Written Corrective Feedback in An ESL Malaysian Primary Classroom: Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

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Abstract
Written corrective feedback (WCF) has long been debated in language learning, with questions raised about its efficacy in the classroom. The use of WCF is important in the process of language learning since it benefits both educators and learners. This study aims to investigate the types of WCF implemented in an English primary classroom in Selangor, Malaysia, and to explore the beliefs and practices of 6 English teachers and 30 students towards WCF. Data was collected through a focus group discussion and document analysis. The study found that WCF served as a useful guideline for students to improve their writing skills and motivated them to excel, while also helping teachers to enhance their pedagogy. However, there were both matches and mismatches between teachers' beliefs and their actual WCF practices, particularly regarding the types of feedback provided. While teachers' beliefs were congruent with the focus and provision of feedback, there were striking incongruences regarding the types of feedback provided. This study contributes to the theory and practice of WCF in a primary ESL classroom context. It also offers insights for educators on how to effectively implement WCF in their teaching practices. Further research could look into the impact of different sources of WCF, such as peer and teacher–student conferencing, on the development of students' writing skills, as this study only looked at teachers' provision of WCF.
Keywords: Written Corrective Feedback, English As A Second Language (ESL), Primary School, Beliefs, Practices

Introduction
This study is in line with the globalisation era, which is rapidly expanding, particularly in international communication, where English is the language of communication used worldwide, including in Malaysia. Even though the English language has become increasingly important in this country, many people still lack proficiency in it. A significant factor contributing to this problem is the ineffective teaching of English language in schools, particularly in written form. In order to enhance the writing abilities of students, the teacher

assumes various roles, such as reader, writing guide, grammarian, and evaluator, and provides feedback on their linguistic errors (including grammar and vocabulary) through written corrective feedback (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Keh, 1990). Written corrective feedback (WCF) has been gaining traction in the fields of second language writing and second language acquisition in recent times (Bitchener and Storch, 2016).

According to Nakamura (2017), written corrective feedback (WCF) is an instructional strategy that can be used to help second/foreign language (L2) learners improve their writing effectiveness by providing written corrections. It entails a student receiving either formal or informal written feedback from a teacher or classmates regarding his or her performance on a variety writing tasks. Despite the fact that the topic of written corrective feedback has been studied extensively in the past, Junqueira and Payant (2015) asserted that the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices when responding to students' written work has received scant attention and deserves more. As a result, the purpose of this study is to delve deeper into the beliefs and practices of teachers regarding written corrective feedback, as well as to examine the congruence and incongruity between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the provision of written corrective feedback.

Research Problem

Writing is a crucial fundamental skill in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom, highly critical to be mastered by the current generation of teachers to bring out the best of narrative excellence amongst students. Thus, discovering and invigorating the best methods in developing second–language writing skills has churned out to be a major focus for teachers and educational researchers. One method which is predominantly employed to accelerate students' excellence in writing is through the provision of feedback. In general, WCF has proven to be monumentally effective for students' writing skills, which also not surprisingly appears to be the most time-consuming task for teachers. While providing adequate and constructive feedback on students' writing is critical, in fueling the students' accelerated writing skills, it is equally paramount to ensure the teachers' beliefs and practices equate and tally hand in hand with each other. According to Al-Shahrani (2017) in the absence of prior experience or knowledge in WCF, some teachers may be unable to provide effective WCF on students' writing, which may have an adverse effect on students' performance in written compositions. Williams (2003) also believed that the inclusion of vague comments or inconsistent marking of errors in teachers' writing assessment forms may have a negative impact on students' writing ability, causing them to become frustrated, passive, or confused. Thus, equal focus and prominence towards teachers' beliefs and practices in providing WCF are extremely pivotal towards the development of students' writing skills, which this research will be divulging deeply into.

Research Questions

1. What are the teachers' beliefs on the provision of written corrective feedback in an ESL classroom?
2. What are the teachers' written corrective feedback practices in an ESL classroom?
3. Are teachers' beliefs on written corrective feedback congruent with their actual WCF practices

Research Objectives

1. To investigate teachers' beliefs on the provision of written corrective feedback in an ESL

classroom

2. To examine teachers' practices of providing written corrective feedback in an ESL classroom.

3. To explore the congruence or incongruity between teachers' beliefs and their actual practices in providing written corrective feedback in an ESL classroom.

Significance of Study

This study will sensitize researchers, material developers, teachers, and students to various approaches of corrective feedback. Investigating teachers' beliefs and practices about corrective feedback, in deep depth and microscopic view, is a premier step to providing feedback in class. In addition, a cohesive understanding of the corrective feedback practices by teachers is fundamental towards the vital role they play in the development of the students' language skills. This study is also deemed important to shed new light on the current WCF practices in the Malaysian ESL writing classroom. According to Lee (2019); Yu (2021), despite the fact that many studies have examined the types, effectiveness, and forms of feedback, the perspectives of teachers on feedback have received relatively little attention in the literature. While significant efforts have been made to understand the congruence between teachers' beliefs and practices in the L1 context, studies examining teachers' beliefs in the L2 context have been few and far between (Borg, 2016). This study will also provide insight into understanding the existence of any mismatches between both the beliefs and practices amongst teachers, which in turn prove significant towards designing a need analysis procedure. English language teachers would also be able to view and comprehend the types of WCF provided in students' writing compositions besides self-evaluating themselves on their own practice of WCF, to constantly measure and improve their teaching and coaching on writing. This type of study has the potential to raise awareness among educators, in addition to providing them with important information about the different types of WCF, as well as the beliefs and practices of WCF held by a teacher (Nilaasini, 2015)

Literature Review

Written Corrective Feedback

Written corrective feedback from the teacher is a method practiced widely by the majority of teachers in guiding their students' writing revisions (Abbas and Hogar, 2018). Amongst many other significant and influential approaches to writing, teachers' written corrective feedback acts as the most sought after and common form of feedback, with its effectiveness being micro coped extensively over the last two decades, but it is still rather diminutively impossible to draw definitive conclusions about which options are the most beneficial to learners (Nematzadeh and Siahpoosh, 2017). Ever since written corrective feedback (WCF) progressed to attain a widely researched topic in language studies, a wide array of researchers proposed different methods and techniques of categorizing corrective feedback. For instance, Tang and Liu (2018) proposed the notion of two WCF, one being the indirect coded whilst the second type being the indirect uncoded feedback. According to Ting and Qian (2018) feedback can be predominantly divided into two types, namely usable and unusable feedback. The feedback that could be applied in certain ways by the students in the revisions was categorized as 'usable feedback' while the feedback points that failed to yield any positive reinforcement or a reader response were categorized as 'unusable feedback'.

Direct Feedback
Indirect feedback appears in one of the following two forms: locating the error or simply indicating the error without highlighting the precise location to the learner. Indirect feedback is beneficial due to equipping learners with highly needed problem-solving and guided learning skills, while also motivating them to reflect on their own mistakes. In simplicity, this enables greater reflection on the type of error encountered by the learner, providing a steady upheaval in cognitive processing. Nonetheless, students who are crippled with lower levels of language proficiency may lack the linguistic acumen and knowledge that is paramount to correct their errors even when pointed out (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005).

Metalinguistic Feedback
Ellis (2009) defined metalinguistic corrective feedback as providing learners with some form of explicit comments about the nature of the errors they have made, as they are coded, encoded, or grammatically explained, most commonly through the use of error codes. Divulging into a recent study conducted by Tanveer et al (2018), students who received metalinguistic corrective were able to revise and create new essays with fewer errors.

Focused and Unfocused Feedback
Ellis (2009) has defined focused feedback as a teacher's correction that centers on only one or two specific types of errors whilst ignoring the rest of the errors committed by the students. Ellis (2009) has propelled the notion that focused feedback is by far more effective as it allowed the learner to review a specific single error and comprehend the pieces of evidence to understand further what was written incorrectly and why it was written wrongly in the first place. Ellis (2009) asserted that unfocused feedback is far more complex and provided corrections for all types of errors, such as grammatical, lexical or sociolinguistic errors which are time consuming for teachers.

Methodology
A qualitative research methodology was deemed the most appropriate design for this study. According to Busetto et al (2020), qualitative research is defined as "the study of the nature of phenomena, including their quality, different manifestations, the context in which they appear or the perspectives from which they can be perceived, but excluding their range, frequency and place in an objectively determined chain of cause and effect". Qualitative research also generally includes data in the form of words rather than numbers. Generally, a qualitative research design comprises collecting data from respondents to obtain the respondents' in-depth views about a certain situation or happening. This study employed a qualitative research design to explore and analyze the beliefs and practices of teachers of written corrective feedback in an ESL classroom. Six English teachers and thirty students from a government primary school located in an urban area were selected as participants for the study. The participants were engaged in a purposive sampling method, and their demographic information was recorded. Two data collection instruments were used in this study, namely focus group and document analysis (students' written essays) based on Ellis (2009) Corrective feedback Framework. Ellis (2009) categorized the various types of WCF into six major categories: Direct CF, Indirect, Metalinguistic and Focus of the feedback (focused and unfocused). The focus group discussions were conducted to discover the teachers' beliefs on the provision of written corrective feedback, and the marked composition work of the students was used to determine the teachers' written corrective feedback practices. The

study aimed to answer three research questions concerning the teachers' beliefs and practices on written corrective feedback in an ESL classroom. Prior to the data collection process, the researcher gained permission from the school, teachers, and students' parents to conduct the study through consent forms. The study followed a flexible and open-ended approach to allow for detailed information to be gathered and to encourage participants to talk freely about the phenomenon under study without any restrictions.

Results

Rq1: what are the teachers' beliefs on the provision of written corrective feedback in an esl classroom?

Teachers' Beliefs on The Purpose of WCF

All participating teachers share a common unison on the importance of written corrective feedback and view WCF as being armed with multiple goals as shared below

Corrective Feedback as A Guideline for Students

Corrective feedback provided by the teacher acts as a guideline to the students towards

Achieving precise and orderly writing skills besides fundamentally improvising their writing competency. Corrective feedback is commonly introduced by teachers via the provision of denoting correct form, circling or crossing the wrong answers. Armed with the feedback, the students are prompted into realizing their initial mistakes, enabling the prevention of future errors in tasks to come. Through thorough analysis of the feedback received, the students are equipped with a concrete understanding of errors committed by digesting the corrected work via repeated revisions. This outlays the foundational pathway for students to stimulate their thoughts and multiply their effort to perfect their writing. As teacher f stated *"i strongly feel feedback helps students. For example, when teachers give feedback, students can actually focus on the important aspect of writing like how the essay is organized, how the ideas are expressed correctly and how the sentence is structured. All this feedback can help students to improve their writing".* Ken (2016) also concurred that teachers who provide students with effective feedback aid students to correct their own mistakes that eventually nurture them into independent, wholesome and exemplified writers.

Provide Motivation

Incorporating written corrective feedback in writing is proven to be a highly effective approach in writing lessons. Feedback is an indispensably effective tool that fuels the students' motivation, polishes their language proficiency as well as rubberstamping great achievement in their writing accomplishments. Simple yet positive feedback such as 'good' and 'great job' by teachers acts as significant boosters in increasing students' motivation and sheer will to improve their writing.

Feedback Assists Teachers to Improve Their Pedagogy

Written corrective feedback also provides teachers with an avalanche of learning preferences, especially suited to individual students with differing levels of strengths and weaknesses in their written work. This information works as guidance towards the teachers' instruction in the classroom. According to Heitink (2016) teachers integrate feedback processes with their pedagogical content knowledge in order to better attend to student learning needs especially their writing skills.

Teachers' Beliefs on The Focus of WCF

During the discussion on the focus of WCF, all the participating teachers opened up on various preferences on which errors to correct in students' writing. The majority of the teachers, i.e., teacher a, teacher b, teacher e and teacher f were more inclined to comment on the error in language forms such as grammar, vocabulary and verb errors. Teacher c and teacher d, on the contrary, were more prone to comment on content-based errors. Teacher a believed that errors related to language form should be micro-scoped through a higher lens of importance than errors related to content and organization. She stated that

"I give a lot of importance to language forms. I give most feedback on that. If you ask me number one priority is language form comes first then only content and organization. I strongly believe that even a writing lacks in coherent but if it's written in the correct language, it can be understood by people who read it."

Despite some obvious errors in the content of the essays, she believed that the teachers would be able to comprehend the students' writing. She believed firmly in her point that students should primarily prioritize writing grammatically astute sentences before shifting their focus towards the organization of the essay.

Teacher B, also asserted that grammar received the greatest attention during her provision of feedback due to the core fundamental language rules that epitomes grammar as the mother of all aspects of writing. She quoted that:

"Firstly, I will read the text in one go and next I will check the grammar in detail. I mostly focused on grammar because I believe the first rule here is students should write error free sentences. Once they get all the grammar correct, I will look into the content. So, I always focus more on the grammatical part of students' work. I feel it is more important to give feedback on form than content"

Teachers' Beliefs on the Types of WCF Used

The first one is direct feedback e.g., by providing the correct answers for the errors. The second one is indirect feedback where the teachers underline the error to identify and indicate the original existence of the error but fall short of providing the correction, thus leaving the student to unearth the correct answers themselves. Next is metalinguistic corrective feedback, which is evidenced through written codes or symbols to identify specific errors or simply numbering the errors and writing a short, descriptive note on the grammatical error for each written error number at the bottom of the text. The final type of corrective feedback is focused and unfocussed feedback. As for focused feedback, the teacher attempts to correct all (or most) of the students' errors whilst unfocussed feedback prompts the teacher to only select one or two specific types of errors to be corrected.

All the respondents of this study preferred and utilized different types of corrective feedback in their students' work. Teacher a shared that she commonly used two methods which are the direct method and metalinguistic feedback for her students. She usually performed a thorough and holistic review of her students' proficiency level before landing on the type of feedback to be used. She further explained that she predominantly used direct feedback and notes down the correct answers for her students with lower language proficiency. Through her experience, she proudly proclaimed that her direct feedback methodology in providing direct correction propel many weaker students to almost

immediately realize their mistakes and perform corrections soon after, which is highly admirable. This group of weaker students also did not face any confusion or lack of understanding as the feedback provided was simple, straightforward and precise. However, she applied metalinguistic feedback for the higher proficiency group, whereby she used specific symbols to denote and indicate errors. For example, she wrote the letter 'v' for verb errors and penned a slash through the symbol '/'to indicate omission for certain letters that were repeated or grammatically incorrect. Another example of symbol utilization by her is writing the caret symbol '^'to indicate missing words, whilst she also used different symbols used to denote certain other errors. She also firmly stated more challenging tasks assigned by teachers need the provision of direct corrective feedback regardless of the proficiency level. Reflecting on her years of teaching language, she said that both sets of her students, encompassing the strong as well as the weaker groups, gave up looking for correct answers rather too easily if the task was deemed too tough. One way of managing the challenge was to provide them with the correct answers even though she was faced with some feedback of spoon feeding her students. In her defence, she claimed that as long as her students are learning, there was no harm in providing direct feedback. Diab (2015) also agreed that students receiving direct error via correction and metalinguistic feedback improve their writing skills drastically in the classroom by committing far fewer errors after the two correction was given to them.

Teacher b, on the flip side, explained that she used direct, indirect corrective feedback, metalinguistic and unfocussed feedback to correct her students' work. Teacher b combined the usage of all the above feedback types based on the proficiency level of her students. She prioritized the use of indirect feedback and metalinguistic feedback for her higher ranked and proficient students as they were able to comprehend the corrective feedback and amend them accurately. Meanwhile, direct feedback was primarily used for her lower proficient students by writing the correct answer above or beside the incorrect answers. Ferris and Roberts' (2001) concurred with this opinion as they stated that direct feedback must be given to students with low levels of proficiency (i.e., students who are incapable of self-correcting). Teacher b also used unfocussed feedback and highlighted all errors done by both the higher and lower proficient students in all their written work.

Meanwhile, teacher c and teacher f strongly portrayed their preference towards three main types of feedback which were indirect, metalinguistic feedback, unfocussed feedback to correct their students' work. Teacher c stated that she consistently provided the same feedback to all types of students regardless of their language literacy and proficiency. She uttered that her students are able to fully comprehend the correction given during most instances. During rare occurrences where they suffer a lack of understanding, direct clarification was sought between her students and herself. Teacher c further proved her point by explaining the depths and details of the correction provided. Interestingly, teacher c highlighted the significance of independent error correcting by allowing her students to self-correct some of the errors in their writing. She believed that indirect feedback encouraged students' self-editing skills, invigorates their minds to unearth the correct solution to the initial error and instigates them to ask questions due to the non-provision of direct feedback. According to al Mohammed (2016), indirect CF improves students' self-editing skills and it saves a huge chunk of teachers' time compared to the direct technique. Teacher c also exposed the different symbols and codes to all her students from the beginning of the year in preparing them on their use and definitions. This enabled the students to grasp and be soundly aware of the meaning of each metalinguistic code and the amendments that need to

be done for the different symbols and codes used. Teacher c mentioned that she corrected all errors and tried her utmost best not to leave any errors uncorrected. This was done to ensure her students focus on their overall writing improvement, rather than over focusing on any single element of their writing.

Besides, teacher f said that she used the three same types of written corrective feedback due to her cemented belief that the indirect method encouraged her students to blossom as more independent learners whilst also attempting to correct their own mistakes without their teachers' direct help or intervention. She had also exposed metalinguistic code to all the students in the classroom paving the platform for them to comprehend what they see and learn in their writings. She is a firm believer that students from all levels of proficiency must get accustomed to metalinguistic code to prepare them earlier with the much-needed skills that they will expect upon stepping into secondary school. Finally, she applied unfocussed feedback to correct all forms and types of mistakes committed by the students.

Furthermore, teachers d and e both shared a common preference for using similar types of feedback to correct their students' work. They were in unison agreement in using the direct and unfocussed feedback for similarly common reasons as stated below. Teacher d in particular explained that she practiced the common provision of stating the correct answer on the essay paper itself as she felt that students often expect teachers to provide them with the right answers. She provided direct feedback to both her high and low proficient students. Relating to her teaching experience, she still encounters highly literate students who expect their teachers to provide them with precise answers readily, surprisingly rarely undertaking the initiative to identify the answers on their own, unless told to do so. Teacher d too used unfocussed feedback in correcting all the errors which were prevalent in the essay despite the huge time and energy these actions consume and toils her with it. She frequently persevered with this method and advocated for the primary role of the teacher to correct and unearth every error with its desired solution.

Teacher e expressed that she only gave direct and unfocussed feedback to her students who belong to the lower proficiency and language literacy group. She goes into deep detail in her correction of inaccurate writings by her students usually furnishing them with the cause of the error, crossing out, or adding to students' answers. She also believed that her weaker students expected their teacher who they see as their point of reference and guidance to provide accurate answers as they are faced with the inability to locate and amend their mistakes independently without help. However, the slight drawback to this is the existence of some students who ignored their mistakes and failed to undertake any initiative to find the right answers and do the needed corrections. Thus, she felt it is best to provide direct corrective feedback to the weaker students. She too provided unfocussed feedback to all her students' work, careful not to leave any error left out, be it a form or content errors to improve their writing skills. By highlighting all their mistakes, teacher e expressed that the students will jump on the bandwagon to learn from it and aim to prevent the repetition of similar mistakes in future tasks. Albeit time consuming, teacher e asserted that she took pride in feeling a sense of job satisfaction when she had corrected all the errors done by her students. She even went a step further by sharing she would feel incomplete and unjustified if she had purposely left out correcting some aspect of her students' essays, failing to play her role as an accountable teacher.

Conversely, none of the teachers preferred focused error correction as the teachers believed that written corrective feedback must be given to all errors that are prevalent in students' work and it can't be selectively done by teachers. Storch (2018) concurred that from a

practical perspective, only targeting specific error types might not be enough; a teacher's purpose in correcting his pupils' written work is (among other things) improving accuracy in general, not just the use of one grammatical feature. Moreover, observing that some of their errors have been corrected while others have not might be rather confusing for students.

Teachers' Beliefs on Positive Versus Negative Feedback

There was a consensus among all participating teachers regarding the negative and positive feedback on students' writing. As for the positive feedback, all teachers shared common acknowledgement of the criticality and paramount importance of using praising terms to motivate students at all levels.

To begin with, teacher f shared that teachers must always strive towards encouraging students by constantly motivating, praising and boosting their spirits, whilst never undermining their effort in any given circumstance. In a typical response, teacher f has stated:

> *"usually, i highlight points of strength of my students' work. I do it by writing encouraging terms and expressions. For example: well, done! For good work or if it is unsatisfactory work. I will still write positive words like "try harder:" this, i believe, facilitates and improves students' writing because i have seen them doing better when they are encouraged with good words. I do not write harsh comments on students' work though i felt that way many times. I feel like it is not helping them in any manner. So, i stop there"*

Teacher a also shared that she loves to and only used positive feedback in students' writing by praising the students' work. She strongly believed that these praises and words of encouragement go a thousand miles in motivating the students to increase the quality of their work several notches on a continuous basis, propelling them towards a brighter future. Teacher b also encouraged students by writing positive expressions such as 'try harder' or 'don't give up' even when their work was not up to the mark. According to teacher b, these positive notes have invigorated her students to feel appreciated in spite of their work containing errors and not meeting the expected level expected out of them. This in turn will spur them on to keep improving and never give up on their pursuit to achieve quality and error free writing. Next, teacher c expressed that some of her students come from non-english-speaking backgrounds and families, and as such they lack the confidence to write well. This did not deter her, as she constantly encouraged them by providing positive feedback which had sustained their motivation in pushing and trying harder in their writing tasks. Teacher c also shared a similar notion with other teachers in writing down short motivating expressions and saw admirable results from them, which has helped certain students to escalate with a very encouraging impact in their writing. Teacher d too believed in positive feedback as it had boosted her students' confidence in the recent past. After receiving positive feedback, teacher d felt like the students were inspired to write more without the feeling of intimidation and fear. Prior to the provision of positive feedback from her, teacher d shared that most of her students frequently shied away and failed to express themselves much in writing as they were crippled by the fear of making mistakes. The students had developed some admirable progress and shown very positive changes after receiving the positive feedback and today, they frequently approach the teacher to discuss their written work and ways to improve it further. These changes now definitely worked in the favour of teacher d as she seemed to be highly determined in improving her students' writing skills.

Teacher e also added that negative and harsh expressions should be avoided at all costs to prevent students from feeling discouraged and fearful.

Rq2: What are the teachers' written corrective feedback practices in an esl classroom?

Teachers' practices regarding the focus of WCF

To identify the participant teachers' written corrective feedback focuses, the written corrective feedback points towards the learner's essays were divided into two main facets of writing: Language Form and Content. Feedback on the language form was related to the accuracy of students' writing which highlighted errors in grammar, vocabulary, morphemes, syntax and spelling. While on the other hand, feedback on content addressed issues such as ideas presented via written work, organization of the essay, rhetoric, cohesion, and paragraphing in the written work.

As seen in Table 4.1, there were a total of 242 teachers' WCF provided by this group of teachers. All the 242 written corrective feedback provided focused on errors related to language form whilst there was an absence of written corrective feedback on the content of the essays.

Table 4.1
Focus of Teachers' WCF Practices

Respondents	Focus of Teachers' WCF Practices		
	Form	Content	Total WCF
Teacher A	48	-	49
Teacher B	43	-	43
Teacher C	53	-	53
Teacher D	40	-	40
Teacher E	21	-	21
Teacher F	37	-	37
Total	242	-	242

Teacher A's Practices Regarding the Focus of WCF

From the data analysis, it can be clearly seen that Teacher A provided corrective feedback on language form errors such as the use of wrong tense, missing articles, sentence fragments, possessiveness, singular-plural, capitalization, punctuation error and wrong choice of words. Based on the essays corrected by Teacher A, it can be clearly seen that she did not comment on either the thesis statement, the topic sentences nor the clarity and relevance of the ideas.

Teacher B's Practices Regarding the Focus of WCF

Teacher B also paid attention towards all the corrections of language forms in the essays. From the analysis of essays corrected by Teacher B, it can be visibly noticed that she provided more focus towards the correction of grammatical issues like punctuation, wrong use of articles and spelling while no corrections were given on the content errors.

Teacher C's practices regarding the focus of WCF

Teacher C emphasized and provided written corrective feedback on the form errors while no corrections were given on the content errors. Teacher C corrected grammatical issues in the student's paper like punctuation, wrong use of words, spelling, capitalization and wrong structure of sentences.

Teacher D's practices regarding the focus of WCF

Further dissecting into findings, it was evident that Teacher D too shared a similar corrective approach by only amending errors in the language form of the essay with an absence of correction provided on the content of the essay. She highlighted errors pertaining to spelling, subject verb agreement, tenses, nouns and the wrong usage of adverbs in the essay.

Teacher E's practices regarding the focus of WCF

Moving on to Teacher E's written corrective feedback, this teacher endeavored to cover all aspects of language points in the forms of missing articles, verb errors, wrong sentence structure, spelling mistakes, punctuation errors while still providing no attention towards errors pertaining to content and organization of students' essay.

Teacher F's regarding the focus of WCF

Based on the document analysis, it is evident that Teacher F corrected almost all form related errors (grammar errors) in the students' essays whilst also not providing any feedback on the content-based error such as content and organization of the essays.

Teachers' Practices regarding the types of WCF

The findings from the document analysis revealed that teachers predominantly applied four out of six types of WCF proposed by Ellis (2009). The types of written corrective feedback used by the teachers to mark the students' English compositions were direct corrective feedback, indirect corrective feedback, metalinguistic feedback (use of error code) and focused feedback. The findings of the types of WCF provided by the six teachers were reflected in table 4.2

Table 4.2
Teachers' Practices on the types of WCF

Respondents	Direct	Indirect CF		Metalinguistic CF		Focus of the feedback	
		Indicating + locating	Indicating only	Use of error code	Brief grammatical descriptions	Focused (selective)	Unfocused (comprehe nsive)
Teacher A	√			√		√	
Teacher B		√		√		√	
Teacher C		√		√		√	
Teacher D	√					√	
Teacher E	√					√	
Teacher F	√					√	

Teacher A's Practices Regarding the Types of WCF

The findings reflected that Teacher A provided direct, metalinguistic and focused feedback on the students' essay. Teacher A provided direct feedback by writing the correct form. For example, the student spelt the word interesting wrongly as 'intresting' and as such, this was promptly corrected by Teacher A by rewriting the correct spelling. The teacher also corrected the informal words used in the essays like 'wanna' and 'gonna' by noting down the actual form of the words which are to be written as 'want to' and 'going to'. Teacher A also applied the metalinguistic code in the form of a question mark to dictate the ideas where the idea highlighted in its original form was unclear, thus needing more elaboration. Focused feedback was provided to students' essays whereby the teacher corrected only language form errors.

Teacher B's Practices Regarding the Types of WCF

On the other hand, Teacher B typically provided three types of feedback on the essays corrected. The three feedbacks consisted of indirect corrective feedback, metalinguistic feedback and finally unfocussed feedback. Firstly, she used indirect corrective feedback in which she underlined the wrong article used. This is clearly noted through this example where the student wrote the article 'an' before the word 'doctor' that begins with a consonant sound which is wrong. Thus, the teacher underlined and highlighted the mistake. Next, the teacher also used a number of metalinguistic codes to exhibit the many errors committed in the essay. For instance, she used the symbol 'sp' to highlight to the student on the mistake she had made in spelling and in this case, it is the word 'ambition'. Teacher E also used ⃝, a circle symbol to notify the student about the incorrect use of possessive markers in the essay. The teacher too used (/) mark in the student's essay to explicitly show that this letter needs to be deleted to be in the correct form. Last but not least, Teacher E also used the tick symbol, (√) to indicate the sentences appear to be in correct and proper form. In this essay, this can be seen through the sentence 'Doctors help everyone', which is a correct sentence, thus this was denoted with the tick to indicate it was written correctly. Teacher E's tendency to give focused feedback was also seen clearly seen where she corrected language form errors involving punctuation, tenses, articles and again, no corrections were given at all on content-based errors.

Teacher C 's regarding the types of WCF

In depth analysis on Teacher C's correction showed that she has provided three types of corrective feedback, namely indirect corrective feedback, metalinguistic feedback and focused feedback. Teacher C mostly corrected indirectly by using the wavy underlining method to indicate the language errors in the forms of inappropriate words used in the essay such as the words 'wanna' or 'maintain'. The teacher also used the circle symbol to reflect the punctuation errors committed. In this essay, the student had missed out on the comma symbol in her sentence and the teacher highlighted this error by circling the exact location in the sentence where the student has to place the comma symbol. Similar to Teacher B, it is also evidenced that Teacher C used the symbol 'sp' to indicate spelling errors in the essay. It is visible in this essay that the student spelt 'desire' and 'therefore' wrongly, resulting in the Teacher writing the symbol 'sp' exactly above the misspelt words. Teacher C also used the tick symbol when she came across some correct forms of sentences written. All types of language form errors such as spelling, punctuation and inappropriate words used were consistently and entirely corrected by Teacher C, whilst content-based errors were again clearly overlooked.

Teacher D's practices regarding the types of WCF

Further analyzing the data, it was found that Teacher D commonly used two types of corrective feedback in the students' essays, in the form of direct corrective feedback and focused corrective feedback whilst marking the students' essays. From the example above, it can be clearly noted that Teacher D provided unfocussed corrective feedback that covered all grammatical errors such as punctuation, capitalization, missing articles and inappropriate words used. Teacher E provided direct feedback by writing down the precise and correct answers above the mistakes committed by the student. In the sample essay shown above, there were a number of capitalization errors done by the student. Here, the teacher amended these errors by noting down the right to be written in capital letters for all the words that were wrongly written with small letters. Next, the teacher also added missing words like 'are' to correct and improve the sentence into a grammatically correct sentence. By also adding missing articles like 'a' in the sentence, the teacher helped her student realize the accurate and precise way to construct a well written sentence. It can also be visibly portrayed in this example that the student had applied usage of some inappropriate words at certain junctures of the essay. Thus, the teacher also corrected this by writing down the accurate choice of words to be used. An example that illustrated this correction, was the incorrect use of the word 'stranger' by the student where the teacher had performed the needed correction by writing the word 'criminal' which is more apt and suitable to the sentence structure and meaning in this essay. Teacher D also performed corrections towards punctuation errors in the sentences, i.e., replacing full stop with a question mark in the essay. This analysis also showed that Teacher D only provided focused error correction on the language form of the essays.

Teacher E's regarding the types of WCF

The data analysis revealed that direct WCF (providing the correct form) was the most common type of WCF used in Teacher E's corrected papers. Most of these directly corrected errors dealt with the informal use of English words, capitalization, wrong use of personal pronouns and missing phrases. Teacher E corrected the informal English words in the essay by adding the correct form, such as: wanna to want to. In addition, Teacher E added words/phrases/ by using cursors to correct the sentences as it was incomplete. Teacher E also corrected the use of personal pronouns in the students' essays. The student used the third person 'They' when it was supposed to be the first person pronoun 'I'. Therefore, the teacher wrote the correct personal pronoun to be used in the essay. Finally, the teacher directly corrected the capitalization errors in the essay made by the student. In general, Teacher E used focused feedback to correct only language form errors that were prevalent in the essay.

Teacher F's regarding the types of WCF

Teacher F also used two types of feedback to correct the students' essays. The first approach used was direct feedback whilst the second method applied was focused feedback. Teacher F provided the correct form for errors pertaining to capitalization, spelling, wrong choice of words, subject verb agreement and punctuation. For example, there were a number of capitalization errors found in the essay, where Teacher F immediately performed the needed correction by writing capital letters. Next, the student wrongly spelt the word 'playdough' as 'play dog', which teacher F mended the error by writing the accurate spelling for the word. As can be seen in this essay, the student too missed out on some punctuation marks like question marks or commas which was highlighted by Teacher F as well. Then there were some

glaring subject verb agreement errors strewn across the essay that was also corrected by Teacher F. Lastly, Teacher F also made it a point to solely correct only language form errors in the essay.

Mainly, the analysis of the teachers' focusses on WCF revealed that all six teachers provided utmost importance to language form errors than content/organization of the text. Furthermore, evidence of extensive usage of both direct and indirect WCF types by respective teachers was largely evident, but also noted that direct form through the provision of the correct form was more commonly used than indirect corrective feedback. Concerning the amount of WCF provided, all teachers provided selective feedback that addressed the language form that occurred in the students' essays.

Teacher B highlighted form-based errors such as the wrong use of articles, punctuation and spelling errors in the essay. For instance, the student has mistakenly used the article 'an' when the actual and correct 'a' for the word noun 'doctor' should be written. Teacher B also corrected another form-based error which was a punctuation error i.e., the teacher circled the wrong use of apostrophe mark in the student's essay. Unfortunately, this teacher failed to notice and correct the unity and development of ideas. The ideas written by the students also seemed misleading and were inaccurately written, which was not captured and corrected by Teacher B.

Practices regarding positive versus negative feedback WCF
The findings provided revelation and findings that Teacher A, Teacher C, Teacher D and Teacher F used positive feedback i.e., praise, at the end of the students' essay. There were clearly no negative remarks provided even though the essays were filled with many errors. On the other hand, Teachers B and E gave only negative feedback on the students' essays, whilst failing to provide any form of positive remarks on any of their students' essays.

Teacher A's practices regarding positive versus negative feedback
Teacher A provided positive feedback such as 'Good', 'Good effort' and 'Good job' on all five essays she had marked and assessed. Despite the presence of a couple of errors in the essays, Teacher A still proceeded to only give positive remarks on the overall content of the essays marked.

Teacher B's practices regarding positive versus negative feedback
Conversely, the corrective feedback analysis findings revealed that Teacher B only expressed negative feedback when responding to errors in students' essays. Out of the 5 essays corrected by Teacher B, four essays received negative remarks regardless of the severity of errors done in the essays. The fifth essay, on the other hand, was given neither positive nor negative feedback.

Teacher C's practices regarding positive versus negative feedback
Positive feedback such as 'Good', 'Well done' and 'Try harder' was given by Teacher C to all the essays she had corrected. Teacher C too provided written constructive comments on every essay marked despite the high number of errors committed in the essays. Teacher C showed her belief in positive and constructive feedback by making it a point to express her appreciation for the effort done by the students to write an error free essay.

Teacher D's practices regarding the positive versus negative feedback
Teacher D also consistently gave good feedback on all five essays corrected. Teacher D gave remarks such as 'Well done', 'Good work', 'You can write better' on all five essays that were corrected.

Teacher E's practices regarding the positive versus negative feedback WCF
    The corrective feedback analysis findings revealed that Teacher E only expressed negative feedback when responding to errors in students' essays. Out of the five essays corrected by Teacher B, all five essays predominantly and consistently received negative remarks throughout regardless of the extent of the error being committed as major or minor.

Teacher F's practices regarding the positive versus negative feedback WCF
    Teacher F too is a firm advocate of positive feedback, as can be seen through her written feedback such as 'Good job', 'Well done'. 'Good' and 'Excellent' across all the five essays she has marked. Although some of the essays contained glaring errors, Teacher F still consistently wrote positive remarks on the overall essay errors and contents.

In conclusion, all six teachers have expressed a mixture or combination of both positive and negative corrective feedback when responding to the students' writing, although the analysis has clearly shown a higher preference of positive feedback usage amongst these teachers.

RQ3: Are teachers' beliefs on written corrective feedback congruent with their actual WCF practices?
    The findings correlated from teachers' focus group discussion and detailed dissection on the analysis of students' corrected papers provided a crystal-clear demonstration of these teachers believing WCF to be a crucially integral device to improve students' accuracy in writing. The teacher unwavering beliefs' concerning the value of WCF in ESL classrooms were also clearly reflected and firmly echoed in their practices. However, some notable disparities and marked mismatches were compounded as well between the teachers' beliefs and practice on certain aspects of WCF. Thus, in the following section congruency/incongruency between participant teachers' beliefs and practices in the focus of WCF, the type of WCF, the amount of WCF and positive vs negative feedback will be discussed and deliberated in length.

Teachers' beliefs and practices on the focus of WCF
    The majority of the teachers, namely Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher E and Teacher F stood firm in their belief in the superiority of language form. Their beliefs were congruent with their actual practices of WCF as they prioritized feedback on language form more than the content. As seen in Table 4.1 in the previous section, the teachers provided a steady flow of feedback on the language form of students' essays while zero comments were given on the content aspect of the essays. A significant factor that could have contributed to such congruence was due to the great number of form errors in the students' essays that needed correction compared to fewer errors in the content or organization of the essay. This reasoning has been proved by studies conducted by Bitchener and Ferris (2012) and Lee (2019) who claimed that language form errors were recorded among the frequent errors committed by students compared to other types of errors in the students' essays. In conclusion, the majority of teachers' beliefs and practices on the focus of teachers' corrective feedback were consistent.

Teachers' beliefs and practices about the type of WCF
Further analysis of the findings, highlighted that Teacher A portrayed a strong belief in her application of direct, metalinguistic and unfocused feedback on her students' writing. While in actual practice, Teacher A provided direct, metalinguistic and focused feedback on the students' essays. As such an incongruency arose on the type of WCF believed and practiced by Teacher A. Her belief in the usage of unfocussed feedback on her students' essays was contrary towards the actual fact of her using focused feedback to assess her students' essays. Based on the focus group discussion and document analysis, it was identified that Teacher B's beliefs and practices on the type of feedback possessed some obvious differences as well. Her firm belief in providing four types of feedback, namely direct, indirect corrective feedback, metalinguistic and unfocussed feedback to correct her students' work was rather opposing to her actual practice of only exhibiting three types of feedback i.e. indirect corrective feedback, metalinguistic feedback and focused feedback. Next, Teacher C also stood her ground by strongly insisting on her belief of using three main types of feedback which were indirect, metalinguistic feedback and unfocussed feedback to correct their students' work. However, actual observation on Teacher C also shed light on disparity where only three types of corrective feedback in the name of indirect corrective feedback, metalinguistic feedback and focused feedback were provided in the actual teaching environment. Teacher D's common preference for feedback provision was reflected in her view of applying direct and unfocussed feedback while grading and evaluating students' essays. However, in reality, another glaring difference was observed, where Teacher D used two types of corrective feedback i.e., direct corrective feedback and focused corrective feedback to mark the students' essays. Following suit with the next teacher analyzed, Teacher E expressed that she only provided direct and unfocussed feedback on students' written work. Again, the precise data analysis revealed that direct WCF and focused was the most common and readily applied type of WCF used by Teacher E's, as observed in the corrected papers. Last but not least, Teacher F strongly portrayed a focused preference towards three main types of feedback which were indirect, metalinguistic feedback, unfocussed feedback to correct her students' work. A similarly consistent difference between the teachers' beliefs and the actual WCF used in the classroom was again apparent here where Teacher F used direct feedback and focused feedback in the students' papers. This steady and persistent mismatch between teachers' beliefs and actual implementation of practices is attributed to two greatly impactful factors amongst teacher, their mountainous workload and hogging time constraints. This explanation is consistent with Van Beuningen (2010) who argued that an overload and imbalance of explicit WCF can be mentally exhausting and time-consuming for the teacher. Summarizing in a nutshell, the majority of the teachers' beliefs on the type of WCF provided were not reflected in their actual teaching.

Teachers' beliefs and practices about positive versus negative feedback
All the participant teachers in the present study shared a common belief in the significance of the use of positive feedback to motivate students immaterial of the level or depth of quality exhibited by the students' writing. In addition, they further forwarded their acumen that negative terms should be avoided at all costs to prevent a loss of self-confidence and esteem among students. This finding had also been shared and highlighted amongst the majority of the WCF research such as (Lee, 2009; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Zacharias, 2007; Jodaie and Farrokhi, 2012) who supported positive remarks in students' essays regardless of the quality of the essays. The data analysis revealed that the beliefs of the majority of the teachers,

namely Teacher A, Teacher C, Teacher D and Teacher F on teachers' positive feedback vs negative feedback were congruent with their practice. The teachers mentioned above showed a consistent alignment towards the provision of encouraging and positive remarks only, whilst not even a single negative remark was given in the students' essays. However, Teacher B and E's belief in teachers' positive vs negative feedback were incongruent with their practice where only negative feedback were given on their students' essays while no presence or writing of positive remarks was noticed on these essays. These opposing and contrary findings between Teacher B's and Teacher E's beliefs and their practices go parallel with Lee (2019) who discovered that teachers respond to the students' weaknesses only despite their beliefs in the importance of positive feedback. This incongruent finding was also concurred by Ferris et al (1997) who stated that although most teachers L1 and L2 believed in the significance and importance of positive feedback on students' essays, they have failed to provide much positive feedback in reality. This incongruence might be attributed to the error-focused approach implemented by teachers which was mostly adopted in the ESL classroom. In addition, teachers might also be influenced by their previous education system in which teachers tend to focus more on the students' weaknesses rather than building on their strengths. In general, most teachers' beliefs on positive versus negative feedback were congruent with their actual practices as most of them actually pen down positive remarks on the written work of their students.

Discussion

Several findings were highlighted and outlined in this study on teachers' WCF on students' essays. Teachers' WCF is a pivotal component of language learning in general and writing in particular. It diligently informs students about their core strengths for excellence and critical weaknesses to be focused on, thus increasing their focus on the subject they are writing about. All of the teachers who undertook active participation in the study duly recognized the importance of WCF in improving students' writing quality. They believed that providing effective WCF on students' work assists them in correcting errors and improving their writing.

Pertaining to teachers' belief in the focus of WCF, the majority of the teachers were more inclined towards comments on language errors such as grammar, vocabulary and verb errors rather than on content-based errors. These teachers stated that their students' rather poor writing attributes or skills caused them to increase their focus on grammar. They also believed that students should follow grammar rules and write with accurate and precise grammar, to begin with, before delving into the context of organization and content of an essay. Next, all the participant teachers in this study believed that they steadily applied a few different types of corrective feedback in their students' work. However, the majority of the teachers preferred direct feedback compared to all other types of feedback. The teachers generally stated that the students' level of proficiency and the types of errors in their compositions influenced their choice of WCF. Furthermore, all the teachers also shared a common agreement in their attempt to correct students' written errors in a comprehensive (unfocused) manner by correcting all or most of the errors that they observed while marking the essays. The teachers were convinced that they were not selective or predominantly attentive in correcting specific errors in the graded text of the essays. All the teachers also firmly believed in the importance of positive feedback as a must as it promoted students' motivation to revise their work from a pedagogical standpoint. The teachers also believed

that assigning negative corrective feedback on students' written work will dampen their desire, spirit and motivation to learn, thus crippling their self-development in writing.

The findings on teachers' practice on the focus of WCF, proved that all teachers provided feedback on the language form of students' essays and not the content as they strongly believed in the fundamental and basic importance for students to get their essays grammatically right as a stepping stone towards better writing quality thereafter. Furthermore, direct and focused corrective feedback was the most utilized type of feedback in the students' essays. Besides, all the teachers in the study chose to provide corrections in a selective manner by correcting only language form errors while they neglected content-based errors. Last but not least, the majority of the teachers also gave multiple positive feedback on their students' work.

Finally, both matches and mismatches were discovered between teachers' beliefs on WCF vs their actual classroom practices of WCF. As depicted in the findings, the majority of teachers' beliefs and practices regarding focus and positive vs negative feedback WCF were congruent and compatible. Nonetheless, remarkable inconsistencies were discovered in the types of WCF provided.

Conclusion

Teachers' WCF is a pivotal component of language learning in general and writing in particular. It diligently informs students about their core strengths for excellence and critical weaknesses to be focused on, thus increasing their focus on the subject they are writing about. All of the teachers who undertook active participation in the study duly recognized the importance of WCF in improving students' writing quality. They believed that providing effective WCF on students' work assists them in correcting errors and improving their writing. The findings of this study will encourage the teachers to reevaluate their own beliefs and practices in the field of WCF. In order to determine their own beliefs and practices in WCF, it is recommended that teachers conduct a self-check on their beliefs and practices. The commitment of the teachers is absolutely necessary in order to obtain an accurate result from the WCF self-evaluation. In a nutshell, WCF is important in language learning because the effective use of WCF is beneficial in many ways to both teachers and students of second language.

Implications and Recommendations

The present study provides several implications related to the field of WCF research. First of all, the present study forwards a direct contribution to the WCF literature by examining the relationships between teachers' beliefs and practices on WCF in a primary classroom. It provided fuller insights into the way primary school teachers view and deal with WCF. The findings from this study can assist a wide range of educators to teachers to improve on their provision of feedback. Teachers also must be more cautious and vigilant when applying WCF to students' work as incorrect feedback can impose a negative impact on students' learning, and further, onto the entire learning process as a whole. Thus, it is critical and timely for educational experts and curriculum developers to designate additional in-service training or workshops for language teachers on how and when to use each type of WCF strategy to improve students' writing ability. This specifically tailor-made training will be able to provide much-needed guidance for teachers in creating a student-centered environment by successfully providing corrective feedback to students of various proficiency

levels. Similarly, in order for students to benefit from the WCF, training that focuses on the purpose of various WCF strategies is also required.

Acknowledgement

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