

THESIS

IRAQI KURDISTAN TEACHERS' VIEWS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS WRITTEN  
CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN EFL WRITING

Submitted by

Chnur Al Jaf

Department of English

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Summer 2023

Master's Committee:

Advisor: Fabiola Ehlers-Zavala

Gerald Delahunty

Frédérique Grim

Copyright by Chnur Al Jaf 2023

All Rights Reserved

## ABSTRACT

### IRAQI KURDISTAN TEACHERS' VIEWS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN EFL WRITING

Written corrective feedback (WCF) in English as a foreign/second language (EFL/ESL) teaching and learning is one of the most controversial topics among researchers and teachers. Several researchers have debated and investigated its influences and effects on student learning (e.g., Ferris, 1999, 2003, 2004; Truscott, 1996), and different types of feedback have proven to be effective in improving writing skills (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Lee, 2004; Lee et al., 2021). Teachers provide WCF to their students in hopes that their students will benefit from it (Bitchener, 2012). Although there is much research on this topic (Brown, 2012; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 1999, 2003, 2004; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Lee, 2004; Lee, 2020; Lee et al., 2021) and in different ESL/EFL contexts, there are no studies on Iraqi Kurdistan teachers' views on WCF and its types. This study, therefore, aims to examine the perception and attitudes of 30 EFL teachers in Iraqi Kurdistan to understand their beliefs regarding WCF and the types of feedback they say they use and find important to give to English language learners (ELLs). A survey questionnaire was used to collect data for this investigation. Results showed that the majority of teachers who participated in this survey use WCF and believe it is useful for their students. However, there is some inconsistency in their answers regarding the types of feedback they use. Results show that they use several types of WCF depending on the context and their students' level of proficiency. Teachers' responses align to a large extent with the literature available. The results of this study can be useful for EFL teachers and researchers in Iraqi Kurdistan and other similar contexts to

improve their practices related to WCF.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my Chair and thesis advisor, Professor Ehlers-Zavala, for her guidance, valuable advice, and feedback throughout the process of writing this thesis. Without her expertise, encouragement, and dedication, this work would not have been completed successfully. She has been a source of motivation for me to complete my studies, and I am grateful to have her as my advisor.

I would also like to express my appreciation to my committee members. First, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Professor Delahunty for his feedback and encouragement. He has been a constant source of support throughout my graduate studies. Second, I would also like to deeply thank Professor Grim, who generously devoted her time and expertise to provide me with feedback.

I would like to thank the universities in Iraqi Kurdistan who supported my research and the teachers who took the time to complete my survey. Their participation has been a critical component of my research.

I am grateful for the faculty and instructors in the English department, TEFL/TESL program, who provided me with extensive knowledge and helped me grow both personally and academically. Furthermore, I would like to express my appreciation to all my classmates for their encouragement and support throughout my academic journey. I have learned a great deal from them, and their contributions have made this journey more interesting.

I would also like to thank my parents and sisters for their love, support, and belief in me. They have always been a source of encouragement and motivation throughout my academic

journey. Furthermore, I would like to thank my colleagues and friends from Iraqi Kurdistan for their support and contributions to my academic pursuits.

Finally, I am grateful to the Fulbright scholarship for providing me with the opportunity to study in the United States and have this enriching and productive experience.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	3
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY .....	24
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS .....	28
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	41
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION .....	49
REFERENCES .....	51
APPENDIX A.....	58
APPENDIX B.....	59

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study is intended to further expand our understanding of EFL teachers' views and attitudes towards written corrective feedback (WCF). It investigated Iraqi Kurdistan teachers' approach to WCF and how their perceptions are informed (or not) by the most current research. My hope is to contribute to this line of research, given that it appears that no studies have accounted for teachers' views and beliefs in this part of the world. In fact, no studies on this topic and population have been published in flagship journals such as the *Journal of Second Language Writing* and *TESOL Quarterly*. Therefore, it is important to explore Iraqi Kurdistan teachers' perspectives on WCF and, eventually, understand whether or not their views align with the current published/research perspectives.

There has been an increasing amount of research on the role of WCF in the development of second language skills in the past two decades (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Ferris, 1999; Laland, 1986; Lee, 2004; Lee et al., 2021; Truscott, 1996). The purpose of WCF can be two-fold: (1) To facilitate second language (L2) acquisition; and (2) to help in writing development (Crosthwaite et al., 2022). Written corrective feedback is a form of corrective response provided by teachers to foreign or second language learners' (L2) written texts, aiming to improve subsequent work by correcting linguistic errors at both local and global production levels through handwritten or electronic markings or symbols. WCF can be either direct or indirect and is given to L2 learners in written texts (Bitchener & Storch, 2016; Li & Roshan, 2019; Mao & Lee, 2022; Moa & Crosthwaite, 2019; Montgomery & Baker, 2007).

Montgomery and Baker (2007) believe that by examining teachers' self-assessments, researchers gain insight into the teachers' awareness of their feedback practices. This information

can be valuable in guiding teachers to provide the feedback type that they believe is important in improving student writing. Furthermore, self-assessment can help teachers realize their strengths and needs, which leads to opportunities to improve their performance.

However, despite the considerable research on WCF, there is a lack of studies on the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Iraqi Kurdistan regarding WCF. Therefore, this study aims to explore EFL teachers' views and practices towards WCF and ascertain if their perceptions align with current research on the topic. By addressing this research gap, the study will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities that EFL teachers in Iraqi Kurdistan face when providing WCF. I hope that the findings from my study will inform teacher training programs in Iraqi Kurdistan and contribute to improve the quality of feedback provided to ELLs in Iraqi Kurdistan.

This study offers a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of WCF in improving EFL/ESL learners' writing proficiency. The study will offer a review of selected research articles published in the last fifty years discussing WCF's effectiveness in different contexts, followed by the findings of a survey conducted among teachers in Iraqi Kurdistan universities in Fall 2022 to investigate their perceptions and practices of WCF. The study concludes with a discussion of research limitations and pedagogical implications for teachers in utilizing WCF effectively in L2 writing instruction.

The study, which considers published research over the past 50 years, was designed to gather data with the goal of answering the following two research questions:

1. What are teachers' views on WCF in Iraqi Kurdistan?
2. Do Iraqi Kurdistan teachers' views on WCF on foreign language (FL) writing align with current/contemporary perspectives?

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to provide an overview of the key research on written corrective feedback (WCF) conducted over the last 50 years. This selected review will be presented in an effort to discuss the debate on the effectiveness of WCF, including the different types and scopes of WCF. I would like to acknowledge that a growing body of research has compared the effectiveness of different types of WCF, including direct, indirect, focused, and comprehensive. Direct WCF involves the teacher pointing out errors and providing the correct form; indirect WCF highlights errors without explicitly correcting them. Additionally, focused WCF is targeted feedback that addresses specific error types in a learner's writing, while comprehensive WCF is correcting all errors in a learner's piece of writing. Some studies have found that certain types of WCF are more effective than others (e.g., Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Ferris, 2007, Jamalinesari et al., 2015; Lee, 2004; Van Beuningen et al., 2012). This review also includes studies on teachers' perceptions of WCF and explores their implications for WCF practice.

WCF has been a topic of interest in the field of language learning and teaching for several decades. WCF refers to any form of correction provided by teachers to students' written work, including grammar, vocabulary, and spelling errors (Brown, 2012; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 1999, 2003, 2004; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Lee, 2004; Lee, 2020; Lee et al., 2021). WCF might be provided on local issues such as spelling, syntax, and punctuation and global issues such as ideas, content, and organization (Montgomery & Baker, 2007). Using WCF is crucial in language learning as it enables students to identify and correct their errors, thereby improving their writing skills.

Despite the extensive research on WCF (Brown, 2012; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 1999, 2003, 2004; Lee, 2020; Lee et al., 2021; Montgomery & Baker, 2007), scholars still debate its effectiveness and the best way to provide feedback. Some researchers (e.g., Cohen & Robbins, 1976; Robb et al., 1986; Truscott, 1996, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008) argue that WCF can negatively affect students' motivation and confidence, while others believe it is an essential tool for improving language proficiency (e.g., Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Farrokhi & Sattarpour, 2012; Ferris, 1999, 2003, 2004; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Lee, 2004).

Consequently, this literature review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the existing research on WCF, its effectiveness, types, and some factors affecting its effectiveness, as well as the perceptions of teachers regarding WCF.

### **Written Corrective Feedback (WCF)**

Several researchers define written corrective feedback (WCF) as a corrective response provided by teachers to foreign or second language learners' written texts, which aims to improve subsequent work by correcting linguistic errors at both local and global levels of production through handwritten or electronic markings or symbols (Li & Roshan 2019; Mao & Lee, 2022; Montgomery & Baker, 2007). According to Bitchener and Storch (2016), WCF is a response to linguistic errors made by second language (L2) learners in written texts, and it can be either direct or indirect. Moa and Crosthwaite (2019) defined WCF as "feedback that is written by the teacher on students' work, with the aim of improving subsequent work" (p. 46). In L2 writing situations, WCF can have two purposes. First, it can be used to help in writing development. Second, it can help facilitate L2 acquisition. WCF can be in the form of handwritten or electronic markings or symbols on a written text to correct linguistic errors at both local and global levels of production (Crosthwaite et al., 2022).

## **Types and Scopes of WCF**

The research on WCF discusses various types of feedback, indicating that the two most commonly discussed types are direct and indirect (Alimohammadi & Nejadansari, 2014; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener et al., 2005; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). Direct feedback is the type of feedback where the teacher points out an error and provides the correct form (Bitchener et al., 2005). This type of feedback can be provided in various ways, such as crossing out unnecessary words, inserting missing words, or providing the correct structure (Bitchener, 2008). Indirect WCF is the type of feedback that points out errors without providing an explicit correction (Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). Mao and Crosthwaite defined four methods of indirect WCF that are commonly used. These include: (1) circling or underlining an error; (2) mentioning the number of mistakes on a given line; (3) using a code to show the location of the error; (4) and using codes to identify the types of errors made.

When it comes to WCF, the scope can be of two kinds: focused and comprehensive/unfocused (Lee, 2020; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). Focused WCF is targeted feedback that aims to address specific error types or patterns in a learner's writing (Ferris, 2011). Whereas comprehensive WCF involves correcting all errors in a learner's piece of writing, regardless of the type or pattern of the errors (Ellis et al., 2008).

## **The Effectiveness of WCF**

For decades, there has been considerable discussion about the importance of providing WCF on L2 writing. Some studies have found WCF to be highly effective in improving students' writing skills (e.g., Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Ferris, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2010; Laland, 1986; Lee, 2004; Van Beuningen et al., 2012). These studies have explored the effectiveness of various types of WCF in enhancing the writing skills of students across different proficiency levels and

situations, as described in the following sections. Results from these studies have consistently indicated that WCF can significantly improve students' writing abilities, regardless of their level of proficiency or the specific type of feedback provided. For instance, some studies (e.g., Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Brown, 2012; Chandler, 2003) have found that direct WCF can significantly improve accuracy levels in specific areas of writing. Others (e.g., Ferris, 2003; Jamalinesari et al., 2015; Lalande, 1982) have shown that providing indirect WCF can lead to sustained improvements in accuracy, even after a considerable period without additional feedback or instruction. Additionally, other studies (e.g., Daneshvar & Rahimi, 2014; Farrokhi & Sattarpour, 2012; Fazilatfar et al. 2014; Lee et al. 2021) have highlighted the benefits of focused and comprehensive WCF, which can significantly enhance grammatical accuracy in subsequent writing tasks. These findings emphasize the importance of incorporating WCF into writing instruction, as it can positively impact students' writing abilities across different proficiency levels and contexts.

Nevertheless, some other studies question its effectiveness (e.g., Cohen & Robbins, 1976; Robb et al., 1986; Truscott, 1996, 2007). These studies, as explained in the following section, have raised questions about the effectiveness of WCF in reducing student errors. These studies have suggested that despite providing WCF, there is no significant improvement in students' writing ability. Moreover, the type of feedback provided may not have a significant effect on the improvement of writing skills. Additionally, critics of WCF have argued that the positive effects of WCF may not carry over to subsequent writing tasks.

### **Studies that Found WCF Ineffective**

Cohen and Robbins (1976) examined three students' written corrections in an advanced ESL course. The sample consisted of three students: a sophomore, a junior, and a first-year

graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), who had a degree of proficiency in Mandarin. The researchers collected the students' assignments, which were graded by one of three graders: the instructor or one of two volunteer class assistants. The study found that “the corrections did not have a significant impact on reducing the student errors” (p. 50). The researchers identified the problem as a lack of consistency in the correction procedure. Although there was a correction checklist used by graders, the instructor returned papers to students without recording the errors, which made it impossible to diagnose students' difficulties in any paper. As a result, errors could appear as non-errors or as random rather than systematic. For example, one student consistently avoided using past perfect, when necessary, in her writing for weeks, and this error was not corrected. Another student always inflected the main verb following a modal auxiliary, resulting in errors such as "man can develops his intelligence." This study, of course, had many methodological flaws, and others, not as anticipated, including, Truscott (1996) stated that Cohen and Robbin's (1976) study did not provide explanations or reasons that better-done corrections would have been beneficial.

A decade later, Robb et al. (1986) researched the effectiveness of various types of feedback in improving students' writing ability. A total of 134 Japanese college freshmen were assigned to composition assignments. Four types of feedback were used: direct correction, coded feedback, uncoded feedback, and marginal feedback. Direct correction involved pointing out the errors and providing the correct forms, while coded feedback was used to indicate the type and location of errors. Uncoded feedback was used to highlight, with a yellow pen, the locations of errors without any explanation, and marginal feedback involved tallying the number of errors in each line without indicating the nature or location of the errors. Regardless of the type of feedback used, students were asked to rewrite their compositions by making the necessary

changes. At the end of the course, the researchers found no significant difference in students' writing ability, suggesting that the use of grammar correction was not effective. It is important to note that, at this time, writing ability seems to be understood very narrowly, equating error correction with it. This assumption is highly problematic, as error correction is only one aspect of effective writing—a necessary, but not sufficient condition to account for writing ability.

Similarly, Truscott (1996) claimed that correction is not only ineffective, but he argued that it could be harmful and worked to make a case for abandoning it. Some of his reasons were that research at that time showed that correction is ineffective, and that it may have side effects on the students' attitudes, such as consuming time and energy in writing classes. In addition, he mentioned that previous studies (e.g., Hillocks, 1986; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981) have shown that students who did not receive correction showed more positive attitudes towards writing compared to those who received correction. Although the uncorrected students were not necessarily better writers as a result, they tended to write more due to their presumably more favorable attitude towards writing. Truscott believed that the underlying cause of these issues could be traced back to the unpleasant nature of corrections. For example, in an effort to avoid corrections, students may tend to shorten and simplify their writing, which can negatively impact their learning. Students who were corrected may also develop a less positive attitude toward learning, further hindering their progress. Furthermore, he also raised concerns around some practical/professional issues, such as teachers' not recognizing the error and students not understanding the explanation given by teachers. Therefore, Truscott suggested that although students may desire and believe that receiving corrections is beneficial, it does not necessarily imply that we should continue the practice. According to him, the responsibility of teachers towards students lies not in adopting every instructional method that students prefer, but rather in

facilitating their learning process, and teachers can best fulfill this responsibility by abandoning grammar correction.

Almost ten years later, Truscott and Hsu (2008) also argued that the effect of WCF does not carry over to a subsequent new writing task. They examined 47 EFL graduate students from a public university in Taiwan tasked with writing a narrative during one class and revising their work during the next session. Half of the students received feedback in the form of underlined errors, while the other half did not receive any feedback. The results of the study aligned with previous research and showed that the group with feedback was significantly more successful in the revision task than the control group without feedback. However, when all students wrote a new narrative one week later as a measure of short-term learning, the two groups were essentially equal in their performance, with no significant differences in their error rates. Therefore, as the researchers noted, while receiving WCF during revision may lead to successful error reduction, it may not necessarily predict improved learning in the long run. This suggests that although the results did not indicate negative effects, the improvements made during revision did not necessarily demonstrate the effectiveness of correction for enhancing learners' writing ability. It is to be noted that Truscott and Hsu explained that the concept of their study is about whether their research findings serve as evidence of learning, which they defined as improvements in learners' ability to write accurately. Thus they do not delve into whether these improvements represent new knowledge or simply activate existing knowledge, but focus on whether learners become better writers due to the treatment.

These studies have shown that WCF may not be effective in improving students' writing ability. They have identified a lack of consistency in correction procedures, as well as concerns around the negative side effects of correction, such as students developing a less positive attitude

toward learning and simplifying their writing to avoid errors. Furthermore, while receiving WCF during revision may lead to successful error reduction, it may not necessarily predict improved learning in the long run.

### **Studies that Support the Effectiveness of Direct WCF**

In contrast, there is now a growing body of literature on the efficacy of different types of WCF for helping L2 writers improve the accuracy of their writing. Several studies examined the effectiveness of different types of WCF on the accuracy levels of students in various contexts. In this section, I will discuss some of these studies and their findings to provide insights into the effectiveness of different types of WCF on the accuracy levels of EFL/ESL students.

Chandler (2003) conducted a study that involved 36 high intermediate to advanced undergraduate ESL students at an American conservatory. The students were music majors from Korea, Japan, China, and Taiwan. These students wrote five assignments and revised them after receiving feedback. They received different kinds of teacher feedback in different orders: 1) direct correction, 2) underlining with description, 3) description of type only, and 4) simple underlining. To measure accuracy, they calculated the number of errors per 100 words, and for fluency, they measured the time students spent on writing. The results concluded that student writing improved significantly over the semester in terms of both accuracy and fluency. In addition, the results showed that students made significantly fewer errors when receiving direct WCF, thus if the teacher had written in corrections, which is also a preferred approach by students because it is the fastest and easiest.

Bitchener et al. (2005) conducted a study to examine the impact of different types of feedback on the writing accuracy of post-intermediate adult migrant students over 12 weeks. The researchers provided three types of feedback to 53 students: direct, explicit written feedback

along with individual conferences, direct, explicit written feedback only, and no corrective feedback. The study focused on three types of errors: prepositions, the simple past tense, and the definite article. The results indicated that a combination of written and conference feedback had a significant effect on accuracy levels for the simple past tense and the definite article in new pieces of writing. In regards to the simple past tense, the results showed that the average accuracy performance varied based on the feedback type provided “( $F(2, 40) = 3.58, p < 0.05$ )” (p. 199). Group one, receiving both written and conference feedback, had a significantly higher average performance than group two (receiving written feedback only). Similarly, for the definite article, the average performance also differed based on the feedback type “( $F(2, 48) = 4.42, p < 0.05$ )” (p. 200). Group one, receiving both written and conference feedback, had a significantly higher average performance than group three who did not receive any corrective feedback).

Similarly, Bitchener (2008) conducted a study over two months to examine the effectiveness of providing WCF to 75 low-intermediate ESL students in two private language schools in New Zealand. The students were divided into four groups, with each group receiving different forms of feedback. Group one received direct WCF as well as written and oral meta-linguistic explanation; group two received direct WCF and written meta-linguistic explanation; group three received direct corrective feedback only; and no feedback in the case of the control group. They were asked to write three pieces of descriptive text, assessed through a pre-test, immediate, and delayed post-test. The feedback focused on two functional uses of the English article system, the referential indefinite “a” and referential definite “the.” The study found that students who received WCF in the immediate post-test performed better than those who did not receive feedback, and there was a significant improvement in accuracy immediately after the treatment had been provided. Moreover, this improvement was sustained even after two months

without additional feedback and instruction, especially with group one, which received corrective feedback with written and oral meta-linguistic explanations, and group three, which received direct corrective feedback.

Bitchener and Knoch (2010) conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of WCF on 63 advanced L2 learners, with a focus on the functional use of the English article system. The study took place in an English as a Second Language (ESL) context at a U.S. university and included a control group and three treatment groups that received: 1) direct WCF in the form of written metalinguistic explanation, 2) indirect WCF in the form of error circling, and 3) direct WCF in the form of written metalinguistic feedback and oral form-focused instruction. The effectiveness of the different types of feedback was assessed at three different testing times: pre-test, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test. The results of the study showed that all three treatment groups demonstrated significant improvement in the level of accuracy at the time of immediate post-test, compared to the control group, after receiving WCF on their pre-test texts. Regarding retaining accuracy gains, the researchers found that both types of direct WCF were significantly more effective than indirect WCF. Those who received indirect WCF were not able to maintain the accuracy gains they achieved in the immediate post-test piece of writing.

### **Studies that Support the Effectiveness of Indirect WCF**

Lalande (1982) investigated a group of 60 U.S. intermediate university students of German as a second language at Pennsylvania State University and reported an advantage for indirect feedback. The study showed that students who used error codes when revising their writing improved grammatical accuracy in subsequent writing more than the control group who received direct correction from the teacher. In addition, Chandler (2003) found that although students prefer direct WCF because it is easier, they believe that they learn more from indirect

WCF because it allows them to self-correct. The study also believes that the basic underlining of errors requires less teacher time.

In her work, and in support of indirect WCF, Ferris (2004) presents several practical recommendations for addressing errors, including one in which she suggests that teachers provide indirect WCF to engage students in cognitive problem-solving. In doing so, students would engage in self-editing using the feedback they have received from the teacher. However, she indicated that there might be some exceptions to the use of indirect feedback, such as when teaching students with lower L2 proficiency who may lack the linguistic competence to correct themselves.

In another study conducted by Jamalinesari et al. (2015), the researchers aimed to investigate the effect of direct and indirect feedback on the writing performance of EFL students in a private language institute in Iran regarding eight grammatical errors. The study involved two classes, each comprising of 10 lower-intermediate English learners. One class received direct feedback, and the other received indirect feedback. They wrote essays for 10 consecutive sessions, and their errors were analyzed and recorded separately. The indirect feedback was given in the form of underlining the incorrect parts or writing short comments; as for the direct feedback, the teacher underlined the incorrect forms and provided the correct forms. The study showed that the total accuracy of the participants varied significantly across the ten writing sessions. The class that received indirect WCF showed significant progress in error reduction. For example, for the third-person singular "s" ending, the number of errors decreased from 15 in the first session to just 2 in the 10th session. Additionally, regarding parts of speech errors, the initial count of 13 errors dropped significantly to only 1. In contrast, the class that received direct WCF also experienced improvements but to a lesser extent. For the third-person singular "s"

ending, the number of errors decreased from 10 to 6 between the first and 10th sessions. Similarly, the count of parts of speech errors was reduced from 12 to 6. Notably, the group receiving indirect WCF displayed significantly fewer errors across various categories compared to the other group. For calculating the inferential statistics, each of the eight grammatical errors was assigned a score out of 20 for each class session (10 classes and 10 scores). An independent sample t-test was then conducted to analyze the data.

### **Studies that Support the Effectiveness of Focused WCF**

Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2011) compared the effects of direct focused and direct unfocused WCF on 120 Iranian EFL learners at different proficiency levels. Focused WCF involves targeting specific errors in a learner's writing, while unfocused WCF aims to correct all errors or a larger range of errors present in writing. Participants were divided into low and high-proficiency groups based on their TOEFL scores. They formed groups with 60 learners in each proficiency level, so they had three groups of 20 students. These groups of students were assigned to either a focused or unfocused WCF or a control group. The analysis showed that the focused group outperformed the unfocused and control groups in both proficiency levels, suggesting that focused feedback promotes grammatical accuracy in L2 writing more than unfocused feedback.

Daneshvar and Rahimi (2014) investigated the impact of two types of WCF, direct focused and recast on 90 low-intermediate participants who were divided into two experimental groups and one control group. The researchers used a pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test to measure the impact of the feedback. The delayed post-test was conducted two weeks after the post-test. For the pre-test, the participants were given a narrative picture composition task; then, they completed three written narrative tasks, with each task being followed by a feedback session

where WCF was provided. The first experimental group received direct focused WCF, while the second group received recast WCF. The control group received no feedback. The study focused on the grammatical accuracy of past tense copula verbs, irregular verbs, and regular verbs. The findings indicated that both experimental groups outperformed the control group; also, the effect of recast WCF was more than the effect of direct focused WCF, and both group's performance in the post-tests was significantly higher than the control group; moreover, these effects were retained over time.

According to Sheen (2007, as cited in Frear & Chiu, 2015), providing focused WCF to learners could reduce their attentional strain, increasing the likelihood of them becoming aware of a target structure. Conversely, providing unfocused WCF would add to the attentional load and decrease the probability of learners' awareness of a particular structure or structures.

Rahimi (2021) compared the effects of focused and comprehensive feedback on improving the written accuracy of ESL learners with a focus on global errors. The study also assessed how this improvement affected writing quality. The data were collected from 78 intermediate French ESL learners, who were randomly assigned to four groups. Two groups received focused WCF and two comprehensive WCF; one focused and one comprehensive group revised their writing, and the other two did no revision after WCF. The study focused on linguistic errors (sentence and word), and the results showed that the focused groups were more successful than the comprehensive ones in reducing their word errors. Also, the focused-revision group significantly outperformed the other groups in reducing sentence errors and improving writing quality, while the comprehensive-revision group was more successful in improving overall written accuracy, which was defined in terms of clarity of expression and text comprehensibility.

In a recent study, Lee et al. (2021) supported focused WCF. The study focused on how EFL teachers in Hong Kong implemented focused WCF. The study was conducted in English classrooms of an English-medium secondary school. Their results indicated that focused WCF is achievable in real-world classroom settings, especially when it is aligned with writing instruction and provided on particular error types that have been pre-selected. In addition, it is important to provide selective feedback based on individual students' needs. The authors found that although teachers faced some challenges, they were able to modify their feedback strategies over time in response to student needs and feedback on the effectiveness of their approaches. They concluded that "if teachers can do more with less, a focused approach to WCF is at least more cost-effective than a comprehensive one" (p. 12).

### **Studies that Support the Effectiveness of Comprehensive WCF**

Fazilatfar et al. (2014) argued that previous research had focused primarily on the benefits of focused WCF in writing instruction and that there was limited evidence on the effectiveness of unfocused WCF. In an effort to address this gap in the literature, the researchers conducted a study to investigate the impact of unfocused WCF on the syntactic and lexical complexity of students' writing. To ensure that any improvements in writing were not simply due to students avoiding complex language use. The researchers selected a group of 30 advanced English learners from an English institute in Iran who were homogeneous in their language proficiency and divided them into experimental and control groups. The results of a multivariate analysis revealed a significant improvement in syntactic and lexical complexity in the experimental group that received unfocused WCF. The researchers concluded that instead of focusing on correcting specific errors, unfocused WCF could provide students with valuable

feedback on their new inaccuracies, thereby offering an opportunity to eliminate errors from their future writing pieces.

Zhang and Cheng (2021) conducted a study in university English classes, targeting English for academic purposes (EAP) writing classrooms in Mainland China. The study involved 72 intermediate EFL learners who were English major sophomores and were divided into two groups. The treatment group received four rounds of comprehensive WCF, while the comparison group did not receive any feedback. Results from the post-test and delayed post-test revealed that such WCF helped the treatment group improve their writing accuracy and fluency statistically significantly, and these positive effects were retained in the delayed post-test. However, the WCF did not enhance their syntactic complexity. The comparison group did not show any significant improvement in their writing accuracy, syntactic complexity, or fluency. They concluded that providing L2 EAP learners with direct comprehensive WCF facilitated students' overall writing accuracy. Although the participants of this study were EFL learners, the researchers emphasized the importance of comprehensive WCF for both EFL and L2 learners.

### **Views on the Effectiveness of the Types of WCF**

The studies mentioned in this section reveal that there are varying opinions among researchers regarding the efficacy of WCF types and scopes. However, a prevailing view is that they all support the effectiveness of WCF. The selection of appropriate WCF types should be determined by both the language proficiency of the students and the choices made by their teachers. Guenette (2007) stated that variations in the outcomes of studies could be attributed to differences in their design and methodology. These differences may include variations in proficiency level, comparison of correction or no correction, longitudinal versus cross-sectional studies, the type and method of feedback, procedures, and elicitation tasks.

Studies often compare direct versus direct and focused versus comprehensive WCF. For instance, according to Bitchener (2008), some studies (e.g., Ferris et al. 2000; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Komura, 1999) showed that students and teachers prefer direct feedback believing that direct feedback helps students to be less confused in understanding and remembering the error codes used by teachers. In addition, Bitchener and Knoch (2010) explained that the direct and indirect approaches have both been proposed as theoretical arguments for providing feedback to L2 writers. Proponents of the indirect approach argue that it is better because it encourages guided learning and problem-solving, which fosters reflection on existing knowledge and promotes long-term acquisition and written accuracy. However, supporters of the direct approach suggest that it is more helpful to writers because it reduces confusion, provides information to resolve complex errors, offers explicit feedback, and is more immediate. Ultimately, the effectiveness of either approach may depend on the goals and proficiency levels of the L2 writers. Ferris (2010) emphasized that the goals of L2 writers in composition classes may differ from those in language learning classes, and this difference may impact the choice of feedback that is most suitable and effective. In composition classes where L2 writers are taught to edit and revise their texts, indirect feedback is often preferred because it prompts writers to use their linguistic knowledge to correct errors. However, for lower proficiency writers in language learning classes, indirect feedback may be less desirable because they have a limited linguistic repertoire to rely on.

Recent studies (e.g., Lee et al., 2021; Nematy et al., 2019; Rahimi, 2021) have shown a growing interest in focused WCF. Nematy et al. (2019) found that providing learners with WCF specifically focused direct and indirect WCF can lead to improved writing accuracy. They stated that focused WCF might be particularly beneficial for learners with lower proficiency levels

(beginner levels), as they may struggle to understand unfocused WCF that covers a wide range of writing structures and aspects. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers provide focused WCF for beginner learners to aid in their writing development.

According to Mao and Lee (2020), teachers' opinions on this matter vary. Nonetheless, despite the fact that many learners in EFL and ESL settings expect teachers to correct all of their written errors, focused WCF is less demotivating for learners and less time-consuming for teachers. Lee et al. (2021) explained that for teachers to implement focused WCF in an environment dominated by comprehensive WCF, they need to receive training and engage in critical reflection and professional development to make changes. However, according to Zhang and Cheng (2021), despite the growing interest in focused WCF, its ecological validity has been questioned. In natural L2 classroom settings, learners often make a variety of linguistic errors in their writing, so providing feedback on only one or a few error types may not be sufficient to help learners produce high-quality writing. The ultimate goal of WCF provision in L2 writing is to improve the overall accuracy rather than accuracy in specific linguistic features. However, a challenge might arise when time constraints, such as in short courses or classes, limit the opportunity to solely target specific linguistic errors. In these cases, students may not make sufficient progress in other linguistic aspects. Therefore, Zhang and Cheng (2021) argued that research on WCF should be more aligned with the reality of L2 writing classrooms to generate more direct pedagogical implications. This includes investigating comprehensive WCF, which corresponds to actual WCF practices in many classroom settings. For instance, teachers frequently make an effort to address all errors, or they are requested to do so by the institution, such as Alshahrani and Storch's (2014) study in which the university's policy is that WCF should be comprehensive and indirect, and teachers should address all errors. Research on

comprehensive WCF is important as it can help L2 writing teachers make informed decisions about how to provide effective feedback to their students.

### **Teachers' Perceptions of WCF**

In the field of second language (L2) writing instruction, written corrective feedback (WCF) from teachers is considered essential. Ferris (2004) emphasized the importance of preparing teachers to plan and execute feedback effectively. According to Ferris (2007), preparing teachers to respond with feedback is an important aspect of teacher training courses. Each teacher has an approach to respond to students' writing, and according to her, "an enlightened approach to response includes a judicious mixture of teacher feedback (which can be oral, handwritten, or electronic), peer review, and guided self-evaluation" (p. 167). In addition, teachers should not try to correct all the errors they encounter on students' papers. Bitchener (2012) explains that most EFL/ESL teachers believe that providing WCF on students' errors is an important aspect of their role and one of their responsibilities, and while the benefits of feedback provided are not always immediately evident, teachers generally assume that their learners will benefit from it. However, Lee's (2004) study found that teachers' practices and beliefs about error correction were not fully aligned. Students were heavily reliant on teachers for error correction, and teachers were not always aware of the long-term significance of feedback.

Alshahrani and Storch (2014) conducted a study at a large university in Saudi Arabia with strict guidelines for WCF. The study examined the WCF practices of teachers in relation to institutional guidelines, their personal beliefs about effective WCF, and their students' preferences. Data were collected through feedback given by three teachers on their students' writing (15 students per teacher), follow-up interviews with the teachers, and questionnaires

completed by the students. Regarding the teacher's background, the study mentioned that they "chose teachers who were considered to be among the best writing teachers" (p.105). One teacher had 2 years of teaching experience and was from England with a Master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Another teacher from Egypt had 9 years of experience and a Master's degree in TESOL. The third teacher had 1 year of experience, from England and had a Bachelor's degree in Finance along with a Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA). The study discovered that while the teachers adhered to strict guidelines and provided comprehensive indirect feedback, their practices did not always align with their beliefs. Most of the WCF given focused on mechanics, which they explained as feedback on spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors; the teachers were unaware that this was their feedback's primary focus. They were also largely unaware that their students preferred direct feedback, primarily on grammar which in this study refers to feedback on morphological and syntactic errors such as errors in verb tense or unnecessary words.

Junqueira and Payant (2015) examined an ESL writing teacher's feedback beliefs and practices. Their results revealed discrepancies between the teacher's beliefs and actual practices. Mao and Crosthwaite's (2019) study also found misalignments between teachers' beliefs and their WCF practices. They explored teachers' beliefs and actual practices regarding written WCF in an EFL context in China. The study utilized questionnaires and interviews with five English writing teachers who provided WCF for 100 student essays. The results showed that some alignment existed between teachers' beliefs and practices in certain instances. However, the study found three areas of misalignment between teachers' beliefs and their WCF practices. These include teachers' mistaken belief that they primarily provide direct feedback while providing more indirect feedback in practice; the belief that they indicate the total number of

errors in the margin, although they never do so in practice. In addition, they believe that they provide more WCF on local issues than global issues, despite the fact that they offer more feedback on global issues. The misalignments were attributed to contextual issues such as time constraints, excessive workload, perceptions of teachers' and students' attitudes toward WCF, and teachers' experiences.

Al Kharusi and Al-Mekhlafi (2019) investigated the perceptions of EFL Post-basic education teachers teaching grades (11-12) and supervisors regarding the importance of WCF and related practices. The study collected data from 156 EFL teachers and 62 supervisors through an online questionnaire. The findings indicated that both groups recognized the importance of providing WCF for writing errors and that EFL Post-basic education teachers commonly used an unfocused indirect coded WCF technique, primarily focusing on grammatical errors.

These studies on teachers' perceptions recommend that teachers receive regular and explicit professional training on WCF provision. Moreover, they recommend collaboration between teachers and students to achieve the ultimate goal of WCF. Yu (2021) also found that providing feedback through WCF provided valuable learning experiences for teachers, enhancing their abilities as professional and academic writers and teacher-researchers in an EFL context.

Lee et al. (2021) argued that an ecological perspective is a suitable approach for effective WCF in authentic classrooms. The ecological perspective, as described in their study, refers to an approach that considers the relationships between humans and their environment and the opportunities for action that exist within that environment. In the context of education and feedback in writing classrooms, the ecological perspective suggests that variations in students'

use of feedback are influenced by learners' varied beliefs and abilities and the mediating effects of other contextual factors, such as teachers' pedagogical practices and curriculum goals. The perspective emphasizes the importance of providing a feedback environment rich in affordances for learning, which requires instructional designs that provide valuable guidance, meet the needs of different learners, use a range of sources and modes, and address students' objectives for learning English.

These studies show that while WCF is considered a crucial aspect of L2 writing instruction, there is a gap between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding feedback. Moreover, teachers are not always aware of their students' preferences, which may impact the effectiveness of feedback. Some studies such as (Al Kharusi & Al-Mekhlafi, 2019), have found that teachers mainly focus on grammatical errors, despite their belief in providing more feedback on global issues. Other studies such as (Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019), found that teachers provide more WCF on global issues. These studies suggest that teachers require regular and explicit professional training on WCF provision and collaboration with students to achieve the ultimate goal of WCF. According to Lee et al. (2021), an ecological perspective is recommended for effective WCF in authentic classrooms because it can help educators and researchers better understand the complex and dynamic factors that influence learning and the use of WCF. This perspective also emphasizes the importance of considering the relationships between people and their surroundings and how these relationships influence behavior and development. It also highlights the importance of establishing practical learning environments that offer valuable opportunities for learning, which can effectively foster students' active involvement with feedback and the encouragement of learners' autonomy.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces and describes the methods utilized in this investigation. First, this chapter introduces the participants and their backgrounds, providing information on the teachers who were recruited from institutions of higher education in Iraqi Kurdistan. Second, the chapter describes the instruments used in data collection. It explains how the survey was presented to the participants and the expectations for their participation in survey completion. Third, it explains the study's design according to its objectives or research questions. The survey was designed to gather data on the Iraqi Kurdistan teachers' views and attitudes towards written corrective feedback (WCF) in EFL writing. The study aimed to answer two research questions and ensure that descriptive statistics were gathered to account for survey results. Statistical and qualitative analyses were conducted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the teachers' responses to the survey.

### **Participants**

Teachers from six institutions of higher education (HE) in Iraqi Kurdistan participated in this survey study. They were recruited with CSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (See Appendix A for recruitment materials). Therefore, upon receiving permission to conduct research from CSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB), as the primary investigator, I contacted schools in Iraqi Kurdistan to recruit participants. I enlisted one point of contact at each school. This person was the primary contact who shared the survey link with the English teachers at the respective institution. Prospective participants were invited to complete a voluntary online survey that aimed to understand their views on written corrective feedback (WCF). They were

asked to complete the survey within three weeks from receiving the link with the invitation to participate and complete the survey using Google Forms.

The participants for this study were thirty (30) teachers (17 females and 13 males) who teach English as a foreign language (EFL). The first language of most participants is Kurdish (93.3%). Since all of them are teachers of English, there was no need to translate the survey, which was presented in English. Teaching experience among participants ranged from 1 to 20 years. See Table 1. In terms of academic degrees, 76.7% of participants held a master's degree, and 23.3% had a doctoral degree. When asked about information on courses taken, most respondents had taken Linguistics courses (73.3%). Following that, 66.7% chose Composition studies, while 36.7% took the Assessment of English language learners course. A smaller percentage had taken ESL methods (26.7%), and even fewer had taken the Theoretical foundation of ESL and Cross-cultural aspects of TESOL, with 16.7% selecting each.

**Table 1**

*Participant's Teaching Experience*

Teaching Experience (Years)	<i>n</i>	%
1-5	13	43.3
6-10	8	26.7
11-15	5	16.7
16-20	3	10
21	1	3.3

**Instrument**

A two-part online survey was developed to collect data from the participants (see Appendix B). The survey was introduced by a statement that offered information about the

purpose and scope of the research study on WCF in EFL writing. The participants were addressed with a statement that introduced the researcher and thesis Chair and provided details about the survey. The statement assured the participants of anonymity and voluntary participation and explained that there were no known risks associated with the survey and they may withdraw their consent and stop participation at any time without penalty. The participants were encouraged to contact the researcher or the thesis Chair for any questions and were provided with the contact details of the CSU IRB for any concerns about their rights as volunteers. Finally, the statement asked the participants to indicate their consent or decline to participate in the research study before proceeding to the survey.

The first part/task of the survey consisted of 19 statements. Each statement was followed by a four-point rating scale with descriptors that ranged from 4 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). The rating scale was used to gather information on teachers' views concerning the treatment of error in the EFL classroom; therefore, participants were expected to select the option that best described their level of agreement with the statement presented. Below the rating scale, space was provided for teachers to offer any additional comments.

The second part/task consisted of a brief survey to gather key demographics and obtain a richer understanding of the participants and their background/professional experience. Part 2 of the survey aimed to collect demographic information about the participants, their language proficiency, teaching experience, academic degrees, and their level of comfort working with EFL learners in teaching them English writing in higher education in Iraqi Kurdistan. It also asked about their experience as a writer in English and how this experience informs their practices in teaching English writing to language learners. In addition, it asked participants to indicate their level of comfort in using various types of WCF and whether they had taken any relevant courses.

Finally, the participants were asked if they would like to receive additional training in the area of WCF (see Appendix B).

### **Design**

The two-part online survey was designed and intended to gather data about Iraqi Kurdistan teachers' views and attitudes towards written corrective feedback (WCF) in EFL writing. The survey was delivered and completed electronically using Google Forms. I developed a survey that would take anywhere between 20-30 minutes to answer, and that would offer teachers the opportunity to offer any additional insights regarding their views on WCF.

The study was designed to gather data with the goal of answering the following two research questions:

- 1) What are teachers' views on WCF in Iraqi Kurdistan?
- 2) Do Iraqi Kurdistan teachers' views on WCF on foreign language writing align with current/contemporary perspectives?

The survey was also designed to ensure that descriptive statistics were gathered to account for survey results in response to the two tasks teachers were asked to complete. Using SPSS, I computed statistical analyses to provide a quantitative account of the teachers' responses to the survey in part one and in part two. I also conducted a qualitative analysis to discuss the common themes in the comments provided by teachers.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The following section presents an analysis of the survey results, providing both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The section is divided into two parts. The first section focuses on the quantitative analysis of the responses to the items pertaining to teachers' views on WCF. The second section focuses on the qualitative analysis of the comments that teachers offered.

The qualitative analysis discusses the participants' responses in detail, including selected comments. This analysis highlights areas of consensus and disagreement among the participants. Through the qualitative analysis, a more in-depth understanding of the participants' views, attitudes, and experiences with WCF is provided.

### **Quantitative Analysis**

The quantitative analysis is presented under two themes: (1) the types of written corrective feedback (WCF) used by teacher participants and (2) their approaches to WCF. The first sub-section provides tables presenting selected statements in relation to the types of WCF used by the participants and the participants' approaches to WCF.

#### **Types of WCF Used**

The theme discussed in this section pertains to the teachers' views on the types of WCF they use and what their students prefer, which are presented in Table 2. The statements relate to various beliefs about providing WCF to language learners, such as their preferences for:

- Providing indirect WCF
- Student's preference to direct WCF
- Focusing on form rather than content

- Focusing on local rather than global
- Providing unfocused/comprehensive WCF.

#### *Direct v. Indirect Feedback*

The majority of participants (90%) with a standard deviation of 0.61 agreed that it is the teacher's responsibility to provide indirect WCF (statement 1). Additionally, 76.7% of the participants also agreed that they provide direct WCF by pointing out all grammatical errors when providing WCF (statement 3) ( $SD= 0.87$ ), indicating a relatively high level of variability in the responses. In response to another question related to indirect WCF, 50% ( $SD= 0.67$ ) disagreed with statement 5, which noted that when providing WCF, teachers ask students questions about their errors rather than making statements. Regarding students' preferences, 86.6% of participants ( $SD= 0.52$ ) strongly agreed or agreed that their students prefer direct WCF and appreciate being directly corrected and provided with answers (statement 7).

A majority of participants (86.6%) agreed or strongly agreed that using editing symbols previously taught to learners is an effective method of providing WCF (statement 14), while a small percentage of teachers (13.3%) disagreed with this statement ( $SD= 0.52$ ). Moreover, a majority of respondents agreed with statement 16, which noted that indirect WCF using metalanguage to point out errors in writing is important when providing WCF. Of the respondents, 23.3% strongly agreed, and 66.7% agreed. However, a minority of respondents (10%) disagreed with this statement ( $SD= 0.57$ ).

#### *Form v. Content*

Regarding the importance of focusing on form versus content when providing WCF, the majority of the teachers (66.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that it is

important to focus on the form rather than the content when providing WCF (statement 2), as indicated by a relatively small standard deviation (0.60).

#### *Local v. Global Issues*

In terms of the effectiveness of providing WCF on local versus global issues, a little over half of the participants (56.7%) disagreed, and 6.7% strongly disagreed ( $SD= 0.66$ ) with the notion that providing WCF on local issues, such as spelling, grammar, and punctuation, is more effective than on global issues, such as ideas, content, and organization (statement 12).

#### *Providing Unfocused/Comprehensive WCF*

Regarding the provision of comprehensive WCF (statement 17), 76.7% of participants agreed that providing unfocused/comprehensive WCF to language learners is necessary ( $SD= 0.66$ ).

The results suggest that the majority of participants believe that providing both direct and indirect WCF to language learners is important. However, the percentage of agreement on the direct WCF is a little lower than indirect, with 76.7% agreeing on providing direct WCF in contrast to 90% who prioritized indirect WCF by marking errors rather than directly correcting them. They also believe that coding errors using editing symbols previously taught to learners are useful and effective means of providing indirect WCF. However, there is some disagreement among respondents regarding the importance of focusing on form versus content, as explained in the following qualitative section. Moreover, about half of the teachers disagreed that providing WCF on local issues is more effective than on global issues. Additionally, most teachers agreed that providing comprehensive WCF to language learners is necessary.

**Table 2***Selective Statements on Types of Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) Used*

Types of WCF Used				
Statement	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
(1) Providing indirect WCF	30	60	10	0
(2) Focusing on form rather than content	3.3	30	63.3	3.3
(3) Providing direct WCF	30	46.7	16.7	6.7
(5) Question-based indirect WCF	10	40	50	0
(7) Student's preference for direct WCF	13.3	73.3	13.3	0
(12) Focusing on local rather than global issues	3.3	33.3	56.7	6.7
(14) Indirect using codes and editing symbols	13.3	73.3	13.3	0
(16) Providing indirect metalinguistic WCF	20	70	10	0
(17) Providing unfocused/ comprehensive WCF	20	56.7	23.3	0

## Feedback Approach

This section addresses the different approaches and considerations taken by teachers when providing WCF to students. Table 3 presents statements related to this theme, including providing WCF that is appropriate to the student's writing level, offering positive comments about writing strengths, and tailoring feedback to individual student needs, preferences, and progress.

### *Teacher's Consideration Toward WCF*

Regarding the appropriateness of WCF provided to students (statement 4), most of the respondents (96.7%) agreed that the WCF provided needs to be appropriate to the student's writing level ( $SD= 0.56$ ). In addition, most respondents strongly agreed (44.7%) and agreed (53.3%) with statement 6, which noted that providing positive comments about students' writing strength contributes to their writing performance ( $SD= 0.50$ ). A majority of the respondents strongly agreed (53.3%) and agreed (10%) with statement 8 that excessive WCF can discourage students and lead them to ignore the feedback. Meanwhile, 36.7% of respondents disagreed with this statement ( $SD= 0.63$ ). In addition, a significant majority of respondents (90%) agreed or strongly agreed with statement 10 that having a certain criterion/rubric available to follow when giving WCF to students is more effective. Only 10% of respondents disagreed with this statement ( $SD= 0.66$ ).

In response to statement 9 which noted that WCF is time-consuming for teachers, 70% of the respondents agreed with the statement ( $SD= 0.80$ ). In addition, a large majority of respondents (93.3%) strongly agreed or agreed with statement 11, which noted that providing WCF improves learners' language proficiency and writing performance. Moreover, a high percentage of respondents (90%) ( $SD= 0.59$ ) strongly agreed or agreed that feedback strategies

should be adjusted to meet the individual needs, preferences, and progress of each student (statement 13). In response to statement 15, regarding the provision of comments on errors that primarily interfere with the communication of students' messages, 90% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and 10% disagreed ( $SD= 0.54$ ).

Moreover, most of the respondents (93.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that providing opportunities for students to ask questions during one-on-one student conferences when providing WCF (statement 18) is an effective strategy with a standard deviation of 0.61. Finally, statement 19 asked participants about their assessment of the survey in terms of ease of task completion. 40% of the participants found the survey easy to rate, while 56.7% of them indicated that the survey was neither easy nor difficult to rate. Only one person (3.3%) noted that the survey was very difficult to rate.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

This section presents the qualitative analysis of the comments provided by the participants on their perspectives regarding WCF. The participants commented on several sections of the survey and shared their views on different aspects of WCF, including the use of direct and indirect feedback, the importance of form and content, the approaches to providing WCF, student preferences of feedback, time commitment, and their comfort level in using different types of WCF. All the comments were provided in the English language.

Regarding the types of WCF used, the comments suggest that most participants believe in using indirect feedback. For example, regarding statement 1, which related to providing indirect WCF, 23% of participants commented on the fact that they believe it helps students identify and correct their own errors, which can improve their language learning skills and confidence. However, there are some differences in opinions among commenters.

**Table 3***Selective Statements on Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) Approaches*

WCF Approaches Used				
Statement #	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
(4) Student-level appropriate WCF	46.7	50	3.3	0
(6) Positive feedback enhances writing performance	46.7	53.3	0	0
(8) Excessive WCF is discouraging	10	53.3	36.7	0
(9) WCF is time-consuming	16.7	53.3	23.3	6.7
(10) Using rubric when providing WCF	43.3	46.7	10	0
(11) WCF enhances language proficiency	40	53.3	6.7	0
(13) Tailored feedback for individual students	26.7	63.3	10	0
(15) Selective WCF	20	70	10	0
(18) One-on-one conferences with students	43.3	50	6.7	0

For example, one participant believed that indirect WCF could encourage students to take more ownership of their learning and develop their problem-solving skills and commented. This participant stated: “This may encourage students to search for their errors and learn the correct form.” Meanwhile, another participant stated: “I believe teachers should correct errors.” Based on the comments, it appears that it is important for teachers to strike a balance between providing direct and indirect WCF when necessary because some students may benefit from more direct WCF. In fact, one participant noted the following: “A teacher can directly correct the errors when student efforts to find the correct answer didn't work.” Another participant stated: “The teacher may correct errors one or two times just to let students know or have an idea about the correct form. Then, he/she might just mark the errors.” Another comment suggested different strategies when providing WCF based on the student’s level of proficiency, stating that “I use error correction codes and error schemes for the students at B1-B2 level and grading rubrics for B2-C1 students.”

Regarding providing direct WCF in statement 3, the comments suggest that while there may be some effort to point out all grammatical errors, the focus may vary depending on the students’ levels of language proficiency, the amount and type of errors present, and the context of the writing task. Based on the six comments provided on this statement, the responses suggest that there is some agreement with statement 3. One comment suggests that the teacher may focus on one grammar item at a time and use error correction schemes to help students understand their weaknesses. A participant wrote: “It depends on the student's level. I usually teach 1 grammar item at a time and assess that only. If the student needs to understand his own weaknesses, I do mark all grammar errors combined with error correction schemes and ask students to enter the codes and analyse their errors. And then they have to rewrite and correct the errors.” Another

respondent suggested that while they try to point out all grammatical errors, sometimes there are too many to address all at once. A different comment highlights the importance of grammatical accuracy for EFL learners, which could suggest an emphasis on addressing all errors.

Additionally, a comment by another participant suggests that students may also need to make efforts to address their grammatical errors, which could imply that the teacher may not necessarily address every single error. Moreover, another comment acknowledges that grammatical errors may not always affect the content of the topic in question but highlights the importance of minimizing errors, particularly for academic writing.

In relation to indirect WCF through asking questions (statement 5), around 16.6% of the respondents provided comments that suggest that teachers have different perspectives and experiences in this area. While some teachers prefer to ask students questions about their errors rather than making statements, as indicated in two of the comments, others use a mixture of different strategies or focus on knowing and solving the errors, as suggested in the other two comments. The challenges of implementing WCF in a large classroom are also highlighted in one of the comments, which suggests that practical constraints may limit the use of certain approaches mentioning the following: “It takes time and effort to do that for every single student in a class containing more than 70 students.” Another response suggests that asking questions might help to increase students' autonomy and self-correction skills, illustrating the potential benefits of this approach beyond just error correction. In general, the responses demonstrate that teachers may need to adapt their strategies based on their goals, students' needs, and practical considerations. In regard to students' preferences for direct WCF, although 86.6% agreed that students prefer it, a respondent stated that although students prefer this way of feedback,

overcorrecting may lead students to be less responsible towards their work and the errors they make.

Some comments (10%) provide different perspectives on the effectiveness of using editing symbols to provide indirect WCF to language learners (statement 14). One comment suggests that the use of editing symbols can be helpful when used alongside error correction schemes and individual feedback. Another comment, however, highlights that students may struggle to recognize the editing symbols, which could lead to confusion and hinder their learning stating that “I tried this in one of my modules. It should be noted however that it's not always easy for students to recognize the codes.” Another comment suggests that using editing symbols can be a time-saving technique.

There is some disagreement among participants regarding the importance of focusing on the form rather than content when providing WCF. Around 43% of the comments suggest that both form and content are important and that it can be difficult to separate the two. For example, one teacher offered the following feedback: “It is important to focus on both; the content and form.” However, 28% of the participants believe that the focus should be on the form, and another 28% believe that the focus should be on content. Some participants commented that students often struggle with the form of their writing and that this should be a focus of WCF. A participant noted: “Most students are able to deliver the content, but they have difficulty with the form which needs to be corrected.” Another participant stated: “I think the WCF’s focus should be on the form.” However, other participants argued that content is more important and that focusing on content can help students improve their overall performance. While there is some disagreement about the relative importance of form versus content in WCF, most participants (66.6%), as presented in Table 2, disagreed with the statement that focus on form is more

important than content, and they explain in the comments that both are important and should be addressed in feedback. It can be noted that teachers do not prefer one over another; the reason could be that they do not separate those two or, as mentioned in some comments, both forms and content should be equally addressed, and one teacher commented that “it is difficult to separate form and content.”

Regarding the approaches teachers use, 20% commented and believed that providing positive comments about students' writing strengths can contribute to their writing performance. This approach is seen as a way of boosting students' confidence in their abilities. Examples of these comments include: “Though it might differ from student to student as to how they response to positive comments, but such a way of providing the feedback boosts the students' confidence in their abilities and thus results in better responses.” Another commented, “I think this will increase their motivation.”

Despite their agreement (70%) with statement 9 which noted that WCF is time-consuming, some respondents (16%) commented that the time commitment required for WCF could depend on factors such as class size and the amount of preparation required. They suggest that while WCF may be time-consuming, it can also be beneficial for students. One participant stated that it is “time-consuming but fruitful.” Another participant mentioned that WCF could take up too much time and prevent teachers from preparing other exercises for their students.

On the second part of the survey, the teachers were asked to express their comfort level in using different types of WCF, and the majority of participants expressed comfort in using all types and scopes of WCF. However, in terms of comparison between focused and comprehensive WCF, the results show that the respondents were more comfortable using focused WCF. Out of

the 30 participants, only 26.6 % expressed discomfort in using focused WCF, while 40% showed discomfort in using comprehensive WCF.

Teachers were also asked to describe their experience as writers in English and what had helped them or not to become effective writers. From the responses given, it is clear that experience plays a crucial role in becoming an effective writer in English. Many respondents emphasized the importance of practice, reading extensively and intensively, and receiving feedback from others. For example, one commented: “I have always enjoyed reading, both fiction and non-fiction works. That has subconsciously affected the way I write. The more I read books in English, the more I seem to develop my writing skills.” Another commented, “Writing is not easy especially when you are not a native speaker. Practicing and getting effective feedbacks helped me to improve writing skill.” Moreover, another noted: “To become an effective writer, I always set a goal, keep reading different books and texts, and practice to develop my writing skills. It is also important to ask for feedback from a highly skilled writer.” They also highlighted the significance of mastering grammar, learning the style of writing in English, and organizing arguments effectively.

Additionally, being able to concentrate on writing for extended periods and having a good command of the language were cited as helpful factors. The results suggest that continuous practice and reading, as well as receiving effective feedback, can be beneficial in improving writing skills. Finally, the participants were asked if they would like to receive additional training in the area of WCF, and 73.3% responded yes to the question.

The qualitative analysis of the participants’ comments on their perspectives regarding WCF highlighted several important factors that influence effective feedback provision. The comments suggest that teachers use different types of WCF and believe in its effectiveness. In

addition, they acknowledge the importance of focusing on both form and content. Furthermore, participants recognize the need for an approach that considers students' specific context and individual needs. Additionally, the results indicate that participants believe that a mixture of different methods may be effective and that the time commitment required for WCF could depend on factors such as class size and the amount of preparation required. The findings of this study emphasize the importance of flexibility and adaptability in providing WCF and the need for teachers to consider their students' needs and preferences in their feedback provision.

This chapter presented the survey results analyzing the types and approaches of WCF used by teacher participants, with both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative analysis focused on two themes: the types of feedback used and preferred by the teachers and the feedback approaches used. The qualitative analysis highlighted the participants' views on different aspects of WCF. The results suggest that most participants prioritize indirect WCF by marking errors rather than directly correcting them while also believing that students prefer direct WCF. The majority agreed that feedback strategies should be adjusted to meet individual needs and that providing WCF improves learners' language proficiency and writing performance.

In the following chapter, the discussion chapter, the results presented here will be explored, considering the existing research on the topic. Additionally, the implications and limitations of the study will also be discussed.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter aims to present the results of the study in relation to the two research questions. It will provide an overview of the teachers' views on WCF, both in general and in relation to available research. The study will highlight key themes that emerged from the teachers' responses and discuss their implications for WCF in writing instruction. The first section will focus on teachers' general views about written corrective feedback (WCF), while the second section will discuss their views in reference to available research. The first section will begin by presenting the teachers' responses to questions related to their perceptions of the effectiveness of WCF in improving L2 learners' writing skills. The section will also cover their beliefs about the benefits of different types of WCF, such as direct and indirect feedback. The second section will focus on teachers' views regarding the effectiveness of WCF based on available research. The section will discuss the teachers' responses to questions related to their familiarity with WCF research. Throughout this chapter, the study will highlight key themes that emerged from the teachers' responses. The chapter also includes the limitations of the study and some pedagogical implications.

### **What Are Teachers' Views on WCF in Iraqi Kurdistan?**

This section considers the first question of the study: *What are teachers' views on WCF in Iraqi Kurdistan?* By discussing teachers' views gained from the result section. This section includes participants' views on the types and scopes of WCF used, and the approaches teachers take.

The results demonstrate that teachers in Iraqi Kurdistan believe in providing WCF, and they use different types and scopes in their practices. Although they provide different types of

WCF, including direct, indirect, and comprehensive WCF, most teachers preferred indirect WCF, as shown in Table 2 in the results. In their answers, they mentioned that it depends on factors such as student level of proficiency and class size.

There have varying opinions regarding whether providing feedback on the form might be more beneficial than content. They disagreed with this statement and mentioned in the comments that both are equally important. According to Lee et al. (2021), students could engage more with feedback if it is provided on content and not only form.

Similarly, the majority disagreed that providing WCF on local issues is more effective than global issues. The result suggests that there is no clear consensus among educators regarding the most effective way to provide WCF to students. Some argued that focusing on form is more beneficial than content, while others had the opposite opinion. However, most respondents emphasized that both form and content are equally important when providing WCF. Likewise, the study indicates that teachers do not agree that providing WCF on local issues is more effective than global issues. This finding suggests that teachers recognize the importance of addressing both local and global issues when providing WCF to students.

In addition, there is some inconsistency in their responses regarding focused and comprehensive WCF. In their responses to a statement about comprehensive WCF, the majority of participants agreed that providing comprehensive WCF is necessary. Additionally, when asked about their comfort level in providing these types of WCF, the majority indicated that they feel more comfortable providing focused WCF compared to comprehensive WCF. This result could suggest that participants have concerns about the time required to provide comprehensive WCF and therefore prefer to focus on one area of error. In addition, there may be differences between the participants' beliefs about what is needed and their confidence in providing it.

The result highlights the complexity and variability of WCF practices and the need for teachers to consider multiple factors when deciding on the most effective approach for their students. It also emphasizes the importance of ongoing professional development and critical reflection in WCF practices.

### **Do Iraqi Kurdistan Teachers' Views on WCF on Foreign Language Writing Align with Current/Contemporary Perspectives?**

Regarding the question that read: *Do Iraqi Kurdistan teachers' views on WCF on foreign language writing align with current/contemporary perspectives?* The results indicate that the views of teachers align with current perspectives to a large extent. Most participants believed that WCF improves learners' language proficiency and writing performance. This finding is consistent with previous research, which has consistently shown that WCF can help improve students' writing skills (e.g., Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Daneshvar & Rahimi 2014; Farrokhi & Sattarpour, 2012; Fazilatfar et al., 2014; Ferris, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2010; Laland, 1986; Lee, 2004; Lee et al., 2021; Van Beuningen et al., 2012; Zhang & Cheng, 2021).

Most teachers believe that indirect WCF is an effective way to provide feedback to language learners, allowing them to learn from their own errors and develop better language-learning skills. This view corroborates with studies such as Brown (2012) and Jamalinesari et al. (2015), who showed evidence that indirect feedback is more effective. Another study by Cheng and Liu (2022), targeting second language (L2) learners of low and high-proficiency, indicated that students preferred indirect WCF, a high proficiency student wanted to engage with the feedback, and a lower proficiency stated that feedback on limited types of errors each time will reduce the pressure of revision. The results also show that teachers recognize the need for an approach that takes into consideration the specific context and individual needs of students.

Regarding students' preference for WCF, the respondents agreed that their students appreciate being directly corrected. This is consistent with what Bitchener and Knock (2010), who explained that direct WCF is preferred because it is more beneficial to writers. This is because it reduces confusion, provides information to resolve complex errors, offers explicit feedback, and is more immediate. Similarly, Ferris and Roberts (2001) found that 30% of students in their study preferred direct feedback, but teachers often used indirect feedback. These studies and the present study highlight the importance of balancing both direct and indirect feedback approaches to maximize the effectiveness of WCF. Ferris (2004) proposes multiple practical suggestions for addressing errors, including one that involves providing indirect WCF to prompt students to engage in cognitive problem-solving as they self-edit using the feedback they have received. However, she notes that there may be exceptions to this approach, particularly with students who have lower proficiency in their second language and may lack the necessary linguistic competence to correct themselves. This study's qualitative analysis section revealed that teachers' responses reflected Ferris's findings, as they reported using either direct or indirect feedback depending on the student's level of knowledge and proficiency. Some teachers also commented that when providing indirect WCF, teachers should be careful about using codes that students might not understand.

This result is also consistent with a study by Chong (2020) who investigated an experienced teacher's practices of WCF. The teacher was firmly convinced that a gradual and targeted method of providing indirect WCF was most appropriate for her students. As a result, she implemented a customized approach of indirect WCF as one of her feedback strategies. She believed that introducing indirect WCF too broadly and all at once could have negative consequences for her students' writing and linguistic growth, particularly for those with lower

English proficiency. The teacher's approach highlights the importance of carefully considering the needs and abilities of individual students when deciding on the most effective method of providing WCF.

There is a strong agreement among the participants that providing positive comments about students' writing strengths can be a useful approach to improving their writing performance, particularly when combined with constructive feedback that addresses improvement areas. In relation to this, Tang and Liu (2018) conducted a study and revealed that additional effective comments on students' writings helped in developing a positive mindset among them, encouraging them to take further steps to improve their writing.

This study also revealed that teachers find comprehensive WCF necessary for learners, which was consistent with studies by Fazilatfar et al. (2014) as well as Zhang and Cheng (2021) who showed evidence supporting comprehensive WCF. The respondents of this study also indicated that they are comfortable using focused WCF, which is consistent with Mao and Lee's (2020) study, which explained that focused WCF is less demotivating for learners and less time-consuming for teachers. Lee et al. (2021) have explained that for teachers to incorporate focused WCF in a setting where comprehensive WCF prevails, they must undergo training, engage in critical reflection, and pursue professional development to effect changes.

In line with the available literature, teachers' preferences for types of WCF varied, including direct, indirect, focused, and comprehensive, but had one aspect in common, which is allowing students to notice errors. Boggs (2019) explains that corrective feedback aims not only to provide accurate linguistic form but also to direct the learners' attention toward it. Chen and Liu (2021) also explain that if the type of corrective feedback can grab the student's attention towards the error, it is considered more effective than the type that cannot.

The present study aimed to investigate teachers' views on WCF provided to language learners. The analysis of the survey data revealed that most participants believed that providing both direct and indirect WCF to language learners is important. Most teachers prioritized indirect WCF by marking errors rather than directly correcting them while also believing that students prefer direct WCF. These findings suggest that teachers should prioritize providing indirect WCF while also being mindful of students' preferences for direct WCF. This highlights the importance of striking a balance between providing direct/indirect feedback and encouraging students to engage with their writing and actively working to improve it.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While the findings of this study provide valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. One of the limitations of this study is the sample size, as only 30 teachers were included in the study. While this sample size is not unusual for this study, a larger sample size might have yielded more effective results. That is, the inclusion of more participants could have provided a broader perspective on the topic being examined and could have increased the generalizability of the study's findings.

However, including a larger sample size would have also presented some challenges. It would have required dealing with more universities and contacting more potential participants, which could have been time-consuming and logistically challenging. Furthermore, since I was not able to be physically present at the universities, all communication with potential universities had to be done via email. This reliance on email communication could have potentially limited my ability to effectively recruit a greater number of participants.

Another limitation of this study is the challenge of aligning teachers' beliefs with their actual practices. While the study explored the beliefs of the 30 participating teachers regarding

WCF, it did not specifically examine whether their practices aligned with their beliefs. It is possible that some teachers may hold certain beliefs about WCF but may not consistently apply these beliefs in their actual practice, as indicated in studies such as Junqueira & Payant (2015) and Mao & Crosthwaite (2019). It can be difficult to fully understand the effectiveness of a particular teaching approach or technique without examining the alignment between beliefs and practices.

To address this limitation, future research could include a more direct examination of teachers' practices, such as by having teachers provide WCF on student assignments or writing samples. This could help to determine whether there are any discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and their actual practices and provide a more complete understanding of the effectiveness of WCF as a teaching technique.

Despite these limitations, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the experiences of the 30 teachers who participated. Future research could build on this study by including a larger sample size and providing a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their actual practices. This study highlights the importance of acknowledging and addressing the limitations of research, while also recognizing the valuable insights that can be gained from even a small sample size and valuable insights into the beliefs and perceptions of teachers regarding WCF.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The findings of this study have several pedagogical implications that can inform teaching practices related to WCF. Firstly, the study highlights the importance of understanding teachers' beliefs and perceptions about WCF. Teachers with a more positive attitude towards WCF are more likely to incorporate it into their teaching practices, which can positively impact students'

writing development. Therefore, it is important for teacher education programs to focus on developing teachers' beliefs and perceptions towards WCF and provide opportunities for them to develop their knowledge and skills in providing effective feedback.

Secondly, the study highlights the importance of providing clear and specific feedback to students. Teachers should aim to provide feedback focused on specific aspects of the student's writing and provide clear suggestions for improvement. This can help students to better understand the areas they need to work on and make more targeted improvements in their writing.

Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that students may have different preferences and needs when it comes to feedback. Therefore, it may be helpful to provide feedback in a way that is tailored to each student's individual needs and learning style and to communicate with students to understand their preferences and how they find feedback most helpful.

Future research should focus on developing effective training programs to help teachers provide effective WCF. Effective teacher training is essential for preparing teachers to provide effective WCF to their students. Teacher education programs should incorporate both theoretical and practical components, and ongoing professional development opportunities should be provided to support teachers in continuously improving their feedback practices.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study investigated the attitudes and perceptions of teachers in Iraqi Kurdistan towards written corrective feedback (WCF) and highlighted the importance of understanding the factors that inform their approach to this practice. By examining the current research on WCF, this study provides insights into the effectiveness of different types of WCF and the potential impact it can have on students' writing skills.

The findings of this study indicate that teachers in Iraqi Kurdistan generally believe in the effectiveness of WCF and employ various types of feedback to enhance students' writing skills. However, they prioritize indirect WCF. The preference for indirect WCF may be a result of practical considerations related to the teaching environment, for example, the issue of large class sizes. In such situations, indirect WCF may be more practical and efficient in terms of time management. Moreover, teachers believe that indirect WCF is more constructive and provides students with opportunities to self-evaluate and reflect on their writing.

The study also revealed that teachers in Iraqi Kurdistan value providing feedback that is appropriate to students' levels of proficiency. This means that teachers take into account the individual needs and abilities of their students when providing WCF. This approach is particularly important in a multilingual context, where students may have varying levels of proficiency in the target language.

It is evident from this study that effective WCF practices can significantly enhance students' writing skills, and it is crucial to continue exploring this area to improve writing instruction in Kurdistan and beyond. Further research could focus on examining how students respond to and utilize WCF to improve their writing. In addition, ongoing professional

development opportunities should be provided to support teachers in continually improving their feedback practices. This would involve providing opportunities for teachers to participate in workshops, conferences, and other training programs that focus on feedback best practices and that provide them with the latest information and techniques for providing effective WCF.

## REFERENCES

- Alimohammadi, B. & Nejadansari, D. (2014). Written corrective feedback: Focused and unfocused. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4(3), 581–587.  
<https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.4.3.581-587>
- Al Kharusi, F. & Al-Mekhlafi, A. M. (2019). The practice of teachers' written corrective feedback as perceived by EFL teachers and supervisors. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 8(6), 120–137. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v8n6p120>
- Alshahrani, A. & Storch, N. (2014). Investigating teachers' written corrective feedback practices in a Saudi EFL context: how do they align with their beliefs, institutional guidelines, and students' preferences? *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 37(2), 101–122.  
<https://doi.org/10.1075/aral.37.2.02als>
- Bitchener, J. (2008). Evidence in support of written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 17(2), 102–118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2007.11.004>
- Bitchener, J. (2012). Written corrective feedback for L2 development: Current knowledge and future research. *TESOL Quarterly*, 46(4), 855–860. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.62>
- Bitchener, J., & Knoch, U. (2010). Raising the linguistic accuracy level of advanced L2 writers with written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 19(4), 207–217.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2010.10.002>
- Bitchener, J., & Storch, N. (2016). *Written Corrective Feedback for L2 Development*. Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783095056>

- Bitchener, J., Young, S., & Cameron, D. (2005). The effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 14*(3), 191–205. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2005.08.001>
- Boggs, J. (2019). Effects of teacher-scaffolded and self-scaffolded corrective feedback compared to direct corrective feedback on grammatical accuracy in English L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 46*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2019.100671>
- Brown, D. (2012). The written corrective feedback debate: Next steps for classroom teachers and practitioners. *TESOL Quarterly, 46*(4), 861–867. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.63>
- Chandler, J. (2003). The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 12*(3), 267–296. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1060-3743\(03\)00038-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1060-3743(03)00038-9)
- Chen, W., & Liu, G. (2021). Effectiveness of corrective feedback: teachers' perspectives. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 9*(1), 23–42. <https://doi.org/10.30466/ijltr.2021.120974>
- Cheng, X., & Liu, Y. (2022). Student engagement with teacher written feedback: Insights from low-proficiency and high-proficiency L2 learners. *System, 109*, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102880>
- Chong, S. W. (2020). Written corrective feedback practices of an experienced ESL primary teacher: An ecological perspective. *TESOL Journal, 11*(3), 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.509>
- Cohen, A., & Robbins, M. (1976). Toward assessing interlanguage performance: The relationship between selected errors, learners' characteristics, and learners' explanations. *Language Learning, 26*(1), 45–66. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1976.tb00259.x>

- Crosthwaite, P., Ningrum, S., & Lee, I. (2022). Research trends in L2 written corrective feedback: A bibliometric analysis of three decades of Scopus-indexed research on L2 WCF. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 58*, 1-16.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2022.100934>
- Daneshvar, E., & Rahimi, A. (2014). Written corrective feedback and teaching grammar. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 136*, 217–221.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.05.317>
- Ellis, R., Sheen, Y., Murakami, M., & Takashima, H. (2008). The effects of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback in an English as a foreign language context. *System (Linköping), 36*(3), 353–371. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2008.02.001>
- Farrokhi, F., & Sattarpour, S. (2011). The effects of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback on grammatical accuracy of Iranian EFL learners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 1*(12), 1797–1803. <https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.1.12.1797-1803>
- Fazilatfar, A. M., Fallah, N., Hamavandi, M., & Rostamian, M. (2014). The effect of unfocused written corrective feedback on syntactic and lexical complexity of L2 writing. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 98*, 482–488.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.443>
- Ferris, D. (1999). The case for grammar correction in L2 writing classes: A response to Truscott (1996). *Journal of Second Language Writing, 8*(1), 1–11. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1060-3743\(99\)80110-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1060-3743(99)80110-6)
- Ferris, D. (2003). *Response To Student Writing: Implications for Second Language Students*. Routledge.

- Ferris, D. (2004). The “grammar correction” debate in L2 writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here? (and what do we do in the meantime ...?). *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13(1), 49–62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2004.04.005>
- Ferris, D. (2007). Preparing teachers to respond to student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16(3), 165–193. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2007.07.003>
- Ferris, D. (2010). Second language writing research and written corrective feedback in SLA: Intersections and practical applications. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 32(2), 181–201. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263109990490>
- Ferris, D. (2011). *Treatment of error in second language student writing* (2nd ed.). University of Michigan Press.
- Ferris, D., & Roberts, B. (2001). Error feedback in L2 writing classes: How explicit does it need to be? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10(3), 161–184. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1060-3743\(01\)00039-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1060-3743(01)00039-X)
- Frear, D., & Chiu, Y. (2015). The effect of focused and unfocused indirect written corrective feedback on EFL learners’ accuracy in new pieces of writing. *System (Linköping)*, 53, 24–34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2015.06.006>
- Guenette, D. (2007). Is feedback pedagogically correct? Research design issues in studies of feedback on writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16(1), 40–53. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2007.01.001>
- Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2006). Feedback on second language students' writing. *Language Teaching*, 39(2), 83–101. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444806003399>

- Jamalinesari, A., Rahimi, F., Gowhary, H., & Azizfar, A. (2015). The effects of teacher-written direct vs. indirect feedback on students' writing. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 192, 116–123. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.06.018>
- Junqueira, L., & Payant, C. (2015). “I just want to do it right, but it’s so hard”: A novice teacher’s written feedback beliefs and practices. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 27, 19–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2014.11.001>
- Lalande, J. (1982). Reducing composition errors: An experiment. *The Modern Language Journal*, 66(2), 140–149. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1982.tb06973.x>
- Lee, I. (2004). Error correction in L2 secondary writing classrooms: The case of Hong Kong. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13(4), 285–312. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2004.08.001>
- Lee, I. (2020). Utility of focused/comprehensive written corrective feedback research for authentic L2 writing classrooms. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 49, 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2020.100734>
- Lee, I., Luo, N., & Mak, P. (2021). Teachers’ attempts at focused written corrective feedback in situ. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 54, 1–15 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2021.100809>
- Li, Sh., & Roshan, S. (2019). The associations between working memory and the effects of four different types of written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 45, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2019.03.003>
- Mao, Zh., & Lee, I. (2020). Feedback scope in written corrective feedback: Analysis of empirical research in L2 contexts. *Assessing Writing*, 45, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2020.100469>

- Mao, Zh., & Lee, I. (2022). Researching L2 student engagement with written feedback: Insights from sociocultural theory. *TESOL Quarterly*, 56(2), 788–798.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3071>
- Mao, S.S., & Crosthwaite, P. (2019). Investigating written corrective feedback: (Mis)alignment of teachers' beliefs and practice. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 45, 46–60.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2019.05.004>
- Montgomery, J., & Baker, W. (2007). Teacher-written feedback: Student perceptions, teacher self-assessment, and actual teacher performance. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16(2), 82–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2007.04.002>
- Nemati, M., Alavi, S. M., & Mohebbi, H. (2019). Assessing the effect of focused direct and focused indirect written corrective feedback on explicit and implicit knowledge of language learners. *Language Testing in Asia*, 9(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-019-0084-9>
- Rahimi, M. (2021). A comparative study of the impact of focused vs. comprehensive corrective feedback and revision on ESL learners' writing accuracy and quality. *Language Teaching Research*, 25(5), 687–710. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168819879182>
- Robb, T., Ross, S., & Shortreed, I. (1986). Salience of feedback on error and its effect on EFL writing quality. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20(1), 83–96. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3586390>
- Tang, Ch., & Liu, Y.-T. (2018). Effects of indirect coded corrective feedback with and without short affective teacher comments on L2 writing performance, learner uptake and motivation. *Assessing Writing*, 35, 26–40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2017.12.002>
- Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning*, 46(2), 327–369. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1996.tb01238.x>

- Truscott, J. (2007). The effect of error correction on learners' ability to write accurately. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16(4), 255–272. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2007.06.003>
- Truscott, J., & Hsu, A. Y. (2008). Error correction, revision, and learning. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 17(4), 292–305. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2008.05.003>
- Yu, S. (2021). Feedback-giving practice for L2 writing teachers: Friend or foe? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 52, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2021.100798>
- Van Beuningen, C., De Jong, N. H., & Kuiken, F. (2012). Evidence on the effectiveness of comprehensive error correction in second language writing. *Language Learning*, 62(1), 1–41. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2011.00674.x>
- Zhang, L. J., & Cheng, X. (2021). Examining the effects of comprehensive written corrective feedback on L2 EAP students' linguistic performance: A mixed-methods study. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 54, 1–15 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2021.101043>

## APPENDIX A

### Participant Recruitment Letter

Dear Participant,

My name is Chnur Al-Jaf, and I am a graduate student from Colorado State University in the English department (M.A. in TEFL/TESL program). My professor and thesis Chair is Dr. Fabiola Ehlers-Zavala. We are conducting a research study on written corrective feedback (WCF). The title of our project is *Iraqi Kurdistan Teachers' Views and Attitudes towards Written Corrective Feedback in EFL writing*.

We would like you to take an anonymous online survey. Participation will take approximately 20-25 minutes. Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

We will not collect your name or personal identifiers. When we report and share the data to others, we will combine the data from all participants. While there are no direct benefits to you, we hope to gain more knowledge on teachers' views and practices related to written corrective feedback (WFC). This knowledge will inform research in this area.

There are not known risks. However, we acknowledge that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but we have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential (but unknown) risks.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact me (Chnur Al-Jaf) at [chnurjaf@colostate.edu](mailto:chnurjaf@colostate.edu) or my professor, Dr. Ehlers-Zavala at [fabponce@colostate.edu](mailto:fabponce@colostate.edu).

To indicate your consent to participate in this research and to continue on to the survey, please choose Yes or No from the options below.

## APPENDIX B

### A Two-Part Online Survey

#### Directions:

This study seeks to develop an understanding of your own beliefs regarding the type of feedback you find important to give to English language learners to assist them with revision of essays. It consists of two parts. Part 1 is intended to develop an understanding of your views related to written corrective feedback (WCF) to students' English as a foreign language (EFL) writing. Part 2 is intended to gather some general information on your feedback related to Part 1 and demographics. Your participation in completing these two parts is much appreciated. All your responses will remain confidential.

#### PART 1

Below you will find a series of statements related to written corrective feedback (WCF). We would like for you to read and rate each statement. As you rate each statement, please make a selection from the range of answer options provided to indicate if you strongly agree; agree; disagree; or strongly disagree with the statement presented. Once you make your selection, please provide additional comments to explain your rating. Your additional comments are highly appreciated as they contribute to the study's results. Thanks!

#### My Views on Written Corrective Feedback (WCF)

1. When providing written corrective feedback (WCF), I believe that it is the teachers' responsibility to mark the errors instead of directly correcting them.

(Choose)

- Strongly agree
- Agree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

2. It is important to me to focus on the form rather than the content when providing WCF.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

3. I make every effort to point out all grammatical errors when providing WCF.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

4. The WCF that I provide needs to be appropriate to the student's writing level.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

5. When providing WCF, I mostly ask students questions about their errors rather than making statements.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

6. I believe that, in WCF, providing positive comments about students' writing strengths contributes to their writing performance.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

7. When receiving WCF, the majority of my students appreciate being directly corrected and provided with the answers.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

8. In my experience, excessive WCF can discourage students and lead them to ignore the feedback.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

9. I find that WCF is a time-consuming practice for teachers.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

10. I believe that, it is more effective to have a certain criterion/rubric available to follow when giving WCF to students.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

11. In my view, providing WCF improves the learners' language proficiency and their writing performance.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree

- Strongly disagree

Comments:

12. From my perspective, providing WCF on Local issues (spelling, grammar, punctuation) is more effective than on Global issues (ideas, content, organization).

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

13. When providing WCF, I adjust my feedback strategy to be tailored to the needs, preferences, and progress of the individual students.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

14. I believe that coding errors by using editing symbols previously taught to learners is a useful and effective means to provide WCF to language learners.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

15. When providing WCF, it is important to me to be selective and provide language learners with comments on errors that primarily interfere with the communication of their message.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

16. I believe that, when providing WCF, it is important to use metalanguage (previously taught to students) to point out errors in writing.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

17. When providing WCF, I believe that it is necessary to provide unfocused (comprehensive) feedback to language learners to develop positive attitudes towards writing.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

18. When providing WCF, I provide opportunities for students to ask me questions during one-on-one student conferences (individual meetings with students).

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

Additional comments:

19. How did you find the task that required you to rate the statements presented?

- a) Easy to rate
- b) Neither easy nor difficult to rate
- c) Very difficult to rate

Please mention any statement or terms that were difficult to understand:

---

---

## PART 2

**Directions:** Please, answer the following questions by selecting from the options provided below or by filling in the necessary information. Thanks!

- 1) What language is your native language?
  - a) Kurdish\_\_\_\_
  - b) Arabic\_\_\_\_
  - c) English\_\_\_\_
  - d) Other (state which one)\_\_\_\_\_

2) Besides your native language, can you list all the languages you are fully proficient in?

3) What is your gender? Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Prefer not to disclose \_\_\_\_\_

4) How many years of English language teaching experience in higher education do you have?

a) 1-3 years

b) 3-5 years

c) 5-10 years

d) 10-15 years

e) 15-20 years

f) Other

5) What is your highest academic degree related to English language teaching?

a) Bachelor's

b) Master's

c) Doctoral

6) What is your major degree? (e.g., TESOL, Applied linguistics, Literature, etc.)

7) How comfortable do you feel working with EFL learners in teaching them English writing in higher education in Iraqi Kurdistan?

Very comfortable \_\_\_\_\_

Relatively comfortable \_\_\_\_\_

Not comfortable at all \_\_\_\_\_

8) Please describe your experience as a writer in English. In your description, can you please tell us what has helped you or not to become an effective writer?

9) How has your experience related to English writing informed your practices in teaching English writing to language learners?

10) Please, select your level of comfort in using the following types of WCF:

a) Direct	Comfortable	Not comfortable
b) Indirect	Comfortable	Not comfortable
c) Metalinguistic	Comfortable	Not comfortable
d) Focused (selective)	Comfortable	Not comfortable
e) Unfocused (comprehensive)	Comfortable	Not comfortable
f) Local issues (spelling, grammar, punctuation)	Comfortable	Not comfortable
g) Global issues (ideas, content, organization)	Comfortable	Not comfortable

**Comments:** (Feel free to provide any comments that can help us understand the areas where you may NOT feel comfortable)

11) Have you taken any of the following courses? (Check all that apply)

- Theoretical Foundations of ESL
- Assessment of English Language learners
- Linguistics
- Cross-cultural aspects of TESOL

\_\_\_\_\_ ESL methods

\_\_\_\_\_ Composition studies

12) Would you like to receive additional training in the area of WCF?

a) Yes

b) No

**THANKS!**