organizing more qualified WCF training and initiatives for pre-and in-service teachers, such as providing access to the academic journals and conferences workshops, may contribute to the effectiveness of their WCF so that their students' writing could be improved.

As this study employed interviews as the complementary data, further research could make full use of the exploratory and explanatory nature of qualitative data to research teachers' beliefs, practices and also influencing factors of WCF. Moreover, the self-reported and general WCF practices in this study could be better justified if there were more data from students' writing, teachers' actual WCF or classroom observation. Future studies could address these limitations to help us gain a wider understanding of how teachers perceive WCF as well as their actual endeavours.

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Appendix A: Teacher questionnaire

Section one: Biographic information

1. Your gender:

- Male Female

2. Your age group belongs to:

- ≤25 years old 26-30 years old 31-40 years old 41-50 years old 51-60 years old 60 years old above

3. Your years of teaching:

- <1 year 1-5 years 6-10 years 11-20 years 21-30 years 31-40 years ≥41 years

4. Your educational degree:

Vocational and below
 College
 Bachelor
 Master
 Doctor

5. You are currently teaching in:

Primary school
 Junior high school
 Senior high school

6. Your professional title:

Leve 2 Teacher, Primary School 小学二级
 Leve 1 Teacher, Primary School 小学一级
 Senior Teacher, Primary School 小学高级
 Level 2 Teacher, Middle School 中学二级
 Level 1 Teacher, Middle School 中学一级
 Senior Teacher, Middle School 中学高级
 Senior Teacher 高级
 None 正高级

7. The school you are teaching belongs to:

Ordinary school in village
 Key school in village
 Ordinary school in city
 Key school in city
 Others

8. Your time of teaching every week in the last semester:

≤ 10 sessions
 11-16 sessions
 ≥ 17 sessions

9. Your time spent on preparing for class every day:

≤ 1 hour
 1-3 hour(s)
 ≥ 3 hours

10. Your time spent on homework correcting every week:

0 hour
 ≤ 2 hours
 2-4 hours
 4-8 hours
 ≥ 8 hours

11. Your time spent on reading professional literature:

- Enough time Almost no time No time at all

Section two: Beliefs and practices of written corrective feedback

12. In your opinion, what is the main purpose of providing feedback on students' errors in writing?

- To provide students with suggestions on language errors
- To provide students with suggestions on logical problems
- To provide students with suggestions on discourse structure
- To provide students with suggestions on spelling and punctuation
- To provide students with suggestions on content
- To help students realize their language problems
- To provide students with samples on language use
- Other _____

13. Which of the statements below best describes your existing error feedback practice?

- I don't mark students' errors in writing.
- I mark ALL students' errors.
- I mark ALL students' errors and indicate the error types at the same time.
- I mark students' errors selectively.
- I mark students' errors selectively and indicate the error types at the same time.

14. Do you use a marking code for providing error feedback on student writing? (For example, using "vb" to indicate a misuse of verbs)

- Yes
- No

15. (Linked to Q14) Your use of marking code is required by

- The school
- The teacher's team in your current grade (年级组)
- The lesson preparation group (备课组)
- The teaching and research officers (教研员)
- Other _____

16. While giving feedback on students' writing, how often do you indicate (underline/circle) errors and correct them? For example,

has went^{gone}

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

17. (Linked to Q16) Is it required by the school?

- Yes
- No

18. While giving feedback on students' writing, how often do you indicate (underline/circle) errors, correct them and indicate types of errors? For example,

has went^{gone} (verb form)

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

19. (Linked to Q18) Is it required by the school?

Yes

No

20. While giving feedback on students' writing, how often do you indicate (underline/circle) errors and indicate types of errors without correcting them? For example,

has went (verb form)

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

21. (Linked to Q20) Is it required by the school?

Yes

No

22. While giving feedback on students' writing, how often do you indicate (underline/circle) errors without correcting them? For example, **has went**

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

23. (Linked to Q22) Is it required by the school?

Yes

No

24. While giving feedback on students' writing, how often do you hint at the location of errors, e.g., by putting a mark in the margin to indicate an error on a specific line.

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

25. (Linked to Q24) Is it required by the school?

Yes

No

26. While giving feedback on students' writing, how often do you hint at the location of errors and categorize them (with the help of a marking code), e.g., by writing 'Prep' in the margin to indicate a preposition error on a specific line.

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

27. (Linked to Q26) Is it required by the school?

Yes

No

28. How would you evaluate the overall effectiveness of your existing error feedback practice on student progress in grammatical accuracy in writing?

My students are making:

- good progress
- some progress
- little progress
- No progress

29. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements according to the scale below.

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Doesn't matter | Agree | Strongly agree |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| There is no need for teachers to provide feedback on student errors in writing. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Teachers should provide feedback on student errors selectively. | <input type="radio"/> |
| It is the teacher's job to locate errors and provide corrections for students. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Teachers should vary their error feedback techniques according to the type of error. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Coding errors with the help of a marking code is a useful means of helping students correct errors for themselves. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Marking codes should be easy for students to follow and understand. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Students should learn to locate their own errors. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Students should learn to locate and | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| correct their own errors. | | | | | |
| Students should learn to analyze their own errors. | <input type="radio"/> |

30. If there are many errors in student's writing, what do you think is most useful to do?

- mark all errors because _____
- mark all major errors but not the minor ones because _____
- mark most of the major errors, but not necessarily all of them because _____
- mark only a few of the major errors because _____
- mark only the errors that interfere with meaning because _____
- mark no errors and respond only to the ideas and content because _____

The following sentences (Question 31 to 43) all have the same error and a teacher has given a different type of feedback for each. For each sentence, please circle the box that best describes the usefulness of the feedback practice.

31. Teacher gives clues or directions on how to fix an error without correcting, for example

Look at section 2 in grammar book

Since I arrived in Victoria, I am very lonely.

- Not useful at all
- Not useful
- Doesn't matter
- Quite useful
- Very useful

32. (Linked to Q31) Your reason for choosing this is:

- It is important for students to know how to self-correct so they remember their errors.
- Clues are not useful. Students need specific advice. (e.g., wrong tense)
- Clues are not useful. Students need the correct form. (e.g., “am” to “have been”)
- Clues are useful, but are too much work for teachers.
- Clues are only useful for high level students.
- Other _____

33. The teacher points out where the errors occur, but no errors are corrected. For example,

Since I arrived in Victoria, I am very lonely.

- Not useful at all
- Not useful
- Doesn't matter
- Quite useful
- Very useful

34. (Linked to Q33) Your reason for choosing this is:

- Only pointing out errors can save teacher's time.
- Only pointing out errors can guide students in self-correction.
- Only pointing out errors can let students see where errors occur.
- Error identification is not useful. Correction is best.
- Error identification is only useful for high-level students.

Error identification is more useful than correction.

Other _____

35. The teacher corrects errors and makes comments. For

example, Since I arrived in Victoria, I ~~am~~ ^{have been (wrong tense)} very lonely.

Not useful at all

Not useful

Doesn't matter

Quite useful

Very useful

36. (Linked to Q35) Your reason for choosing this is:

Comments are useful for motivation.

Comments are useful for students to realize why the error exists.

Comments are useful for students to see how to fix it.

Students will remember better with comments.

Correction with comment is useful only for lower levels.

Comments are not useful for grammar correction.

Comments are too much; the correct form is enough.

The teacher should comment on reoccurring mistakes.

Comments and corrections are useful, but too time-consuming for teachers.

Comments should only focus on the key points pertinent to students' current learning.

Other _____

37. The teacher corrects errors directly. For

example, Since I arrived in Victoria, I ~~am~~^{have been} very lonely.

Not useful at all

Not useful

Doesn't matter

Quite useful

Very useful

38. (Linked to Q37) Your reason for choosing this is:

It is the teacher's job.

Teacher correction is useful, but not enough; comments are also necessary.

Teacher correction is important so students can see their errors.

Teacher correction is important; it's the best way for students to learn from errors.

Teacher correction is not useful because students don't pay attention to them.

Teacher correction is not useful because students don't understand them.

The teacher should select important errors, otherwise it's too time-consuming.

Other _____

39. The teacher gives feedback by making comments about errors, but no errors are

corrected. For example, Since I arrived in Victoria, I am very lonely.
wrong tense

- Not useful at all
- Not useful
- Doesn't matter
- Quite useful
- Very useful

40. (Linked to Q39) Your reason for choosing this is:

- Comments are too confusing; students don't understand them.
- Comments only work if students are dedicated and motivated.
- Comments are not enough; errors must be corrected too.
- Students will remember better with comments and self-correction.
- Comments are useful for fluency, but not accuracy.
- Comments are useful if they are explanatory.

41. The teacher gives no feedback. For

example, Since I arrived in Victoria, I am very lonely.

- Not useful at all
- Not useful
- Doesn't matter
- Quite useful

Very useful

42. (Linked to Q41) Your reason for choosing this is:

43. The teacher gives feedback by making comments on the ideas or content, but no errors

Since I arrived in Victoria, I am very lonely.

are corrected. For example,

I am sorry to hear that

Not useful at all

Not useful

Doesn't matter

Quite useful

Very useful

44. (Linked to Q43) Your reason for choosing this is:

45. If an error is repeated in student's writing more than once, do you think it is useful to mark it each time it occurs?

Yes

No

46. (Linked to Q45) The reason for choosing Yes is:

Yes, the teacher must be consistent.

Yes, so students can be reminded and get an overview to see patterns.

Other _____

47. (Linked to Q45) The reason for choosing No is:

No, it is better to give students a chance for self-correction.

No, students should think about it and do it themselves.

No, just mark an example and students should do the rest.

Other _____

48. For each of the following questions, please circle one box that best describes its usefulness for students.

| | Not useful at all | Not useful | Doesn't matter | Quite useful | Very useful |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| How useful is it to point out grammatical errors in students' writing? (Indicate reason behind) | <input type="radio"/> |
| How useful is it to point out vocabulary errors in students' writing? (Indicate reason behind) | <input type="radio"/> |
| How useful is it to point out spelling errors in students' writing? (Indicate reason behind) | <input type="radio"/> |
| How useful is it to point out punctuation errors in students' writing? (Indicate reason behind) | <input type="radio"/> |
| How useful is it to point out organization errors in students' writing? (Indicate reason behind) | <input type="radio"/> |
| How useful is it to point out content/idea errors in students' writing? (Indicate reason behind) | <input type="radio"/> |

49. If you are willing to accept further interviews, please indicate your contact information here:

Telephone number: ____

Email address: ____

Wechat number: ____

Acknowledgements

We thank the editors of this special issue for their constructive feedback in the preparation of this manuscript. We would also like to express our gratitude towards the participants for their generosity of sharing with us their opinion and experiences with written corrective feedback.

Funding

This study was part of the project of Research on Educating Excellent Foreign Language Teachers in the New Era supported By China National Social Science Found (#19BYY220).

Ethics Declarations**Competing Interests**

No, there are no conflicting interests.

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