

# Investigating the Practice of Providing Written Corrective Feedback Types by ESL Teachers at the Upper Secondary Level in High Performance Schools

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## ABSTRACT

The past few decades has seen the rapid development of WCF (written corrective feedback) study. The present study examined the practice of providing WCF by teachers. The aim of this study was to determine the types of WCF used by English teachers. The study is an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design using open-ended and close-ended survey questionnaire, interviews, and content analysis of students' essays. It involved 54 English teachers of high performance schools in a state in West Malaysia to answer the questionnaire, 8 teachers were interviewed and 48 students' essay scripts were analysed. WCF types studied were by Ellis (2008), namely; Direct, Indirect, Metalinguistic, Focused, Unfocused, Electronic and Reformulation, with two additional types, Personal comment and No feedback. Direct and Metalinguistic comment were the perceived WCF types from the questionnaire findings; however, both teacher interviews and sample essays analysis indicated teachers practised Unfocused and Indirect types the most. The two salient findings to emerge from the data comparison are the teachers were unaware of the available WCF types to provide in the teaching of ESL writing; and teachers' marking is very much influenced by the LPM (Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia) types or marking symbols, which appears to be the only reference teachers have in providing WCF. These findings suggest that teachers need to be given sufficient exposure to all the available WCF types so that more effective WCF practices will take place.

**Keywords:** *Writing, teacher, WCF type, corrective feedback, written feedback, SLA*

## INTRODUCTION

In students' language learning, writing ability has always been regarded an important skill (Ahmadi, Maftoon, & Mehrdad, 2012). Zacharias (2005) addressed that writing is considered the most difficult skill to acquire for many learners of English as second language because it requires having a certain amount of L2 background knowledge about rhetorical organization, appropriate language use or specific lexicon with which they want to communicate their ideas. As a result, many attempts have been made which aimed at helping students improve their writing. Providing feedback is one of such attempts where, studies have been conducted to investigate the nature of feedback and its roles in L2 teaching and learning despite the dissenting voices on the efficacy of WCF (e.g. Truscott, 1996, 1999; Kepner, 1991; Sheppard, 1992). So far, however, there has been several studies constructed on WCF in Malaysia (Farid & Samad, 2012; Afshin Soori, 2011; Razali, Razawi, Muthusamy, Ghazali & Micheal, 2011). Most studies in WCF focus on the specific WCF types and adopt experimental design. In short, there is still insufficient data for teachers' practices at the upper secondary level on WCF practice.

### Statement of Problem

The present study focus is the important of students getting teachers WCF in order to improve their writing. Primarily, the study of WCF will benefit by introducing the teachers with the available WCF types to be used in providing WCF to learners of English as a Second Language at the upper secondary level in Malaysia.

The research conducted on writing as a main skill in language has received great focus of attention since the second half of the twentieth century up to the present, and a number of studies have certified its value as a field of research in teaching (Soleymanzadeh & Gholami, 2014). The act of providing WCF is essential in teaching writing skill. In teaching and learning process of English language, a teacher is needed to check and correct students' composition because they need assistance from an adult as teacher is considered the expert (Vygotsky, 1978).

The biggest challenge of the teachers and learners at the upper secondary level is having had to deal with numerous tasks on composition, as students need to write long essays for English language paper in SPM examination and its exercises. Due to the ineffective practice of giving WCF, teachers are left with frustration and anxiety because giving WCF is indeed a very time-consuming and very exhausting task (Ferris, 1999). Nevertheless, Truscott (1996) added that feedback diverts time and energy away from more productive aspects of teachers' work as writing teachers and, as a result, writing is more often tested than taught (Hyland, 2007).

Therefore, study of the important of students getting teachers WCF in order to improve students' writing is essential, as there are hardly any studies conducted in Malaysia, focusing on both WCF and the secondary level teachers and students. Moreover, the available studies on written corrective feedback in Malaysia are also limited. Thus, the findings of this study would do teachers a big favor in realising the available WCF types, the nature and strengths of each type and in recognising their main focus in providing WCF, to ensure acquisition.

### Background of the Study

Over the past few decades, there has been an increasing amount of literature on corrective feedback (CF) and written corrective feedback (WCF). Since Truscott (1996) claimed that it is ineffective, harmful, and therefore should be abandoned, the call for longitudinal evidence on the efficacy of WCF for ESL and EFL writers has been made repeatedly. Moreover, some other studies indicate that the CF/WCF does not provide any positive effect on second/foreign language learning (e.g. Kepner, 1991; Sheppard, 1992; Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2004, 2007). Since then, the trend of WCF studies is dominating by those advocating its provision.

In the early period, from the late 1980s to 1990s, the focused was on whether or not WCF improved accuracy (e.g. Klien, 1989; Lee, 1997; Ferris, Pezone, & Tade, 1997; Hyland, 1998). During the more recent period from year 2000 to 2010, the focus was still on whether or not WCF improved accuracy with the focus beginning to be given on the types of WCF. Nevertheless, the more current studies (e.g. Bitchener, Young & Cameron, 2005; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima, 2008; Sheen, Wright & Moldawa, 2009; Jhowry, 2010; Ahmadi, Maftoon, & Mehrdad, 2012) were still focusing on whether or not WCF improved accuracy, types of WCF, pedagogical implications and the expansion of linguistic features used or researched. Even until recently, the studies on WCF (e.g. Sampson, 2012; Farid & Samad, 2012; Mubarak, 2013; Guo, 2013; Wistner, 2014; Kazemipour, 2014; Gholaminia & Marzban, 2014; Fazilatfar, Fallah, Hamavandi, & Rostamian, 2014) are circling about the efficacy of specific types of WCF, namely Focused and Unfocused, and Direct and Indirect WCF in improving students' writing by taking up the experimental design of study.

Although extensive research has been conducted on WCF/CF, it is still getting less attention in Malaysia. The most current studies are on The effect of focused meta-linguistic written corrective Feedback (Ebadi, 2014), Corrective feedback and second language acquisition (Mandana Rohollahzadeh Ebadi, Mohd Rashid Mohd Saad, 2014) and Explicit form focus instruction (Ebadi, Rashid, & Saad, 2014). The three studies adapts the experimental design. Studies on the effects of different kind of Direct feedback on students' writing of upper-intermediate international students in a university (Farid & Samad, 2012) and study on The efficacy of immediate and delayed CF (Afshin Soori, 2011), also adapted the experimental design. Meanwhile, there was a study conducted on WCF and focusing on the students' perception on teachers' WCF in a Malaysia university (MdNordin, Halib, Ghazali & Mohd Ali, 2010). Whilst some research has been carried out

on WCF, no single study exists which investigates WCF practices at the secondary level. Therefore, this study makes a major contribution to research on the types of WCF teachers practice.

#### *Written corrective feedback (WCF) Types in the Study*

There are two versions of a typology of WCF available by Ellis (2009) and Sheen (2011). The contents are about the same, but the categorisation is different. Ellis lists six types of WCF (Direct, Indirect, Metalinguistic, The Focused of feedback, Electronic feedback and Reformulation) , whilst Sheen provides seven types of WCF (Direct non-metalinguistic written correction, Direct Metalinguistic written correction, Indirect written correction (non-located error), Indirect written correction (located error), Indirect written correction using error codes, Indirect Metalinguistic written correction and Reformulation (Figure 1). Both have mutual intention where the categorization was made based on the practicing teachers. Sheen relies on Ellis' typology in refining it into a more pragmatic tool as demonstrated by Lindqvist (2011). Contrary to the claim, the author believes Ellis' typology is less complicated and easy to follow. Thus, the current study adopts Ellis' typology of WCF types with the additional two types, Personal comment and No feedback. These two categorizations were added based on the types used by Amrhein & Nassaji (2010). The categories (WCF types) are reflected in the questionnaire, interviews and content analysis of students' essays WCF types checklist.

Type of CF	Description
<b>A Strategies for providing CF</b>	
<b>1 Direct CF</b>	The teacher provides the student with the correct form.
<b>2 Indirect CF</b>	The teacher indicates that an error exists but does not provide the correction.
<b>a Indicating + locating the error</b>	This takes the form of underlining and use of cursors to show omissions in the student's text.
<b>b Indication only</b>	This takes the form of an indication in the margin that an error or errors have taken place in a line of text.
<b>3 Metalinguistic CF</b>	The teacher provides some kind of metalinguistic clue as to the nature of the error.
<b>a Use of error code</b>	Teacher writes codes in the margin (e.g. ww = wrong word; art = article).
<b>b Brief grammatical descriptions</b>	Teacher numbers errors in text and writes a grammatical description for each numbered error at the bottom of the text.
<b>4 The focus of the feedback</b>	This concerns whether the teacher attempts to correct all (or most) of the students' errors or selects one or two specific types of errors to correct. This distinction can be applied to each of the above options.
<b>a Unfocused CF</b>	Unfocused CF is extensive.
<b>b Focused CF</b>	Focused CF is intensive.
<b>5 Electronic feedback</b>	The teacher indicates an error and provides a hyperlink to a concordance file that provides examples of correct usage.
<b>6 Reformulation</b>	This consists of a native speaker's reworking of the students' entire text to make the language seem as native-like as possible while keeping the content of the original intact.

Fig 1. Ellis's Typology of WCF (2008)

**Research Objectives**

The objective of the present study is

To determine the types of written corrective feedback (WCF) used by English teachers.

**Research Questions**

The research question guided the research is

What are the types of written corrective feedback (WCF) used by English teachers?

**METHOD***Setting*

The present study focus is the upper secondary teachers and students of High Performance upper secondary schools in a state in West Malaysia. This study aims to contribute to this growing area of research by exploring the practices of providing WCF at the secondary level. Therefore, these high performance schools were selected. There are 3 SBT schools and 10 Cluster upper secondary schools under the Ministry of Education (MOE), while there is one MRSM (Bitara) upper secondary school under the Ministry of Rural & Regional Development (KKLW) of Regular, Fully Residential and Religious types involved. Five of 14 mentioned schools are Religious schools. English is a compulsory subject in all primary and secondary schools curriculum in line with its status as a second language in Malaysia (MOE English Language Syllabus, 2013). The students selected to these schools, are among those who are good students based on their PMR (*Penilaian Menengah Rendah*) result and about 83% of the teachers have more than 10 years of teaching experience (see Appendix 1).

*Participants*

The survey questionnaire was administered to the total population of English teachers (N=54) of all the High Performance schools (Sekolah Berprestasi Tinggi - SBT), Cluster Schools of Excellence (Cluster) and High Performance Maktab Rendah Sains MARA - MRSM (Bitara) types totaling 14 schools. For the purpose of this study, eight teachers were interviewed based on a set of criteria for the interview sessions and 48 students' essays were analysed for types of WCF.

*Design*

The study is an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design using open-ended and close-ended survey questionnaire, interviews, and content analysis of students' essays. The qualitative data were content analysis of students essay scripts and semi-structured teacher interviews to determine the types of written corrective feedback (WCF) used by English teachers. A mixed-methods design was used as the combination of quantitative and qualitative data collected could bring greater insight to the problem as opposed to analysing either type of data separately (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2009). In this explanatory sequential mixed-methods design study, although data were collected in sequence, they had equal weight. Quantitative data collection and analysis enabled the researcher to understand teachers' practices of providing WCF types in the teaching of ESL writing and teachers' actual WCF types practice. Meanwhile, qualitative data collection and analysis allowed the researcher to interpret and understand teachers' WCF types practice by looking at the actual WCF remarks provided by teachers to the students' essays. The researcher then corroborated the research findings by combining the quantitative and qualitative data.

The instrument used in the study was modified instrument from Evans & Hartshorn (2010), Lee (2003) and Amrhein & Nassaji (2010). The questionnaires were modified to suit the present study objectives while still following the same constructs. Teachers were given one to two weeks to complete the questionnaire and it was agreed as a fair time period for them. Meanwhile, for the interview, eight teachers (from SBT, Cluster and Bitara schools) were interviewed also at their time of convenience and in the state of unobtrusiveness. In the meantime, the researcher and one rater analyzed 48 essays based on a checklist of all the target WCF types in the study.

*Choice of target WCF types*

The present study adopt Ellis (2007) WCF types, namely Direct, Indirect, Metalinguistic, Focused, Unfocused, Electronic Feedback and Reformulation. The researcher brought in another two WCF types to the study, Personal Comment and No Feedback which were available in the literature (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010).

In making sure that teachers understand the characteristic of each target type, brief explanation and example were provided in the questionnaire (Figure 1).

#### *Data Analysis*

The data were analyzed using the descriptive statistics through SPSS 19 software and with the use of NVivo10 software to facilitate managing the vast amount of data for latter analysis and interpretation. In order to validate and strengthen the findings, member checking as well as triangulation were implemented. The data were collected and analyzed from three different sources; the questionnaire, interview and content analysis of students' essays. There were 36 items in the questionnaire on WCF types. The items consist of 5-point Likert scale and non-Likert scale items. As for the content analysis data, 48 student essays were analyzed which were provided with the WCF by their teachers.

Primarily, the questionnaire items that dwelled of 5-point Likert scale items on WCF types were analyzed with the use of SPSS software. Next, the data obtained from the teachers interviews and the content analysis of students' essays were transcribed and recorded in the Microsoft word documents. The data were then coded for themes with the use of NVivo software. The author sought the member checking for the interview data transcribing and analysis. Lastly, for the 48 sample essays collected, the analysis was conducted by marking the WCF types occurrence frequency in the WCF types checklist form. This was conducted by the author and a volunteer rater who is also an experienced English lecturer. The study adopted the careful procedure of inter-rater reliability procedures outlined by Crookes (1986).

The overall design of the study and the targeted WCF types notes were given and explained to the rater. Furthermore, the definition of all the WCF types involved and the method of administering the WCF types found in the essays were also dealt in detail. Besides, the rater was also presented with the worked example before working on the sample essays. The researcher analyzed all the sample essays first before they were being handed to the rater. The rater would refer to the author if she was not sure about the type of WCF involved. Next, inter-rater reliability was calculated where the  $r$  value is 0.75. Finally, the essays were rated and coded for analysis based on the most frequent types of WCF provided in the students' essays.

## RESULTS

The results of the types of WCF provided by the upper secondary school teachers will be presented in a form of across data comparison.

#### *The Findings across Data*

**Table 1 Comparison across data for three sources: questionnaire, interview and sample essays.**

Questionnaire (N=54)	Interview (N=8)	Sample Essays – Content Analysis (n=48)		
<i>Descriptive statistics</i>	<i>Reference in NVivo</i>	<i>No. of Occurrence (Percentage)</i>		
Direct	Indirect	48	Unfocused	48 (100)
Metalinguistic	Unfocused	22	Indirect	39 (81)
Indirect	Direct	16	LPM Codes	37 (77)
Electronic Feedback	LPM Codes	10	Direct	30 (63)
Reformulation	Focused	10	Personal Comment	20 (42)
Focused	Metalinguistic	5	Metalinguistic	2 (4)
Unfocused	Personal comment	5	No feedback	1 (2)
Personal comment	No feedback	1	Focused Reformulation	0 (0) 0 (0)
No feedback	Electronic Feedback	0		
-	Reformulation	0		

Table 1 displays the comparison across data for three sources, which are questionnaire, interview and learners' sample essays. For the questionnaire's findings, the targeted data of WCF types were analysed using descriptive statistics (Appendix 2) to obtain the mean scores for all the WCF types researched in the study. As reflected in the above table, the WCF types findings across data teachers use are presented in rank order. For the questionnaire findings, as shown in the first column of the above table, it appears that most teachers agreed that Direct, Metalinguistic comment and Indirect feedback are the top three WCF types for teachers to apply (Table 1). For Direct type, more than 60% (33 respondents) marked it as very useful while 42.6% (23 respondents) deemed it quite useful. As for Metalinguistic type, 22.2% (12 respondents) found it very useful and 66.7% (36 respondents) marked it as quite useful. For Indirect WCF type, 33.3% (18 respondents) marked it as very useful and 61.1% (33 respondents) marked it as quite useful.

The types that followed were Electronic feedback, Reformulation, Focused and Unfocused. Interestingly, more than 50% (30 respondents) of the teachers marked Electronic feedback type as useful, however, these teachers thought that it was not possible to apply, as the facility is not available in their schools. In the meantime, about 50% of the teachers agreed that reformulation type was useful; yet, they would not be able to practise it, as it is very time consuming. Teachers were unfamiliar with both Focused and Unfocused types as quoted in the interview held with the teachers. As a result, these two types received less than 50% agreement from the teachers. The Personal comment and No feedback types were indicated as not useful by teachers as more than 50% to 70% of the teachers indicated that the types were not useful at all, as it did not help in acquisition.

On the other hand, NVivo software data analysis revealed different findings. By using the NVivo 10 software, through coding, themes and number of reference in NVivo, it was revealed that most teachers applied Unfocused WCF where it was coded 48 times. Next, all teachers (n=8) interviewed agreed that they had been implementing unfocused WCF where it was coded for 22 times, followed by Direct WCF with 16 references in NVivo. Next rather important qualitative findings indicated that teachers also incorporate the Malaysian Examination Council (*Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia – LPM*) codes, where it was coded 10 times. The Focused type also had the same number of references. Meanwhile. The least favoured WCF types that the teachers provided were Metalinguistic and Personal comment types, which had 5 references in NVivo. Eventually, the No feedback, Electronic feedback and Reformulation types appeared to be the last three types of WCF employed within the ranking (Table 1).

Finally, based on the 48 learners essays collected (which were given WCF by the teachers), it appeared that all 48 essays were given Unfocused type of WCF, whilst, the Indirect happened to be the second choice for teachers as 39 essays (81%) were provided with this type of WCF. The LPM codes appeared to be the next important type engaged by the teachers with 77% (n=37), followed by Direct with 63% (n=30), Personal comment with 42% (n=20), Metalinguistic with 4% (n=2) and No feedback with 2% (n=1). However, none of the scripts showed the occurrence of Focused and Reformulation types of corrections. In light of these findings, it appeared that what teachers put into practice was merely not what they thought as best practices in providing WCF as we could see that there are differences in the findings across three sources: the questionnaire, interview and sample essays as shown in Table 1.

In short, the qualitative data findings showed almost similar results where the most applied WCF types by teachers were Unfocused and Indirect, which were followed by LPM codes, Direct, Personal comment, Metalinguistic, No feedback and Reformulation, whereas, none of the teachers applied Focused WCF type as they were unaware of the Focused WCF strategy in providing WCF.

There were few valuable findings discovered from the interviews held with the teachers. The interview data found that teachers were clueless about what Focused and Unfocused WCF type really meant as one interviewee stated

(...) so far there is no specific guideline on correction. So far, none, which I think it is good. Therefore, I cannot say that we have expert on this. Yes, yes because the courses we attended, the focus was more on... more on approach in general, focus on content but not focus on correction. Now that we mention, I think the *Kementerian* (ministry) should organize this kind of course too, I mean correction and feedback, because this is our business. How do we get this information, right? If they're not giving us, there is no way we will come across this (...) (interview INT4).

Interestingly, another interviewee was also keen on understanding more on the Focused and Unfocused types and other available WCF types.

(...) Frankly speaking, I haven't tried that Focused type or method. Now that I know what Focused feedback is, it sounds interesting. It sounds as if, when you're focused it easier, especially when they come to see you for clarification or explanation, you can just highlight the focused items only, compared to when you do thorough marking, we have to give a lot of explanation. And we don't have that much time for that thorough marking and explanation. Very interesting! (...) (interview INT5).

Apparently, the teacher respondents in the present study were not aware of the characteristics of each WCF types and the available WCF types that could be employed in the teaching of ESL writing. The two teachers quoted above admitted that they were not aware of the WCF types available. The majority of those who were interviewed and observed, expressed that they were uninformed of the WCF types, namely Focused, Unfocused, Direct, Indirect, Metalinguistic, Electronic and Reformulation.

## DISCUSSION

The research question concerned in the present study was the types of WCF used by English teachers. The results indicated that the types teachers thought effective (as marked in the questionnaire) differed from the types teachers practised in their teaching (as obtained from the interview and the sample essays teachers marked). Based on the descriptions given to the available WCF types in the questionnaire, teachers ascertained that the most useful types were Direct, Metalinguistic and Indirect. The least functional types to provide were Personal comment and No feedback. Thus, Direct WCF happened to be the most common corrective feedback teachers practise. The need to produce 'correct' writing could explain why teachers primarily focused on Direct error feedback (Lee, 2011).

Meanwhile, the findings from the interview and open-ended items analyzed with NVivo demonstrated that the first three types used by teachers were Indirect, Unfocused and Direct WCF. The most interesting part was with the occurrence of a new WCF type used by these teachers; the LPM (Malaysian Examination Council) type which appeared to be the fourth type provided by teachers in the WCF list (Table 1). As for these sources (interview and open-ended questions), the slightest favourable types were No feedback, Electronic and Reformulation.

Finally, the 48 scripts collected from the schools, which were given WCF, were the proof of what teachers have been practising. Apparently, it showed that all collected scripts were given Indirect and Unfocused WCF. Indirect referred to any kinds of indication, for example, underlining, circling and using of arrow sign while Unfocused referred to extensive marking without focusing on any specific error types or linguistics features. The next applied correction type was LPM codes; with 37 (77%) of the scripts were marked based on the codes. It demonstrated that teachers were bound with this correction strategy in providing WCF to students' composition. Likewise, teachers employed Direct and Personal comment to learners' composition during the marking process. Whilst most experienced writing teachers assert that providing feedback to student writing is the most difficult, and time-consuming part of teaching writing, but it is widely seen as informational and advice to facilitate improvements (Hyland & Hyland, 2001), also plays a key role in motivating the students (Afshin Soori, Abusaied Janfaza, 2012). On the other hand, teachers did not make use of the Metalinguistic comments (e.g. *Sp (spelling)*, *T(tense)*, *A(article) SVA(subject verb agreement) and Prep.(preposition)*) and Focused approach. Apparently, No feedback type remained the not useful type according to these teachers. This finding is in line with what Cohen & Cavalcanti (1990) and Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, (1994) stressed that providing feedback to student writing is pedagogically beneficial. Therefore, No feedback type was not an option though one of the teachers interviewed agreed that it is a useful type.

The two teachers' statements quoted earlier support that most teachers believe that error correction is beneficial, i.e., WCF is an area that has clear and direct relevance for language teachers (Leeman, 2007). These two interviewees were expert teachers in their respective schools and they were very experienced teachers with more than 20 years of teaching experience. The fact that they were unaware of the available and important approaches of WCF really is a serious consideration.

Other primary finding on the type of WCF teachers used in providing correction was the use of LPM type (codes). The type was later added to the types used by teachers in the present study. It seemed that it was another crucial method of giving correction at the upper secondary level schools. Teachers applied this

method along with Indirect and Unfocused WCF. LPM marking consists of a few marking symbols that represent errors such as √ (merit), ® (repetition), ∧ (omission), || (multiple word error – parallel lines in the right-hand margin), — (serious error) and ~~~~ (minor error). It indeed involved very simple marks for the errors learners committed. By applying these symbols and making any kinds of indication such as underlines, circles and arrows without correcting and making use of the metalinguistic comment and other available WCF types, raise the question of how effective would the WCF provided be. In other words, in this study, it appeared that teachers practised Direct and Unfocused types the most. Also, their lack of knowledge in WCF strategy has made them unaware that they have been practicing another WCF strategy which is Unfocused type where teachers did not focus (intensive marking) on certain linguistic item(s) in a composition practice. As admitted by teachers interviewed, Focused type could be an interesting and effective strategy in providing WCF. In addition, the three WCF types (Direct, Indirect and Unfocused) were extensive types of WCF and very time consuming, as emphasised by Ferris (1999a) as “one of the most time-consuming and exhausting aspects of their jobs” (p. 1) and yet teachers have been practicing it.

The interviews held in the present study provided important findings on the reasons for each targeted WCF types. Both No feedback and Electronic strategies received little attention from teachers, as they claimed the No feedback type would leave learners clueless and that it was not possible to practise Electronic feedback, as schools do not have enough facilities and lack of materials and references on it. On the other hand, teachers assented that No feedback type would also promote leisure writing, as too much error correction would demotivate the learners.

Based on the interviews also, the recurrent themes in the questionnaire’s open-ended items and interviews were time and learners’ ability (proficiency level). These two factors were said to be the reasons for teachers’ WCF types practices. The decision of which type to adapt was based on the learner’s proficiency level and the amount of time teachers had to provide the correction. The finding was in line with what Soori (2012) emphasized, that providing effective feedback should be based on the needs of students. Thus, learners with different proficiency level receive different types of WCF.

Indeed, teacher participants claimed that they were burdened with packed timetable and loads of other clerical responsibilities. Despite the time constraint teachers have at school, they still practise the unsystematic approach of giving WCF. Having had to deal with a large amount of error feedback, detailed marking easily leads to teacher exhaustion, stress, and burn-out (Ferris, 2003). Since there are no specific guidelines on the method of providing WCF, teachers simply make corrections based on either LPM type and guidelines, or the adopted symbols and marking techniques from another English teachers, external source or what they had learnt in the university. The findings that show teachers were uninformed of the available types to be used in providing WCF are rather disappointing.

### CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATION

The main purposes of the current study were to determine the types of WCF used by English teachers and examine the rationale behind the choice of WCF types teachers practised. Even though the setting was at the high performance upper secondary schools in a state in West Malaysia, the findings of this study can also be generalised to other upper secondary schools level students as English subject is not a compulsory subject for the schools admission.

The data across three sources; questionnaire, interview and essay scripts has shown that the school teachers have no specific marking techniques and approach, particularly in providing the types of WCF that can be used as a guideline. This has resulted in the inefficiency and unsystematic practices of giving WCF and on the importance of having and following a systematic approach as addressed by Ferris (1999) if the correction is clear and consistent it will work for acquisition.

Teachers gave high rating of agreement on the types of WCF proposed in the present study namely; Direct, Metalinguistic comment, Indirect, Electronic feedback, Reformulation and Focused as presented in Table 1. This finding rejects the statement made by Truscott (1996; 1999) that correcting learners’ errors in a written composition may enable them to eliminate the errors in a subsequent draft but has no effect on grammatical accuracy in a new piece of writing (i.e. it does not result in acquisition).

Meanwhile, the results across three data sources show teachers’ different or inconsistency of favarouble or selected WCF types. The questionnaire findings showed that the types of WCF teachers thought very useful were Direct, followed by Metalinguistic comment, Indirect, Electronic feedback, Reformulation,



Focused and Unfocused, respectively. Both Personal comment on content and No feedback remained the last two WCF types choice. In the meantime, the interview findings indicated that teachers agreed that Indirect, Unfocused, Direct, LPM codes, Focused, Metalinguistic and Personal comment were very useful and adopted respectively. Whilst, teacher respondents agreed that both Electronic feedback and Reformulation types were not useful and were not applied in their teaching at all. Finally, the actual practice of giving WCF was made clear through the analysis of the sample essays. This sample essays findings supported the interview findings where all scripts (100%) collected were given Unfocused and 39 scripts (81%) were given Indirect WCF, followed by LPM codes, Direct, Personal comment and Metalinguistic WCF. There was only one teacher (2%) practised No feedback type. Surprisingly, none of the teachers interviewed (from essays were collected) gave Focused and Reformulation types.

To summarize, it is crucial for teachers to be made aware of the available and possible types of WCF to be incorporated in their teaching, as teachers seem to be uninformed about the available approach to giving written corrective feedback (WCF). In future, the courses planning for teachers should also include the WCF methods, where available and possible corrective feedback and WCF types should be introduced and explained in detail, along with other issues related to the giving corrective feedback. The implication of teachers' lack of awareness in the method of giving feedback is an unsystematic, inefficient and very time consuming process of providing corrective feedback. These implications need to be addressed as WCF ensures acquisition (Ferris, 1999). Nevertheless, Soori (2012) stresses that one major issue that has obsessed the teachers' minds is how to provide the students with fruitful feedback, that will have a positive effect on students' writing processes, and so best contribute to improve the overall, long-term quality of their writing.

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**Appendix 1**

Teacher Data Composition by Gender, Age, Years in School, Teaching Experience, Teaching Background and Teaching Discipline (N=54)

Description	Teacher	N (%)
<i>Gender</i>	Male	5 (9.3)
	Female	49 (90.7)
<i>Age</i>	20-25	2 (3.7)
	26-30	3 (5.6)
	31-35	5 (9.3)
	36-40	8 (14.8)
	above 40	36 (66.7)
<i>Years in school</i>	1-5	15 (27.8)
	6-10	11 (20.4)
	>10	28 (51.9)
<i>Teaching Experience</i>	1-3	2 (3.7)
	4-6	2 (3.7)
	6-10	5 (9.3)
	> 10	45 (83.3)
<i>Education Background</i>	Bachelor	42 (77.8)
	Masters	12 (22.2)
	PhD	0 (0.00)
<i>Teaching Discipline Background</i>	TESL	36 (66.7)
	English related	18 (33.3)
<i>N=54</i>		

**Appendix 2**

WCF Types means and standard deviations based on questionnaire data

No.	Variables	Mean	Very Useful Frequency/ %	Quite Useful Frequency/ %
<i>WCF Types</i>				
1	Direct	4.10	33 (61.1%)	23 (42.6%)
2	Metalinguistic	3.90	12 (22.2%)	36 (66.7%)
3	Indirect	3.69	18 (33.3%)	33 (61.1%)
4	Electronic feedback	3.31	8 (14.8%)	22 (40.7%)
5	Reformulation	3.00	6 (11.1%)	22 (40.7%)
6	Focused	3.10	3 (5.6%)	20 (37%)
7	Unfocused	3.00	1 (1.9%)	17 (31.5%)
			Not Useful at All	Not Useful
8	Personal comment	1.83	28 (51.9%)	11 (20.4%)
9	No feedback	1.38	40 (74.1%)	10 (18.5%)
N = 54				