



## **EFL students' perceptions and preferences towards written corrective feedback at Sintuwu Maroso University**

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**Abstract.** This research aims to provide information regarding students' perceptions and preferences towards written corrective feedback given by lecturers in writing classes. This research uses a quantitative approach with a survey design. The data are collected from questionnaires. There are 61 EFL students' participated in filling out the questionnaires. The research results show that: 1) EFL students' perceptions of written correction feedback are based on their views or expectations of feedback, EFL students' agree that feedback can help them write better next time. Based on experience with feedback, EFL students' agree that feedback explains their mistakes in writing. Based on the usefulness or value of feedback, EFL students' agree that feedback tells them how to make their writing better. Based on the affect or emotions associated with feedback, EFL students' agree that feedback on their writing makes them feel confident. 2) The types of written corrective feedback that most preferred by EFL students' are unfocused feedback, focused feedback, and direct feedback.

**Keywords:** perceptions, preferences, written corrective feedback

### **INTRODUCTION**

Writing is a process for expressing ideas through words, letters, and symbols. These need to be arranged properly into coherent sentences or paragraphs because the purpose of writing is to convey messages to wide readers. No wonder, writing is considered one of

the most important language skills. In the writing process, students are guided and taught by lecturers on correct writing techniques by providing feedback. Written corrective feedback refers to comments, corrections, or suggestions given by lecturers in written form to students' written work.

Students' perceptions of lecturer corrections in writing classes are very important because they influence motivation, self-confidence, writing quality, and the development of critical thinking skills. It can be investigated based on the student's views or expectations of feedback, experience with feedback, the usefulness of the feedback, and the affect or emotions associated with the feedback.

The EFL students expect feedback that is more detailed and easy to understand, while lecturers want the EFL students to have the ability to learn independently after the feedback given and revise their assignment as soon as possible correctly. In order to understand the lecturer's feedback more effectively, students actually also have their own preferences for the lecturer's corrective feedback, whether direct, indirect, metalinguistic, focus of the feedback, reformulation, or using electronic feedback.

There are three theoretical studies related to this research. Firstly, Saragih et al. (2021) conduct a research under the title "Written Corrective Feedback: Students' Perceptions and Preferences". This research explores Indonesian university students' perceptions and preferences regarding written corrective feedback (WCF). The study finds that while students have diverse preferences, they generally believe WCF improves their writing. Direct feedback is the most common type used. Secondly, Salami & Khadawardi (2022) entitle "Written Corrective Feedback In Online Writing Classrooms: EFL Students" Perceptions And Preferences. This research investigates Saudi EFL students' perceptions and preferences of WCF in online writing classes. The study reveals that students value WCF as a tool for improvement and prefer electronic feedback. The most recent study, titled "Perceptions and Preferences of Senior High School Students About Written Corrective Feedback in Pakistan," is conducted by Rasool et al., (2023). The research finds that while students generally view WCF positively, meta-linguistic explanations and direct feedback are preferred methods.

ESL/EFL writing experts believe this written corrective feedback (WCF) helps students learn and become skilled at using proper sentence structures in the target language (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008). So, there's a big focus on finding the best ways to give WCF. Problems that arise in the field of providing feedback encourage researchers to carry out further investigation at Sintuwu Maroso University. Therefore, the researchers are interested to identify EFL students' perceptions and to find out types of written corrective feedback preferred by EFL students.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The researchers used Marris' (2016) theory to describe the EFL students' perceptions and Ellis (2008) theory to identify what type of written corrective feedback they prefer in writing classes. These findings will help lecturers become more pay attention to strategies for providing feedback that is more effective to the EFL students'.

### **Written Corrective Feedback**

Written corrective feedback is provided when students are completing assignments, feedback from a teacher or lecturer is essential for them to improve the quality of their writing. According to Ellis (2005), feedback aids students in mastering a language by enabling them to identify inaccuracies in their work and providing them with the correct forms or correction techniques. In writing courses, teachers most often provide feedback by correcting students' writing.

In second language acquisition theory, interactionists highlighted feedback as a component of input. According to Ellis (2008) that feedback facilitates acquisition by assisting learners in recognizing their mistakes and establishing a relationship between form and meaning.

### **EFL Students' Perceptions**

Perception is something that influences attitudes, and attitude will determine behavior which contains beliefs and opinions according to what is seen (Walgito, 2010). In addition, Marris (2016) proposed four aspects of written feedback perception as follows:

#### **View or Expectations of Feedback**

Views on Feedback refers to how someone perceives feedback. Perceptions can be influenced by past experiences, personality, and cultural background. Expectations for Feedback refers to what someone hopes to gain from feedback. Expectations can vary depending on the context and the relationship with the person providing feedback.

#### **Experiences with Feedback**

Experiences with feedback captures the cumulative effect of past interactions with feedback, shaping both how we give and receive it in the future.

#### **Usefulness or Value of Feedback**

The usefulness/value of feedback refers to the positive impact it has on the recipient. It essentially measures how much the feedback helps someone improve, learn, or achieve a goal.

### **Affect or Emotions associated with Feedback**

The affect or emotions associated with feedback refer to the feelings that arise when giving or receiving feedback. These emotions can be positive, negative, or neutral, and they can significantly impact the outcome of the feedback exchange.

### **EFL Students' Preferences**

Preference is as a stronger interest in or desire for someone or something. According to Salami Khadawardi (2022), preference is when someone chooses one thing over others because they like it. According to Ellis (2008) there are six types for written corrective feedback, which are as follows: direct corrective feedback, indirect corrective feedback, metalinguistic feedback, the focus of the feedback, electronic feedback, and reformulation.

### **Direct Feedback**

Direct feedback is how lecturers provide corrections in the correct form. When a student's writing is corrected by the lecturer, the lecturer will correct it by immediately giving the correct answer to the writing error.

### **Indirect Feedback**

Indirect corrective feedback will occur when the lecturer only points out errors in the student's writing without providing the correct form.

### **Metalinguistic Feedback**

The lecturer provides metalinguistic clues about the nature of the error. This requires providing explicit feedback to students regarding the nature of errors in their writing.

There are two approaches to making comments explicit. The first method involves the use of error codes, while the second method uses metalinguistic explanations.

### **Focus of the Feedback**

This refers to whether the lecturer attempts to correct all (or most) of the students' writing errors or focuses on exclusively one or two specific types of errors. Focused corrective feedback corrects a single type of error, whereas unfocused corrective feedback corrects all or the majority of errors. The distinction between unfocused and focused applies to direct, indirect, and metalinguistic. The example, it could be direct focused or unfocused, indirect focused or unfocused, and metalinguistics focused or unfocused.

### **Electronic Feedback**

This type of feedback involves the teacher using a computer to identify student errors. The teacher uses technology, such as websites, software and other media, to provide feedback to students on their writing. Lecturers use electronic media to comment on students' writing texts. One of example of electronic software that is effective and can be used in writing classes is WhiteSmoke Writing (Pariyanto & Tungka, 2024).

### **Reformulation Feedback**

The last type of written corrective feedback is reformulation feedback. Reformulation feedback involves a native speaker rewriting the student's text after that that student will rewriting the revision expressing his/her own words similar native-like. Rewriting students' texts can improve their writing skills while maintaining the original content. In essence, reformulation involves two option 'direct correction' + 'revision'.

## **METHOD**

This research employs a quantitative methodology with survey design. Quantitative research aims to gather numerical data from a defined population or sample (Sugiyono, 2017), In this case, a survey was administered to collect data on participants' attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics (Creswell, 2012).

The population of this research were 109 EFL students' from 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> semester academic year 2023/2024 of English Language Education Study Program at Sintuwu Maroso who were joining English Paragraph Writing, English Essay Writing, Academic Writing, Thesis Proposal Writing, and Undergraduate Thesis Writing. This research used convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a type of data collection from participants based on ease of access and the consent of willing participants. According to Tungka & Tarinje (2021), a sample size of 30% of the total population is considered healthy. Based on the explanations, it can be said that the sum of the samples for this study is  $109 \times 30\% = 32.7$  so it becomes 32 participants. However, the total number of participants who filled out the questionnaires was 61 students, where the sample for this research was fulfilled or even more.

In this research, the researchers used questionnaires to identify and found out EFL students' perceptions and preferences towards written corrective feedback. This research adapted the questionnaire from (Marrs 2016) and (Rowe & Wood 2008) Cronbach's Alpha value 0.890 for EFL students' perception dan 0.883 for EFL students' preferences questionnaire. The questionnaire in this research covers all WCF strategies developed by Ellis (2008).

The questionnaire was distributed to participants and was divided into two parts. First, EFL students' perceptions questionnaire consisting of 13 statements. Second, EFL students' preferences questionnaire consisting of 19 statements. The researchers

distributed the questionnaire to the participants in the form of a Google Form via WhatsApp. To make it easier for participants to understand, the questionnaire was translated into Bahasa Indonesia.

The questionnaire provided consists of statements, and for each statement using Likert Scale, the following answer options are provided: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The data gained from the questionnaire were then examined and analyzed using Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The researchers used descriptive statistical methods to analyze the data, producing results like percentages, frequencies, means, etc. Then, the data was presented in table form for easy visualization. Finally, based on the analyzed data and discussions, the researcher draw conclusions from the results.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. EFL students' Perceptions

There are four components of student's perceptions that were discussed in this research. They are views or expectations of feedback, experiences with feedback, usefulness or value of feedback, and the last is affect or emotions associated with feedback. The data are presented below:

**Table 1.** The results of Views or Expectations of Feedback

No	View or Expectations of Feedback		
	Statements	Percentage	Mean
1	The feedback I get on writing makes me want to become a better writer	73.3%	3.80
2	Feedback makes me feel like I am a good writer	29.5%	2.97
3	Feedback on my writing encourages me to do better next time	85.3%	4.31

Based on table 1, it can be seen that the highest score of views or expectations of feedback goes to the item feedback encourages to do better next time (85%, M= 3.80), and the lowest score goes to feedback makes feel like a good writer (29.5%, M= 2.97). The results of students' perceptions of their views or expectations towards feedback were (85.3% M= 3.63) agree. This statement ("Feedback on my writing encourages me to do better next time") offers valuable insights into student experiences with feedback for writing improvement. This indicates EFL students' perception of feedback that written corrective feedback as a tool for improvement. Students likely view feedback as helpful in

identifying their weaknesses and motivating them to improve their writing skills in the future.

**Table 2.** The Results of Experiences with Feedback

No	Experience with Feedback		
	Statements	Percentage	Mean
4	Feedback tells me what I did well in my writing	83.6%	4.18
5	Feedback explains what I did wrong in my writing	92.2%	4.25
6	I use feedback to help me write better next time	88.5%	4.21

Based on table 2, it was found that the highest score of experiences with feedback (92.2%, M= 4.25), that feedback effectively explains what they did wrong in their writing, and the lowest score goes to the item feedback tells what I did well in my writing (83.6%, M=4.18). The results of students' perception of their experiences of feedback offers insights into student experiences with feedback clarity and reveals a positive experience with feedback for most students. This suggests that students generally perceive the feedback they receive as clear and effective in explaining their writing errors.

**Table 3.** The Results of Usefulness or Value of Feedback

No	Usefulness or Value of Feedback		
	Statements	Percentage	Mean
7	Feedback helps me write better next time	93.4%	4.39
8	Feedback makes me a better writer	70.5%	3.95
9	Feedback on my writing is helpful	88.5%	4.25
10	Feedback tells me how to make my writing better	88.5%	4.20

Based on table 3, it was found that the highest score of usefulness or value of feedback (93.4%, M=4.39) that feedback helps to write better next time, and the lowest score goes to the item feedback makes a better writer (70.5%, M=3.95). The results of students' perception of usefulness or value of feedback provides valuable insights into the perceived usefulness of feedback for writing improvement. This suggests that students find feedback helpful in understanding how to improve their writing.

**Table 4.** The Results of Affects or Emotions Associated with Feedback

No	Affects or Emotions Associated with Feedback		
	Statements	Percentage	Mean
11	Feedback on my writing makes me feel proud	37.7%	3.18
12	Feedback on my writing makes me feel happy	45.9%	3.38
13	Feedback on my writing makes me feel confident	47.5%	3.46

Based on table 4, it was found that the highest score of affects or emotions associated with feedback (47.5%) that feedback on writing makes feel confident, and the lowest score goes to the item feedback on writing makes proud (37.7%). The data showed that feedback was generally perceived as helpful in increasing writing confidence for most participants. EFL students in the research generally appreciated the impact of the use of Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) in their writing class. WCF helped them improve their writing skills and knowledge of the language. By receiving WCF, students learned to identify their mistakes, what to avoid in the future, and how to write more effectively. The EFL students generally feel happy, confident, and proud when receiving feedback (WCF).

The results of research regarding this perception are in line with (Saragih et al., 2021; Salami & Khadawardi, 2022; Rasool et al., 2023) the participants' perceptions of writing feedback that they benefited from the feedback on their writing. The benefits of written corrective feedback can be seen in studies by Bitchener and Knoch (2008) they stated that written feedback on errors (WCF) helps students develop the skills they need to use proper sentence structures in the target language. Other than that, as highlighted by Lapanda & Modjanggalo (2023), the benefit from understanding students' perceptions of correction allows teachers to adapt their approaches to maximize learning effectiveness for themselves and their students. Therefore, from the data findings this research found that that based on their perception, feedback potentially enhanced EFL students' to improve writing skills.

## 2. EFL students' Preferences

There are six types of student's preferences developed by Ellis (2008) that were discussed in this research namely direct feedback, indirect feedback, metalinguistic feedback, focus of the feedback: focused feedback & unfocused feedback, electronic feedback, and reformulation. The data are presented below:



**Table 5.** The Results of Direct Feedback

No	Direct Feedback		
	Statements	Percentage	Mean
1	Providing the right forms of the errors	73.8%	3.92
2	Providing the right forms is encouraging	70.5%	3.89
3	Knowing the right forms assists in reflecting on the errors	77.1%	4.00

Based on table 5, the EFL students' wanted if the mistakes they made in writing were immediately corrected with the right forms by the lecturer (73.8%) and when they know the correct answer to their mistake, they feel encouraged to correct their mistake (70.5%). They also agree that direct feedback could help them reflect on their writing mistakes (77.1%) with a high mean of (3.94). According to Salami & Khadawardi (2022) With direct feedback, teachers clearly indicate errors and provide the correct answers. Using direct feedback is helpful because it gives learners specific instructions on how to fix their mistakes. This is very helpful when learners can't figure out the correct way themselves (Ellis, 2008). The disadvantage is direct corrective feedback may be preferable for low proficiency students.

**Table 6.** The Results of Indirect Feedback

No	Indirect Feedback		
	Statements	Percentage	Mean
4	Underlining or circling the errors without any codes or revisions is better for learning	49.2%	2.66
5	Locating the errors only trains to analyze and think critically	41%	3.26

Based on table 6, the EFL students' disagree that the lecturer just underlining or circling the errors without any codes or revisions is better for learning (49.2%) but they also agree (41%) when the lecturer locating the errors is only trains them to analyze and think critically. The result of the mean for indirect feedback is moderate (2.9). The advantage of using indirect feedback is that it can better guide students to have problem-solving intuition (Ellis, 2008). However, in this research the EFL students' felt that indirect feedback was less helpful for their writing. Low-proficiency learners might not benefit from indirect feedback as they may lack the language skills needed to independently recognize and rectify errors.

**Table 7.** The Results of Metalinguistic Feedback

No	Indirect Feedback		Mean
	Statements	Percentage	
6	Giving codes/cues through the errors	40.9%	3.25
7	Providing only codes is helpful for a better understanding	65.6%	3.70
8	Providing codes encourages the learning motivation	62.3%	3.61

Based on table 7, the EFL students' agree that lecturer providing codes through the errors (40.9%) is helpful for better understanding (65.6%) and encourages their learning motivation (62.3%) with high mean 3.52. Using metalinguistic feedback might be a more effective way to teach EFL students' how to use articles correctly compared to other written corrective feedback. This research in line with Saragih et al., (2021) that this types of feedback raises students' sensitivity and awareness of writing skills when writing because they were educated to observe their writing. According to Gholaminia et al. (2014), metalinguistic feedback is an effective teaching method that improves students' writing abilities. By offering explanations about language errors, this approach motivates students to edit their work carefully and develop a stronger awareness of language use.

**Table 8.** The Results of Focused Feedback

No	Focused Feedback		Mean
	Statements	Percentage	
9	The correction should be specific	73.7%	4.07
10	Feedback should focus only on certain crucial errors	63.9%	3.75
11	Focusing on crucial errors motivates me to learn more	78.7%	4.05

Based on table 8, The EFL students' wanted the feedback should be specific (73.7%) to focusing on crucial errors (63.9%) so they can be motivated to learn more (78.7%) with a high mean 3.95. Focused feedback where the lecturer can correct one type of error that exists in their writing type (e.g. errors in the use of the past simple tense). According to Ellis (2008) By concentrating on specific errors, focused feedback enhances students' comprehension of their mistakes.

**Table 9.** The Results of Unfocused Feedback

No	Focused Feedback		
	Statements	Percentage	Mean
12	Correcting all errors encourages me to be more aware of my writing	82%	4.07
13	Correcting any errors motivates me to gain more knowledge	80.4%	3.97
14	Correcting any errors is helpful for me	78.7%	3.97

Based on table 9, the EFL students' wanted that the lecturers correcting all errors or mistakes to makes them more aware (82%), motivates them to gain more knowledge (80.4%) and helpful for them (78.7%). Unfocused feedback has the high of mean 4.0. Unfocused feedback is where the lecturer corrects all types of errors in the writing (e.g. simple past tense; articles; prepositions). According to Ellis (2008) Students might struggle more with feedback that highlights many mistakes at once. In contrast, Lertcheva (2014) study found that students who received feedback on various error types (unfocused feedback) showed better long-term language learning than those who received feedback on specific errors (focused feedback).

In short, unfocused feedback catches more mistakes but might not explain them as clearly while focused feedback helps learners understand specific mistakes better but might miss other errors. So, unfocused feedback might be better for overall improvement over time while focused feedback is good for learning.

**Table 10.** The Results of Electronic Feedback

No	Electronic Feedback		
	Statements	Percentage	Mean
15	Providing the correction through electronic devices facilitates me to review the correction	41%	3.31
16	The use of electronic devices eases the revision process	62.3%	3.75
17	It is clearer to review the feedbacks through electronic devices	32.8%	3.26

Based on table 10, the EFL students' agree that providing the correction through electronic devices facilitates them to review the correction (41%) and the use of electronic devices eases the revision process (62.3%) and it is clearer to review the feedbacks through electronic devices (32.8) with a high mean 3.44. Using electronic feedback can encourages students' independence but also removes the need for the lecturer to determine what words or sentences are wrong and right in their writing (Ellis, 2008).

A research was conducted by Salami & Khadawardi (2022) in online writing classroom and the results is electronic feedback is the most preffered by EFL student's in online writing classroom. Recently, Pariyanto & Tungka (2024) explored how using the WhiteSmoke writing assistant to provide automated feedback could improve English language learners' writing abilities. Their research found that this approach effectively enhanced the quality of students' writing. In summary, electronic feedback is a practical, time-saving, and simple method in modern era.

**Table 11.** The Results of Reformulation

No	Reformulation Feedback		
	Statements	Percentage	Mean
18	Providing more natural words/phrases in writing enriches my language knowledge	77.1%	3.90
19	Giving the native-like version of writing is highly suggested	44.3%	3.39

Based on table 11, the EFL students' agree that providing more natural words or phrases enriches their language knowledge (77,1%) and giving the native-like version of writing is suggested (44.3%) with a high mean 3.64. This research found that the suggestion to use more natural language encourages students to construct original sentences in their writing. They got the idea to create more using natural and academic words so that their writing has a certain quality and further enriches their knowledge.

The data obtained from these findings revealed that the majority of EFL students determined from the highest mean among the six types of written corrective feedback, the EFL students' chose unfocused feedback (82%; 80.4%; 78.7%; M= 4.00), followed by focused feedback (78.7%; 73.7%; 63.9%; M= 3.95) and direct feedback (77.1%; 73.8%; 70.5%; M= 3.94).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research and discussions, it can be concluded that, the EFL students' perceptions based on views or expectations of feedback, it was found that the EFL students agree that feedback was encouraged them to do better next time (85.3%; M= 4.13). Based on experiences with feedback, the EFL students' experienced that feedback on their writing explained errors in their writing (90.2%; M=4.25). Based on usefulness or value of feedback, the EFL students' value writing feedback and perceive it useful to help them to be better with their writing (93.4%; M= 4.39). Based on affect or emotions associated with writing feedback, revealed that the EFL students' (47.5%; M=3.46) agree that feedback on their writing makes them feel confident. The types of written corrective feedback EFL students' preferred are unfocused feedback (82%;80.4%;78.7%;M=4.00) followed by focused feedback (78.7%;73.7%; 63.9%; M= 3.95) and direct feedback (77.1%; 73.8%; 70.5%; M= 3.94).

Referring to the results of this research, the researchers suggests that lecturers continue to provide written feedback to students because the strategy of providing feedback does contribute to enriching students' knowledge because it allows them to engage with the feedback provided. It is recommended to the lecturers writing courses to consider using unfocused feedback because based on the findings the unfocused feedback performance as the most preferred and effective strategy to improve students' writing skills, followed by focused feedback and direct feedback. Furthermore, various limitations to this research. First, the number of participants is not large, they all only come from one university. Therefore, the findings of this research may not be applicable to a wider and more diverse range of students and learning situations. Second, this research only focuses on providing written corrective feedback. Thus, interested researchers are encouraged to study various feedback-giving techniques in writing class.

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