

**T.C.  
SAKARYA ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ  
YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİMİ ANABİLİM DALI  
İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ BİLİM DALI**

**THE EFFECTS OF WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK  
TYPES ON THE PREPOSITIONS OF TIME AND PLACE AND  
STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON WRITTEN CORRECTIVE  
FEEDBACK IN EFL CONTEXT IN TURKEY**

**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ**

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## BİLDİRİM

Hazırladığım tezin tamamen kendi çalışmam olduğunu, akademik ve etik kuralları gözeterek çalıştığımı ve her alıntıya kaynak gösterdiğimi taahhüt ederim.

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Semih Beşkardeşler



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“Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretim Bağlamında Yazılı Düzeltme Geribildirimi Çeşitlerinin Yer ve Zaman Edatları Üzerindeki Etkileri ve Öğrencilerin Yazılı Düzeltme Geribildirimine Olan Görüşleri ve Tercihleri” başlıklı bu yüksek lisans tezi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalında hazırlanmış ve jürimiz tarafından kabul edilmiştir.

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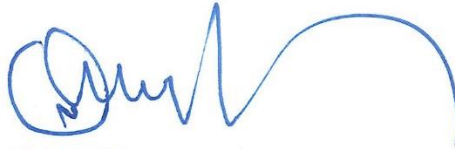


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## ÖZET

# YABANCI DİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİM BAĞLAMINDA YAZILI DÜZELTME GERİBİLDİRİM TÜRLERİNİN YER VE ZAMAN EDATLARI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ VE ÖĞRENCİLERİN YAZILI DÜZELTME GERİBİLDİRİMİNE OLAN GÖRÜŞLERİ VE TERCİHLERİ

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Yazılı düzeltme geribildirimini İngilizce'nin yabancı ve ikinci dil olarak öğretimi bağlamındaki araştırmacılar ve öğretmenler arasında olan hararetli tartışmanın odak noktası olmuştur. Yazılı düzeltme geribildiriminin etkinliği veya etkisizliği üzerine yapılan bir çok araştırma olmasına rağmen, konuya dair anlaşmazlık halen devam etmektedir. Mevcut çalışma, yazılı düzeltme geribildiriminin İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin yabancı dilde yazma üzerine olan etkilerini araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Bu nedenle, ön test, son test ve kalıcılık testi uygulanarak, doğrudan odaklı ve doğrudan odaklanmamış yazılı düzeltme geribildiriminin yer ve zaman edatlarının ('-in', '-at', '-on' and '-to') doğru kullanımı üzerine olan etkileri incelenmiş ve karşılaştırılmıştır. Doğrudan odaklı geribildirim deney grubunda olan öğrenciler yazma aktivitelerinde sadece yer ve zaman edatlarına yönelik hataları için geribildirim almıştır. Son testte ve kalıcılık testinde, iki deney grubu kontrol grubundan daha fazla başarı göstermiştir. Fakat, iki deney grubu arasında, son test ve kalıcılık testi sonuçlarına bakıldığında, istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark saptanmamıştır. Sonuçlar baz alınarak, yazılı düzeltme geribildiriminin, odaklı veya odaklanmamış, öğrencilerin yer ve zaman edatlarını doğru kullanmasında faydalı olduğu görülmüştür. Son olarak, çalışmaya katılan öğrencilerin üçte biri ile bire bir görüşme yapılarak, öğrencilerin yazılı düzeltme geribildirimine dair görüşleri ve tercihleri alınmıştır. Görüşme sonuçları öğrencilerin yazılı düzeltme geribildirimine

karşı pozitif bir bakış açıları olduğunu ve geribildirim faydalı bulduklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yazılı düzeltme geribildirim, doğrudan odaklanmış ve odaklanmamış yazılı düzeltme geribildirim, yer ve zaman edatları, yabancı dilde yazma, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretimi.





## ABSTRACT

# THE EFFECTS OF WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK TYPES ON THE PREPOSITIONS OF TIME AND PLACE AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN EFL CONTEXT IN TURKEY

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Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) has been a centre of a lively debate among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) researchers and practitioners. Although there is a good body of research which was aimed at investigating the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of WCF, the dispute over WCF has yet to be settled. The present study set out to examine the effects of WCF on the accuracy of the EFL students in L2 writing. For this reason, a pretest-posttest-delayed posttest design was used to compare the effects of direct-focused and direct-unfocused WCF on the accuracy of the prepositions of place and time: '-in', '-at', '-on' and '-to'. The students who were in the focused WCF group received direct correction on the errors related to the target structure only whereas the unfocused WCF group received direct correction on all of their errors (grammar, spelling and punctuation) including the target structure errors. In the posttest and delayed posttest, both experimental groups outperformed the control group, which received no correction. Between the focused WCF and unfocused WCF groups, on the other hand, no statistically significant difference was found in the posttest and delayed posttest results. Thus, it was concluded that WCF, focused or unfocused, was helpful for the students to use the target structure more accurately. Finally, a structured interview was implemented with a third of the total students and it was revealed that the students had a positive attitude towards WCF and viewed it as a useful tool.

**Key words:** Written corrective feedback, focused and unfocused direct written corrective feedback, error treatment, the prepositions of place and time, L2 writing, EFL context.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

EFL..... English as a Foreign Language

ESL..... English as a Second Language

ELT..... English Language Teaching

SLA.....Second Language Acquisition

L1..... First Language

L2..... Additional Language

CF..... Corrective Feedback

WCF.....Written Corrective Feedback



# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Second language (L2) learning is a creative and developmental process in which learners produce oral and written utterances in a foreign language. L2 output by learners is based on the rules of a language system, which they internalise (Hendrickson, 1980). L2 learning can also be defined as “developing knowledge of the L2 and about how to use it accurately” (Bitchener & Storch, 2016, p. 2). If a learner has a good grasp of rules and their usage, they are expected to produce L2 output that is grammatically and meaningfully appropriate. However, if learners’ hypotheses of the language rules are occasionally incorrect, they are likely to produce some erroneous utterances (Hendrickson, 1980). Considering the nature of second language learning, expecting non-erroneous oral or written utterances from students in any L2 is not realistic, hence it is not possible to avoid committing errors when learning an L2 (Hendrickson, 1980; Polio, Fleck & Leder, 1998). In other words, errors in L2 are expected to occur and viewed as a natural part of learning a second language by L2 teachers and researchers alike.

Since it is accepted that error free utterances in L2 learning process is out of question, one main concern arises: how to deal with errors? Many teachers, in order to facilitate L2 development and to foster the accurate use of an L2, refer to error correction also known as error feedback or corrective feedback (CF) which is defined as, “Any indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect.” (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 171). Considering the fact that an overwhelming majority of L2 teacher attempt to make use of CF as a viable option to respond students’ errors, “It is logical, therefore, to ask a rather critical question: Can error correction benefit language learners?” (Hendrickson, 1980, p. 216).



The very question has been asked many times not only in L2 learning as a whole, but also specifically in L2 writing. Learners are expected to commit errors in any guided or free writing task until they acquire an ample level of competence in L2 (Dülger, 2016). Therefore, as a response to learner errors in writing, error correction is commonly preferred, and consequently, the practice of error correction in L2 writing has long been discussed.

Various terms have been used for the same phenomena such as written error correction, written error feedback or written corrective feedback (WCF). WCF can be generally defined as, "... a written response to a linguistic error that has been made in the writing of a text by an L2 learner. It seeks to either correct the inaccurate usage or provide information about where the error has occurred and/or about the cause of the error and how it may be corrected." (Bitchener & Storch, 2016, p.1). Bitchener and Storch further add that:

It is generally understood that written CF is provided on linguistic errors rather than on content or organisational errors or issues. Most frequently, it has tended to focus on grammatical errors but it can also be provided on lexical and non-grammatical errors (e.g. punctuation, spelling). (p. 1)

While WCF is a central aspect of ESL and EFL writing programmes across the world, many Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and L2 writing researchers have argued over the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of WCF for L2 writing accuracy and L2 development in general. Some researchers (Kepner, 1981; Semke, 1984; Woods, 1989; Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2004, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008) casted doubts on the so-called effectiveness of WCF, yet many other researchers (Lee, 1997; 2004; Ferris, 1999, 2004, 2006, 2010; Ashwell, 2000; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Chandler, 2004; Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a) argued for beneficial aspects to WCF in L2 writing. In other words, "...the research literature has not been unequivocally positive about its role in writing development..." Hyland & Hyland, p. 83).

It is safe to say that many SLA and L2 writing researchers as well as L2 writing teachers agree that there is a role for WCF in L2 writing but its extent is still open to debate (Ferris, 2010).

In academic circles, not only the effectiveness of WCF have generated a heated debate, there is also an ongoing dispute on the types of WCF and their potentially differential effects in L2 writing accuracy. For this end, various ways to provide WCF have been

used and put to test in a good many empirical studies both in ESL and EFL context. Ellis (2009b) categorises various types of WCF provided by teachers in his typology.

The first category of WCF is based on the explicitness of feedback:

- a. **Direct WCF:** It is related to providing the correct form of student error explicitly. It may take various forms such as “crossing out an unnecessary word, phrase, or morpheme; inserting a missing word or morpheme; or writing the correct word or form near the erroneous form.” (Ferris, 2006, p. 83). Direct WCF can also be supplemented with written or oral metalinguistic explanations for student errors in which it is explained why a particular utterance is erroneous based on the rules of L2 (Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a).
- b. **Indirect WCF:** It is basically indicating an error exists without providing the correct form. It can be done by specifically underlining student errors (indicating and locating); indicating the existence of errors in the margin without specifically locating them (indicating but not locating); or locating errors and using metalinguistic error codes to indicate them (coded error correction, e.g. ww - wrong word; art - article) (Ferris, 2006).

The second category of WCF is concerned with the focus of feedback:

- a. **Focused (Selective) WCF:** It is providing correction for certain error types or linguistic features of L2, it is more selective and intensive (Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami & Takashima, 2008). It is mostly concerned with one single linguistic feature at a time. Therefore, learners’ attention is required to be drawn into a single linguistic feature. Focused WCF can be provided directly and indirectly.
- b. **Unfocused (Comprehensive) WCF:** It involves the correction of all errors in writing without being selective or prioritizing (Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami & Takashima, 2008). Therefore, it is extensive and when unfocused WCF is provided, learners are required to attend a great range of errors at a time. It can also be provided explicitly and implicitly.

Apart from the categories for various types of WCF, error types have also been broadly categorised:

- a. **Form errors:** They refer to errors that are concerned with linguistic features such as grammar, spelling and punctuation (Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986; Woods, 1989; Leki, 1991; Truscott, 1996; Grami, 2005).
- b. **Content errors:** They usually refer to matters like organization, choice of vocabulary, rhetoric use of the language, cohesion and coherence, and other more abstract and notional matters of writing. (Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986; Woods, 1989; Leki, 1991; Truscott, 1996; Grami, 2005).

Ferris (1999) put forward an alternative to categorise error types:

- a. **Treatable errors:** They simply refer to errors that are rule-governed and can be explained by the rules of L2 (i.e. subject-verb agreement, verb and tense form, article usage). Learners can easily refer to grammar books to resolve them.
- b. **Untreatable errors:** They refer to errors that are more meaning-based rather than rule-based. They are idiosyncratic in nature and concrete grammar rules are not sufficient to explain them (i.e. sentence structure, word choice, missing or unnecessary words).

To this day, the debate on the use of WCF in L2 writing has not settled and there are certain questions that have not been satisfactorily answered (Bitchener & Storch, 2016):

1. Can WCF facilitate the improvement of accuracy in L2 writing?
2. Can WCF foster the acquisition of linguistic features in specific?
3. Which one can potentially benefit students more: indirect or direct WCF?
4. Is WCF more effective if it is focused (selective) or unfocused (comprehensive)?
5. Should form or content errors have the priority?
6. How do L2 teachers and students view WCF?

These questions have been the focus of most of the empirical studies both in ESL and EFL context and still attract a great deal of attention today.

In the present study, the said questions are explored and reviewed through various studies and arguments. Further, it have aimed to investigate the effectiveness of WCF in L2 writing accuracy, to explore the so-called differential effects of different types of WCF (focused vs. unfocused WCF) and to find out how students view WCF as well as their preferences for it.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

There has been a great contradiction in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) when written corrective feedback (WCF) is concerned. Many researchers and scholars have argued that WCF is facilitative in improving students' accuracy in L2 writing as well as their writing skills. However, there also have been adversaries of WCF who have claimed WCF is ineffective in reducing students' errors in L2 writing and it may also be harmful. One thing is sure, many researchers failed to look at it critically and there was only a small number of studies about WCF until Truscott's (1996) article which received great objection from SLA and L2 writing researchers alike. Before the heated debate, however, it is essential to discuss theoretical perspectives to WCF in order to understand its role in SLA.

#### **2.1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

##### **2.1.1 Behaviourist Approach**

In the early days of SLA, writing was only practised to focus on grammar and vocabulary knowledge of learners and therefore errors were taken seriously (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005; Brown, 2007, as cited in Ferris, 2010).

*Behaviourism*, which is one of the fundamental theories, came up with the belief that there was a need to provide error correction in L2 writing classes (Corpuz, 2011). The theory posits that learning occurs through habit formation and learners are expected not to form undesirable or wrong habits. Habits can be shaped through providing stimuli and responses to stimuli (Skinner, 1957). It can be inferred that WCF can serve as the stimuli for learners to respond in order to promote learning and improvement in

writing (Corpuz, 2011). Therefore, behaviourism and the behaviouristic methodology *audio-lingual method* had no tolerance to errors as they were a sign of non-learning (Ellis, 1995, as cited in Tangkiengsirisin & Kalra, 2016). This is to say, errors were to be corrected immediately and directly (Truscott, 1996; Lee, 1997; Hansen & Wilkins, as cited in Hendrickson, 1978). So, correction for all errors were provided in order to prevent *fossilisation* (Lalande 1982; Higgs & Clifford, 1982, as cited in Ferris, 2006). Chomsky (1959), who is known to be a strong critic of behaviourism, posits that learners are capable of producing novel utterances that they have never heard before by internalising rules rather than producing responses appropriate for a stimuli (Corpuz, 2011). Considering the fact that Chomsky and his theory of *universal grammar* view errors as a natural part of language learning, he attributes minimal value to corrective feedback in both L1 and L2 learning.

### **2.1.2 Communicative Approach**

Errors were never much tolerated before *communicative approach* came into existence, which suggests errors are natural (Lee, 1997) and there is no production in L2 that is free of flaws until the language is completely mastered (Krashen 1984; Selinker 1992, as cited in Ferris, 2006). Encouraging students to produce is what is essential, which may not occur by constantly indicating that they are wrong (Chastain, 1971, as cited in Hendrickson, 1980). In other words, errors should not be corrected (Truscott, 1996), however an exception may be made when it comes to errors that interfere with communication.

Krashen's *Monitor Model* (1982) tends to view error correction as ineffective and even harmful. One of his hypotheses called *monitor hypothesis* suggests that learners are prone to monitor their output and check its appropriateness and accuracy by referring to their existing knowledge of L2. Therefore, it is safe to say that language rules obtained before act as the editor of output. In such a process, corrective feedback, written or oral, will have a minimal effect to make changes in student output (Corpuz, 2011). Another reason is due to learners constantly monitoring their output, corrective feedback can be a faulty practice which is likely to put them on the defensive and this may result in having detrimental effects on production in L2 (Krashen, 1982). Not providing any sort of feedback, on the other hand, may lead to grammatically

inaccurate student output. As for the harmful effect of corrective feedback, Krashen (1982) suggests that learners have an *affective filter* which can facilitate or hinder learning process. Constant reminder that students are wrong in their production is likely to raise the affective filter of them, which will lead to demotivation and negative attitude towards production in L2.

### **2.1.3 Interlanguage Theory**

One of the most dominant theories, *interlanguage theory* refers to language system developed by learners during the development of L2 (Selinker, 1972, as cited in Corpuz, 2011). Interlanguage is the learner output that does not completely represent L2 or L1 and it has its own system and rules. In the theory, errors are viewed as an essential part of learners L2 learning process. However, unlike *contrastive analysis* which posits that errors stem from learners' L1 interference, interlanguage theory claims that errors stem from the language system created by learners, which is neither like L1 nor L2. Therefore, regardless of L1, learners' unique interlanguage should be the point of focus in error analysis.

According to the theory, learners are desired to achieve a mastery of L2; fossilisation, on the other hand, "...is a permanent lack of mastery despite continuous exposure, instruction and sufficient practicing the target language" (Corpuz, 2011, p. 14). In such a case, if learners do not receive any corrective feedback, their incorrect interlanguage may be fossilised which means they will not be able to reach a desired level of L2. However, with corrective feedback, learners are given to chance to discover their errors in their interlanguage and new features of L2 (Corpuz, 2011). In short, corrective feedback, written and oral, can be a valuable tool to prevent fossilisation in L2 learning and to facilitate learners to master a desired level of target language.

### **2.1.4 Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis**

There are some implications to be found in Schmidt's *noticing hypothesis* regarding both oral and written corrective feedback. Schmidt (1994, as cited in Corpuz, 2011) suggests that the amount of attention that learners pay in L2 learning has an effect on their production in L2. In other words, "selective attention or noticing may be influencing the processing of utterances during second language learning and that that

in order for students to learn any aspect of the L2, they need to notice the relevant material in the linguistic data provided within the environment.” (Corpuz, 2011, p. 16-17).

Corrective feedback can work as stimuli to draw learners’ attention to correct structures and forms in L2. Therefore, it can be inferred that corrective feedback can be effective in promoting awareness to desired L2 forms and effective L2 development. The research made by Philp (2003, as cited in Corpuz, 2011) indicates that learners were observed to pay more attention to forms and utterances that were recasted (i.e. providing the correct form) by the instructors. In this case, it is safe to say that when corrective feedback is provided for learners, they tend to be more aware of their written or oral corrected utterances and hold them in their working memory longer.

### **2.1.5 Skill Acquisition Theory**

The skill acquisition theory fundamentally refers to how skills are acquired. When a skill is desired to be acquired, first the knowledge about the skill, *declarative knowledge*, is obtained by learners. After obtaining declarative knowledge, learners are required to implement it through extensive practice in order to build *procedural knowledge* (DeKeyser 1998, as cited in Wagner &Wulf, 2016). In L2 learning, declarative knowledge can be the equivalent of the system, rules and structure of L2. Therefore, L2 learners should be required to internalise the rules of L2 and they can practice their knowledge to produce output in L2 learning. As for the WCF’s role, it can be useful to provide learners with the declarative knowledge of linguistic features of L2. Then, learners will practice the corrected forms to be able to produce correct L2 output (Wagner & Wulf, 2016).

As discussed above, there are various theoretical perspectives for corrective feedback with various implications. It is clear to see that theory on the role of corrective feedback has shifted from one end to another. However, after a long debate it was commonly accepted that by most researchers and teachers:

The knowledge and experience base of L2 acquirers and writers is not the same as that of native speakers. Thus, learners need additional information and intervention as well as (at least slightly) different pedagogical approaches to writing instruction. It also seems fair at this point to generalize that the current state of opinion among many SLA and L2 writing researchers and most L2 writing teachers is that there is some role for



written CF in L2 writing instruction. The nature and extent of this role, however, remains in dispute (Ferris, 2010, p.184).

## 2.2 THE GREAT DEBATE ON WCF

With Truscott (1996) starting a heated debate on the effectiveness of WCF or error correction in L2 writing, he faced opposition from SLA and L2 writing researchers (Ferris 1999, 2006, 2010; Chandler, 2003; Bitchener, Young & Cameron, 2005; Sheen, 2007; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami & Takashima, 2008; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2009a; Ellis, 2009a). A good deal of studies carried out by researchers yielded varying results about the extent of effectiveness of WCF in L2 writing. Before the results of the studies, however, the background of the debate should be discussed.

The first point Truscott (1996) addressed was to do with the unquestioned belief that WCF works. The effectiveness of WCF is not questioned in great deal by L2 teachers in both **EFL** and **ESL** contexts (Truscott, 1996, 1999). While that might be the case, an overwhelming majority of L2 teachers find it useful and feel that they must provide some type of WCF for students to help them improve in L2 writing. (Lalande, 1982; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1995b, 1997; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Atmaca, 2016). The concept itself has always been taken for granted and most teachers have deemed it necessary for preventing learners from making errors without giving it a much thought (Hendrickson, 1978; Truscott 1996). Furthermore, Atmaca's (2016) study in EFL context revealed that it was widely agreed by both the teachers and the students who took part in the study that not providing feedback was not an option. Even though some teaching ways tolerate errors made by learners more, every teaching system provides a form of correction whether it is oral or written. In other words, correcting errors is universal (Krashen & Selinger, 1974). Truscott (1999) expressed his concerns on the unquestioned and unchallenged practice of corrective feedback by teachers:

There is, in my opinion, no situation more undesirable than this for the teaching profession: when one questionable view becomes so dominant that most teachers can scarcely conceive of an alternative, let alone seriously consider it as an option for their own teaching. (p. 111)

Foreign language teachers seem to favour WCF due to several reasons such as the view that students' errors are a sign of imperfect teaching method and a way of feedback for

teachers to students' progress in producing oral or written utterances in L2 (Corder, 1967; Gorbet 1974) also due to the widely common belief that WCF facilitates improving accuracy for students. (Hedgcock &Leftkowitz, 1994; Saito, 1994; Ferris, 1995b; Lee, 2004; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Atmaca, 2016; Chen, Nassaji & Liu, 2016).

Similar to foreign language educators, most students also expect their teachers to correct their errors in their writings and find WCF valuable and useful. (Lalande, 1982; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Leki, 1991; Hedgcock & Leftkowitz, 1994; Saito 1994; Ferris, 1995b; Lee, 2004; Grami, 2005; Hyland and Hyland, 2006; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Atmaca, 2016). However, Truscott (1996) argues that this may be the case because of students' past learning experience. An overwhelming majority of students are exposed to WCF in any form in their past learning experience, the truth is they have never experienced another alternative which does not include WCF and what they prefer may simply not be beneficial for them (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990, as cited in Truscott, 1996). Therefore, their judgment on the matter does not provide a good enough reason to conclude WCF is needed in L2 writing.

Considering how much both teachers and students value WCF, it is reasonable to question whether it is effective or not (Truscott, 1996, 1999; Ferris, 1997).

Another point of criticism towards WCF is due to the way teachers provide feedback. Teachers are observed to be inconsistent and unsystematic with their error correction both in oral communication and written one (Lalande 1982; Semke, 1984; Zamel, 1985; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1987; Woods 1989; Truscott 1996; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Furthermore, Lightbown (1985) underlines the unreliable nature of the 'corrector' by stating that "...the 'corrector' may not know—indeed probably knows only rarely—what the real nature of the learner's error is, that is, what it represents in terms of underlying knowledge." (p. 178). In such a case, while teachers attempt to help students, they may end up making them confused. Zamel (1985) further criticizes the role of teachers in WCF:

ESL writing teachers misread student texts, are inconsistent in their reactions, make arbitrary corrections, write contradictory comments, provide vague prescriptions, impose abstract rules and standards, respond to texts as fixed and final products, and rarely make content-specific comments or offer specific strategies for revising the text. (p. 86)

In response to Zamel (2005), Ferris (2006), based on her findings, argued L2 teachers are complete, accurate and balanced when they provide WCF for their students. Moreover, Leki (1990, as cited in Ferris, 1995b), as a reaction to Zamel, posits that this understandably happens as there is no certain criteria that dictate the error types that need correction and it is rather difficult for a teacher to sort out all the output coming from students. Is it possible to say non-native like utterances are errors? Or, is it the appropriateness and meaningfulness of an utterance in a certain context? Or, is it safe to say the errors that have higher frequency and keep repeating themselves in learners' utterances is worthy of correction? Therefore, it is hard for teachers to deal with a great variety of errors made by students in a systematic way, which will make it difficult for learners to comprehend the nature of their errors and remember corrections for the future use. The findings of Allwright (1977, as cited in Woods 1989) show that teachers' reactions to errors varied based on the profile of students. In his research, teachers were observed to correct certain students whereas no corrections were made for some other students. This may clearly lead to a confusion in class as students may assume some erroneous sentences are correct since no correction is made by the teacher. In addition, teachers are thought to fail to recognise errors, even when they recognise them, they may not have a strong grasp for explaining why some written utterances of students are incorrect, which will eventually lead students to feel confused (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990, as cited in Truscott, 1996). It is accepted that such an inconsistent and unsystematic way to provide WCF will lead to confusion as students will have difficulty understanding the feedback, let alone benefit from it (Ferris, 1995b; Truscott, 1996).

Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) suggest that this problem is rooted from a misunderstanding between teachers and students. When correcting errors, teachers are often quick to assume they know what students want to express in their writing and they reformulate student output based on what they think is meant by students. It is no coincidence that "...there is at times a mismatch between the idea that a student wants to express and that which a teacher assumes is correct" (Amrhein & Nassaji, p.97). Leki (1990, as cited in Ferris, 1995b) and Lee (2004) also argue that teachers' inconsistency and vagueness in giving feedback might be due to the lack of training at teacher education programmes and she further suggests that the curriculum of teacher

training programmes should be revised in order to help future teachers to be more effective in providing corrective feedback.

Apart from the criticism towards the unchallenged belief in WCF in classroom and the so-called faulty way of teachers' feedback, Truscott (1996) criticises the very nature of written error correction by stating that error correction stemmed from *audio lingual method* (ALM) in which errors were not tolerated at all and promptly corrected. He further argues that this teaching methodology was not effective in helping learners communicate in L2 with meaningfulness and appropriateness. Similar to Truscott, Woods (1989) sees error correction as the remnants of *behaviourism*, which should not have much importance in L2 learning today. Another point he makes is that error correction when it is concerned with only the linguistic forms of L2 is similar to learning, which is superficial and not long-lasting, rather than acquisition (Krashen, 1987, as cited in Truscott, 1996). However, the development of L2 is not as a simple process as providing the correct form an error made by learners, then simply expecting them to comprehend it and to use it correctly in their future utterances (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). He also adds: "The acquisition of a grammatical structure is a gradual process, not a sudden discovery as the intuitive view of correction would imply" (Truscott, 1996, p. 342). Moreover, Lightbown (1985) argues for the ineffectiveness of written error correction in changing language behaviour and claims that simply providing error correction will not lead to learning. She further adds that:

Most errors are not isolated phenomena but part of a system, and to the necessarily sequential nature of some aspects of interlanguage development. In order to make a lasting change in language behaviour, there must be a change in language knowledge. There must be a restructuring of the system itself—something which may take some time and considerably more information than is provided in a single error correction. (p. 178)

Teachers may feel discouraged when they keep seeing the same type(s) of errors are still made by their students even with all the correction they have been provided with in their previous writing or speech (Krashen & Selinger, 1974; Semke, 1984). One simple fact should be taken into consideration when dealing with errors is that there is a natural order of acquiring L2 in terms of its grammatical structure. Morpheme order in L2 acquisition suggests that learners will learn linguistic forms when they are ready (Truscott, 1996). In other words, acquisition of linguistic forms is not a matter of instruction or correction but maturation (Goldschneider & DeKeyser, 2005). Some items of L2 are meant to be comprehended in the earlier stages of L2 development

whereas others can only be digested in further stages. Written error correction is, however, based on transferring knowledge without considering developmental stages of language practice. “Learning is actually a much more subtle and complex process than that” (Truscott, 1996, p. 357). Negative results may arise from their students’ performance in writing after a certain amount of correction was provided, this may not have to do with the type of feedback, but with bad-timing (Truscott, 1996). Even if there is a flawless form of correction and learners are highly motivated, they still may not understand the correction or may not use it accurately for the subsequent time. They simply may not be ready for it yet. Consequently, WCF ignores the reality of L2 learning and its natural developmental stages, which makes it ineffective.

Some researchers, instead of deeming WCF ineffective, views a different perspective. SLA studies posit that L2 acquisition occurs gradually over time (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). There may be a u-shaped course of development in which learners at first may be able to use some forms accurately, but then they may show regression until they are finally able to use them in a way that fits the target language system (Ellis, 1997, as cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2006). So feedback cannot be expected to be acquired immediately or permanently at the first stage. Time and constant repetition are required for students to have a complete mastery of corrected forms (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

Another reason why there is a critical stance against WCF is owing to psychological factors caused by corrective feedback. Similar to Truscott (1996), Woods (1989) views written error correction as a distracting factor for learners and can have detrimental psychological effects on students. It is argued that written or oral correction can be hindering in second language acquisition as it can raise learners’ *affective filter* Krashen (1982, 1984). Students, if corrected often in the stage of production of L2, seeing all the comments, underlined sentences or corrected utterances with a red pen is likely to have detrimental impacts on students psychologically and to discourage students from further writing. Moreover, *the monitor hypothesis* of Krashen (1982, 1984) posits that L2 learners tend to monitor themselves while producing in a foreign language and if learners’ attention is often drawn on their errors, this will result in learners being distracted by their erroneous utterances and not concentrating on production. Learning can only be fruitful when its environment is safe, accepting and enjoyable. WCF, on the other hand, is likely to lead stress, discouragement and negativity in students. Also, students have to allocate a great deal of time to understand

given feedback and find a way to correct their errors. Such time-consuming effort naturally and understandably causes the feeling that they cannot handle all the correction made. Such time could be spend on more productive activities that can benefit students more than WCF (Truscott, 1996, 2004). As for teachers, they often spend a great amount of time to deal with students' errors in L2 writing and they often feel discouraged and even stressed upon seeing their students' repeating the same mistakes that have been corrected previously. (Krashen & Selinger, 1974; Semke, 1984). Consequently, teachers are likely to feel frustrated or even burned-out because of making such a tiring and time consuming effort and not seeing satisfying results in the end. They have the right to ask the question: "Is it all worth it?"

The final criticism when it comes to WCF is to do with avoidance, which happens when students are not sure of a certain grammar point and they either simplify it or not use it at all. Truscott (1996, 2007) argues that written error correction causes avoidance in students' writing and it occurs when they do not understand the correction or are confused by it, which makes them not use the corrected grammar points in their subsequent writings. In some studies (Lalande, 1982; Frantzen, 1995) correction groups may have shown improvement and reduction in their errors but this may not mean they mastered linguistic points, on the contrary, it might mean they avoid using complex structures. Similar cases of avoidance were observed in some other studies (Semke, 1984; Kepner, 1991; Lee, 1991; Sheppard, 1992). In Sheppard's study, students' errors related to subjunctives were corrected and in subsequent writing tasks, the researcher realised that half of the students avoided using subjunctives. So, it was not clear whether the students learned to use subjunctives or not. This is to say, WCF especially for form errors can be harmful and discourage students to use complex grammatical structures out of fear for committing errors (Truscott, 2007). In such a case, it is difficult to speak of mastering a language fully if parts of it are avoided.

All in all, WCF or error correction in writing was seen a time-consuming endeavour for teachers and students and there was nothing certain that it would lead to improvement (George, 1972, as cited in Lee, 1997). Moreover, based on his interpretations of the findings of previous research (Semke, 1984; Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986; Kepner, 1991; Sheppard, 1992; Polio, Fleck & Leder, 1998; Fazio, 2001), Truscott (1996), in his article, concluded his case against error correction in L2

writing that it is not only effective but may be harmful. Therefore it should be abandoned. He also remarks:

“Because correction does not help students’ accuracy, and may well damage it, simply abandoning correction will not have harmful effects on accuracy (or anything else) and might improve it. In other words, teachers can help students’ accuracy at least as much by doing nothing as by correcting their grammar...” (p. 360)

Considering his closing statement and his previous arguments, it is clear that Truscott (1996) is not against WCF as a whole, he only argues against WCF in the form of grammar correction or in others, error correction for form errors. However, his strong stance against WCF for form errors still receives great objection.

Ferris (1997, 1999) was one of the first researchers who immediately objected Truscott’s (1996) case related to WCF or error correction in L2 writing. She firmly argued against his argument as it was: “...premature and overly strong...” (p. 2). Moreover, she discussed some key points that did not hold up in Truscott’s argument:

- a. Truscott’s definition of error correction is of vague terms and not distinctive enough. In other words, he did not make a clear distinction of which type(s) of error correction in particular. Teachers and researchers would disagree with the idea as there are more and less effective ways of error correction in L2 writing. Moreover, the research supports that “effective error correction – that which is selective, prioritized and clear- can and does help at least some student writers” (Ferris, 1999, p. 4).
  
- b. The studies that Truscott based his claims on are not comparable in terms of subject profile and research paradigms, and teaching strategies differed to a great extent. While some studies covered over a time period of a semester, some others were only one-time experiments. Furthermore, the tools for treatment and measuring had a variety and some studies lacked control groups. Another problem is lack of revision, revision should be a part of WCF to enhance its potential effects (Ferris, 2004) and it can also cause long-term acquisition of linguistic features (Ferris, 2010; Atmaca, 2016). Moreover, the research that does not have a longitudinal approach and its findings cannot be reliable as students may show improvement in immediate revision but the long-term effects should be examined in order to see whether the feedback is

retained or not (Ferris, 2004). This is to say, it is impossible to draw a generalized conclusion that WCF is ineffective.

- c. “Truscott also overstates research findings that support his thesis and dismisses out of hand the studies which contradict him.” (Ferris, 1999, p. 5).
- d. It may be true that some students benefit from WCF less than others, which could be due to many factors such as motivation, priorities, individual needs and expectations, attitude towards writing and WCF, learning context, L1 interference and so on (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Ferris, 2010; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010a; Chen, Nassaji & Liu, 2016). But it does not mean it is useless. Many students can benefit from it if WCF is appropriate for them to take in.

As much as Ferris (1999) disagrees with Truscott (1996) on the points above, there are other aspects to WCF that Ferris agrees on:

- a. Truscott (1996) pointed out that “There is some reason to think that syntactic, morphological, and lexical knowledge are acquired through in different manners (p. 343). Ferris (1999) finds his argument reasonable; she conducted a research to identify students’ written errors in her ESL class and found that many errors were easy to categorise and *treatable*, but almost half of them had a variety of “lexical errors, problems with sentence structure including missing or unnecessary words as well as word order problems” (p. 6). Underlining such errors with basic codes such as ‘WC (Word Choice)’ or ‘Voc (Vocabulary)’ will not suffice and one cannot expect students to understand their errors and correct them in such a way. Therefore, it is safe to say that there is not one type of WCF that can fix every type of error that exists. Teachers should try out various kinds of WCF for error types that differ from one another.
- b. Truscott (1996) and Ferris (1999) found common ground on the issue of both teachers’ and students’ inability and limitations when WCF is concerned, which may well hinder the effectiveness of feedback. In other words, teachers may be inconsistent and unsystematic with their treatment of errors and may be unable to correct errors appropriately. Students, on the other hand, may not understand the feedback or be unmotivated to deal with it. To fix the issue,



Ferris suggests that teachers commit themselves to be more selective in the correction of errors, meaning they can direct their attention to the most frequent errors or the most serious ones. In this way, they can be more accurate and systematic (Hendrickson, 1980). Besides, it would help students not feel overwhelmed with the amount of WCF received. As for students, feedback must be appropriate for their language proficiency, and their motivation should be boosted up that accuracy in L2 writing is important and they need to improve it as well as their self-editing skills which will lead to self-learning (Corder, 1967; Gorbet, 1974).

- c. Ferris (1999) concluded her counter-argument against Truscott (1996) by stating that his claims against WCF is based on limited, incomplete and outdated data and it is not possible to declare WCF useless or ineffective all together. However, his questions and doubts against WCF should be used as a base to explore the problems of feedback and to look for ways to make it more efficient and help for students in L2 writing. For this end, instead of abandoning feedback, the focus of WCF and the ways it can be provided should be explored further.

### **2.3 MAJOR CONSIDIRATIONS FOR WCF**

The heated debate on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of WCF that Truscott (1996) and Ferris (1999) started in the 1990s still goes on to this day. Not only does it still continue but the debate has been taken to different aspects of WFC. With that in mind, when approaching the controversial subject of WCF in L2 writing, there are certain considerations needed to be addressed:

- 1. The Scope of WCF: Error Types for Correction**
- 2. The Differential Effects of WCF: Direct or Indirect WCF**
- 3. The Perceptions and Preferences of Teachers and Students for WCF**

### **2.3.1 The Scope of WCF: Error Types for Correction**

The first consideration that arises with WCF is concerned with its scope. The common question constantly asked by researchers and teachers alike is that what errors should be corrected if they should be corrected at all: all of them or is there a need to be more selective? Moreover, how can one decide on which kind of errors are worthwhile whereas others are not? SLA and L2 writing researchers mostly discuss on choosing a selective (focused) approach or a comprehensive (unfocused one) for WCF as well as choosing between a focus on form errors or content errors or both.

#### **2.3.1.1 Selective (focused) vs. comprehensive (unfocused) WCF**

In the history of SLA, most of the early research only investigated the effects of WCF overall, meaning there was a treatment of errors with a comprehensive approach (Lalande, 1982; Fathman & Whaley, 1990; Kepner, 1991; Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Ferris, 2006; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). On the other hand, the amount of research on focused WCF is increasing (Sheen, 2007; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami & Takashima, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2012).

The argument over the scope of WCF starts in the early days of SLA. George (1972, as cited in Lee, 1997) and Gorbet (1974) argue that teachers should not and cannot correct every single error and it is a waste of time. However, tolerating some oral or written errors helps learners produce more confidently in a foreign language (Hendrickson, 1978). Walker (1973, as cited in Hendrickson, 1978) conducted a survey with 1200 students of a foreign language and found that the majority of the students did not want their minor errors to be corrected in their speaking or writing as it affected their confidence negatively and drew their attention to errors, which led to losing motivation and even the ability to produce in their foreign language. Similarly, Radecki and Swales (1988) had some findings revealing that some of the participants were reluctant about all of their errors being corrected; they preferred the correction of only major errors. Additionally, Atmaca (2016), based on her findings in students' and teachers' perceptions on WFC, concluded that while some teachers were in favour of correcting all errors, most students were against the very idea. The findings also suggested that correcting all errors can be overwhelming for students and exhausting for teachers. Another problem with comprehensive error correction is that when

teachers correct as many errors as possible, there is a possibility that they over-mark, meaning they may provide correction for student output that does not need correction in the first place (Lee, 2004).

Ellis (2009a) is also in favour of focused WCF as he posits it can be potentially more effective than unfocused WCF; teachers should identify specific linguistic features in small bits rather than as a whole. In this way, it will be easier for students to handle given feedback and it is likely for them to benefit more. Otherwise, overwhelmed students may not be able to benefit from feedback no matter how effective it is claimed to be. Cohen's (1987, as cited in Ferris, 1995b) findings in his study revealed that almost one third of the participating students did not even check the feedback whereas most students did nothing but only took mental notes of the feedback. This may be due to the over-correction or in other words, the attempt to correct all errors. Therefore, a more selective feedback may lead to better results since teachers can be more consistent and systematic, and it will be more manageable for students to intake feedback (Lee, 2004; Atmaca, 2016).

Leki (1991), however, found that even though most learners wanted all of their errors to be corrected, they did not have a very positive attitude towards dealing with them, namely correcting them. Similarly, Lee (1997) found that students preferred comprehensive WCF to selective one since they would like to know all of their errors and avoid committing the same kind of errors in subsequent writing tasks.

### **2.3.1.2 Previous studies on focused and unfocused WCF**

The advocates of focused WCF have conducted studies that are only concerned with direct focused WCF and its different types.

One of the first studies on the effects of focused WCF was carried out by Sheen (2007), whose study involved 91 ESL learners at intermediate level in the USA. The participants were assigned to three different groups: direct focused WCF (1), direct focused WCF with metalinguistic comments (2) and no correction group (3). The immediate posttest results showed that WCF in general had a positive effect on the acquisition of the selected target structure (the English articles: a, an, the) but there was not a significant difference between the two treatment groups. When it comes to delayed posttest results, the group that received direct WCF with metalinguistic

comments was observed to outperform the other treatment group in using the target structure accurately. From the results it can be inferred that metalinguistic comments enhance the effectiveness of direct focused WCF and make it more retainable. Apart from the treatment groups, the control group also showed improvement, which may be because of writing and test practice over time. One limitation of the study, however, was that it did not ask the students to revise their corrected writing assignments; revision, if it had been done, could have increased the effects of WCF further.

Similar to Sheen's study (2007), another study on focused WCF was conducted by Bitchener (2008). The study was a longitudinal one that lasted two months involving 75 low-intermediate ESL students who were randomly assigned to four different groups: 1. direct focused WCF with oral metalinguistic explanations, 2. direct focused WCF with written metalinguistic explanations, 3. direct focused WCF only and 4. no correction. At the end of the study, it was revealed that all the treatment groups outperformed the control group in using the target structure (the English articles) with accuracy. Moreover, the treatment groups were able to retain the level of accuracy two months later as well as on the new writing tasks. Even though no statistically significant difference was found between the three treatment groups, it was concluded that direct focused WCF in general was effective in helping students improve their accuracy in L2 writing. Similar findings revealed in Bitchener and Knoch's study (2009a) which involved 39 low-intermediate ESL students and three treatment groups: direct focused WCF (with oral and written metalinguistic explanations), direct focused WCF (with only written metalinguistic explanations) and direct focused WCF only. In the posttests, it was reported that direct focused WCF only was just as effective as the other two types WCF on the accuracy of the target structure.

Bitchener and Knoch (2009b, 2010a) replicated their previous studies in order to explore the effects of focused WCF for a longer time of period. Two 10-month studies were conducted with following treatment groups: 1. direct focused WCF with written and oral metalinguistic explanations, 2. direct focused WCF with only written metalinguistic explanations, 3. direct focused WCF only, 4. no feedback. The results of the two studies demonstrated that all the treatment groups outperformed the control group, however there was no statistically significant difference found between the treatment groups. It was also revealed that focused direct WCF was retainable as at the end of 10 months, the students in the treatment groups kept improving or maintained

their level of improvement. The researchers concluded that providing WCF on one or two linguistic error categories at a time should be more effective than feedback on a great range of linguistic features. They finally added that the effects of focused WCF should be tested, not only on the repeated target structure (the English articles), but also on other categories of errors and linguistic features.

As for EFL context-based studies, one of the few studies was carried out by Salah (2015) with 50 EFL university students. The target structure was decided to be the prepositions of time and place. The treatment group received direct WCF for only the target structure errors whereas the control group did not have any WCF. At the end of 7 weeks, direct focused WCF was reported to be facilitative in reducing students' errors related to the selected prepositions but the control group did not show much improvement in the posttest. It was concluded by the researchers that focused, selective WCF is more beneficial for students.

The above studies seem to favour focused direct WCF, yet they did not attempt to compare the potentially different effects of focused and unfocused WCF. So, it cannot be concluded from the said studies that focused WCF is superior to unfocused WCF or vice versa. The following studies, on the other hand, did compare the effects of both feedback types and provide some conclusions on the issue.

Ellis, Sheen, Murakami and Takashima (2008) carried out a study that involved 49 EFL Japanese students at a state university and it had a time period of 15 weeks and new writing tasks were implemented to measure the effects of direct focused and direct unfocused WCF. In the posttest, there was no difference to be found between the focused and unfocused group in using the target structure (the English articles), they both demonstrated similar levels of improvement. However, as far as the delayed posttest is concerned, the focused feedback group was able to improve their accuracy further whereas the unfocused feedback group was only able to maintain their level with no further improvement. Lastly, the students in both focused and unfocused groups were not aware of the purpose of the study which was to improve their accuracy in the English articles use. Focused WCF did not seem to promote awareness.

Frear and Chiu (2015) also investigated the differences between focused and unfocused feedback but they provided feedback indirectly rather than directly. 42 EFL students at a Taiwanese university took part in the study and the target structures were past simple tense (regular, irregular verbs). In the posttest, even though the focused

indirect feedback group and the unfocused indirect feedback group outperformed the control group, the two treatment groups did not demonstrate a significant difference between them. Moreover, focused WCF did not lead to awareness of the target structure in the students. These results can be due to the fact that there was only one treatment episode implemented and indirect feedback demands students to do self-correction based on their pre-existing knowledge, so the students may not have been able to correct their errors accurately as far as the target structure is concerned. Moreover, the students' ability to use articles was not tested with a delayed posttest, so the long-term effects of focused feedback were not investigated.

In conclusion, although it is difficult for focused WCF to provide a healthy, reliable conclusion or implication for classroom use, it is a better alternative to reduce specific types of error in L2 writing. (Ferris, 2010). Moreover, it makes sense that students seem to benefit more from WCF and have long-term acquisition of target language features when there are fewer, clearer error types that are the focus (Ferris, 1999, 2010; Ellis, 2009a).

### **2.3.1.3 Form errors vs. content errors**

There are also some issues regarding the balance of WCF. It has been observed that most teachers' focus is mainly form errors, meaning they tend to correct errors that are concerned with grammar, spelling and punctuation more than content errors such as coherence, cohesion, organisation and style (Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986; Woods, 1989; Leki, 1991; Truscott, 1996). The reason why form-errors is the priority is because they are easy to attend to, which means teachers can categorise and correct them more easily than content-errors (Woods, 1989; Leki, 1991). This type of approach to WCF is likely to lead to a decrease in students' motivation for writing (Krashen & Seliger, 1974; Hendrickson, 1978; Semke, 1984; Radecki & Swales, 1988). Likewise, Zamel (1985) also argues that students' attention must be drawn into more important concerns such as meaning. Teachers should refrain themselves from only focusing on form errors and should give priority to content errors that affect meaningfulness of student output. Otherwise, thinking that students' written output will naturally have a good deal of form errors; attempting to correct all of them is likely to cause students to monitor themselves to a greater deal, which can be unproductive (Krashen, 1982). Supporting Zamel's argument, Semke (1984) revealed that students

who received WCF only on their content developed a more positive attitude towards writing and they were motivated to write. This can be explained by the notion that when students were able to communicate with their teachers in a meaningful way and knew that their message was understood, it encouraged them to write more. If teachers' focus becomes the content and comments instead of only form errors, students become more engaged. This is to say, the students' view on correction for form related errors is negative. Radecki and Swales (1988) also found supporting findings in which it was observed that some students complained that their teachers did not focus on content much but paid more attention to linguistic features of their writing. The students found this demotivating and this may also indicate that they felt as if their opinions in writing did not matter.

Similar to Semke's, and Radecki and Swales' (1988) study, in Sheppard's (1992) study with 50 students of Upper-Intermediate level who were from various cultures and backgrounds, findings showed that written error correction for linguistic forms may be harmful. Two treatment groups were involved, one of which (A) received coded error correction and had conferences with their teacher to discuss only the errors made. The other group's (B) treatment relied on clarification requests on students' papers followed by conferences in which students and teachers discussed the content of the writings. Both groups were asked to re-write their paper. The results indicated that Group A whose attention was drawn only to nothing but form-errors showed significant improvement in their use of verb accuracy but they were observed to produce less complex sentences in their subsequent writings in order to avoid making errors. On the other hand, the students in Group B, who mainly focused on the meaning of their writing instead of grammar, still made significant improvement in verb accuracy and punctuation. In addition, Group B became more conscious of their writing; they started to evaluate in order to make the meaning clearer and to form longer and more complex sentences than Group A. Even though Group A's focus was on the accuracy of their writing, Group B was observed to give more attention to the accuracy. The results of the study can be interpreted as WCF for form errors may be in vain, yet comments and clarification request on content as a form of WCF can be more engaging for students to reconstruct their writings where conveying meaning clearly is the priority.

Ferris (2004) criticised Sheppard's findings since she claimed conferences and WCF for grammar correction are very different ways of treatment and the results may have been stemmed from the conferences. So, it is difficult to make assumptions about the effectiveness of WCF in this study. Truscott (2007), however, objected to Ferris (2004) by stating that conferences are a natural part of feedback as how revision is. The ineffectiveness of WCF on form errors cannot only be attributed to conferences in this study. Another criticism for the study came actually from Truscott (1996) himself. Even though, he argues against the effectiveness of WCF for form errors, this study had no control group to see the differences between WCF treatment and no form of any written corrective feedback on students' accuracy and writing skills.

Similar findings surfaced in Kepner's (1991) study, in which the treatment group that received WCF in the form of comments on content improved their writing proficiency more than the other treatment group that was given direct error correction with explicit metalinguistic explanations for rules of grammar. Moreover, there was no significant difference in grammatical accuracy between the treatment groups. Ferris (1999) and Chandler (2003) however, did not find Kepner's findings reliable. In the study, the students did not receive any WCF on the writing assignments that were later to be revised by them, meaning their performance was measured on the revisions of writing tasks that did not have any correction for. They only had feedback in their journal entries for which no testing was carried out. It is not possible to claim WCF for form errors was ineffective. Another criticism for Kepner's study is that it did not have a control group so it is difficult to argue for effectiveness of WCF, on form or content errors (Sheen, 2007). One last criticism can be added, Kepner did not implement a pretest before the feedback sessions, which practically again makes her findings unreliable.

Woods (1989) and Truscott (1996), in addition, claim that written error correction of linguistic points results in stress, discouragement and negativity. That is to say if teachers concentrate on content-errors, with their meaningfulness and appropriateness in mind, students seem to develop more positive attitude towards writing (Semke, 1984; Truscott, 1996). More emphasis should be put on the psychological effects of error correction on students (Truscott, 1996). In brief, it can be inferred that since students receive WCF for form errors more than content errors, more attention can be



given to content errors in order to help students to be familiar with them (Zamel, 1985; Lee, 1997).

In contrast to the discussion above, Radecki and Swales' (1988) survey on the preferences of students for WCF revealed that almost two third of the participating students preferred their form errors to be corrected or marked. Similar, the study carried out by Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) showed that students were more concerned with their form errors rather than content ones and form errors should be the priority. Also, Ferris (1995b) found that students valued feedback on form related errors as much as content related ones. This might indicate that students expect feedback for form errors and are not demotivated by it. Furthermore, in Saito's (1994) research it was revealed that students found written corrective feedback "...most useful when it focuses precisely on grammatical errors." (p. 65). In fact, students were observed to correct form errors more easily than content errors when indirect WCF was provided (Lee, 1997). That is to say, students also appreciate feedback for form errors and are not frustrated with it. Therefore, WCF on content and form can work well together (Ferris, 2007). However, this could be stem from their past learning experience and their teachers approach to WCF; they might just be accustomed to it over time and believe it is what they want (Truscott, 1996).

Fathman and Whalley (1990) conducted a study specifically for form and content errors. In the study, there were 4 groups which had a total of 72 ESL students: Group 1 received only WCF for form errors, Group 2's WCF was only focused on content errors and the participating students in Group 3 had WCF for both their form and content errors. Group 4, however, was the control group and received no feedback at all. The results revealed that Group 3, which had a combination of feedback for form and content errors, was observed to benefit from the feedback the most. Also, it was shown that Group 3's performance in content improved as much as Group 2's. This clearly means WCF on form errors did not negatively affect the improvement in content. However, the findings also revealed that WCF for form errors led to greater improvement in form than WCF for content errors did for content improvement. This may be interpreted as students benefit from WCF for form errors more than they do for WCF focused on content errors. Fathman and Whalley's findings were criticised to be not credible since the students' performance were not tested on a new piece of writing (Bitchener, 2008). Instead, the posttest was only the revision of the pretest.

Revision was criticised for only testing short-term effects of WCF whereas its effects should be measured over time (Ferris, 1999). In other words, it does not measure long-term effects of WCF on the accuracy in L2 writing and they should be tested for more reliable results (Truscott, 2004). Instead of making a decision between form and content errors, Hendrickson (1980) suggests that learners' goals and purposes should be the first consideration, which means teachers should act on what their students need. To illustrate, if a student aims to write a thesis, errors related to coherence and cohesion as well as terminology must be the priority, not the minor errors related to form. He adds that errors that hinder the meaningfulness and appropriateness of an utterance should be prioritised and when meaningfulness and appropriateness of correction is concerned, teachers can comment, which promotes critical thinking along with praising, on students' content-errors, which is observed to increase students' motivation for writing and to improve their writing abilities (Kepner, 1991; Semke, 1984; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1987; Truscott, 1996, 2007).

Another suggestion made by Hendrickson (1980) posits that errors which have a high frequency deserve more attention than others, this can be facilitated if teachers provide students with error frequency sheets so that they can view where the majority of their errors stem from and can put emphasis on them (Lalande, 1982). Another suggestion was made that choosing major errors for correction would eradicate inconsistency in error treatment by teachers, facilitate learners to concentrate more effectively and stop them from feeling distracted and overwhelmed (Burt & Kiparsky, 1972; Raimes, 1983; Bartram & Walton, 1991; Byrne, 1988, as cited in Truscott, 1996).

### **2.3.2 The Differential Effects of WCF**

On the other side of the debate on WCF, there is the question of 'how to correct errors', which is perhaps the most discussed. One thing, however, is clear that syntactic, morphological and lexical knowledge are acquired in different manners (Schwartz, 1993, as cited in Truscott, 1996). This is to say, one type of correction cannot be helpful to account for each error type. Ferris (1999) also supports the argument by stating that one single type of WCF to use in every type of error is not possible or realistic. Considering all the controversy among SLA and L2 researchers regarding WCF, it is difficult to assume if it is effective or ineffective. However, its differential effects can be pointed out through various studies conducted both in ESL and EFL

context. For this end, there are two major types of WCF that are often put to test: direct WCF and indirect WCF.

### **2.3.2.1 General discussion on direct and indirect WCF**

The discussion on direct and indirect WCF starts in late 60s. Corder (1967) and Gorbet (1974) are not in favour of direct WCF or explicit error correction. They claim that errors should not be directly corrected since making errors is a part of language learning and a sign of development. Learners are to learn from their errors as when errors do not occur, there will not be learning. With this approach to errors in mind, Corder stated that: “Making a learner try to discover the right form could be often more instructive to both learner and teacher” (p. 168). In order to stimulate self-learning from errors, Corder (1967) and Gorbet (1974) suggest a type of indirect WCF called coded error correction which pushes learners to discover their own errors and correct them.

Similar to Corder (1967) and Gorbet (1974), Saito (1994) suggests direct WCF may not lead to revising or rewriting and students may just end up reading it through. It does not create an opportunity for self-learning. Giving clues such as underlining errors or using codes for each type of error is likely to lead to revising and rewriting which enable learners to discover their own mistakes and correct them by themselves. This practice can be regarded as challenging and engaging. In addition, some researchers suggest that indirect WCF forces students to engage in ‘guided-learning’ and ‘problem-solving’, which in time develop their self-editing skills and it has long-term benefits (Lalande, 1982; Frantzen, 1995; Ashwell, 2000; Ferris, 2004, 2006). Furthermore, Hyland and Hyland (2006) points out the aim of WCF should be facilitating students to have a more independent and self-reliant role in which they can critically evaluate their own writing, identify the problems and fix them; this can only happen with indirect WCF. Likewise, Ellis (2003, as cited in Tootkaboni & Khatib, 2014) also believes that students who are given indirect WCF will put effort into figuring out what the indications mean, be it codes or simply underlining. Only after that will they look for ways to correct them, which will make them reflect more on their writing. Therefore, they will retain linguistic knowledge more effectively and show improvement over time (Lalande, 1982). Direct WCF, on the other hand, is argued to be very passive and it does not engage students or challenge them (Lee,

1997). Another favouring point for indirect WCF is that it enables students to achieve more progress in accuracy over time than direct WCF does (Lalande, 1982; Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986; Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

While not arguing that indirect WCF is completely not effective, some other SLA researchers (Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami & Takashima, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a) argue that direct WCF is superior for certain L2 structures that are not simply explained by a set of rules. The researchers further indicate that, for such structures direct WCF is more preferable because it does not cause confusion or uncertainty in students' and it provides L2 learners with adequate information to solve more complex errors (i.e. semantic or idiomatic errors) but indirect WCF provides them with insufficient information to resolve complex errors (Chandler, 2003). Another point, while Sheen (2007) claims both indirect and direct WCF can promote awareness and noticing, direct WCF with metalinguistic comments and explanations promotes not only awareness but also conscious awareness about the rules for linguistic features, which is likely to facilitate L2 learning. Likewise, Bitchener and Knoch (2009a) argue that errors that are rule-based can benefit from direct WCF with metalinguistic comments to promote a better understanding of rules and how to use them correctly. Additionally, in the absence of direct WCF when it is needed for certain error types that are not rule-governed, students may come up with false assumptions or over-simplistic solutions to their errors if indirect WCF is provided (Wagner & Wulf, 2016). Similar to Wagner and Wulf, Chandler (2003) argues that while direct WCF fosters internalisation of correct forms without any confusion or uncertainty, with indirect WCF students may not feel certain that their ways of correction are indeed true, which can potentially make internalisation more difficult. Also, indirect WCF provides them with insufficient information to resolve complex errors.

Hendrickson (1980) and Ferris (1999, 2004, 2006), instead of choosing one of them at the cost of the other, suggests a combination of direct and indirect WFC. Ferris further states that errors in L2 writing can be sorted in two categories: treatable errors that and untreatable errors. For treatable errors (i.e. subject-verb agreement, verb and tense form, article usage etc.) indirect WCF can be provided; students should be able to deal with errors that are rule-governed and they can always refer to grammar books for help when they need to do the corrections on their own. On the other hand, for untreatable

errors that are not rule-governed (i.e. sentence structure, word choice, missing or unnecessary words), Ferris suggests direct WCF for such errors because they are meaning-based rather than rule-based and there are no specific guidelines or rules to explain them. So, it is expected Ferris and Roberts' (2001) that findings are also supportive of the argument; the treatment groups that had indirect WCF had more success with correcting treatable errors than correcting untreatable ones.

Another suggestion that was made by Hendrickson (1980), Ferris (1999) and Atmaca (2016) indicated that effective WCF should take students' proficiency into account. As the proficiency increases, learners are more able to discover their own errors and to correct them on their own (Hendrickson, 1980). The reason why this is the case is because it takes time for learners to internalise the rules of a foreign language and how to implement them accurately. This argument is supported by the existence of developmental stages in L2 learning. To specify further, beginner level of learners are likely to need more specific clues in their feedback and perhaps they need to be directly corrected as they may not be able discover their own mistakes at their stage. More advanced level of learners, however, can find their own mistakes and correct them if provided with an indication of errors which may include underlining them or assigning them codes (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Ferris, 2004, 2006).

### **2.3.2.2 Previous studies on direct and indirect WCF**

One of the first studies that focused on the potentially differential effects of direct and indirect WCF was conducted by Lalande (1982). His study involved 60 Intermediate learners of German at a state university. The study was carried out with two treatment groups and two controlled groups. All the groups received the same type of grammar instruction and were asked complete writing assignments based the same short stories read. Control groups only received direct WFC followed by rewriting whereas treatment groups' feedback included indirect WCF in the form of coded error correction which required students to correct their errors on their own in their revision. Treatment groups outperformed control groups in reducing the number errors in their subsequent writings. Control groups, however, had an increase in their grammatical errors. The researcher, based on the findings, concluded that grammar instruction is irrelevant when it comes to reducing errors in writing, a discovery-learning based form of corrective feedback namely; indirect WCF was observed to be more efficient in

improving accuracy. The problem with this study is that there was no actual control group since the so-called control groups received a form of corrective feedback (Chandler, 2003). So, it is not clear whether treatment groups improved because of corrective feedback or practising writing over time. Another criticism for this study is that it is likely that the participants may have avoided using the structures they are not sure of in order not to commit errors (Truscott, 1996).

Frantzen's (1995) findings were similar to Lalande's (1980). The researcher whose findings were rather debateable, worked with 44 Intermediate students attending a Spanish class at a state university. In the study, two treatment groups received daily grammar review and indirect WCF in the form of coded error correction for their writings after which they were required to correct the mistakes and rewrite them. What is different about this treatment from previous studies is that teacher provided the students in the treatment groups with direct error correction if they fail to correct their own errors. The other two groups were control groups which were not given grammar review and their errors were only underlined, not corrected or coded. Frantzen found that her treatment groups improved significantly in the so-called MLA tests whereas the control groups did not show any significant improvement in the same tests. This study can be said to evaluate the potential differential effects of two forms of indirect WFC: coded errors and underlined errors and the findings revealed that coded WCF was more effective than only underlining errors. However, the problem is that the treatment groups also received direct WCF when they were not able to correct their errors with the codes given. So, it is difficult to say the findings were caused by coded indirect WCF or direct WCF. Another problem is that the MLA tests that were used to test the participants' performance only required students to fill the blanks with the correct linguistic forms. The tests did not measure students' accuracy in writing. Furthermore, the results may have stemmed from the daily grammar review, not the written corrective feedback. The other reasons for the seemingly positive results could be due to exposure to L2 from other various sources, and practicing writing over a long time. Apart from the MLA tests, essay writings assessments were implemented as well. In these assignments, none of the groups, whether they were treatment or control, had better accuracy in writing. In fact, it was observed that there was a decrease in accuracy of both treatment and control groups. This is to say, written feedback was not only

ineffective to increase accuracy and writing skills, but it also may have been harmful for students.

Another study revealed results in favour of indirect WCF; Ferris, Chaney, Komura and Roberts (2000, as cited in Chandler, 2003) carried out a study with ESL students in which there were two treatment groups. The first group was only provided with direct WCF whereas the second group received only indirect WCF. The study findings indicated that the direct WCF group was able to correct more errors (88%) than the indirect WCF group (77%). However these were the initial reports and over the course of a semester the indirect WCF group reduced the number of their errors more than the other group. The findings clearly points out long-term benefits of indirect feedback (Ferris, 2004, 2006).

Ferris (2006), upon receiving criticism (Truscott 2004; Bitchener, Cameron & Young, 2005), conducted a study to investigate the effects of WCF on a new piece of writing. 92 ESL students at a state university, who were required to write four essays with drafts, and three L2 writing teachers. First, how the participating teachers provided WCF for their students was explored; it was reported that the amount of direct and indirect WCF used by the teachers was balanced. As for the students' performance, it was revealed that they were responsive to teacher feedback; only 9% of the provided WCF did not lead to any changes in the subsequent drafts. Additionally, the majority of the students were observed to reduce their errors in 5 categories between their first and the last essay of the semester. Another result showed that the students were able to utilise both direct and indirect WCF successfully in revisions but indirect WCF was observed to lead to more improvement in the students' writing over time.

One of the most recent studies on the issue was carried out by Diab (2015) whose study involved 57 ESL students. Instead of having a wide range of error categories, the researcher only focused on pronoun agreement and lexical errors. In that regard, this study can be viewed as a focused WCF study as well. However, the main concern was the differential effects of indirect and direct WCF. One of the two treatment groups received direct WCF and metalinguistic feedback on the concerned error types and the other one was provided with only metalinguistic feedback. The latter group can be regarded as indirect WCF because they were only provided with certain codes for their errors. For pronoun agreement errors, the direct WCF group reduced more errors than the other treatment group in the posttest. Regarding lexical errors, on the other hand,

the two treatment groups reduced their errors but with no significant difference. This is to say, unlike what Ferris (1999, 2004, 2006) argued about direct WCF and untreatable errors, direct WCF in this study was not very helpful for lexical errors that are not rule-based. The students were reported not to be able to internalise or use them in new context. As for the delayed posttest, it was observed that the indirect WCF group was able to reduce as many pronoun agreement errors as the direct WCF group. This result indicates that if given enough time and practice indirect WCF with codes increase accuracy in L2 writing as well.

Even though they are not many, there are some studies that aimed to investigate the differential effects of indirect and direct WCF in EFL context and their number seems to be increasing recently. Jamalinesari, Rahimi, Gowhary and Azizi (2015) carried out a study with 20 EFL students who were given WCF for ten class sessions. Group A only received indirect WCF in the form of underlining errors and was asked to revise their writing. The other group (B) was only given direct WCF with no revision. The results revealed that Group A improved their level of accuracy on new writing tasks more than group B did. In contrast to the findings of Jamalinesari et al. (2015), another EFL context study aimed to compare the effects of direct and indirect WCF was carried out by Tangkiengsirisin and Kalra (2016) with 63 Thai EFL students in business English class. The findings of the study showed that the group who was provided with direct WCF improved their accuracy in writing more than the group that had indirect WCF. In the end, the researchers concluded that direct WCF is likely to be more effective in improving L2 writing accuracy. Another study was conducted in Iranian EFL context by Tootkabani and Khatib (2014) with 67 high school students. At the end of 5 weeks, the direct WCF group with conference sessions outperformed the indirect WCF in the immediate posttest or in short-term. However, in the delayed posttest, the indirect WCF was reported to gradually reduce their errors more than the other group. This is to say, indirect WCF was more effective in the long term (Lalande, 1982; Frantzen, 1995; Ashwell, 2000; Ferris, 2004, 2006).

From the various studies mentioned above, it can be inferred that indirect WCF is more effective than direct WCF in L2 writing especially because it leads to greater improvement in long term and engages students in self-discovery and self-learning. Not all studies, however, found positive findings for indirect WCF, a few studies' findings revealed contradicting results.



Semke (1984) conducted a study with 141 students in a period of 10 weeks. The participants were German learners of English at a state university. The students were divided into four groups and each group received a different type of corrective feedback for their writing assignments. Group 1 had only comments on the content and questions about it and Group 2 were provided with all their errors marked and corrected for them (direct WCF). Group 3, on the other hand, had a combination of both comments on the content and reformulation of their errors (direct WCF). The last group's errors were only underlined and not corrected with asking them to do the necessary corrections on their own (indirect WCF). The findings showed that Group 2 did not show much progress in their writing skills and they kept making the same errors in their subsequent writings. Group 1, however, developed a more positive attitude towards writing which eventually caused them to improve their writing skills. Group 3 did not show much different attitude towards writing than Group 2 and their accuracy did not reveal a significant improvement. Group 4, finally, developed the most negative attitude as attempting to correct their errors without understanding their errors was a discouraging and overwhelming task. They also did not improve their accuracy. These findings show that indirect WCF in the form of underlining errors caused students to be demoralised and discouraged for writing. Also, between direct WCF Group (2) and indirect WCF group (4), there was not a statistically difference in the accuracy of the students. The only problem with this study is that it had no control group to see the possible differential effects of getting written corrective feedback and not getting it at all in students' writing. In contrast to Semke's findings, Fathman and Whalley (1990)'s treatment group whose errors were only underlined, with no codes were able to correct a good deal of errors and it was reported that it did not lead to confusion or frustration in the students.

Similar to Semke's (1984) findings, Robb, Ross and Shortreed's (1986) study, which is one of the earliest EFL context study, involved 134 Japanese learners of English. The study was carried out with four groups: Group A had direct error correction, Group B, coded error correction and Group C had indirect correction where their errors were only underlined, not corrected or coded. However, the final group (D) had only the number of their errors written in the margin. The results revealed that there was no significant difference in writing skills or accuracy between the groups, even when compared to the control group. It is safe to say, this study also found no significant

difference between direct WCF and indirect WCF groups in terms of accuracy in their writing. The researchers further suggest that the less time-consuming one, which is indirect WCF, could be sufficient to help with improvement in writing. On the other hand, this study was criticised by researchers such as Chandler (2003) and Sheen (2007) for not having a control group who received no feedback at all. That is why, it is difficult to conclude WCF, direct or indirect, caused such results. However, Group D can be counted as a control group since they only had the numbers of their written in the margin (Truscott, 1996).

Ferris (1999) also casted doubts on Robb, Ross and Shortreed's (1988) study because it was in EFL context, which may have caused such results that are not in favour of WCF. Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1994) argue that EFL learners tend to value accuracy in their writing less than ESL learners. Therefore, EFL contexts seem to focus on form and accuracy more than content and meaning (Chen, Nassaji & Liu, 2016). One reason for that could be the possibility that while ESL learners need writing skills so they can pursue a formal education or achieve career-oriented goals, EFL learners mostly view writing as a form of practice for L2. So, they are likely to be less motivated for WFC.

One of the two studies conducted by Chandler (2003) aimed at investigating the so-called differences between indirect and direct WCF. For this end, each of the 36 ESL students who participated in the study was provided with four different types of WCF: 1. direct WCF, 2. underlining and coded error correction, 3. coded error correction with no underlining and 4. only underlining errors. As it can be seen, one direct WCF and three indirect WCF ranging from more explicit to less explicit were implemented. The findings of the study showed that direct WCF and indirect WCF that only included underlining errors were observed to result in reduction of errors in subsequent writing assignments of the students and there was not a notable difference between the two's improvement in writing. Moreover, the researcher believes underlining and coded error correction made it more confusing and difficult for the participating students, possibly due to students not being familiar with metalinguistic nature of codes used and it did not lead to better accuracy. Yet, coded error correction with no underlining was reported to have the worst effects on the students' accuracy in writing. It possibly caused even greater confusion than underlining and coded error correction. So, the assumptions that students are familiar with codes and know about errors types in terms of structure may not be accurate (Lee, 1997). Moreover, even though it seems to be

popular among L2 teachers, coded error correction, if done comprehensively, can be overwhelming for students; they will have to deal with a great variety of codes and may not be able to identify their errors with given codes (Lee, 2004). Apart from that, Truscott (2004) claimed avoidance may have been at work for the results in favour of WCF.

Based on the findings of various studies revealed above, most research seem to favour indirect WCF over direct WCF. Not all research, however, aimed to compare the differential effects of indirect and direct WCF. There are other studies focused on direct WCF only whereas some others were only concerned with indirect WCF.

Polio, Fleck and Leder (1998) explored the question of whether direct WCF is effective for increasing linguistic accuracy of learners in L2 writing. With this aim, the researchers conducted a study with 64 ESL students from English for academic purposes composition class. The treatment group, in the study, was provided with direct error correction and grammar review exercises after each writing assignment and was asked to rewrite their assignments. Control group did not receive any form of written corrective feedback or any grammar review. The findings revealed that the treatment group did not perform significantly better than the control group in terms of accuracy in the subsequent writing tasks. The control group showed improvement in reducing their linguistic errors almost as much as the treatment group. The researchers explained these findings by arguing that the participants practiced writing over a long period of time, received grammar instruction in their other classes and were exposed to the language from various environmental sources. These factors may have been effective in increasing especially the control group's accuracy. This is to say, the direct corrective feedback used in this study is difficult to prove effective or ineffective. Apart from that, the study had different types of measuring between the pretest and posttest, which can likely lead to such an outcome that may not be so reliable. Lastly, the limitation of the study is that it did not compare the differential effects of direct WCF and indirect WCF, so no assumptions can be made that direct WCF is superior to indirect one or vice versa.

Similarly, Bitchener, Cameron and Young (2005) carried out a study to explore the effects of direct WCF. The participants were 53 immigrant ESOL students at intermediate level. One of the treatment groups received direct WCF with a 5-minute conference with their teacher and the other group were only provided with direct WCF

whereas the last group had no feedback for their form errors but content errors for only ethical reasons. Also, it was a longitudinal study for 12 weeks and the students' performance was tested on new pieces of writing, which many studies lacked at the time. The findings points out that the group that had both direct WCF and conference with the teacher performed with greater accuracy in two of the selected target structures in comparison to the other two groups. It can be inferred from this study that direct WCF can be beneficial with conference sessions to discuss errors whereas only direct WCF may not be sufficient. Yet, there is one point that needs to be discussed in this study; the group who performed better had 20 hours of English weekly whereas the other treatment group had 10 hours and the control group only had 4 hours of English classed in a week. Such a difference may have affected the outcomes dramatically. The researchers, however, claimed that all the groups had the same amount grammar and writing lessons.

Lee's (1997) study was one of the early studies that only focused on the differential effects of indirect WCF. It involved 149 ESL university students who were given articles containing various types of errors. The first group's errors were only underlined specifically in the articles and the second group' errors were only indicated on each line of the articles without specifically pointing out where the errors were; the last group, however, were given the same articles with the same errors without any feedback. All the groups were asked to correct as many errors as they could. At the end of the study, it was revealed that the first group was able to correct far more errors than the other two that had no significant difference in between regarding the amount of errors corrected. This means, only specifically underlining errors was the most effective whereas indicating the errors without specific underlining was as ineffective as not giving any feedback at all; the reason of failure was due to the students not being able to detect errors. Lee (1997) concluded that indirect WCF in the form of underlining errors without codes could be enough for the improvement of students in L2 writing.

Ferris and Roberts (2001) carried out a study to observe the potentially differential effects of two types of indirect WCF: coded error correction and correction in the form of underlining errors. 72 ESL students participated in the study. Although, both treatment showed improvement in their accuracy to some extent, between the two treatment groups, there was no statistically significant difference in accuracy, meaning

underlining errors could be as effective as using codes for errors, which is more time-consuming. However, there is also the possibility that students may end up feeling frustrated with a less explicit (underlining errors) form of indirect WCF because it may be more time-consuming for students and even confusing for them. Despite this concern, the study, based on the survey results following the treatment sessions, did not reveal such an outcome. Other findings showed that the treatment groups performed better than the control groups at self-editing their writing. Truscott (2004) and Bitchener, Cameron and Young (2005) criticised the study for not testing the students on a new piece of writing; they only tested the effects on the revision.

The other study of Chandler (2003) was carried out with 31 ESL students. The treatment group was given indirect WCF in the form of underlining errors and was asked to self-correct their errors in revision. The control group, on the other hand, was provided with the same type of WCF but was not required to revise their writing. The results expressed that the treatment group showed a significant increase in their accuracy but the control group did not show a notable increase in their accuracy. From these results it can be inferred that providing only feedback but not requiring revision is as ineffective as providing no feedback at all. WCF should be complimented with revision in order to boost its potential effects on accuracy in L2 writing. Truscott (2004) was critical of the first study arguing that positive results for WCF may have been caused by writing practice alone over time, input obtained in class and outside exposure.

Truscott and Hsu' (2008), however, casted doubts on the so-called benefits of indirect WCF and WCF in general. Their study aimed to investigate the effects of indirect WCF on new pieces of writing. For this purpose, 47 ESL students at a public university located in Taiwan were assigned to two different groups: treatment (indirect WCF – only underlining errors, and control – no feedback). In reducing the amount of errors, the treatment group was reported to outperform the control group in revision and indirect WCF was helpful in that regard. However, “benefits of error correction found on the revision task did not extend to a new writing task” (Truscott & Hsu, 2008, p. 209). There was no substantial difference between the two groups on the new writing task. Based on their findings, the researchers expressed that error reduction in revision is not a sign of learning or in other words, immediate success in revision does not show that students now are able to successfully acquire linguistic forms or use them

accurately. They further argued that even if WCF helps student learn the concerned linguistic features but they forget over time, then WCF does not last long and is not an effective way of learning. In addition, Khanlarzadeh and Nemati (2016) had similar findings in their EFL context study with 33 students. Direct WCF that was provided for the treatment group led to greater accuracy in revision but it was observed not to be retainable over time and did not extend to new pieces of writing because the treatment and the control group showed no difference in improvement of their writing in the delayed posttest. All in all, the two studies view WCF, indirect and direct, ineffective in a new piece of writing and not retainable over time.

It can be inferred from all the various studies aimed at investigating the differential effects of direct WCF and indirect WCF that WCF in general is observed to be a valuable tool in L2 writing. The types of different WCF and their potential effects, however, is still a matter of debate.

In conclusion, in spite of the controversy, some points made about WCF remain to be true. First, revision is a necessary part of WCF whether it is direct or indirect. Revision is observed to increase the effects of WCF in L2 writing: it helps students for a long-term acquisition of linguistic features and it facilitates reducing the number of errors made by students in their writing (Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 2004, 2010; Atmaca, 2016). Second, the reliable results for WCF can only be obtained through longitudinal studies. Immediate test results does not necessarily indicate acquisition of concerned linguistic features in L2, therefore the effects of WCF should be examined with delayed posttests especially on new pieces of writing (Truscott, 2004; Ferris, 2004, 2006). Third, for WCF to be effective, students must be given adequate time to reflect on given feedback and the opportunity to make use of it (Zamel, 1985). Thus, multiple drafting should be implemented, which will also raise students' awareness for errors and to give them enough opportunity to self-correct their errors. In such a way, they will be more prone to pay attention to WCF and make the best use of it (Zamel, 1985; Ferris, 1995b, 1999). Fourth, correction for all errors can be counter-productive to learning a foreign language (Hendrickson, 1978), therefore, focused WCF can be more helpful. It is reported that focused feedback leads to greater improvement of accuracy in L2 writing as it can get students' attention to specific forms with more ease and it is more manageable for students to deal with fewer specific errors in comparison to all kinds of errors (Ferris, 1999, 2010; Sheen, 2007; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami & Takashima,

2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a). Fifth, WCF can be more effective if it is provided with a good balance of content and form errors, they are likely to work well together (Ferris, 1995b, 2007). Finally and perhaps most importantly, WCF can be made the most effective when students truly believe in it and value it. For this end, Hendrickson (1980) argues that learners' attitude towards error correction must be positive and facilitating, not resisting. To be able to do that, learners must be aware of the fact that errors are a natural and healthy part of learning a foreign language with the help of teachers creating a friendly environment in class (Corder, 1967; Gorbet, 1974). Furthermore, to be able to evoke positive feelings for WCF in students, some researchers (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1987; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994) suggest that it can be motivating for students if teachers make use of positive commentary such as praises in their writing instead of criticism. However, if students encounter the marks of red pen pointing out their errors only, it is likely that they will feel discouraged and the feedback will be less effective.

### **2.3.3 The Perceptions and Preferences of Teachers and Students for WCF**

A good body of research points out that it is certain almost all teachers and students value WCF, believe it is useful and they expect it from their teachers in L2 writing (Lalande, 1982; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Leki, 1991; Hedgcock & Leftkowitz, 1994; Saito 1994; Ferris, 1995b, 1997; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Grami, 2005; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Atmaca, 2016).

It is clear that nearly every student and teacher want WCF to have a key role in L2 learning. However, when it comes to preferences for WCF, the amount of it and its focus, the findings of studies seem to vary. This issue is still discussed today as students' preferences for the type of WCF and amount of it clearly affect the efficacy of it in L2 writing improvement. They may prefer one type of it to another one and therefore can pay more attention to the one they prefer, which may result in students benefitting from the preferred one and ignoring the ones that are not their preference (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010).

As far as students' preferences between direct and indirect WCF, some researchers (Leki, 1991; Ferris & Roberts, 2001) found that most students prefer indirect WCF in

the form of coded error correction to direct WCF. They do not favour underlining of errors as a way of indirect WCF because they believe it is not adequate for them to do their own correction. Moreover, even though Chandler (2003) whose survey with 31 ESL students revealed that direct WCF was more preferable for the students as it is the most convenient and the most efficient way for revision, the students also believed that indirect WCF with coded error correction was the most effective way for them not to repeat the same mistakes in the future. This means the students had the opinion that indirect WCF leads to more retainable input for students. Also, some of the students in the study expressed that direct WCF does not help them learn from their errors and it causes them to feel passive and not engaged.

In contrast, Saito (1994) carried out a study that included 39 ESL students in their ESL writing assignments. After collecting data through a survey and interviews with the participants, he concluded that students did not have a positive view on self-correction with the help of codes or only underlining of errors. This may mean students tend to favour the idea that their teacher correct their mistakes directly. Similarly, Chen, Nassaji and Liu's (2016) survey with 64 Chinese EFL students showed that majority of the participating students preferred direct WCF to indirect WCF as they were reported to want their errors to be correct by teachers in order to prevent any confusion. Additionally, Tangkiengsirisin and Kalra (2016) whose study involved 63 EFL students indicated that the students who were provided with direct WCF viewed it positively and believed it helped them improve their accuracy in writing.

The students that received indirect WCF, on the other hand, had negative attitude towards it and they were reported to be confused by it, therefore they wanted to get more direct WCF than indirect. Amrhein and Nassaji's (2010) findings were also similar. Their study was carried out with 31 ESL students and it revealed that the students mostly preferred more explicit and direct types of WCF to implicit and indirect ones. Direct WCF was reported to help the students remember and understand their errors better whereas indirect WCF was reported to be not useful as the students believed they needed more specific feedback and would not like to deal with self-correction. Lastly, mixed results were reported in Atmaca's (2016) study. While some students favoured direct WCF, some others were against explicit intervention of teachers in writing and preferred less explicit ways of WCF to achieve self-discovery.



As for teachers' preference on the types of WCF, even though there is not enough research, Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) reported that the majority of the teachers in their study preferred indirect WCF over direct WCF as it was less-time consuming and less tiring for them. The reports also indicated that teacher cared about workload but this was not the only reason why they don't prefer direct WCF. The other reason was that the teachers desired their students to do self-correction in order to reach self-discovery and self-learning, which will make them autonomous in their own learning process.

Apart from the discussion for students' and teachers' preferences for the type of WCF, there is also the focus of WCF which is open to debate. Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1994) carried out a survey with 137 EFL and 110 ESL participants that involved both teachers and students. The survey results revealed that the EFL students were more concerned with their form errors than their content errors. Similarly, the EFL teachers also focused on linguistic accuracy of their students more than content. The ESL students and teachers, on the other hand, deemed content related errors more important than form related ones.

In contrast, Chen, Nassaji and Liu's (2016) 64 Chinese EFL students viewed content errors as more important than form errors and would like them to be corrected as well, not only form errors. It was reported the students' main concern was the quality of meaning not accuracy in their writing. However, the participating students were at the levels of intermediate and advanced and this fact may have been mostly responsible for such results. In fact, the researcher also suggest that higher level of learners can benefit from WCF on content errors more and advise teachers to focus on content errors more. Similarly, some of the teachers who took part in Atmaca's (2016) study expressed that errors on content should be the priority while form related errors can be less emphasised.

However, in the same study, some other teachers stated all errors, including both form and content errors, should be the focus of WCF. Amrhein and Nassaji's (2010) also had similar findings. While most of the teacher in the study believed WCF should be for all errors, they deemed the errors that interfere with communicating ideas a very important consideration when providing feedback.

Another point is that focusing only on form errors can be demotivating for students (Hendrickson, 1978; Semke, 1984; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1987; Woods, 1989; Kepner,

1991; Truscott, 1996.) In an interview and survey conducted by Radecki and Swales (1988), it was revealed that some of the participants found error correction of only linguistic points in their papers demotivating. The participants developed an assumption that their teachers were not concerned with content and meaning in it which may have resulted in a decrease in desire for writing. Moreover, they demanded more WCF on content errors. Ferris (1995b), in contrast, revealed that the students in her study valued WCF for form errors and they were reported not to be demotivated by it.

In contrast to the findings above, many other researchers' findings showed that most students are more concerned with form errors than content ones and believe that form-related errors should have more attention (Radecki & Swales, 1988; Saito, 1994; Ashwell, 2000; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010) or they valued WCF for form errors as much as content errors (Ferris, 1995b).

Based on the findings of the studies mentioned above, it can be concluded that if there are differences between how teachers and students view WCF, it is likely that there will be problems and challenges in class which may affect the quality of given feedback in the end. In other words, it is problematic when a teacher provides a certain type of WCF which certain students do not favour, those students will be less likely to benefit from it. That is why, both students and teachers must be on the same page about the type of WCF and focus of it to be implemented in class. Teachers first should discuss why WCF is important in L2 writing with their students and then they should show their students and explain to them why certain types of WCF can be more beneficial for them (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Hyland, 1998; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010).

In addition, students may have pre-existing expectations from WCF, which may not necessarily be beneficial for them (Leki, 1991, Truscott, 1996) and in such cases teachers should be able to shift their expectations in order to help them benefit from feedback as much as possible (Saito, 1994). To find the most effective ways of WCF for their students, teachers should feel free to adapt or experiment with various types of WCF (Lee, 2004). Lastly, teachers can find a balance between providing feedback for form and content errors to maximise the effectiveness of WCF and meet some of the valid student expectations of students (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Chen, Nassaji & Liu, 2016).

Based on the points discussed and the studies conducted by SLA and L2 writing researchers, the present study attempts to address the questions raised in WCF research and for this end, it considers the following research questions:

- 1.** Does WCF in the form of direct focused and indirect focused feedback have an effect on the acquisition of prepositions of time and place?
- 2.** Is there a difference in the effect of direct focused WCF and direct unfocused WCF on EFL learners' acquisition of prepositions of time and place?
- 3.** What are the EFL learners' preferences and perceptions of WCF?



## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 PARTICIPANTS**

The participants in this study were 52 beginner level (A1) EFL students at the preparatory school of a private university. All the students participated in the three treatment sessions and completed the pretest and posttest. However 10 of the participating students did not take the delayed posttest, therefore their performance in the long term was not measured. Of the remaining 42 participants, 29 of them were males and the other 13 students were females. 36 of the students who took part in the study were Turkish native-speakers whereas six students were native speakers of Arabic from various countries as follows: Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq and Syria. All the participants who took part in the study were aged between 18 and 20 years old.

Besides the fact that the students were EFL learners, none of the students had any experience of studying or staying in an English speaking country for an extended period of time. All of the participating students had English classes in their prior education for eight or more years.

The students were assigned to their respective beginner classes based on their performance in the placement test applied by the university. The preparatory school had 18 beginner level classes and three of those classes were randomly selected and they were randomly assigned to their respective treatment groups and the control group.

### **3.2 DESIGN**

The study used a quasi-experimental design involving three EFL classes serving as two experimental groups – direct focused WCF (N= 14), direct unfocused WCF (N= 13) – and one control group (N =15). All three groups completed a pretest, a posttest and a delayed posttest all of which involved narrative writing based on provided key words in order to complete a story. Additionally, all three groups were required to complete error correction tests – once prior to the treatment sessions and two times following the treatment sessions. The two experimental groups received WCF on three written narratives. While one group were provided with direct focused WCF (i.e. correction directed exclusively at errors that involve the use of prepositions of time and place), the other group received direct unfocused WCF (i.e. correction directed at a great range of error types).

### **3.3 INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING**

The students that were in their respective groups were required to take 28 hours of English classes weekly, which included grammar and vocabulary, oral communication, listening, reading and writing classes. Even though the students were provided with WCF in their writing class and related writing assignments as well as being given oral feedback in their other classes, care was taken to ensure that, during the period of study, no explicit attention was paid to the target structure of the study.

### **3.4 TARGET STRUCTURE**

For the present study, the prepositions of time and place, ‘-in’, ‘-at’ ‘-on’ and ‘-to’, were selected as the target structure. The first reason for this choice was that the prepositions of time and place are not completely rule-governed and can be idiosyncratic. Moreover, it is one of the most problematic grammar points for EFL students and they often have difficulty using them accurately. The other reason for selecting the prepositions of place and time was concerned with the pretest results. The

results showed that majority of the students in the groups were not able to produce the target structure with a high level of accuracy. Therefore, it was decided that the prepositions of place and time would be an appropriate choice.

### **3.5 TREATMENT**

Three treatment sessions took place in the study and the two experimental groups were asked to complete three different written narratives in separate lessons at different times. All the students in experimental groups completed the same narratives and received feedback from the same researcher.

Reading and rewriting tasks were involved in the three narrative tasks. The two of the narrative tasks were adaptation of fairy stories rewritten by the researcher – ‘Red Riding Hood’ and ‘Cinderella’ whereas the other narrative task was originally written by the same researcher. Students were made clear by their respective teachers that the tasks were to be considered as class assignments, which would be graded into their overall evaluation and assessment throughout the academic year. One of the three treatment narrative tasks is provided in the Appendix as an example.

The procedure adopted for the tasks was as follows:

1. First, the teacher handed out the story after which they asked the students to read it and to complete the vocabulary activity as well as answering the comprehension questions. This part was assigned as homework.
2. The following day, the students were asked to retell the story and discuss it.
3. The teacher read the story aloud in order to refresh the students’ memory.
4. The teacher collected the story back from the students and handed out the written narrative task with key words.
5. The students were told to write the story with provided key words as much as they remembered.
6. The teacher collected the students’ written stories.

The researcher provided WCF for each student’ written narrative task and the correction was made for the two experimental groups in accordance to the correction guidelines (see below). After two weeks, their respective teachers handed each

student' story back to them. The students were provided with adequate time to examine the given feedback with no further comment from their teachers. Then, the next written narrative task was handed over to them in the same lesson in which the same procedure was followed.

As for the control group, the students did not receive any sort of WCF via the written narrative tasks. They were only required to complete the pretest, posttest and the delayed posttest. However, similar to the experimental group, the control group did receive oral or written feedback in their regular classes and various assignments.

### **3.6 WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK GUIDELINES FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS**

#### **3.6.1 Direct Focused WCF:**

This type of WCF involved correcting only the target structure errors. The feedback was given through indicating the error and correcting it. To provide an example:

He start work as shepherd ~~in~~ this summer.

#### **3.6.2 Direct Unfocused WCF**

The same treatment procedure was followed for the experimental group except not only the errors in prepositions of place and time but also other types of errors (e.g. errors related to simple present, articles, subject-verb agreement and punctuation) were attended to.

He ~~start~~ (starts) (to) work as (a) shepherd ~~in~~ this summer.

### 3.7 TESTS

Two types of tests were implemented in the study: (1) narrative writing tests and (2) error correction tests.

#### 3.7.1 Narrative Writing Test

Three different narrative writing tests were used, which involved the students writing a complete story based on the provided key words as cue. All the tests were created by the researcher. The first test was previously implemented on a non-participating group and the necessary adjustments were made according to the feedback collected by the students and the teachers. The three writing tests are as follows: (1) 'About Bill', (2) 'Gustavo's Experience' and (3) 'A New Beginning'. The tests included certain key words which were selected in order to create a context in which the target structure could be used. To exemplify:

Aisha / her family / live / Syria	go / U.S.A / start / new life	get / school / Monday morning
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No student was given the same story to write on more than one occasion; each test was different to another one in terms of context and key words. In other words, the students were tested on a new piece of writing for each test. A sample narrative writing test is provided in the Appendix.

The pretest was administrated two weeks prior to the first treatment session and the immediate posttest was applied a week after the third and final treatment session. The delayed posttest, in addition, was implemented 6 weeks after the first posttest.

#### 3.7.2 Error Correction Test

The three error correction tests that were instrumented for the study was developed by the researcher. The error correction test in the pretest was used in a non-participating group and necessary adjustments took place in accordance to the student and feedback. The error correction in the pretest included 23 target structure errors; the ones in the posttest and delayed posttest contained 27 target structure related errors. In the error



correction tests, distractor errors (i.e. the errors in subject-verb agreement, present simple, pronouns, articles etc.) were also placed.

### **3.7.3 Structured Interviews**

The interviews took place after the treatment sessions and tests were completed. For the interviews, five students from each group were selected based on their level of improvement between the pretest and the posttests; varying levels of improvement were accounted for in the selection process. The purpose of this was to explore the students' attitude and perception towards WCF, their preferences for it and to establish whether they had recognised the focus of the narrative writing tasks they had completed was on the prepositions of time and place. The interview is presented as an example in the Appendix.

## **3.8 TEST RELIABILITY**

The narrative writing and error correction pretest were tested in a pilot study with the participants who were not included in the study and were at the same level as the students in the experimental groups and the control group. Based on the feedback obtained, necessary changes were made in order to tailor the test to be more suitable for the target students. Furthermore, each test's level and appropriateness were approved by the two experts in the field and by the teachers whose classes participated in the study.

## **3.9 SCHEDULE**

The schedule for the study is shown below. The entire study had a time span of 13 weeks. The first treatment session took place a week after the pretest. The three treatment sessions were implemented with a gap of two weeks between them. The posttest was applied a week after the last treatment and the delayed posttest was

implemented 6 weeks after the first posttest. The structured interviews, on the other hand, took place following the delayed posttest.

Week	Activity
1	Writing pretest: error correction pretest
2	Task 1
4	Feedback on task 1: task 2
6	Feedback on task 2: task 3
7	Feedback on task 3: writing posttest: error correction posttest:
13	Writing posttest 2: error correction posttest 2: structured interviews

### 3.10 DATA ANALYSIS

To investigate the effects of the two types of WCF treatment on the students' use of the target structure, the prepositions of place and time, the scores of the narrative writing tests and error correction tests (pretest, posttest, delayed posttest) were collected by the researcher.

All scores obtained through the narrative writing tests and error correction tests were entered into *SPSS 20* and a range of descriptive and inferential statistics were computed. The values of mean, median, mode, standard deviation, kurtosis and skewness were calculated in order to determine whether the collected data could be analysed by the means of parametric analysis methods. In addition, Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality test was run to examine whether the normality assumptions were taken into account. For the scores of the narrative writing and error correction tests, a one-way ANOVA test was used to determine the students' level of accuracy in the pretest, to investigate if the three groups were homogeneous or not. Furthermore, the scores of the narrative writing tests and error correction tests across the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest were analysed by means of a repeated measures ANOVA (3

groups x 3 times) with multiple comparison post-hoc one-way ANOVA test. Lastly, in order to assess whether there was a statistically significant difference among the three groups across all three tests, a paired samples t-test was implemented.

As for the data obtained from the structured interviews, content analysis was performed and the participating students' responses were categorised into certain responses that were recurrently uttered by the students.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### 4.1 NARRATIVE WRITING TESTS

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for the Narrative Writing Tests

Repeated Measures	PRE TEST SCORES			POSTTEST SCORES			DELAYED TEST SCORES		
	N	$\bar{X}$	sd	N	$\bar{X}$	sd	N	$\bar{X}$	sd
Unfocused	16	41,51	17,46	16	66,19	14,31	13	59,88	31,41
Focused	18	42,56	15,74	18	68,52	20,13	14	56,91	32,55
Control	18	41,83	15,4	18	53,83	12,50	15	48,62	30,97
<b>Total</b>	52	41,97	18,87	52	62,85	15,65	42	55,14	31,64

Having analysed all three group's means scores in the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest, it is noted that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of the pretest among the three groups for the narrative writing test. Both the experimental groups' and the control group's scores revealed in the pretest prior to the treatment sessions are reported to be close to one another with only a slight difference. The statistics, therefore, indicate that the three groups were homogeneous in the grammatical knowledge of L2.

A one-way ANOVA test was implemented to see whether there was a significant difference in the mean scores of the groups in the pretest. Table 2 shows the results of the pretest.

Table 2 One-way ANOVA Results of the Total Scores across the Three Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	854,369	2	427,184	1,157	0,323
Within Groups	18089,6	49	369,176		
Total	18943,97	51			

\*\*p< 0,01; \*p< 0,05

Table 2 shows that the mean scores of the focused group, unfocused group and the control group in the pretest had no statistically significant difference to one another ( $F_{(2-49)}=1,157$ ).

A two-way ANOVA test was used to investigate if there was a statistically significant difference in the accuracy of all three groups across the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest. The test was aimed at measuring the students' progress and performance in all the groups throughout the three tests and it was carried out to investigate the differences among all the students whether they were in the treatment groups or the control group and how their progress varied from the pretest to the posttest and the delayed posttest

Table 3 below shows the results of the two-way ANOVA test among the three groups across all the tests: pretest, posttest and delayed posttest.

Table 3 Two-way ANOVA Results of the Scores in the Pretest, Posttest and Delayed Posttest

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between students	222199,462	51			
Groups	2307,451	2	1153,725	36,257	.034*
Error	219892,011	49	4487,592		
Within students	409386,07	104			
Measures (all tests)	19134,468	2	18175,699	329,449	.012*
<b>Groups*Measures</b>	<b>7458,130</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3542,213</b>	<b>37,477</b>	<b>.003**</b>
Error	382793,472	98	7420,671		
<b>Total</b>	<b>631585,532</b>	<b>155</b>			

\*\*p< 0,01; \*p< 0,05

The two-way ANOVA test was used to compare the accuracy of the students in the tests. The findings of the two way ANOVA test were concerned with how the total level of accuracy of the students across all three groups may vary for the results of the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest.

Table 3 shows that the students were observed to show improvement in the accuracy regardless of their group. In other words, all three groups were revealed to make progress in improving the accuracy of the target structure in the posttest and delayed posttest in comparison to the pretest. Table 3 also reveals that the level of improvement of the students across the focused, unfocused and the control group were observed to have varied.

In order to determine the reason for the varying levels of improvement, a multiple comparison (post-hoc) test was required to be run. The mean scores of the groups show that each group displayed improvement in accuracy in the posttests when compared to the pretest. However, the control group showed the least amount of improvement in accuracy. On the other hand, the two experimental groups showed a higher level of improvement compared to the control group. This is to say, the groups that were

exposed to the treatment sessions were positively affected. In addition, to see whether there was a significant difference in the posttest among the groups, a one-way ANOVA was implemented. Table 4 represents the findings of the ANOVA test.

Table 4 The ANOVA Results for the Scores among All Three Groups in the Posttest

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Sig. Dif.
Between Groups	529,718	2	264,859	6,029	,034*	Exp. 1-Control
Within Groups	12616,669	49	257,483			Exp. 2-Control
Total	13146,387	51				

\*\*p< 0,01; \*p< 0,05

Table 4 shows that there was a statistically significant difference in the scores of the focused, unfocused and control group for the posttest, which was confirmed by the ANOVA test ( $F_{(2-49)}=6,029$ ). In order to determine the significant difference among the groups in their level of improvement, the Tukey analysis, a post hoc two-way ANOVA test, was implemented. The analysis' findings revealed that the unfocused group ( $\bar{X} = 66,19$ ) showed a greater level of accuracy than the control group ( $\bar{X} = 53,83$ ) in the posttest. The focused group ( $\bar{X} = 68,52$ ) were also observed to achieve a higher level of accuracy than the control group ( $\bar{X} = 53,83$ ) in the posttest. However, between the unfocused group ( $\bar{X} = 66,19$ ) and the focused group ( $\bar{X} = 68,52$ ), no statistically significant difference was reported, which means both groups were similar to one another in terms of the posttest results.

Having analysed the delayed posttest scores of the students, it was observed that there was a difference, in comparison to the pretest and posttest. In all three groups, a certain level of improvement was reported in the delayed posttest, compared to the pretest. However, the control group showed the least amount of improvement in the delayed posttest. In addition, having been compared to the posttest scores, the delayed posttest scores were revealed to have decreased in all three groups. However, this decrease was not a statistically significant one.

A one-way ANOVA test was run to see if there was a significant difference in the delayed posttest scores of the students in the three groups. Table 5 indicates the findings of the implemented test.

Table 5 The ANOVA Results for the Scores among All Three Groups in the Delayed Posttest

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Sig. Dif.
Between Groups	8381,494	2	4190,747	5,359	,028*	
Within Groups	571979,213	49	11673,045			Exp. 1 - Control Exp. 2 - Control
Total	580360,707	51				

\*\*p< 0,01; \*p< 0,05

Table 5 shows that there was a statistically significant difference in the scores of the focused, unfocused and control group for the delayed posttest based on the results of the ANOVA test ( $F_{(2-49)}=5,359$ ). The Tukey analysis of the post hoc two-way ANOVA indicated that the unfocused group ( $\bar{X} = 59,88$ ) showed a higher level of accuracy than the control group ( $\bar{X} = 48,62$ ) in the delayed posttest. Furthermore, the focused group ( $\bar{X} = 56,91$ ) was reported to achieve a greater level of accuracy compared to the control group ( $\bar{X} = 48,62$ ) in the delayed posttest. In other words, a statistically significant difference was found when the two experimental groups were compared to the control group and it was in favour of the experimental groups. However, between the unfocused group ( $\bar{X} = 59,88$ ) and the focused group ( $\bar{X} = 56,91$ ), no statistically significant difference was reported, which means both groups were similar to one another in terms of the delayed posttest results. These results also indicate that WCF was, to some extent, retainable in the long term.

In the present study, paired samples t-test was used to determine in which tests the students showed a higher level of accuracy. The t-test analysed and compared the differences between: pretest and posttest, posttest and delayed posttest, pretest and delayed posttest.



Table 6 Paired Samples T-test Results of the Unfocused Group in All the Tests

	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}_{i,j}$	t	p
Pretest	41,51			
Posttest	66,19	24,68	-4,811	,000**
Posttest	66,19			
Delayed posttest	59,88	-6,31	,811	,430
Pretest	41,51			
Delayed posttest	59,88	18,37	-7,286	,000**

Table 6 reveals that the unfocused group had a statistically significant difference between: the pretest and posttest; posttest and delayed posttest; pretest and delayed posttest. The results of the pretest and posttest revealed a difference in favour of the posttest ( $\bar{X}_{\text{post-pre}} = 24.68$ ) and the results of the pretest and delayed posttest had a difference in favour of the delayed posttest ( $\bar{X}_{\text{delayed-pre}} = 18.37$ ). The t-test results also indicate that the students in the unfocused group had a higher level of accuracy in the posttest when compared to the delayed posttest. However, there was no significant difference between the posttest and delayed posttest ( $p > .05$ ). In other words, it was concluded that WCF given was effective in retaining the target structure but the mean scores of the delayed posttest were lower than the posttest's ( $\bar{X}_{\text{delayed-post}} = -6.31$ ).

Table 7 Paired Samples T-test Results of the Focused Group in All the Tests

	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}_{i,j}$	t	p
Pretest	42,56			
Posttest	68,52	25,96	-9,945	,000**
Posttest	68,52			
Delayed posttest	56,91	-11,61	-1,623	,068
Pretest	42,56			
Delayed posttest	56,91	14,35	-6,566	,000**

Table 7 shows that the focused group had a statistically significant difference between: the pretest and posttest; the pretest and delayed posttest. The results of the pretest and posttest revealed a difference in favour of the posttest ( $\bar{X}_{\text{post-pre}} = \mathbf{25.96}$ ) and the results of the pretest and delayed posttest had a difference in favour of the delayed posttest ( $\bar{X}_{\text{delayed-pre}} = \mathbf{14.35}$ ). Although the t-test results show that the students in the focused group had a greater level of accuracy in the posttest when compared to the delayed posttest, there was no significant difference between the posttest and delayed posttest ( $p > .05$ ). Therefore, it was concluded that WCF given was effective in retaining the target structure but the level of accuracy of the delayed posttest was lower than the posttest's ( $\bar{X}_{\text{delayed-post}} = \mathbf{-11.61}$ ).

Table 8 Paired Samples T-test Results of the Control Group in All the Tests

	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}_{i-j}$	t	p
Pretest	41,83			
Posttest	53,83	12	-3,729	,000**
Posttest	53,83			
Delayed posttest	48,62	-5,21	1,410	,177
Pretest	41,83			
Delayed posttest	48,62	6,79	-1,189	,251

Table 8 shows that a statistically significant difference was found between the pretest and posttest of the control group ( $\bar{X}_{\text{post-pre}} = 12$ ). On the other hand, no significant difference was found between: the posttest and delayed posttest; the pretest and delayed posttest ( $p > .05$ ). Thus, it was concluded that even though the control group showed improvement in the posttest, they were not able to retain the same or higher level of improvement in the delayed posttest ( $\bar{X}_{\text{delayed-post}} = -5.21$ ,  $\bar{X}_{\text{delayed-pre}} = -6.79$ ). Figure 1 below illustrates the levels of accuracy achieved by the students in all three groups through the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest.

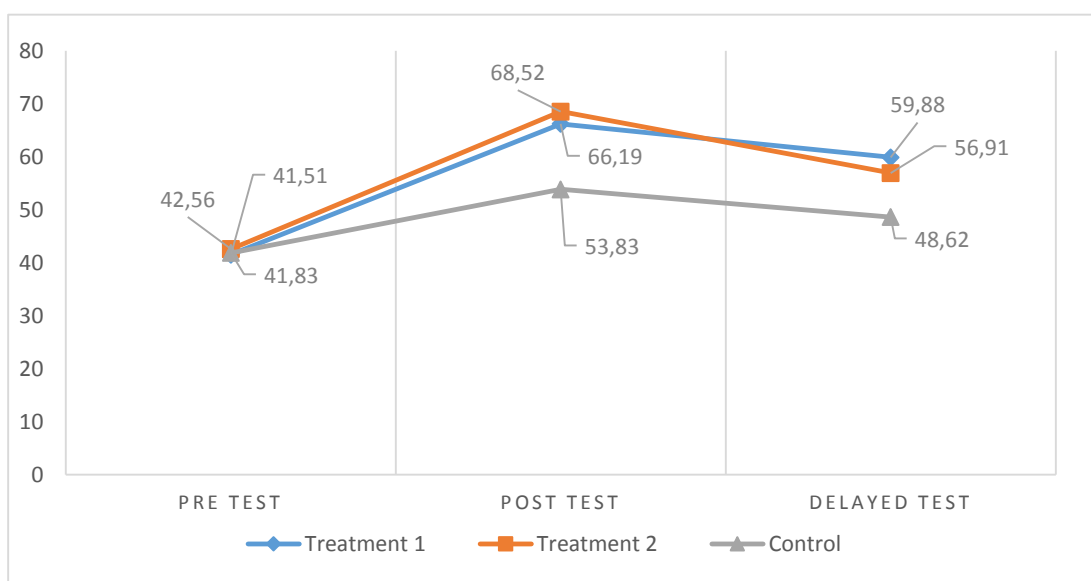


Figure 1. Scores of the groups in all three narrative writing tests

Figure 1 points out to the fact that all three groups had a similar level of accuracy in the pretest. However, the focused group achieved a higher level of improvement from the pretest to the posttest in comparison to the unfocused and the control group. In the delayed posttest, on the other hand, the unfocused group reached a greater level of accuracy than the focused and the control group. Lastly, the control group's level of accuracy in the delayed posttest was observed to be much lower than the level of accuracy of the focused and the unfocused group.

#### 4.2 ERROR CORRECTION TESTS

Table 9 Descriptive Statistics for the Error Correction Test

Repeated Measures	PRETEST SCORES			POSTTEST SCORES			DELAYED TEST SCORES		
	N	$\bar{X}$	sd	N	$\bar{X}$	sd	N	$\bar{X}$	sd
Treatment 1	16	15,74	17,23	16	34,92	12,95	16	37,23	27,406
Treatment 2	18	13,49	12,28	18	29,96	15,91	18	33,18	24,316
Control	18	15,25	19,98	18	21,18	13,18	18	23,64	17,687
<b>Total</b>	52	14,82	19,20	52	28,69	17,50	52	31,35	16,95

Upon analysing all three group's means scores in the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest, it was reported that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of the pretest among the three groups for the error correction test. The scores of the two experimental groups and the control group revealed in the pretest which took place before the treatment sessions were reported to be close to one another with only a slight difference. The statistics, therefore, point out that the three groups were homogeneous in the grammatical knowledge of L2 in the pretest for error correction.

A one-way ANOVA test was implemented to investigate whether there was a significant difference in the mean scores of the three groups in the pretest. Table 10 shows the results of the pretest.

Table 10 One-way ANOVA Results of the Total Scores across the Three Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1942,656	2	971,328	1,028	0,492
Within Groups	13808,728	49	281,811		
Total	15751,384	51			

\*\*p< 0,01; \*p< 0,05

Table 10 indicates that the scores of the focused group, unfocused group and the control group in the pretest had no statistically significant difference to one another ( $F_{(2-49)}=1,028$ ). In other words, all the groups were close to one another in terms of their level of accuracy in the pretest.

A two-way ANOVA test was run to investigate if there was a statistically significant difference in the level of accuracy of all three groups across the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest.

Table 11 Two-way ANOVA Results of the Scores in the Pretest, Posttest and Delayed Posttest

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between students	27447,566	51			
Groups	1827,188	2	913,594	31,747	,026*
Error	25620,378	49	522,865		
Within students	31530,243	104			
Measures (all tests)	2722,435	2	1361,217	5,422	,006 **
<b>Groups*Measures</b>	<b>4204,740</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1316,280</b>	<b>4,187</b>	<b>,007**</b>
Error	24603,068	98	251,052		
<b>Total</b>	<b>27447,566</b>	<b>155</b>			

\*\*p< 0,01; \*p< 0,05

The two-way ANOVA test was used to compare the accuracy of the students in the tests. The results of the two way ANOVA test were concerned with how the total level of accuracy of the students across all three groups may vary for the results of the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest.

Table 11 shows that the students in all three groups were observed to have shown improvement in their level of accuracy. In other words, all three groups made progress in improving their accuracy of the target structure in the posttest and delayed posttest in comparison to the pretest. Table 11 also reveals there was a difference in the level of improvement of the students across the focused, unfocused and the control group.

In order to determine the reason for the varying levels of improvement, a multiple comparison (post-hoc) test was required to be run. The scores of the posttest across the three groups indicate that each group showed improvement in accuracy when compared to the pretest. However, the control group showed the least amount of improvement in the accuracy of the target structure. In addition, the two experimental groups showed a higher level of improvement compared to the control group in the

posttest for error correction. In other words, the two experimental groups that took part in the treatment sessions were positively affected by them.

A one-way ANOVA was implemented to investigate whether there was a significant difference in the posttest among the groups. Table 12 represents the findings of the ANOVA test.

Table 12 The ANOVA Results for the Scores among All Three Groups in the Posttest

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Sig. Dif.
Between Groups	1601,549	2	800,775	4,012	,024*	
Within Groups	9779,287	49	199,577			Exp. 1-Control Exp. 2-Control
Total	11380,836	51				

\*\*p< 0,01; \*p< 0,05

Table 12, based on the ANOVA test ( $F_{(2-49)}=4,012$ ), shows that there was a statistically significant difference in the scores of the focused, unfocused and control group for the posttest. In order to determine the significant difference among the groups in their level of improvement, the Tukey analysis, a post hoc two-way ANOVA test, was implemented. The analysis' findings revealed that the unfocused group ( $\bar{X} = 34,92$ ) showed a greater level of accuracy than the control group ( $\bar{X} = 21,18$ ) in the posttest. The focused group ( $\bar{X} = 29,96$ ) were also observed to achieve a higher level of accuracy than the control group ( $\bar{X} = 21,18$ ) in the posttest. However, between the unfocused group ( $\bar{X} = 34,92$ ) and the focused group ( $\bar{X} = 29,96$ ), no statistically significant difference was found, which means the two experimental groups were similar to one another in terms of the posttest results.

Having analysed the delayed posttest scores of the students, it was observed that there was a difference in the delayed posttest results, in comparison to the pretest and posttest. In all three groups, a certain level of improvement was found in the delayed

posttest, compared to the pretest. However, the control group showed the least amount of improvement in the delayed posttest. In addition, when compared to the posttest results, the delayed posttest scores were observed to have decreased in all three groups. A one-way ANOVA test was used to determine if there was a significant difference in the delayed posttest scores of the students in the three groups. Table 13 indicates the findings of the implemented test.

Table 13 The ANOVA Results for the Scores among All Three Groups in the Delayed Posttest

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Sig. Dif.
Between Groups	2487,723	2	1243,862	12,288	,043*	
Within Groups	26635,431	49	543,580			Exp. 1-Control Exp. 2-Control
Total	29123,155	51				

\*\*p< 0,01; \*p< 0,05

Table 13 shows that the results of the ANOVA test ( $F_{(2-49)}=12,288$ ), which found a statistically significant difference in the scores of the focused, unfocused and control group for the delayed posttest. The Tukey analysis of the post hoc two-way ANOVA revealed that the unfocused group ( $\bar{X} = 37,23$ ) showed a higher level of accuracy than the control group ( $\bar{X} = 23,64$ ) in the delayed posttest. Moreover, the focused group ( $\bar{X} = 31,18$ ) was found to have achieved a greater level of accuracy compared to the control group ( $\bar{X} = 23,64$ ) in the delayed posttest. This is to say, a statistically significant difference was found when the two experimental groups were compared to the control group and it was in favour of the experimental groups. However, between the unfocused group ( $\bar{X} = 37,23$ ) and the focused group ( $\bar{X} = 31,18$ ), no statistically significant difference was reported, which can only mean both groups were similar to one another in terms of the delayed posttest results. These results also point out that WCF was, to some extent, retainable in the long term.



In the present study, paired samples t-test was used to determine in which tests the students performed a higher level of accuracy in the target structure. The t-test analysed and compared the differences between: pretest and posttest, posttest and delayed posttest, pretest and delayed posttest.

Table 14 Paired Samples T-test Results of the Unfocused Group in All the Tests

	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}_{i,j}$	t	p
Pretest	15,74			
Posttest	34,92	19,18	-4,482	,000**
Posttest	34,92			
Delayed posttest	37,23	2,31	-,436	,669
Pretest	15,74			
Delayed posttest	37,23	21,49	-2,764	,014*

Table 14 reveals that the unfocused group had a statistically significant difference between: the pretest and posttest; pretest and delayed posttest. The results of the pretest and posttest showed a difference in favour of the posttest ( $\bar{X}_{\text{post-pre}} = \mathbf{19,18}$ ) and the results of the pretest and delayed posttest had a difference in favour of the delayed posttest ( $\bar{X}_{\text{delayed-pre}} = \mathbf{21,49}$ ). The t-test results also indicate that the students in the unfocused group had a higher level of accuracy in the delayed posttest when compared to the posttest. However, there was no significant difference between the posttest and delayed posttest ( $p > .05$ ). In other words, it was concluded that the unfocused WCF given was effective in retaining the target structure and the scores of the delayed posttest were a little higher than the posttest's ( $\bar{X}_{\text{delayed-post}} = \mathbf{2,31}$ ).

Table 15 Paired Samples T-test Results of the Focused Group in All the Tests

	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}_{i,j}$	t	p
Pretest	13,49			
Posttest	29,96	16,47	-4,826	,000**
Posttest	29,96			
Delayed posttest	33,18	3,22	,990	,336
Pretest	13,49			
Delayed posttest	33,18	19,69	-8,356	,015*

Table 15 shows that the focused group had a statistically significant difference between: the pretest and posttest; the pretest and delayed posttest. The results of the pretest and posttest pointed out a difference in favour of the posttest ( $\bar{X}_{\text{post-pre}} = 16,47$ ) and the results of the pretest and delayed posttest had a difference in favour of the delayed posttest ( $\bar{X}_{\text{delayed-pre}} = 19,69$ ). Even though the t-test results reported that the students in the focused group had a higher level of accuracy in the posttest, compared to the delayed posttest, there was no significant difference found between the two tests ( $p > .05$ ). Therefore, it was concluded that focused WCF was effective in retaining the target structure but the level of accuracy in the delayed posttest was a little higher than the posttest's ( $\bar{X}_{\text{delayed-post}} = 3,22$ ).

Table 16 Paired Samples T-test Results of the Control Group in All the Tests

	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}_{i-j}$	t	p
Pretest	15,25			
Posttest	21,18	5,93	1,344	,197
Posttest	21,18			
Delayed posttest	23,64	2,46	-,636	,533
Pretest	15,25			
Delayed posttest	23,64	8,39	,666	,514

Table 16 shows that no statistically significant difference was found among all three tests of the control group ( $p > .05$ ). Thus, it was concluded that the control group did not show improvement a statistically significant improvement in the error correction tests that were implemented in the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest. ( $\bar{X}_{\text{post-pre}} = 5,93$ ;  $\bar{X}_{\text{delayed-post}} = 2,46$ ;  $\bar{X}_{\text{delayed-pre}} = 8,39$ ).

Figure 2 below illustrates the levels of accuracy achieved by the students in all three groups through the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest.

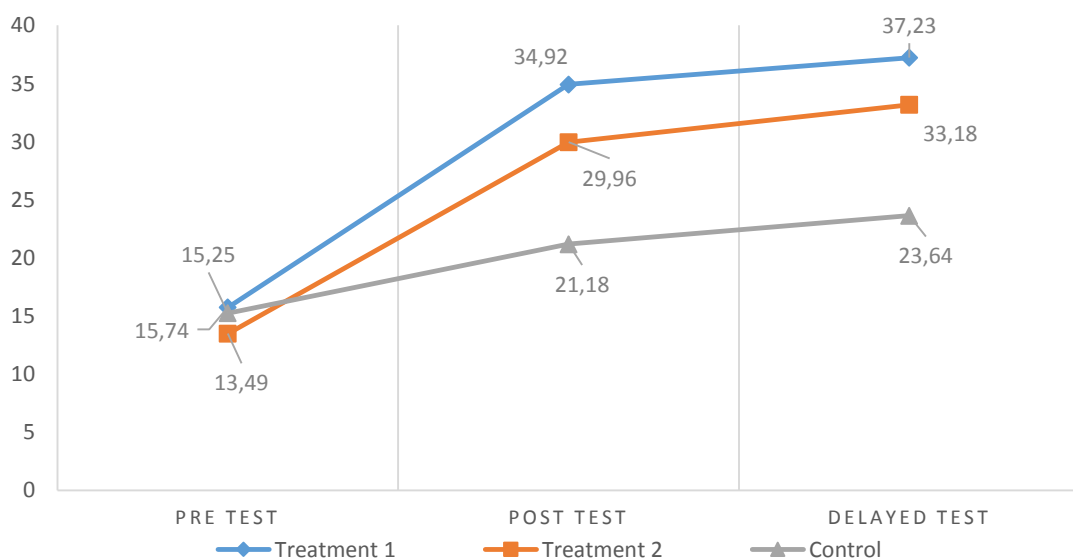


Figure 2. Scores of the groups in all three error correction tests

Figure 2 indicates the fact that all three groups had a similar level of accuracy in the pretest. However, the unfocused group achieved a higher level of improvement from the pretest to the posttest in comparison to the focused and the control group. Moreover, in the delayed posttest, the unfocused group reached a greater level of accuracy than the focused and the control group. Lastly, the control group's level of accuracy in the posttest and delayed posttest was observed to be lower than the level of accuracy of the focused and the unfocused group.

### 4.3 STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

For the data collected through the structured interviews, content analysis was implemented and the 15 participating students' responses were categorised under recurring responses. In addition, only the questions and responses which are directly related to the study and WCF were taken into account for the content analysis. For this end, the questions listed below were chosen.

**Question 4:** *Do you find written error correction useful? If so, how do you benefit from it?*

All of the 15 participants were reported to find WCF useful for the reasons as follows: (1) it helps them be aware of their errors and not repeat them, (2) it improves their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary (3) it helps them to improve their writing skills. Figure 3 shows some of the excerpts of the students' responses for question 4.

<b>Focused</b>	
<b>S1</b>	<i>It is useful, without WCF, I wouldn't be able to see my mistakes and would repeat them.</i>
<b>S2</b>	<i>It's useful because it helps me with improving writing skills, I don't repeat the same errors or mistakes after my teacher corrects them.</i>
<b>S5</b>	<i>It's useful but it'd be better if I could get oral feedback from the teacher and can learn better this way. But with, only written feedback, it's not that affective, I may forget or not check carefully.</i>

<b>Unfocused</b>	
<b>S2</b>	<i>It is so useful. I find out what I do wrong and what I know wrong when I see my errors on paper. Then, I learn about the correct way.</i>
<b>S3</b>	<i>If a student checks feedback carefully and think about it, he may not make the same mistakes again. It's useful.</i>
<b>Control</b>	
<b>S1</b>	<i>It's useful, as teacher gives me feedback, I write better.</i>
<b>S5</b>	<i>It's useful because teacher shows me my mistakes and I become more careful with them, it also improves my grammar and vocabulary competence.</i>

Figure 3. The students' responses to question 4

**Question 6:** *In your writings, what kind of errors would you prefer to be corrected?*

Almost half of the students (7) deemed grammar related errors as the most important for WCF and the rest of the students (7) judged such errors as the second most important. On the other hand, content errors were not viewed as important as grammar errors by the overwhelming majority of the participant students.

**Question 7:** *If there are many errors in your writing, what do you prefer your instructor to do?*

11 of the 15 participants were reported to favour the correction of all types of errors in writing. In addition, three participants would like their major errors to be corrected and only one student preferred correction for only the errors that interfere with communication of ideas. Figure 4 shows some of the excerpts of the students' responses to question 7.

<b>Focused</b>	
<b>S1</b>	<i>I prefer the correction of all errors so that I can know all my mistakes and won't repeat them.</i>
<b>S4</b>	<i>I'd like to focus on the major errors because I already know the minor ones, they are mistakes I do momentarily. There's no need to correct them.</i>
<b>Unfocused</b>	
<b>S3</b>	<i>I prefer all my errors to be corrected. I need to learn from my errors, all of them. Every error, minor or major, counts.</i>
<b>S4</b>	<i>All my errors should be corrected. If I don't see all of my errors, I won't feel like I've learnt completely. I feel like I'm missing something.</i>
<b>S5</b>	<i>I want my teacher to correct errors that interfere with communicating ideas. I don't want my teacher to correct all errors because some of them could be really easy mistakes or errors but if I lose the meaning of paragraph because of errors, that's a big problem. I want to find my own mistakes.</i>
<b>Control</b>	
<b>S4</b>	<i>All errors should be corrected. I'll have more opportunities to improve myself.</i>

Figure 4. The students' responses to question 7

**Question 8:** *When your teachers correct your errors in writing, how would you prefer them to be corrected?*

Almost half of the participant students (7) preferred indirect WCF with codes because they believed that if they found out how to correct their errors on their own by doing research, they could learn more effectively. Apart from that, five students were reported to favour direct WCF with metalinguistic explanations so that they could understand their errors better and would not repeat them. Two participants, on the other hand, were in favour of indirect WCF with only underlining errors, which most

participants found confusing. Figure 5 shows some excerpts of the students' responses to question 8.

<b>Focused</b>	
<b>S1</b>	<i>I prefer direct WCF with metalinguistic explanations so that I can understand my mistakes better.</i>
<b>S2</b>	<i>I prefer error codes as I can do research about my errors and figure them out by myself. In this way, I can learn better and won't forget easily.</i>
<b>S4</b>	<i>I prefer indirect WCF with error codes over only underlining errors because the latter can be too difficult and discouraging.</i>
<b>Unfocused</b>	
<b>S1</b>	<i>I prefer direct WCF with metalinguistic explanations. It can be more informative and explanatory. I'm a little lazy to do my research on my mistakes, I'd rather teacher does it for me.</i>
<b>S2</b>	<i>I prefer error codes. It's my job to learn why it's a mistake, I can learn it myself. Providing direct WCF with metalinguistic explanations is a burden on teachers.</i>
<b>S4</b>	<i>I prefer direct WCF for my errors. It will be more useful for me because direct WCF with metalinguistic can be confusing for me.</i>
<b>Control</b>	
<b>S4</b>	<i>I prefer underlining errors with no codes as WCF, because I can do research and learn on my own. In this way, I won't forget.</i>
<b>S5</b>	<i>I prefer error codes because I can do research myself and learn on my own. I won't forget this way.</i>

Figure 5 The students' responses to question 8

**Question 9:** *How carefully do you review the correction of errors made by your teacher?*

9 of the participants expressed that they examine teacher feedback carefully and correct all of their errors whereas four students would rather correct only major errors. The other two students, however, were reported to do no error correction.

**Question 10:** *What do you think was the purpose of the writings you completed for this study?*

All five students from the direct-focused WCF group became aware that the focus of the study was the prepositions of time and place. Four of them reported that they started to use the target structure more carefully and accurately after the study. The other students expressed that he did not have enough time to examine the teacher feedback provided for his errors and did not improve for the use of the target structure.

None of the participants in the direct-unfocused WCF group was aware of the focus of the study. They reported that it was concerned with grammar and vocabulary errors in general. However, two of the five students reported that their errors related to the prepositions of place and time got their attention. In addition, having been informed on the purpose of the study, 4 of the 5 participants reported that they could use the target structure more carefully and accurately along with other linguistic features for which WCF was provided.

All five students in the control group were not aware of the focus of the study. In addition, four students of the control group revealed that they were provided with supplementary exercises for the target structure by their teachers in other classes. Moreover, it was reported that the students were given WCF on the target structure in their respective writing class.

Figure 6 shows some of the excerpts from the students' responses to question 10.



<b>Focused</b>	
<b>S1</b>	<i>Grammar mistakes, especially the prepositions were the focus. I only saw errors related to the prepositions. I realised I should be more careful when using them. I'm also more aware of using them accurately and they became automatic to use in my mind. Thanks to this study, I use the prepositions in writing better now.</i>
<b>S2</b>	<i>The focus of the study was the preposition mistakes. I'm more aware them now and I make fewer mistakes when it comes to the prepositions now.</i>
<b>S3</b>	<i>The focus was to see our mistakes in prepositions. But, I couldn't improve much because allocated time wasn't enough, I couldn't even check the error correction tests.</i>
<b>S5</b>	<i>The focus was the preposition related mistakes. I wasn't careful about the prepositions and I didn't think they were important before. But, I believe they are important and can use them more accurately, not only in writing but also in speaking.</i>
<b>Unfocused</b>	
<b>S1</b>	<i>The focus was our mistakes related to grammar, spelling and word order.</i>
<b>S2</b>	<i>Grammar was the focus, every type of grammar errors.</i>
<b>S3</b>	<i>The purpose of the study was about forming sentences in the correct word order and grammar mistakes in general. I also noticed my prepositions related errors and can use them more accurately now.</i>
<b>S5</b>	<i>The purpose was to show my mistakes, especially I had a problem about prepositions and now I've learned how to use them. I don't make such mistakes anymore. The study helped me with my prepositions and also other kinds of mistakes.</i>
<b>Control</b>	
<b>S1</b>	<i>The focus was word order and grammar mistakes, to see how we make mistakes about them.</i>  <i>I can use prepositions more accurately because I had feedback in writing lesson and speaking practice. We also did exercises about the prepositions in class.</i>

<b>S4</b>	<p><i>The focus was to know how to write stories and how to use our grammar knowledge in them.</i></p> <p><i>I'm able to the prepositions more accurately thanks to the exercises we did in class.</i></p>
<b>S5</b>	<p><i>The purpose of the study was to see how we use our grammar knowledge in writing.</i></p> <p><i>I improved myself in using the prepositions as we did exercises about them in class.</i></p>

Figure 6. The students' responses to question 10

**Question 11:** *If you have a difficulty in accurately using a certain grammatical structure, what would you prefer your teacher to do?*

13 of the participants in the interviews favoured the correction of all errors in their writing. Because they believed that all errors were important and they would like to be aware of all of them so that they could learn from them and would not repeat committing them. Even in the direct-focused WCF, four of the five students preferred WCF for all their errors. The other student in the direct-focused group favoured focused WCF because it can raise students' awareness more towards the target structure. In addition, one student from the control group preferred focused WCF for the same reasons.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 DISCUSSION**

The first research question asked whether written CF was effective in improving the students' accuracy on the target structure, the prepositions of time and place: '-in', '-at', '-on' and '-to'. The question can be answered by examining the results revealed from the narrative writing tests and error correction tests. The results of the narrative writing posttest indicate that the students in the focused WCF and unfocused WCF groups made significant improvement in their use of the target structure. Moreover, in comparison to the control group, the students in the experimental groups were observed to use the target structure more accurately in the posttest which took place after three treatment sessions. Thus, it is safe to say that written CF had a positive effect on the students' use of the target structure more accurately. Control group, on the hand, showed improvement to some extent. The students in the control group increased their accuracy of the target structure in the posttest but the level of accuracy was lower than the experimental groups'.

As for the error correction tests results, it was revealed that all three groups showed improvement in the detection and the correction of the target structure errors in the posttest and delayed posttest, compared to the pretest. However, the experimental groups were able to detect and correct more errors related to the target structure than the control group did in both the posttest and delayed posttest. This is to say, the control group showed a lesser amount of improvement when compared to the experimental groups.

The results of the current study are in line with some of the previous studies (Lalende, 1982; Bitchener, Cameron & Young, 2005; Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Bitchener & Knoch 2009b, 2010a; Frear & Chiu, 2015; Saleh, 2015).

The first research question also aimed at investigating the long-term effects of WCF. Even though all three groups showed a decrease in their level of accuracy in the delayed posttest of narrative writing, it was not a statistically significant one for the groups. On the other hand, in the delayed posttest, the WCF groups were able to sustain a higher level of accuracy in the target structure, in comparison to the control group. In fact, regarding using the target structure accurately, there was a statistically significant difference between the WCF groups and the control group in the delayed post. This is to say, written CF was effective in enabling the target structure to be more retainable in the long term. The control group, however, had a more unstable progress. Although the students in the control group showed improvement in the posttest, they were not able to retain it in the delayed posttest. In fact, no statistically significant difference was found between the pretest and delayed posttest results of the control group. So, the students' level of accuracy nearly decreased to the level that they had in the pretest.

Similar to the narrative writing tests results, in the error correction tests, the delayed posttests findings showed that the focused and unfocused WCF groups achieved a greater success in detecting and correcting the errors of the target structure than the control group did. Unlike the narrative writing tests results, although there was no statistically significant difference found, all three groups were observed to have a slight increase in their delayed posttest performance in comparison to the posttest. This means, the students were able to retain their knowledge of the target structure in the long term, especially the experimental groups as they had a higher level of performance than the control group. Finally, some of the previous studies had similar findings as well (Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Bitchener & Knoch 2009b, 2010a).

The control group's gains, on the other hand, can be explained with a few reasons. The first reason is that, based on the structured interview findings, the students in the control group were reported to receive explicit grammar instruction and exercises regarding the target structure whereas the students in the experimental groups were not provided with either. Another reason is that the control group was provided with

written and oral CF in their usual classes and the target structure was likely to be one of the focuses of the feedback. Moreover, it is possible that test practice effect over time might have played a role in the gains of the control group in the posttest.

As for the individual gains made through the tests, the scores of the students in the two experimental groups were more consistent than the scores of the control group. In the focused group, all the students with the exception of one student showed gains from the pretest to posttest; in the unfocused group almost all the students had gains with the exception that only one student showed losses. Even though some of the students' gains were not notable ones, it is clear that WCF, focused or unfocused, led to a general gain in accuracy in students individually. In addition, the majority of the students in the focused group seemed to show little amount of losses in the accuracy of the target structure, the ones in the unfocused seemed to show minor gains in general. However, the concerned losses or gains had no statistically significant difference. Thus, it can be concluded that the individual gains were durable to a certain extent from the posttest to delayed posttest. As for the control group, although they seemed to show gains from the pretest to posttest, they were not able to sustain the gains from the posttest to delayed posttest. Therefore, their pattern of accuracy was much more inconsistent.

The second research question investigated whether there was a statistically significant difference between the focused WCF and unfocused WCF in terms the level of accuracy on the target structure. The pretest results of the narrative writing and error correction tests ensured that the two experimental group had a similar level of accuracy in using the target structure. In other words, the focused and unfocused WCF groups were equal to one another regarding how accurately they were able to use the target structure before the treatment sessions took place.

At the end of the three treatment sessions, the narrative writing posttest results showed that the level of accuracy of the focused WCF group was a little higher than the unfocused WCF group's. However, this difference was not statistically significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that the focused and unfocused WCF groups showed a similar amount of improvement in using the target structure accurately and focused WCF was not observed to be more effective in the accuracy of the prepositions of place and time. Likewise, the error correction posttest results indicated that no statistically significant difference was reported between the focused and unfocused WCF. Thus, it is safe to say that the focused and unfocused WCF had a similar effect on raising

awareness for the target structure. Lastly, in line with the current study, the studies such as Ellis et al. (2008) and Frear and Chiu (2015) did not find a statistically significant difference between their focused WCF and unfocused WCF groups in terms of their level of accuracy in the target structure.

As for the delayed posttest results which took six weeks after the first posttest, it was observed that both the focused WCF and unfocused WCF groups showed a level of decrease in the accuracy in the narrative writing delayed posttest. However, the difference in the accuracy between the posttest and delayed posttest was not statistically significant. In addition, when compared to one another in terms of their delayed posttest results, the focused WCF and unfocused WCF group had a similar level of accuracy. In other words, the unfocused WCF was just as effective as the focused WCF when it comes to the retainability of the target structure in the long term. Similar to the narrative writing delayed posttest, the findings of the error correction delayed posttest reported no statistically significant difference between the focused and unfocused WCF groups. On the other hand, unlike the narrative writing delayed posttest, the students did not show a decrease in their level of performance in the error correction delayed posttest. The current study's findings for the delayed posttest differ from Ellis et al. (2008) as in their study the focused WCF group was reported to outperform the unfocused WCF in the delayed posttest.

In short, unlike Truscott's (1996, 1999) argument against the beneficial effects of WCF, it can be inferred from the results of the narrative writing and error correction tests that written CF, focused or unfocused, was helpful for the students to be more aware of the prepositions of place and time and to use them more accurately in new pieces of writing. In addition, both focused and unfocused WCF were facilitative for the students to retain their knowledge of the target structure in the long term. Finally, focused WCF was not proven to be more effective in improving the students' level of accuracy or awareness of the target structure as unfocused WCF was observed to be just as effective.

The last research question aimed at the students' perceptions and preferences for WCF. First of all, the structured interviews revealed that all the participating students believed that WCF is useful for the reasons that: it helps them to be aware of their errors and not repeat them, it improves their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, and it is facilitative for students to improve their writing skills. The students also

believed that without WCF, they would not be able to see their mistakes and to improve their competence in grammar and vocabulary. In addition, one student in the unfocused WCF group said that: *“If a student checks feedback carefully and think about it, he may not make the same mistakes again. It’s useful.”* and this means WCF can only be effective if learns pay attention to it, otherwise it may have no use. The findings of the interviews are in accord with the previous studies such as Radecki and Swales (1988), Hedgcock and Leftkowitz (1994), Saito (1994), Ferris, (1995b, 1997), Ferris and Roberts (2001), Hyland and Hyland (2006), Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) and Atmaca (2016). Lastly, another student was reported to claim that: *“It’s useful but it’d be better if I could get oral feedback from the teacher and can learn better this way. But with, only written feedback, it’s not that affective, I may forget or not check carefully.”* This is to say, written CF alone may not be enough to improve one’s accuracy in writing and oral feedback should also be provided about students’ errors in writing. Written CF with the help of oral CF may potentially be more effective as the combination is likely to draw learners’ attention to their errors more and help them process provided feedback.

Secondly, the students’ responses during the interviews showed that they were in the belief that the form errors are more important than content errors since the majority of them thought grammar errors are the most or the second most important errors that require WCF. The results are in line with the previous research as follows: Radecki and Swales (1988), Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1994), Saito (1994), Ashwell (2000) and Amrhein and Nassaji (2010).

Another point revealed during the interviews was that the majority of the students were in favour of unfocused WCF since they would like to be provided with feedback for all of their errors. The common reason for that was the belief that every error is important and they needed to know about all of their errors in order to improve themselves in writing. One student was reported to say that: *“All my errors should be corrected. If I don’t see all of my errors, I won’t feel like I’ve learnt completely. I feel like I’m missing something.”* This statement represents the preferences of most of the students for WCF. They do not prefer focused WCF as they simply do not desire to miss out on their other errors and they feel learning is not complete if WCF is only provided for a certain grammatical point. Leki (1991) and Lee (1997) had similar findings in their own studies. On the other hand, only very few students preferred

focused WCF as for the reason that it can raise their awareness to a grammar point more.

As for the choice between direct and indirect WCF, more than half of the students that participated in the interviews preferred indirect WCF to direct WCF. They were also in favour of being provided with error codes because they believed that they could do their own research and correct their own mistakes, which would lead to a more effective and permanent learning process. In addition, the majority of the students did not prefer direct WCF with only underlining errors because it can be confusing and discouraging for them. In fact, one student reported that: *“I prefer indirect WCF with error codes over only underlining errors because the latter can be too difficult and discouraging.”* Similar findings were reported in a few previous studies (Leki, 1991; Ferris et al., 2000, as cited in Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Ferris & Roberts, 2001). On the other hand, one third of the students preferred direct WCF with metalinguistic explanations as it would help them understand the nature of their errors better.

Having been asked the question: *“How carefully do you review the correction of errors made by your teacher?”*, nine of the fifteen students were reported to correct all of their errors whereas the rest preferred to correct their major errors only or to do no correction at all. In other words, the majority of the students are likely to be willing to put necessary time and effort into self-correcting all their errors.

Finally, not only the students in focused WCF group but also the ones in unfocused WCF group reported to have become more aware of the prepositions of time and place and have started to use them more carefully and accurately in their writing after the study took place. This was the consensus among the students from the experimental groups, which took part in the interviews with an exception of one student. Therefore, based on the students responses, it can be inferred that unfocused WCF was just as effective as focused WCF in raising awareness to the target structure and using it more accurately.



## 5.2 CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to investigate whether written CF improved the students' level of accuracy on the prepositions of place and time in new pieces of writing over a 3-month period and to determine if there was a difference in accuracy for different types of WCF: focused and unfocused. The current study's findings fundamentally revealed that the students who received WCF outperformed the ones who received no correction in the use of the prepositions of place and time both in short and long term. Thus, it is safe to say that written CF, whether it is focused or unfocused, positively affected the students' level of accuracy on the target structure. However, the gains which the focused and unfocused WCF groups showed were similar to one another. This is to say, unfocused WCF was as just as effective focused WCF in terms of improving the students' level of accuracy on the target structure.

Apart from the effectiveness of WCF, the perceptions and preferences of the students on WCF were also investigated. The interview results indicated the fact that all the students viewed WCF positively and believed it was useful in L2 writing; most of the participants preferred written CF for all of their errors. Clearly, there are exceptions and a need for WCF as far as learners are concerned. In other words, students simply expect their teachers to provide them with feedback in L2 writing and they seem to value it. Thus, the lack of feedback may result in discouraging and demotivating students in terms of L2 writing practice. If they do not get a response to their written output, they may basically lose their willingness to continue writing.

Even though the controversy surrounding the effectiveness of WCF has yet to be resolved, the findings of the current study do not support Truscott's (1996, 1999) argument against the effectiveness of WCF. In contrast, the findings are supportive of the argument for the effectiveness of WCF. Truscott's sceptical view of the effectiveness of WCF was mainly based on the lack of empirical evidence proving that WCF can lead to improvement in the accuracy of L2 writing. However, in the recent years, more and more studies reported findings demonstrating the benefits of WCF in terms of improving learners' accuracy on certain grammatical points (Bitchener, Cameron & Young, 2005; Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Bitchener & Knoch 2009b, 2010a; Frear & Chiu, 2015). Therefore, it would not be possible to

completely abandon the practice of providing feedback in L2 writing, in contrast to Truscott's arguments.

Even though the body of research is growing, there is yet an issue. Most of the recent research supporting the case for WCF in L2 writing were mainly focused on a certain grammatical point such the English articles and past simple tense (Bitchener et al, 2005; Sheen, 2007; Ellis et al., 2008). Therefore, it is clear that there is a need for new studies supporting the case for WCF, which focuses on not one or two grammatical points but a wider range of grammatical features.

The issue at hand is also one of the limitations of this study as it only focused on the prepositions of place and time, '-in', '-at', '-on' and '-to' in particular. Another limitation to the current study was that the sample size was small in terms of the number of the students who participated. Therefore, new studies with a bigger scale should be carried out in order to investigate the effects of written CF on the accuracy of learners in L2 writing. The final limitation of the study was concerned with the fact that the students in the groups were exposed to WCF not only in the study but also in their L2 writing class. However, it is not possible to argue that outside exposure to WCF might have had a role in the improvement of the students' accuracy. Besides, even if the students received feedback on the target structure in their L2 writing class, the concerned feedback was not a focused one. It can be inferred from this limitation that it is difficult to carry out a study where students are not exposed to any type of corrective feedback apart from the one provided in the study.

Based on the findings of the current study, a number of pedagogical recommendations can be offered. First, teachers should not hesitate to provide feedback in L2 writing as students not only find it useful but also expect it. Another reason why teacher should feel confident when it comes to providing feedback because there is a good body of research which demonstrated evidence proving the effectiveness of WCF (Bitchener, Cameron & Young, 2005; Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008 Bitchener & Knoch 2009b, 2010a) Secondly, teachers should take into account the fact that students' preferences of WCF tend to vary, therefore teachers should negotiate with students and make standards and expectations for WCF clear. In addition, teacher should not instrument only one type of WCF. Instead, they can make use of various types of written CF in accordance to students' preferences and error types. Finally, in addition to WCF, teacher may try to provide oral CF for students' L2 writing in a one

to one conference. Such a combination of written and oral CF may prove to be more effective as it can make feedback more clear and understandable.



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## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX-1 NARRATIVE WRITING TASK USED IN THE TREATMENT

#### *Post-Reading: Writing Activity*

*Write the story from your memory and USE all the WORDS below. Please also use linking words (and, but, after that, because etc.) in your writing.*

Helen / live / town	wear / red cap / gift / grandmother	love / grandmother / her picture / desk	look / happy / picture	visit / every week
school / weekdays	7 o'clock / morning	put / books / diary / bag	home / 4 o'clock / afternoon	blogs / Internet
grandmother / birthday / 3 <sup>rd</sup> June / it / this Saturday	celebrate / grandmother / house	want / stay / Saturday and Sunday	ask / mother / talk / strangers / outside	happy / go / grandmother / house
love / listen / music / bus	bus / hot / summer	big hairy man / bus stop	man / ask / Helen / say	dark / dangerous / night
Helen / get / grandmother / house	blood / floor / grandmother / bed	big hairy man / attack / scream	man / street / beat	call / police / murderer

## APPENDIX-2. NARRATIVE WRITING TEST

### *Gustavo's Experience*

USE all the WORDS below and write the story. Please use Present Simple Tense and use linking words if necessary.

---

Gustavo / study / not / live / stay / friend / want / study / would like / go / English / family / place / England / there / summer university

---

talk / parents / buy / plane / plane / take off / arrive / London / they / nice / they / say / yes / tickets / feel / 9 o'clock / meet / English / warm / people / excited / morning / family

---

give / him / there / old desk / there / old / they / have / go / language / bedroom / bedroom / paintings / wall / dinner / evening / school / Monday morning

---

school / meet / enjoy / London / watch / love / grey / take / bus / and / new friends / it / interesting / musicians / clouds / sky / go / school / city / dancers / streets / weather / weekdays / beautiful

---

enjoy / read / come / home / 4 / chat / parents / learn / new / there / a lot of / about / city / bus / o'clock / Instagram / miss / things / English / social / activities / afternoon / them / culture / every / weekend / day

---

visit / museums / do karaoke / bar / there / school / plan / go / everything / city / Saturdays / night / trip / this / Oxford / amazing / feel / Sunday / so / happy

## APPENDIX-3. ERROR CORRECTION TEST

### Find and Correct the Mistakes

Correct the mistakes in each sentence below. There might be more than one mistake in the sentences.

1. - Hi, Andrew. How are you?  
- It's great. I'm going work. I'm in the bus.  
- Okay. Can us meet after work?  
- Yeah. I'd love that.
2. John parents live at a small village. They wake up early on the morning and walks to the woods.
3. Waiters haven't an easy job. They work at a restaurant for long hours.
4. There's the new Star Wars film. I want watch it in Saturday.
5. Zoey's birthday is in 3<sup>rd</sup> June. She has a party usually at her birthday.
6. The young high school student want to study in university.
7. It very dark and dangerous in every night so John and Paul goes to home very quickly.
8. Millions of people in İstanbul wake up 6 o'clock and take the metrobus to go to work.
9. Be careful! There's a broken glass in the floor.
10. İstanbul have got a very bad traffic in weekdays. But the traffic is not so bad in the weekend.
11. Famous actor Christian Bale lives in The UK. But he often goes the USA to make films.
12. There is so many bad things in the Internet.
13. The employees have lunch in noon but it not free. The boss doesn't pay for it.
14. The weather is not so cold on winter now. Global Warming is real.
15. I love my mother pasta. Always she cooks for me kitchen before I come home.
16. Young people doesn't care about the world. They only read the magazine pages on the newspaper.
17. School finishes on June and Zeynep would like get a job in this summer.
18. The Film student has Tommy Wiseau's picture in his desk. He the best director in the world.
19. Everybody talks to each other in the party but I hate it. I want to get to home.
20. Jane takes dancing classes at the week. It her favourite hobby.

## APPENDIX-4. STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

### Questionnaire-Interview

#### Perceptions and Preferences of Written Corrective Feedback in EFL Writing on a Certain Target Structure

#### Demographic Information

**Age:**

**Gender:**

**Level:**

**Years of Learning English:**

**High School:**

**Weekly hours of English in High School:**

**Department:**

**Voluntary/Compulsory**

#### Items

1. How much time do you spend to improve your English outside the class and what sort of things do you do?
2. When do you put four skills in order of importance, what could be the order of writing?
3. What do you do to improve your writing skills? What is important to improve your writing skills?
4. Do you find written error correction useful? If so, how do you benefit from it? Explain.
5. Do you think there is a difference between error and mistake in writing practice? Explain if there is.
6. In your writings, what kind of errors would you prefer to be corrected? Please provide **your rank** for the following errors. (1-5)

- a. Grammar errors
  - b. Vocabulary errors
  - c. Spelling errors
  - d. Organization and style errors
  - e. Punctuation errors
7. If there are many errors in your writing, what do you prefer your instructor to do? Check one of the answers and then provide a reason for your choice.
- a. My instructor should correct all errors.
  - b. My instructor should correct major errors but not the minor ones.
  - c. My instructor should only correct errors that interfere with communicating ideas.
  - d. My instructor should not correct grammatical errors, and should focus on the content only.
8. When your teachers correct your errors in writing, how would you prefer them to be corrected?
- a. Underlining and correcting the error
  - b. Underlining and correcting the error along with providing explanation
  - c. Underlining the error and indicating the type of it
  - d. Underlining the error only without correction
9. How carefully do you review the correction of errors made by your teacher?
- a. I do not read them
  - b. I read them, but I do not correct the errors
  - c. I read them, and correct the major errors
  - d. I carefully read them, and correct all the errors
10. What do you think was the purpose of the writings you completed for this study?
- a. What kinds of errors were corrected in your papers?
  - b. Do you think you've improved on using the target structure accurately?
11. If you have a difficulty in correctly using a certain grammatical structure, would you prefer your teacher to;
- a. Correct only that type of grammatical error?
  - b. Every kind of grammatical errors?

## APPENDIX-5. DIRECT-FOCUSED WCF SAMPLE

Write the story from your memory and **USE** all the **WORDS** below. Please also use linking words (and, but, after that, because etc.) in your writing.

Helen / live / town	wear / red cap / gift / grandmother	love / grandmother / her picture / desk	look / happy / picture	visit / every week
school / weekdays	7 o'clock / morning	put / books / diary / bag	home / 4 o'clock / afternoon	blogs / Internet
grandmother / birthday / 3 <sup>rd</sup> June / it / this Saturday	celebrate / grandmother / house	want / stay / Saturday and Sunday	ask / mother / talk / strangers / outside	happy / go / grandmother / house
love / listen / music / bus	bus / hot / summer	big hairy man / bus stop	man / ask / Helen / say	dark / dangerous / night
Helen / get / grandmother / house	blood / floor / grandmother / bed	big hairy man / attack / scream	man / street / beat	call / police / murderer

Helen lives in town. She is wearing a red cap and buy gift for grandmo  
 She loves grandmother and she saw her picture on the desk. She looks  
 very happy in picture. Helen visits her grandmother every week. She goes to  
 school ~~from~~ weekdays. She gets up at 7 o'clock in morning. She puts  
 books and diary in her bag. She arrives home at 4 o'clock in afternoon  
 to that she write blogs ~~in~~ on internet. Her grandmother's birthday ~~on~~ 3<sup>rd</sup> June  
 it is this Saturday and she is celebrating ~~in~~ at grandmother house. He is  
 wanting to stay ~~at~~ at grandmother's home ~~at~~ on Saturday and Sunday. She asks  
 mother and her mother says talk talk to strangers ~~in~~ outside. She feels  
 very happy because she go to grandmother's house. She loves listen to  
 music ~~on~~ on bus. The bus very hot because in summer. She sees a big hairy  
 man ~~at~~ at the bus stop and the man asks: where are you going? Helen says  
 I'm going to my grandmother's home after that there is a dark ~~in~~ at night very  
 dangerous. Helen arrive ~~in~~ in the grandmother's house and she sees the blood  
 in the floor. and she looks grandmother's bed **YOUR NAME: Helen** celebrate

## APPENDIX-6. DIRECT-UNFOCUSED WCF SAMPLE

Part: Reading, writing

*clearly right*

Write the story from your memory and USE all the WORDS below. Please also use linking words (and, but, after that, because etc.) in your writing.

Helen / live / town	wear / red cap / gift / grandmother	love / grandmother / her picture / desk	look / happy / picture	visit / every week
school / weekdays	7 o'clock / morning	put / books / diary / bag	home / 4 o'clock / afternoon	blogs / Internet
grandmother / birthday / 3 <sup>rd</sup> June / it / this Saturday	celebrate / grandmother / house	want / stay / Saturday and Sunday	ask / mother / talk / strangers / outside	happy / go / grandmother / house
love / listen / music / bus	bus / hot / summer	big hairy man / bus stop	man / ask / Helen / say	dark / dangerous / night
Helen / get / grandmother / house	blood / floor / grandmother / bed	big hairy man / attack / scream	man / street / beat	call / police / murderer

Helen ~~X~~ lives in <sup>a</sup> the town. She wears a red cap and ~~X~~ it's a gift for <sup>her</sup> grandmother. She ~~X~~ loves <sup>her</sup> grandmother. For this reason, <sup>she</sup> puts her picture on the desk. Her grandmother looks ~~X~~ happy in <sup>the</sup> picture. She visits her every week.

On ~~X~~ ~~the~~ weekdays, she gets up <sup>at</sup> 7 o'clock in the morning. She put the books and diary in the bag. She comes home at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. ~~After~~ <sup>she</sup> writes her blogs on the internet. Her grandmother's birthday <sup>is</sup> June, it ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> this Saturday. ~~They~~ <sup>they</sup> celebrate ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~her~~ <sup>her</sup> grandmother's house. She wants to stay ~~X~~ <sup>on</sup> the Saturday and Sunday. She asks <sup>her</sup> mother and she ~~answers~~ <sup>answers</sup> "Don't talk ~~X~~ <sup>to</sup> strangers ~~X~~ outside."

She is happy and goes <sup>to</sup> the grandmother's house. She loves ~~X~~ <sup>listening</sup> to music on the bus. <sup>The</sup> bus is very hot because <sup>the</sup> season is summer. <sup>A</sup> big hairy man comes <sup>to</sup> the bus stop that man asks "Where do you go?" and Helen says: "Grandmother's home". Outside is very dark, dangerous <sup>at</sup> nights. Helen gets <sup>in</sup> grandmother's house and she sees <sup>the</sup> much blood <sup>on</sup> the floor. ~~After~~ <sup>she</sup> goes <sup>to</sup> the grandmother's bed. ~~The~~ <sup>The</sup> big hairy man attacks her and she ~~X~~ screams. ~~A~~ <sup>the</sup> man in the street comes and ~~beats~~ <sup>beats</sup> the wolf. ~~After~~ <sup>they</sup> ~~that~~ call the police for the murderer.

YOUR NAME:



## APPENDIX-7. INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GROUPS IN THE THREE NARRATIVE WRITING TESTS

FOCUSED				UNFOCUSED				CONTROL			
Percentage of the total correct use (%)				Percentage of the total correct use (%)				Percentage of the total correct use (%)			
STUDENTS	PRETEST	POSTTEST	D. POSTTEST	STUDENTS	PRETEST	POSTTEST	D. POSTTEST	STUDENTS	PRETEST	POSTTEST	D. POSTTEST
<b>S1</b>	54.1	59.2	61.5	<b>S1</b>	33	61.7	69.2	<b>S1</b>	30	82	79.8
<b>S2</b>	11.7	51.6	-	<b>S2</b>	63.3	85	88.4	<b>S2</b>	25	80	-
<b>S3</b>	32.3	90.3	76.6	<b>S3</b>	55.5	64.7	-	<b>S3</b>	77	76	100
<b>S4</b>	55.8	84.8	83.3	<b>S4</b>	51.7	68.4	80.7	<b>S4</b>	71	58	78.9
<b>S5</b>	25.9	6.25	33.3	<b>S5</b>	79.4	81.25	80	<b>S5</b>	54	71	74
<b>S6</b>	52.1	80.6	79.2	<b>S6</b>	39.3	57.1	-	<b>S6</b>	59	90	79.3
<b>S7</b>	24.2	50	41.1	<b>S7</b>	71	64.2	75	<b>S7</b>	66	88	86.2
<b>S8</b>	37.5	74	69	<b>S8</b>	13.6	72	50	<b>S8</b>	100	81	-
<b>S9</b>	60.6	86.6	75	<b>S9</b>	31	87.5	89.6	<b>S9</b>	55	83	-
<b>S10</b>	48.1	68.75	50	<b>S10</b>	23.5	37,5	60	<b>S10</b>	66	86	88.4
<b>S11</b>	60.6	87	79	<b>S11</b>	41.1	87	79.3	<b>S11</b>	0	84	71.4
<b>S12</b>	42.8	62.5	-	<b>S12</b>	35.2	45.8	65.5	<b>S12</b>	75	80	72,4
<b>S13</b>	50	75	20	<b>S13</b>	39.3	56.25	83	<b>S13</b>	33	48	48.1
<b>S14</b>	45.1	73.5	-	<b>S14</b>	57.5	71	-	<b>S14</b>	54	51	67,8
<b>S15</b>	48.4	81.8	80	<b>S15</b>	35	57.1	69.2	<b>S15</b>	40	71	74
<b>S16</b>	65.6	80.6	-	<b>S16</b>	42.8	62.5	68.1	<b>S16</b>	57	70	79.3
<b>S17</b>	14.9	51.6	58.6					<b>S17</b>	31	61	55.5
<b>S18</b>	36.3	69.3	63					<b>S18</b>	40	69	72

## APPENDIX-8. INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GROUPS IN THE THREE ERROR CORRECTION TESTS

<b>FOCUSED</b>				<b>UNFOCUSED</b>				<b>CONTROL</b>			
Percentage of the total correct use (%)				Percentage of the total correct use (%)				Percentage of the total correct use (%)			
<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>PRETEST</b>	<b>POSTTEST</b>	<b>D. POSTTEST</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>PRETEST</b>	<b>POSTTEST</b>	<b>D. POSTTEST</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>PRETEST</b>	<b>POSTTEST</b>	<b>D. POSTTEST</b>
<b>S1</b>	0	11.1	33.3	<b>S1</b>	13.04	37.03	22.2	<b>S1</b>	4.3	3.7	44.4
<b>S2</b>	4.3	11.1	-	<b>S2</b>	8.6	44.4	66.6	<b>S2</b>	4.3	14.8	-
<b>S3</b>	4.3	22.2	74.07	<b>S3</b>	17.3	25.9	-	<b>S3</b>	0	18.5	40.7
<b>S4</b>	8.6	22.2	11.1	<b>S4</b>	8.6	33.3	48.1	<b>S4</b>	0	37.03	37.03
<b>S5</b>	0	22.2	14.8	<b>S5</b>	60.8	66.6	66.6	<b>S5</b>	30.4	29.6	7.4
<b>S6</b>	21.7	40.7	51.8	<b>S6</b>	13.4	11.1	-	<b>S6</b>	60.8	22.2	37.03
<b>S7</b>	4.3	11.1	37.03	<b>S7</b>	47.82	29.6	59.2	<b>S7</b>	52.1	22.2	33.3
<b>S8</b>	43.4	29.6	40.7	<b>S8</b>	0	51.8	77.7	<b>S8</b>	34.7	0	-
<b>S9</b>	13.04	48.1	0	<b>S9</b>	0	37.03	66.6	<b>S9</b>	21.7	7.4	-
<b>S10</b>	4.3	29.6	7.4	<b>S10</b>	8.6	29.6	3.7	<b>S10</b>	39.1	40.7	22.2
<b>S11</b>	30.4	40.7	55.5	<b>S11</b>	4.3	29.6	48.1	<b>S11</b>	17.3	0	11.1
<b>S12</b>	21.7	44.4	-	<b>S12</b>	4.3	29.6	22.2	<b>S12</b>	56.5	37.03	40.7
<b>S13</b>	8.6	7.4	3.7	<b>S13</b>	13.04	18.5	18.5	<b>S13</b>	21.7	18.5	33.3
<b>S14</b>	26.08	44.4	-	<b>S14</b>	26.08	37.03	-	<b>S14</b>	26.08	18.5	0
<b>S15</b>	26.08	59.2	0	<b>S15</b>	0	33.3	48.1	<b>S15</b>	43.4	37.03	44.4
<b>S16</b>	13.04	7.4	-	<b>S16</b>	26.08	44.4	48.1	<b>S16</b>	39.1	22.2	37.03
<b>S17</b>	13.04	37.03	48.1					<b>S17</b>	0	14.8	3.7
<b>S18</b>	0	14.8	3.7					<b>S18</b>	39.1	37.03	33.3

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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The researcher graduated from Istanbul Aydın University, the department of English Language Teaching (ELT). Following the graduation, the researcher started his M.A. programme at the ELT department of Sakarya University. He still continues his M.A. studies and currently works as a lecturer at the Preparatory School of Istanbul Aydın University.

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