

**A TEACHER'S WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK:
BELIEFS AND PRACTICES**

NILAASINI A/P RAJAGOPAL

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
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NILAASINI A/P RAJAGOPAL

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ABSTRACT

In the English language classroom, writing is a necessary skill for the English as a second language (ESL) learners but it appears to be a very difficult skill to master. However, the writing skills could be mastered if teachers give good written corrective feedback to the students. This study investigated a teacher's written corrective feedback in responding to students' English written compositions in a private school in Subang Jaya, Selangor. It examines a teacher's beliefs and practices towards written corrective feedback. The theoretical framework that underlined this study is the 'noticing hypothesis' where teacher's feedback is intended to trigger noticing and it is important in language learning. A teacher participated in this study and 58 Year Four students contributed in this study through their written compositions. This study is primarily a qualitative research involving frequency counts of the types of written corrective feedback used by the teacher in the students' compositions and qualitative analysis which is based on the questionnaire on the teacher's beliefs and practices in giving written corrective feedback. The study found that the teacher used direct, metalinguistic and unfocused written corrective feedback in her student's compositions. Based on the teacher's questionnaire and students' compositions, it was found that most of the teacher's beliefs and practices aligned. The mismatches on the teacher's beliefs and her practices in giving written corrective feedback were marginal. The implications of the findings suggested the teacher to take note of her written corrective feedback because it is crucial to be noted by language teachers in order to give good written corrective feedback in students' compositions. Thus, effective written corrective feedback from the language teachers would help the students' to master the writing skill.

ABSTRAK

Di dalam kelas Bahasa Inggeris, penulisan adalah kemahiran yang perlu dikuasai oleh pelajar Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua tetapi penulisan merupakan kemahiran yang sangat sukar untuk dikuasai. Walau bagaimanapun, kemahiran dalam penulisan boleh dikuasai jika guru memberikan maklum balas pembetulan bertulis yang baik kepada pelajar. Kajian ini menyiasat maklum balas pembetulan bertulis seorang guru dalam komennya di dalam karangan Bahasa Inggeris pelajar - pelajar di sebuah sekolah swasta di Subang Jaya, Selangor. Kajian ini meneliti kepercayaan dan amalan terhadap maklum balas pembetulan bertulis guru tersebut. Kerangkateori yang mendasari kajian ini adalah hipotesis 'noticing' di mana maklum balas guru adalah bertujuan untuk mencetuskan penelitian dan ia adalah penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa. Seorang guru telah mengambil bahagian di dalam kajian ini dan 58 pelajar – pelajar Tahun 4 menyumbang di dalam kajian ini melalui karangan bertulis mereka. Kajian ini pada dasarnya merupakan suatu penyelidikan kualitatif yang melibatkan kiraan kekerapan jenis maklum balas pembetulan bertulis yang digunakan oleh guru dalam komposisi pelajar dan analisis kualitatif yang berasaskan soal selidik tentang kepercayaan dan amalan guru dalam memberi maklum balas pembetulan bertulis. Kajian mendapati bahawa guru menggunakan maklum balas pembetulan bertulis secara langsung, metalinguistic dan tidak terfokus dalam karangan pelajar. Berdasarkan soal selidik guru dan penelitian dalam karangan pelajar, didapati bahawa kebanyakan kepercayaan dan amalan guru adalah sejajar. Ketidakpadanan antara kepercayaan dan amalan guru dalam memberi maklum balas pembetulan bertulis adalah kecil. Implikasi dari penemuan dalam kajian ini mencadangkan guru untuk mengambil perhatian terhadap maklum balas pembetulan bertulis kerana ia penting untuk diambil perhatian oleh guru bahasa untuk memberi maklum balas pembetulan bertulis yang baik dalam karangan pelajar.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESL: English as a Second Language

WCF: written corrective feedback

SPM: Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia

KFL: Korean as a foreign language

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

English is one of the subjects being offered in the Malaysian education system and being taught in both primary and secondary schools. In the English classroom, writing is a necessary skill for the English as a second language (ESL) learners but it appears to be a very difficult skill to master (Mastan & Maroof, 2014). But mastering the writing skill is not impossible if students are guided well with proper written corrective feedback from their teachers.

This study is about a teacher's written corrective feedback (WCF) in responding to students' English written compositions. It examines the teacher's beliefs and practices in giving WCF. The researcher investigated the teacher's beliefs about WCF and actual practice in giving WCF because only a small number of studies have been conducted to determine the beliefs and practices of WCF among teachers who teach ESL (Lee, 2009).

Scholars defined WCF in various ways. Wang and Jiang (2014) simply defined it as error correction or grammar correction. Others perceived WCF as written feedback given by the teacher on a student's paper with the aim of improving grammatical accuracy as well as written feedback on idiomatic usage (Ducken, 2014) or "various ways a reader can respond to a second language writer by indicating that some usage in the writing does not conform to the norms of the target language" (Sun, 2013, p. 12). In this study, WCF will be defined as a feedback which acknowledges correct forms and "a feedback which specifically indicates errors of language, such as in grammar, vocabulary and mechanics" (Al Shahrani, 2013, p. 4). The researcher prefers to use this definition in her study because it is the most general form of WCF used by ESL teachers (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

In a second language class, particularly writing, a teacher gives WCF on the learners' writing because WCF serves many purposes. WCF are used by the teacher to alert learners of the errors that they have committed in their writing. The act of giving WCF on the learners' writing also notifies the learners on the correct forms which have been used in their English compositions. WCF also helps the second language learners to improve the accuracy of their writing (Hosseiny, 2014). Apart from that, WCF serves as a tool that helps the teachers to give efficient feedback in students' writing.

The theoretical framework that underlies this study is the 'noticing hypothesis'. "The noticing hypothesis states that what learners notice in input is what becomes intake for learning" Schmidt (1995, p. 20). This means that input that is noticed is likely to be acquired. In this study, the given WCF by the teacher is considered to be the input which may contribute to the writing skill acquisition by the learners. The 'noticing hypothesis' is chosen to be used as the base of this study because WCF helps trigger the students to notice their performance in their writing. According to Gass (1988), the first stage of language acquisition is noticing. Noticing is also known to be a crucial element in language learning (Lynch, 2001).

1.1 Statement of problem

Writing is an important skill to be developed in school and beyond that in any learning institutions. Often, students need to be guided in their writing. Students generally learn the writing skill through guidance provided by the teacher in the form of feedback. Teachers provide various kinds of assistance to the students through their feedback. For example, the teacher might help the students to look out for ideas, sort out the ideas, outline the ideas through pre-writing, draft the writing, revise the writing, edit the writing and even publish or share the writing in order to be seen by other students. WCF is given to the students after they edit their writing task. It is done before sharing

the students' writing to be read by others. However, if the guide or in this case the teacher is not good at providing WCF in students' writing, then the students may not get the input they need from the teacher to revise their writing. This will affect the students' writing quality.

This study on WCF was conducted for several reasons. First, the teacher plays an important role in writing classes because a good teacher would produce students who can write well. According to Keh (1990) and Hedgcock and Leftkowitz (1996), a teacher plays at least four important roles in providing feedback on students writing. First, a teacher is seen as a reader or a respondent. As a reader, the teacher reads the students' writing and thereafter responds to it through WCF. Second, the teacher functions as a writing teacher or guide. In this aspect, the teacher takes the lead to guide the students if the students do not follow the intended answers wanted from the writing task. For example, the teacher will take note of the students' points or ideas in their writing task. If the points or ideas do not fit in the students' writing, the teacher will then inform the students on what the points or ideas were supposed to be. Third, the teacher plays a role as a grammarian. As a grammarian, the teacher informs the students on their grammar errors and gives relative feedback that is useful to the students in order to help them overcome the grammar errors. This also includes giving explanations to the students on why certain grammar rules were followed the way it is. Hence, it gives the students some logical reasons about grammar rules and students would be careful when applying the grammar rules in their writing. Fourth, the teacher is seen as an evaluator or a judge. The teacher reads and evaluates the students' written work by looking at the quality of their writing and also judge the types of grades which is deserved by the students. Overall, the teacher plays an important role in providing feedback on students' writing as the feedback will help to mould the students' next writing task apart from giving reliable information for the students to follow in their

writing. Most importantly, “teachers must constantly make decisions about what to do –and what not to do– in their classes” as teachers play an important role in giving WCF (Trustcott, 1999, p. 121). Providing good and sufficient feedback in students’ writing is crucial but it would be worrying if the teachers’ beliefs and practices do not tally with each other.

The main objective of a writing class is to produce students who are able to write well. However, some teachers themselves are not equipped with the knowledge of giving WCF in order to achieve the objective in a writing class (Al Shahrani, 2013). For example, some teachers may not have the adequate training or knowledge when it comes to giving WCF. When teachers lack training or knowledge on WCF, they would not be able to give effective WCF on students’ writing and this would impact the students’ performance in writing. Students would be at lost if no proper WCF is given to them in their writing.

Scholars had outlined the types of WCF that were used by teachers in student writing through studies of WCF. One example is the outline of the types of WCF that was proposed by Ellis (2009). Ellis came up with the types of WCF after examining the teachers’ handbooks and studies of WCF. Ellis stated that there are six main strategies in providing WCF. They are direct WCF, indirect WCF, metalinguistic WCF, focus of the feedback, electronic feedback and reformulation. The compilation of the types of WCF by Ellis is very useful as they are clearly presented to the readers (see Table 2.1). The types of WCF proposed by Ellis could serve as a guideline for teachers to give WCF.

The teacher’s role in providing good feedback is important and it is especially so in the current situation in the Malaysian education system. Phung (2015) stated that the Malaysian Education Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin announced the initiative of

making a pass in English compulsory in Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) by 2016 in launching the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025. A compulsory pass in English means the SPM students are obligated to master all the skills in English like reading, speaking, listening and also writing as these are the elements that would contribute in the students' passing in English. Since one of the skills that will be assessed in the SPM English examination is writing, the teacher's role in providing WCF is critical in supporting students' development in it. The WCF in students' written English compositions will help the learners to prepare themselves for their SPM English examination. Thus, what teachers do in giving feedback is important as students need to do well in all the skills in English including writing. The feedback given by the teacher will build the students' writing skills. The implication of making English as a compulsory pass is relevant to this study. Therefore, there is a real need to look into classroom to see what the teacher is doing.

1.2 Significance of the study

The study on WCF in students' English composition is important to be conducted as the outcome of this research would benefit several groups. First, this study would reveal the way the teacher gives WCF in students' written English compositions. Apart from that, the outcome of the research, if published, may encourage other English teachers to reflect on how they give WCF on their students' written English compositions. Teachers may be more alert and aware of the form of WCF that could be given.

Next, English language teachers would be able to see the types of WCF given in students' writing compositions and evaluate themselves on their own practice of WCF. In addition to that, the outcome of this study may help teachers to focus in giving effective WCF in students' compositions. The outcome of this study would also provide

teachers with knowledge on how to improve themselves in responding to students' compositions.

Then, the school where the teacher is teaching could take note of the types of WCF given by the teacher in the students' English compositions and the school authority or the language head of the department could try to organize seminars and writing workshops for the other English language teachers in the school in order to help them to improve their skills in giving WCF. When teachers are informed about WCF, the students are likely to gain from the comments given by their teachers.

Though this is a small scale study, the outcome of the study could be taken as a guideline by teachers who give WCF in students' writing. This study could create awareness for the educators apart from adding vital information to the educators on the types of WCF and the beliefs and the practices of WCF by a teacher (Norouzian & Farahani, 2012). For instance, the findings of this study could be shared with the teacher's colleagues to create awareness on how to give WCF in students' compositions. It could be seen that this study has valid significance and these are the compiling arguments that moved the researcher to conduct this study.

1.3 Research objectives and research questions

The general objective of this research is to examine the language teacher's WCF in responding to students' English compositions. This research aims, in particular to investigate the teacher's practices and beliefs of written corrective feedback. In order to achieve these objectives, the following research questions are asked:

- 1) What are the types of written corrective feedback used by the teacher in responding to the Year Four students' English composition?
- 2) What are the beliefs of the Year Four English teacher with regard to written corrective feedback?

- 3) What are the practices of the Year Four English teacher with regard to written corrective feedback?

The first research question intends to uncover the types of corrective feedback used by the teacher in responding to the Year Four students' English compositions. The teacher-written feedback is a crucial part of the writing process and this is agreed by both the teachers and students (Ferris, 2002). The second and third research questions intend to gain insights into the teacher's beliefs and practices about giving WCF in students' English compositions. These insights by the teacher give qualitative information on what actually takes place in the classroom and such information will reveal whether teacher's beliefs are indeed reflected in their actual practice (Storch, 2010).

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter introduces the focus of the study that is to investigate a teacher's beliefs and practices in WCF. It provides the operational definition of WCF and the statement of problem which drives the study. Then, the statement of problem which contributes to the move to conduct this study was stated. Next, the significance of the study was outlined by the researcher followed by the research objectives and research questions of the study.

This report is divided into five chapters. Chapter two presents the related literature pertaining to the research. Chapter three describes the methodology and how the data were analysed. Chapter four outlines the findings and discussions. Chapter five presents the conclusions of the research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This study investigates one teacher's beliefs and practices in giving WCF and as such it is imperative for the researcher to review certain topics in the literature which are related to the study. The topics that are covered in the literature review include types of written corrective feedback, influence of teachers' beliefs on teachers' practices and roles of teacher in providing feedback on students' writing.

2.1 Types of WCF

There are various types of corrective feedback that are used by teachers to mark their students' writing and the types of WCF teachers use, it has been reported, are based on the teachers' wants and needs (Lee, 2004). Bitchener and Ferris (2012) noted that there are four main types of WCF which are mainly used by teachers when correcting students' compositions. The four main types of WCF are the direct WCF, the indirect WCF, unfocused WCF and focused WCF. Through direct WCF, the teacher gives straightforward answers in the students' writing. For example, the right word for the wrong word used in the students' written work is given by the teacher. In contrast to that, the indirect WCF only provides an explanation, an example or a hint and the teacher will not provide the correction on the students' written work. As for focused WCF, the teacher will only highlight specified errors in the students' writing, usually a small number of errors. Unfocused WCF refers to a situation when all the errors in the students' writing are corrected by the teacher. However, there are other varieties of WCF that are also used by educators other than the four types mentioned above.

The types of corrective feedback provided by Bitchener and Ferris (2012) are not the only ones available in the literature as other scholars have also made their contributions. Ellis (2009), for example, provides a list of WCF used by teachers following an examination of a teachers' handbook and published empirical studies of WCF. The types of teacher WCF noted by Ellis are provided in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Written corrective feedback (Ellis, 2009, p. 98)

Corrective Feedback (CF) Type	Description	Studies
Direct CF	The teacher provides the student with the correct form.	e.g. Lalande (1982) and Robb et al. (1986).
Indirect CF	The teacher indicates that an error exists but does not provide the correction.	Various studies have employed indirect correction of this kind (e.g. Ferris and Roberts 2001; Chandler 2003). Fewer studies have employed this method (e.g. Robb et al. 1986).
a. Indicating + locating the error	This takes the form of underlining and use of cursors to show omissions in the student's text.	
b. Indication only	This takes the form of an indication in the margin that an error or errors have taken place in a line of text.	
Metalinguistic CF	The teacher provides some kind of metalinguistic clue as to the nature of the error.	Various studies have examined the effects of using error codes (e.g. Lalande 1982; Ferris and Roberts 2001; Chandler 2003). Sheen (2007) compared the effects of direct CF and direct CF with meta-linguistic CF.
a. Use of error code	Teacher writes codes in the margin (e.g. ww=wrong word; art = article).	
b. Brief grammatical descriptions	Teacher numbers errors in text and writes a grammatical description for each numbered error at the bottom of the text.	

‘Table 2.1, continued’

Corrective Feedback (CF) Type	Description	Studies
The focus of the feedback a. Unfocused CF b. Focused CF	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. Unfocused CF is extensive. Focused CF is intensive.	Most studies have investigated unfocused CF (e.g. Chandler 2003; Ferris 2006). Sheen (2007), drawing on traditions in SLA studies of CF, investigated focused CF.
Electronic feedback	The teacher indicates an error and provides a hyperlink to a concordance file that provides examples of correct usage.	Milton (2006).
Reformulation	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.	Sachs and Polio (2007) compared the effects of direct correction and reformulation on students’ revisions of their text.

Ellis (2009) listed nine types of teacher WCF as shown in Table 2.1. The types of WCF used by teachers can be categorized as an important tool which serves to indicate the performance of students in their writing. The various types of WCF allow teachers to choose their preferred WCF when giving feedback in students’ writing. Thus, teachers are not restricted to give only one specific type of WCF. It would be good if teachers practice giving effective WCF as it contributes to language learning.

2.2 Influence of teachers' beliefs on teachers' practices

Borg (2001) defined the term 'teacher's beliefs' as a guide that is followed by the teacher whether consciously or unconsciously and it is shown through the performance of the teacher in the classroom. The performance of the teacher in the classroom is thus, the practice of the teacher. There are numerous factors that contribute to the teachers' beliefs and among them are the teacher's learning experience (Pajares, 1992), the teacher's teaching experience and also the context or situation (Pennington, 1996). In this study it is believed that both the teacher's teaching experience and learning experience together with the situation in the classroom faced by the teacher contribute to the teacher's beliefs and practices of WCF.

2.2.1 Studies on teacher perception of WCF

Studies on teacher's perception of WCF have been conducted by researchers such as Ko (2010) and Mc.Martin-Miller (2014). Ko (2010) conducted a comparative study in order to investigate the similarities and differences of the perceptions of North America's teachers of foreign language (Korea) and teachers of a second language (ESL) in terms of written feedback. An online survey containing questionnaires were given to 153 college instructors of ESL and Korean as a foreign language (KFL) in order to conduct the research in North America. A huge difference was found in the practice of both the group of ESL and KFL teachers. The KFL instructors preferred comprehensive and direct feedback compared to the ESL instructors who opted for selective and indirect feedback in students' writing. The instrument used in Ko's study was a questionnaire and it was quite detail as it helped the language instructors to give a comprehensive outline of the language instructors' respective beliefs and practices in written feedback. Hence, the researcher decided to use the questionnaire by Ko in this study in order to determine the Year Four teacher's beliefs and practice in WCF.

McMartin-Miller (2014) conducted a study to investigate the percentage of errors marked in students' work by the instructors of second language and the reasons behind it. The study also served the purpose to investigate the students' attitudes towards selective and comprehensive error treatment. Three instructors and 19 students from Grant University, a large university in United States, participated in this study. The study discovered that the feedback on the students' writing provided by the three instructors differed from one another. The findings also revealed that students preferred to obtain comprehensive feedback from their instructors. Unlike Ko (2010), McMartin-Miller used interview to obtain the data for the research. The instructors and the students were interviewed in order to gain in-depth information. The interview method used in this study was good because both the students and teachers were interviewed to obtain the core data for the purpose of the research. Through the interview method, underlying information could be obtained for better result of a study. The questions used by McMartin-Miller to attain qualitative data from the instructors were used by the researcher in this study in order to identify the Year Four teacher's beliefs and practices in WCF.

2.2.2 Studies on teachers' beliefs and practices about WCF

There are not many studies that investigated teachers' beliefs and practices on WCF. One of the studies that investigated teachers' beliefs and practices on WCF was by Lee (2008) who conducted a study in Hong Kong to investigate teachers' beliefs and practices in written feedback. Two sets of data were collected for the purpose of this study. The first set of data was 174 texts that were collected from 26 teachers and follow-up interviews with seven of the teachers. These data were used to investigate the teachers' actual feedback. The second set of data was questionnaires that were given to 206 secondary teachers and 19 of the teachers were interviewed. These data were used to investigate the teachers' beliefs and reported practice. After an in-depth analysis, ten

mismatches were determined between teacher beliefs and practices at the end of the study. This study by Lee (2008) serves as an eye opener to all educators as certain beliefs and the practices by the teachers turned out to be a mismatch. This shows that the teachers were not aware of their actual practice in the classroom because their beliefs or what they thought they did is not the same as their performance or what they actually did.

Similar to Lee (2008), Montgomery and Baker (2007) also conducted a study to investigate teachers' beliefs and practices in respect to feedback. 15 English as second language (ESL) teachers from an English Language institute in the United States participated in this study. The teachers were asked to answer questionnaires which asked about the amount of feedback that the teachers gave on different characteristics or aspects of their students' writing. The teachers' feedback was compared with their students' written compositions. The result of the study showed that the teachers' practices of giving written feedback were different from their beliefs. One of the findings showed that the teachers did not give feedback to the students according to what they had discussed in their weekly meeting. The teachers did not provide feedback to as what they believe they should do. This research once again shows that the teachers were not aware about their actual practice in giving feedback to their students.

Ferris (2006) chose to focus her investigation on the accuracy and consistency of corrections by a group of teachers in a university in the United States. The teachers were supposed to use an error correction chart provided by the university for correcting their students' text. Ferris noted the strategies used by the teachers' in the university's freshmen texts and later interviewed three teachers. The results of the study revealed that the teachers were mostly using direct feedback in their students' texts. The teachers did not appear to follow the instruction that required them to use coded indirect feedback prescribed by the university. It was discovered that the teachers were actually

providing corrections based on their students' needs and in doing so they chose not to follow the feedback strategies given by the university. In this case, it can be clearly seen that the teachers were giving feedback based on the situation. The teachers might have felt that they should give a comprehensive feedback to these freshmen students in their university as they were new students. It could also be that teachers might have felt it was their responsibility to give full guidance to these freshmen students, despite going against the feedback strategies given by the university.

Al Shahrani (2013) investigated the beliefs and practices in WCF provided by three teachers in their students' written text in one Saudi university. The study also investigated forty-one students' preferences about WCF. The data were collected through interviews and questionnaires. The results showed that most of the students' preferences matched the teacher's practice. However, there were several mismatches on the teachers' beliefs and their own practices in giving WCF in students' writing. This certainly shows that such study is important in order to outline what teachers think they are doing and their actual performance. This research was interesting because it generated in-depth answers from the teacher regarding their WCF practices. Thus, the researcher used the questions directed by Al Shahrani to the teachers on WCF practices in this study to find out the Year Four teacher's beliefs and practice in WCF.

The findings reported in the above studies about teachers' beliefs and practices about WCF emphasise the importance of paying attention to teachers' WCF. Teacher WCF need to be examined as teachers have been shown to have inaccurate self-assessments of their corrective feedback behaviours. It is critical for teachers to scrutinise their own feedback practice in responding to students' compositions in order to ensure that the strategies teachers use contribute to student learning.

2.3 Roles of teacher in providing feedback on students' writing

The review on the role of teachers' feedback in writing shows that the way teachers correct a second language learners' writing contributes to different impact on the learners' attitudes towards feedback and writing. The impact certainly will have a bearing on the learner's learning process.

Teachers' feedback in responding to students' compositions is especially important in the ESL learning context because the feedback can influence the students' attitude towards writing in the target language. Teacher feedback that is focused and clear has been shown to assist students in noticing the weaknesses in their writing. These students are likely to learn from their errors (Nagata, 1997). It has been shown that weak students, in particular, appreciate teacher feedback which not only draws attention to errors that occur in their writing but also provides explanations or corrections for the errors (Chandler, 2003).

The literature on teacher feedback on writing has noted that feedback that is given in a tactful manner encourages students to develop a positive attitude towards feedback (Semke, 1984). Students look forward to receiving non-threatening feedback about their writing from the teacher as they could see the potential benefits of the feedback. On the other hand, feedback that is harsh may result in demotivation or worse, animosity towards the teacher (Leki, 1991).

Although teacher feedback on writing often focuses on errors, teachers have also been found to provide feedback on positive aspects of student writing. The feedback may be provided in the form of praise or encouraging words. Students who receive praises like "Good point" or "Well done" try to produce better writing in their next writing task. There is evidence that students are motivated by teachers' feedback that

are positive (Cardelle & Corno, 1981). However, it is noted that teachers seldom provide feedback that is positive (Ferris, 1995).

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter reviews the literatures that are related to the focus of this study that is to investigate a teacher's beliefs and practices in WCF. It provides discussions related to the previous studies on a teacher's beliefs and practices in WCF. The methodology that was used by the researcher to conduct this research is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher reviewed the literature on topics that are related to WCF which include among others studies that investigated teachers' beliefs and practices on WCF. In this chapter, information about the methodology used for data collection, processing and analysis is discussed.

The aim of this study is to determine the types of WCF used by a teacher in responding to the Year Four students' English compositions. The study also aims to investigate the teacher's beliefs and practices about WCF. This study employs a qualitative research in order to achieve its aims. Seale (1999) stated that qualitative research allows the exploration of valid and reliable qualitative data in order to produce findings with good quality.

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study consist of a teacher and her 58 students. The teacher is addressed with the pseudonym 'Ms. Lisa' throughout this study from this section onwards. This section discusses the background of Ms. Lisa and the 58 students and it also states their respective roles in this study.

3.1.1 Ms. Lisa

Ms. Lisa played the role of a monitor in this study where she monitored the students in class when they were writing their English composition entitled 'My ambition'. Apart from that, Ms. Lisa also provided WCF on the students' compositions which were used as the primary data of this study. Ms. Lisa also contributed to this study by answering questionnaire which determined her beliefs and practices in WCF.

Ms. Lisa was the only teacher who participated in this study because the researcher wanted to investigate Ms. Lisa's beliefs and practices in WCF. The researcher was particularly interested in investigating Ms. Lisa's beliefs and practices in WCF due to the following reasons. Ms. Lisa had attended courses on writing feedback and training workshops which were conducted in her school. Apart from that, limited time for data collection left the researcher with no choice but to be content with Ms. Lisa being the only English teacher from the upper primary division who was able to provide data for this study.

Ms. Lisa was the Year Four English teacher who had been teaching English for the past two years in a private school in Subang Jaya, Selangor. She has an experience of two years in teaching English for the Year Four students in the same private school. She is a 31 year old Malaysian and she has a degree in Bachelor of Arts (Hons) English Language which she obtained from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Ms. Lisa is a Chinese and her mother tongue is Cantonese. She can communicate well in three languages, namely English, Bahasa Malaysia and Cantonese. Her first language is English because she grew up speaking English and had been communicating more in English with her family members and friends since young compared to Bahasa Malaysia and Cantonese. Ms. Lisa's proficiency in English is advanced. She scored A1 in her SPM English examination.

3.1.2 The students

The students are not the participants in this study but they contribute to the primary data of this study. The students' compositions were used as part of the analysis in this study and the analysis was done on the WCF that the teacher gave on the students' English compositions.

The students were 58 students who were studying in Year 4 in a private school in Subang Jaya, Selangor. All of them completed their lower primary years, from Year 1 to Year 3. The participants were 9 to 12 years old. The respondents were from Primary Four Lily, Primary Four Orchid and Primary Four Rose. In class 4 Lily, there were a total of 18 participants, consisting of 10 boys and 8 girls. In class 4 Orchid, there were a total of 19 participants, consisting of 11 boys and 8 girls. In class 4 Rose, there were a total of 21 participants, consisting of 11 boys and 10 girls. In total, the participants for this study were 32 boys and 26 girls. All the participants just sat for their mid-term examinations with the highest mark scored in English was 87% and the lowest mark scored in English was 35%.

3.2 Instruments

The current study employed a qualitative research involving frequency counts of the types of written corrective feedback used by the teacher in the students' compositions and qualitative analysis which is based on the questionnaire on the teacher's beliefs and practices in giving WCF.

Two instruments were used for the purpose of this study and they were the students' marked English compositions and a teacher questionnaire. In total, 58 Year Four students' marked English compositions were collected. This instrument was used by the researcher to collect the quantitative data for this study and it serves to answer the first research question:

- 1) What are the types of written corrective feedback used by the teacher in responding to the Year Four students' English composition?

The second instrument which was the teacher questionnaire was used by the researcher to collect qualitative data for this study. It serves to answer the second and third research questions. The research questions are:

- 1) What are the beliefs of the Year Four English teacher with regard to written corrective feedback?
- 2) What are the practices of the Year Four English teacher with regard to written corrective feedback?

3.3 Data collection process

As mentioned in the previous section, this study used two instruments which were the Year Four students' marked English compositions and a teacher's questionnaire. The data collection process is explained in this section. Prior to the data collection process, the researcher first gained permission from Ms. Lisa to conduct this study through a consent form (see appendix A) and briefed Ms. Lisa through a face-to-face conversation on 12th April 2015 about her participation in the study.

3.3.1 Students' marked English compositions

The first instrument used in this study was the students' marked English compositions which were collected after the marking process by Ms. Lisa. The topic which was assigned to the students for the English composition writing was 'My ambition'. Ms. Lisa chose that topic as it was the students' first writing activity in class and she did not want to give them a difficult task.

Prior to the writing activity, Ms. Lisa gave the students some guided questions related to the chosen composition topic. After distributing the guided questions, the students were asked to answer the questions. The guided questions were intended to help the students in writing out sentences in their English compositions. By using the guided questions as reference, the students were required to write a composition about their respective ambitions so as to meet the requirement of the title. The writing activity was done in a period of one hour and it was conducted during the students' English class. The activity was monitored by Ms. Lisa. Ms. Lisa played the role of a monitor

during the English composition writing task to ensure originality of the students' written work by making sure they do not discuss their answers and do not copy from any sources. Ms. Lisa did not set a limitation for the number of words to be written in the composition because she wanted the students to express themselves freely without worrying about the number of words in their first writing task. Upon completion of the writing task, Ms. Lisa collected and marked the students' English compositions. Upon the completion of marking, the researcher collected the 58 students' marked English compositions and made copies of them on 14th April 2015 for analysis purpose. The students' compositions are not provided in this report but will be made available to the reader upon request.

3.3.2 Teacher questionnaire

The second instrument used in this study was the questionnaire which was meant for Ms. Lisa to respond to. The questionnaire served to investigate Ms. Lisa's beliefs and practices in WCF. The questionnaire consisted 44 closed items and 16 open-ended items. The questionnaire was designed for the study and the ideas of the items to be included in the questionnaire were taken from Ko (2010), Al Shahrani (2013) and McMartin-Miller (2014). The ideas of the 44 closed items in the questionnaire were taken from Ko (2010) while the ideas for the 16 open-ended items in the questionnaire were taken from Al Shahrani (2013) and McMartin-Miller (2014).

The researcher sent Ms. Lisa the questionnaire via e-mail on 8th of May 2015 because Ms. Lisa requested the researcher to send the questionnaire to her via e-mail as she was busy and it was easier for her to respond via email. The researcher fulfilled Ms. Lisa's request because Ms. Lisa was an important part of the study as her feedback contributes to the primary data of this study. The researcher ensured that Ms. Lisa had enough time to answer all the questions. This was important as it gave Ms. Lisa enough space and time to ponder before giving an in-depth answer on her beliefs and practices

of WCF. However, Ms. Lisa was not informed about the specific purpose of the study because the researcher wanted to obtain genuine answers from Ms. Lisa, especially the feedback on her beliefs and practice in WCF.

3.4 Data analysis

3.4.1 Students' marked English compositions

The Year Four students' marked English compositions were analyzed quantitatively by the researcher through frequency counts. The researcher determined the types of WCF that were used by Ms. Lisa to mark the students' English compositions. For this purpose, the list of types of teacher WCF compiled by Ellis (2009) was used as the analytical framework by the researcher to determine the types of WCF used by Ms. Lisa in the Year Four students' English compositions entitled 'My ambition'. This list was used by the researcher because the explanation of each WCF is clear and it helped the researcher to determine the types of WCF in the students' compositions easily. The researcher coded the types of WCF used by Ms. Lisa in the students' compositions by looking at the WCF list provided by Ellis (2009) and the results were tallied. The types of WCF used by Ms. Lisa were presented in the form of a table (see appendix C) followed by explanations using extracts from the students' compositions through the descriptive method in the results of this study.

3.4.2 Teacher's questionnaire

Ms. Lisa's questionnaire was analyzed qualitatively. The researcher used a thematic analysis to present the feedback from Ms. Lisa based on the given questionnaire (Merriam, 2002). The responses from the given questionnaire which denote Ms. Lisa's beliefs and practices in WCF are presented in the following chapter in this report (see section 4.2).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter reveals the methods that the researcher used in her study which was focused to investigate a teacher's beliefs and practices in WCF. It provides the information on the participants and instruments used in this study together with the information on the methodology of the data collection and data analysis of this study. The findings and the discussion of this study is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This study examined the types of written corrective feedback (WCF) used by the teacher in responding to the Year Four students' English composition. This study also investigated the beliefs and the practices of the Year Four English teacher with regard to WCF. The types of written corrective feedback (WCF) used by the teacher in responding to the Year Four students' English composition were counted to determine the frequency of occurrence while qualitative analyses were conducted to uncover the beliefs and practices of the WCF by the teacher. The findings of the study and the discussion of the findings are presented in this chapter which consists of two sections. The two sections are the types of WCF used in students' English compositions and the teacher's beliefs and practices on WCF.

4.1 Types of WCF used in students' English compositions

The first research question asked about the types of WCF used by the teacher in the Year Four students' English compositions. Table 4.1 (see appendix C) shows three types of WCF were used by Ms. Lisa out of nine types of WCF from the list of types of WCF (Ellis, 2009) in responding to the 58 students' English compositions entitled 'My ambition'. The three types of WCF used by Ms. Lisa were direct WCF, unfocused WCF and metalinguistic WCF. These findings are discussed from sections 4.1.1 to 4.1.3 and in section 4.2.2.

4.1.1 Direct WCF

Direct WCF "provides the student with the correct form" (Ellis, 2009, p. 99). Ms. Lisa's use of direct WCF provided the students with "explicit guidance about how to correct their errors" (Ellis, 2009, p. 99) and this she appeared to execute in different

ways. Following are some instances from the students' compositions which revealed how Ms. Lisa used the direct WCF. (The letter 'S' in the following extracts represents the word 'student' who wrote the English compositions. Ms. Lisa's WCF is typed in bold and italics above or close to the errors.)

S7 .is Dr.Chan^o

S46 —→ My ambition is to become

S49 I can achieve my ambitions~~s~~ by

S3 ...is to~~/~~win many trophies

S50 *an*
....this is ^ interesting job...

Ms. Lisa used various symbols to indicate errors in her students' compositions. Ms. Lisa placed a full stop and circled it to show the absence of full stop in S7. In S46, Ms. Lisa used an arrow to indicate that the sentence is the beginning of a paragraph and it needs to be indented. Ms. Lisa used slashes to indicate different errors. In S49, the slash was used by Ms. Lisa to show that the letter 's' needs to be omitted. On the other hand, the slash was used to indicate that the words 'to' and 'win' need to be separated in S3. Ms. Lisa used the caret symbol to indicate missing word or words. In S50, Ms. Lisa used the caret symbol to show that the word 'an' is missing. She also wrote the missing word above the caret symbol to allow the student to know the exact missing word. WCF symbols were not only limited to give feedback on errors but also to acknowledge correct performance by the students. This is evident in the following examples.

S1 I need to learn to study smart. ✓

S25 My father inspired me to become a pilot because he used to take me to the hangar.
✓

In S1 and S25, Ms. Lisa put a tick (✓) for students' sentences which were presented in the correct form. This is a good feedback strategy as students might feel appreciated for being able to write correctly. Another way direct WCF was provided was through the use of single letters as shown below.

S2 *a*
.....attendent.....

S27 *e*
...intresting.....

S4 ...free items to orphans...

Ms. Lisa used single alphabets differently in her direct WCF. She used single letter to indicate incorrect choice with correction. In S2, she added the letter 'a' above 'attendent' to show incorrect spelling as a result of choosing the wrong alphabet. However, in S7, Ms. Lisa added the letter 'e' above 'intresting' to indicate a letter was missing and also underlined the entire word to show that it was erroneous. The above feedback shows that some of the erroneous words in the students' composition were underlined and some were not underlined by Ms. Lisa. Ms. Lisa also added single letter at the end of the word. She chose to add the letter 's' at the end of the word 'item' in S4 to indicate a missing letter. Direct WCF was also given at word level as shown below.

S3 *country*
...contry.....

S28 *keep*
I will kept drawing

Direct WCF at the word level was given by Ms. Lisa by underlining the wrong words and providing the correct words. In S3, Ms. Lisa underlined the wrongly spelled

word and wrote the correct form above it. In S28, feedback on the student's wrong choice of tense was also given by underlining the wrongly written word 'kept' and providing the correct word 'keep' above it. Ms. Lisa also used direct WCF based on her preferred style in writing as and it is evident in the examples below.

S11 *to*
They tell me ^ never ~~to~~ give up.

S6 *earn more*
...because I can get money

S29 *love*
... I can count money.

S22 *I choose this ambition because*
^I like to teach students in class.

Ms. Lisa also was found to comment on students output which were grammatically correct. Corrections appeared to be related to stylistic. Ms. Lisa moved the position of the word 'to' in S11 by using error code and producing the word at her preferred position in the sentence. In S6, Ms. Lisa underlined the word 'get' and replaced it with the words 'earn more' by writing those words above the word 'get'. Similar to S6, Ms. Lisa replaced the words 'can count' with the word 'love'. She suggested that S29 should use the 'love' instead of 'can count' but S29 wanted to be an accountant because S29 can count money and there was no reason for those words to be replaced with the word 'love'. Her act shows that maybe she might have felt that those words were more suitable to be used in the sentence. Even though there were no mistakes in S22, Ms. Lisa wanted to add some words at the beginning of the sentence just to improve the students' sentences to make them sound better. It needs to be pointed out that Ms. Lisa also gave WCF that appeared to be erroneous as shown below.

S5 *lives*
...saving peoples life...

In S5, Ms. Lisa made correction for the word 'life' by underlining the word 'life' and writing the correct word 'lives' above the word. She also added the letter 's' behind the word 'people' but she did not include the apostrophe and left the feedback as 'peoples' which was wrong because it was supposed to be 'people's', with an apostrophe before the 's'. In this case, Ms. Lisa's WCF contains error.

Ms. Lisa employed varieties of direct WCF in her students' compositions. The different varieties of direct WCF used by her were evident in the students' compositions and were presented in this section together with the extracts from students' compositions.

4.1.2 Unfocused WCF

The unfocused WCF was detected in all the 58 students' compositions. Ms. Lisa chose to correct all the students' errors in the compositions without selecting specific error types for correction purposes. Unfocused WCF has the advantage of "addressing a range of errors" (Ellis, 2009, p. 102). Hence, it is useful to be used by Ms. Lisa in her Year Four students' compositions as the students would be able to see the range of errors that they had committed in their writing. The students just stepped into their upper primary and such feedback from their teacher in their compositions would give students better knowledge on how to write good compositions in the near future.

4.1.3 Metalinguistic WCF

Metalinguistic WCF gives learners clues about the errors that they made in their writing and the common form that is used by teachers is the error codes (Ellis, 2009). Based on the analyses on the students' compositions, it was found that Ms. Lisa used only one type of metalinguistic WCF and it was in the form of an error code. Ms. Lisa used this code in four of her students' compositions. The extracts from the students' compositions are as follows:

S9 Creating a golden ball. ??

S26 My future achievement is to own a mall.??

S31 (Future achievement is to compared to what happens in other classroom.) ??

S39 *called?*
I was inspired by the movie ^.

S9's ambition was to be a football player and the question marks that Ms. Lisa gave indicated that she did not understand S9's statement. S26's ambition was to be a teacher but he wrote that he wanted to own a mall in the future. Thus, the error code was given by the Ms. Lisa because the statement "to own a mall" has no connection with the student's ambition. S31 also received similar WCF because Ms. Lisa probably could not make sense of the poorly constructed sentence. Ms. Lisa used several strategies for the feedback given to S39. She used the caret symbol at the end of the sentence before the full stop to show that words need to be added. She continued the student's sentence by adding the word 'called' above the caret symbol together with a question mark after the word 'called' to indicate that the sentence should be completed by the student.

4.2 Teacher's beliefs and practices in WCF

The second research question asked about the Year Four English teacher's beliefs with regard to WCF while the third question asked about the Year Four English teacher's practices with regard to WCF. The research questions on the beliefs and practices of the Year Four English teacher with regards to WCF are answered in this section.

4.2.1 Teacher's beliefs with regard to WCF

Ms. Lisa stated that it important to give feedback on students' writing errors so that the students are aware of their mistakes and they can learn to improve their writing Ms. Lisa stated that she provided feedback on the students' grammar/punctuation, vocabulary/word choices, content and organization/rhetoric in their writing compositions. This is true as seen in the students marked compositions. Ms. Lisa focused on grammar, spelling and format of the writing because she felt that those aspects are the basic knowledge in writing which the students need to understand. Ms. Lisa also added that grammar, spelling and format of the writing are important aspects to be focused compared to the other categories of writing errors when giving feedback because the foundation and basics are more important for her students as they just started their upper primary.

Ms. Lisa did not list plagiarism as an aspect to be given feedback but she did comment on a student's composition which was similar to another student's composition. Ms. Lisa wrote "Why is your essay same as Ranice?"

Ms. Lisa indicated that she provided comprehensive feedback by correcting all the grammar errors that the students made and this was evident in the students' compositions. This finding matched one of the previous studies which found that comprehensive feedback was preferred by teachers (Lee, 2004). Ms. Lisa also said that

she gives feedback on all students' writing errors and does not select some of the errors to be given feedback because Ms. Lisa feels that her students are still young and they need guidance. Though Ms. Lisa claimed that she gave comprehensive feedback on the students' compositions, it was noted that she did miss to attend to some students' errors in their compositions as shown below.

S42 my future goals and achievements is to be the most popular engineer in the *world* universe.

S55 ...I must learn important things like knowing the names of medicines, CPR and cure illness.

In S42, Mr. Lisa did not indicate that the letter 'm' in the word 'my' needs to be capitalized as it was the first word of the sentence. In addition to that, she did not indicate that the letter 's' needs to be omitted from the words 'goals' and 'achievements' since the student stated only one goal which was to be the most popular engineer. In S55, Ms. Lisa should have added a few words in front of the word 'CPR' and the words 'cure illness' so that the sentence sounds right. For example, the words 'how to perform' could have been added in front of the word 'CPR' and the words 'how to' could have been added in front of the words 'cure illness'. Ms. Lisa probably overlooked those errors in the students' compositions and hence, she did not attend to the errors.

Ms. Lisa also declared that she also gave selective WCF. However, Ms. Lisa explained that she gives selective WCF based on the writing task given to the students. Ms. Lisa did not give selective WCF in the students' compositions entitled 'My ambition' as it was the students' first writing task in class and she wanted to guide them in writing properly through correcting all the errors in the students' compositions so that they would be able to write better in the next writing task. This explains why the

researcher was not able to detect any selective WCF during the data analysis process in the students' compositions entitled 'My ambition'.

In the questionnaire, Ms. Lisa stated that she did not provide correct forms when she made comments on students' grammar errors. She said she used different methods to let the students know the error by underlining or circling. However, the analyses of the students' compositions did not support her claims. Ms. Lisa actually provided direct corrective feedback where she indicated the grammar errors in the students' compositions by underlining or circling and also by providing the correct forms to the students' grammar errors. Lee (2004) revealed that certain practices and beliefs by teachers do not always match and this is true in Ms. Lisa's case as there were mismatches on what she claimed she did and what she actually did in the classroom.

Apart from that, Ms. Lisa stated that she preferred to provide written commentary on the last page of the students' paper. However, the analyses done on the students' compositions showed that Ms. Lisa also provided written commentary on the space between the lines or at the end of a particular sentence.

Ms. Lisa also declared that she focused on both strong and weak aspects of students' papers and provided both encouragement and constructive criticism equally when she wrote comments on students' papers. Some of the positive comments or encouragements that were found in the students' English compositions were "Good", "Good try" and "Good point". Compositions that were very good were stamped "Well done" and were given a 'star' symbol. Students were not required to do corrections for these well-written compositions. Besides this, Ms. Lisa gave comments like "improve handwriting", "see me on the corrections" and "corrections not done" for the students to improve themselves. In one instance, Ms. Lisa also wrote down instructions on the correct paragraphing format of the composition on a student's composition.

Ms. Lisa stated that she explains her approach to providing written feedback in advanced to her students so that her students may fully understand it. This could not be verified because there was no observation made on Ms. Lisa in relation to this claim. In the aspect of types of feedback provided to the students, Ms. Lisa said that she usually provided individualized feedback to each student by not giving the same types of feedback to all her students but the researcher found that Ms. Lisa actually provided comprehensive or unfocused and direct feedback in all her students' English compositions.

Ms. Lisa said she uses a specific process in order to mark her students' compositions. According to Ms. Lisa, she identifies the errors in grammar, spelling and format and later uses pointers for students to do corrections. Ms. Lisa stated that she decided to use this process because she felt it is a general and acceptable method to be used in marking the upper primary students' English compositions. However, based on the analyses of the students' compositions, the researcher found out that Ms. Lisa does not only indicate the errors in the students' compositions but she also provides the correct forms for the students.

According to Ms. Lisa, her approach or process used in marking students' compositions is influenced by the availability of sources like teacher's training. On a good note, Ms. Lisa stated her students can see the feedback given by Ms. Lisa and understand the feedback easily with her current marking process. This statement could not be verified because the students' were not interviewed in this research.

Ms. Lisa prefers to give directive corrective feedback on students' writing because she believes her students are young and they are not independent to correct their writings by themselves. In addition to that, Ms. Lisa felt that giving directive corrective feedback to young students can be more beneficial for improving students'

writing because the students will be able to address the WCF given effectively. Apart from that, Ms. Lisa also stated that because her students are too young, she does not ask her students about their preferences with regard of how much and which type of corrective feedback should be given to them in their English compositions.

Ms. Lisa never used another process to treat errors in her students' compositions and she is positive that there would not be any factor that would lead her to change her current process of treating students' errors. Apart from that, Ms. Lisa believes that having an organized marking scheme as a reference is an effective way to mark students' English compositions.

Ms. Lisa disclosed that she required students to review her feedback and submit revised versions of their written compositions. This is true because students needed to do corrections after receiving feedback from Ms. Lisa. Ms. Lisa said she provided feedback in the aspects of grammar/punctuation, vocabulary/word choices, content and organization/rhetoric for both early and later drafts from the students. According to Ms. Lisa, when her students did not respond to her feedback or when they responded poorly, she would actually ask her students to write another draft. However, this could not be verified in this research because the researcher did not observe Ms. Lisa.

Ms. Lisa strongly believes that the more teaching experience she has, the more effectively she responds to students' writing. Ms. Lisa believes that she has guiding principles or personal philosophies when she responds to student writing. She claimed she has enough knowledge of giving writing feedback and therefore she adjusts her corrective feedback according to context or situation.

Ms. Lisa said she uses face-to-face or oral feedback to respond to her students' writing sometimes. She added that she usually gives written feedback for all her students but if any of her students need personal feedback, she will talk to them

personally, on a one to one basis regarding their writing. Ms. Lisa claimed that she provides electronic feedback sometimes. Ms. Lisa also declared that she rarely uses peer review and guided self-evaluation as a method to respond to students' writing. Ms. Lisa claimed she reads the students' writing at least twice before responding to it. Ms. Lisa stated she spends eight hours per week in responding to students' essays or written homework. Ms. Lisa added that her personal beliefs about the WCF mostly came from teacher preparation courses, personal experiences as a student, personal experiences as a teacher, reading literature and teacher peers. These claims by Ms. Lisa could not be verified in this study because the researcher did not observe Ms. Lisa's way of giving WCF.

In conclusion, Ms. Lisa had her own beliefs in which some of her beliefs do not align with the discovery of her WCF in her students' compositions. In addition to that, some of her beliefs could not be verified by the researcher because those beliefs were not observed by the researcher.

4.2.2 Teacher's practices with regard to WCF

The findings from the frequency counts of Ms. Lisa's WCF in the students' compositions as shown in Table 4.1 (see appendix C) revealed she used three out of nine types of WCF from the list of types of WCF compiled by Ellis (2009). The types of WCF used by Ms. Lisa to mark the students' English compositions were the direct corrective feedback, metalinguistic feedback (use of error code) and unfocused feedback. Both the direct corrective feedback and unfocused feedback were used in all the 58 English compositions of the students. However, the metalinguistic feedback (use of error code) were only used in 4 students compositions by Ms. Lisa. The code that was used by Ms. Lisa was question mark. Table 4.1 (see appendix C) does not reveal

anything interesting but interesting findings were discovered by the researcher upon a closer examination of the teacher's WCF in the students' compositions.

Ms. Lisa somehow agreed that responding to students' writing is time-consuming and tedious and those were the disadvantages of her current process in giving WCF. This statement by Ms. Lisa is similar to the previous argument that correcting students' compositions adds the workload for the teacher (Ferris, 2002). Regardless of that, she gave her students unfocused WCF. Ms. Lisa agreed to the statement that students like to receive teachers' written commentary on their papers and also agreed that generally, students want more feedback on their writing. This finding matches one of the previous studies that stated that students are in favour of receiving comprehensive feedback from their teachers (McMartin-Miller, 2014). Ms. Lisa might have chosen to do comprehensive WCF in order to give valuable input to the students on writing. Ms. Lisa also agreed that students feel that her written comments are easy to be followed by them. However, Ms. Lisa agreed that her written feedback type changes a lot from situation to situation. This is evident in this study through the varieties of direct WCF that were given by Ms. Lisa in the students' compositions (see section 4.1.1). This statement by the teacher can be supported with the findings by Pennington. Pennington (1996) stated that the teacher's teaching experience and the context or situation of where they are teaching contributes to their beliefs.

Apart from that, Ms. Lisa also agreed to the statement that she can provide accurate feedback on any problem in her students' writing. In contrast, there is evidence that she had provided incorrect feedback in her students' compositions (see section 4.1.1). Ms. Lisa agreed that students are discouraged when her written feedback on their writing is negative. There is no evidence to support this claim because the researcher did not interview the students to obtain their perceptions.

In conclusion, most of the practices with regard of WCF that were done by Ms. Lisa aligned with the WCF data of the students' compositions. However, there were some mismatches in the practices by Ms. Lisa. Other than that, it can be seen that Ms. Lisa is a dedicated teacher where she actually spends time giving direct and unfocused WCF in her students' compositions which is proved to be tedious and time-consuming. The teacher's practise in WCF is important as it contributes to the students' language learning.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter uncovered the answers of the three research questions of this research. The findings for the first research question on the types of WCF used by the teacher were presented through a table. The beliefs and practices of the teacher were discussed based on evidence provided by a questionnaire and reference to student compositions. Findings from previous studies that were related to the findings of the current study were also highlighted in the discussion of this chapter. The conclusion of this research is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This study investigated the types of WCF that were used by a teacher in students' compositions. This study also discovered the teacher's beliefs and practices in giving WCF. The topics that are enclosed in the conclusion includes summary of the findings, implications, limitations and future research.

5.1 Summary of the findings

This study on a teacher's WCF outlined several findings. First, out of the nine types of WCF provided by Ellis (2009), three types of WCF were used by the teacher in the students' compositions. The three types of WCF were the direct WCF, unfocused WCF and metalinguistic WCF (use of error code). The teacher mainly used the direct WCF in her students' compositions and all her feedback were unfocused WCF. There were a few beliefs and practices of the teacher that matched and there were also mismatched. For example, the teacher said she gave comprehensive feedback and it was proven true, based on the analyses on the students' compositions. On the other hand, the teacher stated that she corrected all the students' errors but there were errors which were not given proper feedback by the teacher. Overall, the findings revealed that the teacher had her own beliefs and practices on WCF where most of all her beliefs and practices aligned. This indicates that the teacher is not fully aware of her habits in giving WCF in the students' compositions and such study would help the teacher to know better about her own beliefs and practices of WCF.

5.2 Implications

This study's findings have several implications. First, the teacher who participated in this study can share the findings of this study with her colleagues in the language department. This is because, in this research, though most of the teacher's beliefs and practices aligned, there were still some mismatches. Teachers can improve themselves through sharing their experience of giving WCF. Teachers should also be more careful when they give WCF. This study revealed that the teacher gave erroneous WCF. WCF is an important input for students because the feedback that they receive from their teachers is a crucial input in their language learning process. Through WCF, students are expected to notice the feedback by their teacher and find ways to improve their writing. A misleading feedback may affect the students' learning input as they may not acquire good input from the WCF by their teacher. In order to produce learners with good writing skill, the teachers can conduct a language workshop among them and discuss about the best and effective type of WCF that should be given to the language learners. The research reported that the teacher who participated in the study attended courses on writing feedback and training workshops which were conducted in her school. Despite that, there were mismatches in the teacher's beliefs and her practices. Hence, a workshop on WCF would help the teachers to give effective feedback in students' writing.

5.3 Limitations of the study

.There are a few limitations in this study. First, because of the time constraints, the researcher only used one teacher to participate. The results of this study, therefore, are only limited to the beliefs and practices in WCF of only one teacher and so should not be generalized to all teachers. Second, the researcher used the marked compositions with only the same title from each student in order to determine the types of WCF used

by the teacher. Investigating compositions on one topic may not expose the teacher's overall WCF because the teacher's WCF may vary according to topics. Moreover, the marked compositions collected by the researcher were the students' first writing tasks in class. The WCF given by the teacher might differ after a few writing activities in class or if the students were to answer a different question on writing. Thus, the results of this study could not be generalized with all compositions because of the difference in topic. Third, the data for this study were taken from a teacher and 58 students in a private school in Subang Jaya, Selangor. Hence, the results of this study could not be applied to all the schools in Malaysia or Selangor. Fourth, the teacher claimed that she read the compositions twice before giving WCF. This point could not be justified by the researcher because the researcher did not observe the teacher during the WCF process. Fifth, the teacher said her WCF were easy for the students to follow and understand. This could not be justified because the researcher did not analyze the students' revised writing. Lastly, the teacher declared that the students felt discouraged when the teacher gave negative WCF. There is no prove to support this claim because the researcher did not interview the students.

5.4 Future research

This research on a teacher's beliefs and practices in WCF is an interesting topic to be investigated. First, in the future, the study on WCF could be conducted using more than one teacher to find out the differences of how the teachers give WCF. This type of study will generate an in-depth result which is considered important as it can be used as a reference and knowledge by fellow educators. Second, a longitudinal study could be conducted in observing the types of WCF that teachers give to their students over a period of time. Through such research, patterns of teachers' WCF use over time can be compared. Third, an intervention stage could be carried out where learners are required to revise their compositions following their teacher's WCF to see if learners benefited

from the teacher's WCF on the first composition. Fourth, in order to receive an in-depth result in research on WCF, the use of questionnaire as an instrument, can be supplemented with teacher interviews. This could increase the validity and reliability of the research findings. More information can be uncovered through an interview session because great details can be obtained.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is highly hoped that teachers could use WCF effectively in students' compositions in order to enhance students' writing skill. As a teacher herself, the findings of this study made the researcher to ponder upon her own beliefs and practices in WCF. Hence, it would be best if teachers conduct a self check on themselves to determine their own beliefs and practices in WCF. The commitment from the teachers is extremely essential to gain a truthful result from the self evaluation on WCF. The findings in this study made the researcher wonder about the importance of WCF in language acquisition. Learners receive WCF from their teachers and it affects the input obtained by the learners in the language acquisition process, specifically in acquiring the writing skill. Thus, the researcher would like to share the findings of this study with the teacher who participated in the study. This would allow the teacher to notice her own WCF practices and it might help her to give better WCF in the future. The effective use of WCF is beneficial to both the teachers and also the second language learners because it could improve the learners' knowledge for a better future; particularly sharpen the learners' skill in writing.

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APPENDIX A : Teacher's consent form

Name	: Nilaasini a/p Rajagopal
Supervisor	: Dr. Asiah binti Mohd. Sharif
Program	: Master of English as a Second Language
Faulty	: Faculty of Languages and Linguistics
University	: University of Malaya
Research title	: A teacher's written corrective feedback : beliefs and practices

Dear Ms. _____, this study aims to investigate a teacher's beliefs and practices in giving written corrective feedback in students' English compositions. Thus, I would like to invite you to help me in my efforts to collect data that is pertinent to this research. This research forms part of my masters research report. It will investigate your beliefs and practices in giving written corrective feedback. The results of this study will help you to understand your beliefs and practices in giving written corrective feedback.

If you agree to participate in this study, I would like to collect your students' writing compositions with your feedback on them. I will select the marked compositions that are needed for my study and make copies of them. Finally, you will be asked to participate in a questionnaire. I will send the questionnaire to you via e-mail and your honest and genuine answers in the questionnaire are very much appreciated as it contributes as a primary data in my study.

I intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent. Thus, a pseudonym will be used in my study instead of your name. If you would like to participate, please complete and sign the consent form to show that you have read and understood this information.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Signature:

.....

Date :

APPENDIX B : Teacher's questionnaire

Part A:

This part asks about types of written feedback second language teachers use when responding to students' writing. In each item, please mark the closest types of feedback you normally provide. Mark 'X' in the given boxes.

1. On what aspects of student writing do you provide feedback? (Select all that may apply.)

	Grammar / Punctuation
	Vocabulary / Word Choices
	Content
	Organization / Rhetoric
	Style
	Plagiarism
	Other(s):

2. If you provide feedback on the language use of student writing, on what portions of grammar errors do you provide feedback?

	I address all grammar errors that students make. (comprehensive feedback)
	I address only a few significant grammar errors. (selective feedback)
	I do not provide grammar feedback.

3. If you address only a few significant grammar errors on students' papers, how do you prioritize those grammar errors? (Select all that may apply.)

	Based on course rubric, grading policy, or external standards
	Based on the task on which students are working
	Based on the needs of individual students
	Based on lessons recently given in class
	Other(s):

4. When you make comments on students' grammar errors, do you provide correct forms?

	I provide correct forms to students' grammar errors.
	I do not provide correct forms. Instead, I use different methods to let students know the error.
	I sometimes provide correct forms, but sometimes not.
	Other(s):

5. If you do not provide correct forms to grammar errors, which method do you use to let students know the errors?

	I indicate grammar errors by underlining or circling.
	I indicate errors and provide error codes. (i.e., 'VT' for a verb tense error)
	I count the number of errors in each line and write the number down on the margin.
	Other(s):

6. Which areas of a student paper do you prefer to use to provide written commentary?
(Please select all that may apply.)

	On the cover page (a cover memo)
	On the last page (an endnote)
	On both side margins of text
	On the space between lines
	Other(s):

7. What is your primary focus when you write comments on students' papers?

	I focus on positive sides of students' papers and try to provide encouragement.
	I focus on room for improvement and try to provide constructive criticism.
	I focus on both strong and weak aspects of students' papers and provide both encouragement and constructive criticism equally.
	Other(s):

8. Do you provide the same types of feedback to all students? (i.e., comprehensive vs. selective, direct vs. indirect, and local vs. global issues)

	Yes, I usually provide the same types of feedback to all students.
	No, I usually provide individualized feedback to each student.
	Other(s):

9. Do you require students to review your feedback and submit revised versions of their papers?

	Yes, I ask student to submit more than one draft after reviewing my feedback.
	No, I do not ask student to submit revised versions.
	Other(s):

10. If you require students to submit multiple drafts, on what aspects of the early draft(s) do you provide feedback? **(Select all that may apply.)**

	Grammar / Punctuation
	Vocabulary / Word Choices
	Content
	Organization / Rhetoric
	Style
	Plagiarism
	Other(s):

11. If you require students to submit multiple drafts, on what aspects of the later draft(s) do you provide feedback? (**Select all that may apply.**)

	Grammar / Punctuation
	Vocabulary / Word Choices
	Content
	Organization / Rhetoric
	Style
	Plagiarism
	Other(s):

12. What do you do when you see that students aren't responding to your feedback or when they respond poorly?

	I usually ignore them and do not provide more feedback.
	I have them write another draft.
	I use follow-up methods other than written feedback. (specify):

Part B:

This part asks about your degree of agreement with various statements about written feedback. Please indicate your opinion after each statement by marking a choice that best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. (Just mark 'X' for the chosen answer)

13. Providing feedback on student writing is an important part of being a second/foreign language teacher.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

14. Teachers' written commentary helps students improve their writing.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

15. Responding to student writing is time-consuming.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

16. Providing written commentary on student writing is tedious.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

17. Students like to receive teachers' written commentary on their papers.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

18. Generally, students want more feedback on their writing.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

19. Students feel my written comments are easy to follow.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

20. My written feedback type changes a lot from situation to situation.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

21. I explain my approach to providing written feedback in advance so that my students may fully understand it.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

22. I can provide accurate feedback on any problem in my students' writing.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

23. Students are discouraged when my written feedback on their writing is negative.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

24. When students are asked to revise their papers according to my feedback, they give up their thoughts/ideas to follow my suggestions.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

25. When students revise according to my feedback, their main interest is in getting a better grade, not improving their writing.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

26. The more teaching experience I have, the more effectively I respond to student writing.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

27. I do not have any guiding principles or personal philosophies when I respond to student writing.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

28. I need some training on teacher feedback because I do not have enough knowledge of giving writing feedback.	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

Part C

This part asks about how often you use various approaches to responding to student writing. Each item provides a method that foreign/second language teachers may use to respond to students' papers. Please mark a choice that best indicates the frequency of your use of each method. If the method is not clear, check N/A (Not Applicable) right before each scale.

29. How often do you use face-to-face oral feedback to respond to student writing? (Check N/A if the method is not clear.)	N/A	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Almost Always

30. How often do you provide written comments on the students' papers?	N/A	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Almost Always

31. How often do you provide electronic feedback? (i.e., using email or 'comments' function found in Microsoft Word)	N/A	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Almost Always

32. How often do you use peer review as a method to respond to student writing?	N/A	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Almost Always

33. How often do you use guided self-evaluation as a method to respond to student writing?	N/A	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Almost Always

34. If you use (or know) any other approaches to responding to student writing, please share your methods. Be specific. (You may skip this question.)

Part D

This part asks about basic demographic information and current written feedback practices. Please choose the most appropriate response or write additional information in the space provided. Mark 'X'

35)What is your gender? Please state your age.

	Male
	Female (_____ years old)

36)What is your highest level of education? (Specify)

	BA (_____)
	Currently working on MA (_____)
	MA(_____)
	Ph.D. (_____)
	Currently working on Ph.D. (_____)
	Other.

37)i)What is your native language? Answer:

ii) What language(s) can you speak? Answer:

38)How many times do you usually read a student paper before responding to it?

	Once
	Twice
	More than 3 times
	Other(s):

39) How many hours per week do you spend in responding to student essays or written homework? (Enter Arabic number.)

_____ hrs/wk

40) What is the English proficiency level of the majority of your students?

	Beginning
	Intermediate
	Advanced
	Other(s):

41) How many years have you been teaching English as a second language? (Enter Arabic number.)

_____ yrs

42) How many years have you lived in Malaysia? (Enter Arabic number.)

_____ yrs

43) Have you ever taken courses or training workshops on writing feedback? (Please select all that may apply.)

	Courses on writing feedback
	Training workshops
	None
	Other(s):

44) Where do you think your personal beliefs about written feedback mostly come from?

	Teacher preparation courses
	Personal experiences as a student
	Personal experiences as a teacher
	Reading literature (i.e., research findings on written feedback)
	Teacher peers
	Other(s):

Part E

(a) Please respond to the following questions with full sentences.

1. Do you think it is important to give feedback on students' writing errors?
2. Do you give feedback on all students' writing errors or do you select some of the errors to be given feedback? Can you explain the reasons
3. Which approach do you prefer? Can you explain your answer
4. Which categories of writing errors do you focus your feedback on more? Why?
5. Which categories do you think are important to be focused on for feedback? Why?
6. Which type of corrective feedback (direct vs. indirect) do you use when giving feedback on writing errors? Why do you use it?
7. Which type of corrective feedback do you think can be more beneficial for improving students' writing? Can you explain the reason
8. Do you ask your students' about their preferences with regard to how much and which type of corrective feedback should be given? Can you explain the reason

(b)Please respond to the following questions with full sentences.

1. Describe the process you use to mark errors on a student's paper.
2. How did you decide to use this process?
3. How influenced have you been by outside sources – second language writing classes, literature, mentors, etc.?
4. What are the advantages of your current process?
5. What are the disadvantages of your current process?
Tedious & time-consuming,
6. Have you ever used another process to treat errors? If so, why did you change to your current process?
7. What factors would lead you to change your current process of treating errors?
8. What in your opinion is an effective way to mark students' English compositions?
Have an organized marking scheme as reference.

APPENDIX C :

Table 4.1: Types of WCF used in Year Four students' English compositions

Students	Direct CF	Indirect CF		Metalinguistic CF		The focus on the feedback		Electronic feedback	Reformulation
		a) Indicating + locating	b) Indication only	a) Use of error code	b) Brief grammatical descriptions	a) Unfocused CF	b) Focused CF		
S1	✓					✓			
S2	✓					✓			
S3	✓					✓			
S4	✓					✓			
S5	✓					✓			
S6	✓					✓			
S7	✓					✓			
S8	✓					✓			
S9	✓			✓		✓			
S10	✓					✓			
S11	✓					✓			
S12	✓					✓			
S13	✓					✓			
S14	✓					✓			
S15	✓					✓			
S16	✓					✓			
S17	✓					✓			
S18	✓					✓			
S19	✓					✓			
S20	✓					✓			
S21	✓					✓			
S22	✓					✓			
S23	✓					✓			
S24	✓					✓			
S25	✓					✓			
S26	✓			✓		✓			
S27	✓					✓			
S28	✓					✓			
S29	✓					✓			
S30	✓					✓			
S31	✓			✓		✓			
S32	✓					✓			
S33	✓					✓			
S34	✓					✓			

'Table 4.1, continued'

Students	Direct CF	Indirect CF		Metalinguistic CF		The focus on the feedback		Electronic feedback	Reformulation
		c) Indicating + locating	d) Indication only	c) Use of error code	d) Brief grammatical descriptions	c) Unfocused CF	d) Focused CF		
S35	✓					✓			
S36	✓					✓			
S37	✓					✓			
S38	✓					✓			
S39	✓			✓		✓			
S40	✓					✓			
S41	✓					✓			
S42	✓					✓			
S43	✓					✓			
S44	✓					✓			
S45	✓					✓			
S46	✓					✓			
S47	✓					✓			
S48	✓					✓			
S49	✓					✓			
S50	✓					✓			
S51	✓					✓			
S52	✓					✓			
S53	✓					✓			
S54	✓					✓			
S55	✓					✓			
S56	✓					✓			
S57	✓					✓			
S58	✓					✓			