THE LECTURERS' WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN WRITING CLASSES: UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' OPINIONS AND PREFERENCES

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Abstract

Writing in English for university students who use English as their second or foreign language can be challenging. This is not only because of the linguistic aspects that may be different from their first language but also because of the non-linguistic aspects such as the content, knowledge, and structure. For such cases, the involvement of a lecturer in their learning process is essential and this can be done by providing written corrective feedback (WCF) to their writing. In order to investigate the university students' opinions of written corrective feedback and the types of it that are preferred in their writing classroom, this study hence is conducted to gain a better understanding from the students' point of view. By implementing mixed-method research, the findings revealed major outcomes. Results showed that students generally felt positive about receiving WCF, as it helped identify errors, progress, and weaknesses. However, they felt that WCF alone was insufficient, and a combination of written corrective feedback and verbal feedback was more beneficial. Moreover, the students prefer direct feedback over indirect feedback to build awareness and knowledge about their writing process. They are impartial towards metalinguistic feedback and prefer correction forms with explanations. Lecturers' writing feedback develops critical thinking and revision strategies, encouraging students to research and read widely. Future studies could include longitudinal studies with teacher and student opinions, class observation, and technological advancements, aiming to stimulate new perspectives on written corrective feedback in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: written corrective feedback; writing class; higher education; second language learning and teaching; foreign language learning and teaching

Abstrak

Menulis dalam bahasa Inggris untuk mahasiswa yang menggunakan bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua atau bahasa asing dapat menjadi tantangan. Hal ini bukan hanya disebabkan oleh aspek kebahasaan yang mungkin berbeda dengan bahasa pertama mereka, namun juga karena aspek non-linguistik seperti isi, pengetahuan, dan struktur. Untuk kasus seperti ini, keterlibatan dosen dalam proses pembelajaran sangatlah penting dan hal ini dapat dilakukan dengan memberikan umpan balik perbaikan secara tertulis (WCF) terhadap tulisannya. Untuk menyelidiki pendapat mahasiswa tentang umpan balik korektif tertulis dan jenisnya yang lebih disukai di kelas menulis mereka, maka penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih baik dari sudut pandang mahasiswa. Dengan menerapkan penelitian metode campuran kuantitatif dan kualitatif, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa secara umum merasa positif menerima WCF, karena membantu mengidentifikasi kesalahan, kemajuan, dan kelemahan. Namun, mereka merasa bahwa WCF saja tidak cukup, dan kombinasi umpan balik korektif tertulis dan umpan balik lisan lebih bermanfaat. Selain itu, siswa lebih memilih umpan balik langsung daripada umpan balik tidak langsung untuk membangun kesadaran dan pengetahuan tentang proses menulis mereka. Mereka tidak memihak terhadap umpan balik metalinguistik dan lebih memilih bentuk koreksi dengan penjelasan. Umpan balik tulisan dosen mengembangkan pemikiran kritis dan strategi revisi, mendorong mahasiswa untuk meneliti dan membaca secara luas. Penelitian di masa depan dapat mencakup studi longitudinal dengan pendapat guru dan siswa, observasi kelas, dan kemajuan teknologi, yang bertujuan untuk merangsang perspektif baru tentang umpan balik korektif tertulis di ruang kelas EFL.

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INTRODUCTION

Writing skills have been commonly perceived as the predominant and challenging competence in language learning (Hartshorn et al., 2010). Not a few L2 learners struggle to create a piece of writing that is correct and accurate linguistically, although they have adequate knowledge of grammar and lexical (Tangmpermpoon, 2008). The quality of writing can also be measured from the beginning process of writing, from creating ideas, and planning, to transforming those by weaving word by word into a unified form that can be properly called a decent piece of writing (Ceylan, 2019). Further, such a process is not linear yet requires constant effort to repeat the process by keeping editing to meet the desired outcome.

To achieve success in writing, the role of a teacher is necessary. Hyland (2006) suggests that successful writing can be achieved when the teachers are aware of the significance of their role in assisting learners in the process of creating a desirable piece of writing. The teacher's understanding can be in the form of how and what kind of feedback they deliver. Generally, feedback is a procedure to let the learners know if their response to a certain task is right or wrong (Kulhavy, 1977). The main purpose is to modify the learners' thinking or behaviour to keep improving their learning process (Shute, 2008). Therefore, the kind of feedback the teacher delivers is expected to be effective and constructive (Ellis et al., 2006) since it is strongly important to facilitate L2 knowledge from errors or mistakes in any stage of learning (Lee, 2017).

One significant and relevant to the current study is written corrective feedback (WCF). WCF is a kind of feedback defined as a written response to the linguistic error detected in the L2 learners' writing (Bitchener and Storch, 2016). Referring to Ellis (2009), WCF is divided into six types: direct, indirect, focused, unfocused, metalinguistic, electronic, and reformulation. Each of these types has its own characteristics, and the L2 learners may have preferences on some types to suit their needs and circumstances. Although there are past studies on this matter, however, very few studies have been conducted in Indonesian higher education using the mixed-method research (MMR) method that takes university students' opinions on the lecturers' WCF including the WCF types that are favourable to the students. This study therefore aims to fill in the gap by proposing the following two research questions:
1. What are the learners' opinions of written corrective feedback in their writing classroom?
2. What types of WCF are preferred by the learners in their writing classroom?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching and Learning of L2 Writing

In the EFL setting, The L2 learners are expected to acquire all English skills, which require them to master a variety of linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural competencies (Barkaoui, 2007). Yet, in writing, the L2 learners are also required to be able to produce well-structured pieces of writing, which entails their efforts to go through a process repeatedly of creating ideas, organising them and then pouring them into a unified form to be properly called a decent piece of writing (Ceylan, 2019). Furthermore, their constant practice in writing is needed to achieve the writing skills that at least meet the standard of academic achievements in any writing assessment type (Scarcella, 2002). As for the teachers, they are required to guide the learners to become effective L2 writers (Barkaoui, 2007). With such high expectations, it is not surprising that writing has been perceived as a challenging task for both L2 learners and teachers.

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There are three theoretical orientations to emphasise the significance of learning and teaching L2 writing: text-focused, process-focused, and sociocultural (Cumming, 2001; Hyland, 2002). The text-focused perceives L2 writing development in L2 learners' text features, such as orthography, lexicon, morphology, syntax, discourse, and rhetorical conventions. These features are the main focus for the L2 learners to write effectively. The second theoretical orientation is process-focused, which takes macro strategies (planning, drafting, revising) and micro strategies (researching for content, form or syntax, or words). These two orientations, text-focused and process-focused, correlate to each other since the knowledge of linguistic and discourse aspects highlighted in text-focused orientation has some impact on the process. In other words, knowledge of L2 linguistic and textual elements is beneficial for the writers to use these resources to write more fluently; hence the macro and micro strategies can be done more effectively (Sasaki, 2000; Cumming, 2001). The last theoretical orientation is sociocultural, which perceives genres, values and engagement with the target community are part of writing development. According to Hyland (2002), a successful L2 writer is able to "act effectively in new cultural settings", which means the writers take a socialisation process where they learn the genres, knowledge, values and expectations of their target communities. During the process, Cumming (2002) adds that the macro and micro skills are also polished.

On the other hand, the theoretical orientations stated above require teachers to support and provide the L2 learners with meaningful assistance. In the scope of text-focused, the main orientation is text forms which can be delivered with explicit instruction. Concurrently, the sociocultural orientation advocates a broader approach by providing contexts, audiences, and values of the text forms within the text orientation. Hyland (2002) suggests that such an overall approach has the benefit of encouraging the L2 writers to structure their writing while at the same time learning how to engage and respond to the contexts and demands of the audiences, as Reid (1989) calls it as "reader-considerate". Meanwhile, in process-focused, the teachers can help L2 learners process and develop strategies to be competent and effective writers by showing some process modelling.

In addition, providing frequent practice, motivating students, promoting learner autonomy and self-assessment, and having teachers' positive attitudes and expectations are more suggestions offered by those three theoretical orientations to assist the L2 learners in writing (Barkaoui, 2007). Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) state that learners can be encouraged to write intensively inside and outside the classroom by integrating reading and writing to raise their awareness and become familiar with the writing process. In terms of motivating the learners, Dornyei (2001) puts forward some techniques and strategies to generate and maintain their motivation in the writing classroom. These include identifying their needs, goals and experiences to create meaningful writing activities that see the learners as a writer more than merely a student (Williams, 2003). During class interactions, the atmosphere in the classroom should be supportive and pleasant, making them feel safe and trusted to express themselves (Dornyei, 2001). Finally, being explicit with clear instructions and goals is necessary to assist the L2 learners in doing the tasks more manageable manner (Dornyei, 2001; Cumming, 2002).

Promoting learner autonomy can be achieved by gradually moving from a teacher-centred to being more learner-centred by encouraging the learners in reflective writing and starting journal writing so they can notice their writing strengths and weaknesses and reflect on them (Huot, 2002). Regarding teacher attitudes and expectations, the teachers' firm, appropriate and positive attitudes and high expectations are suggested to be present all the time. Williams (2003) confirms that even though the teaching method could be categorised as exceptional, it would be less meaningful if they do not believe in themselves in improving the learners' writing competence.

One more aspect that is no less important is feedback. Numerous studies have examined the significance of feedback practices in general. Some studies reported the positive impacts of feedback since the students saw the benefits and managed to develop their writing skills (Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Myles, 2002). On the contrary, in Fazio's (2001) study, the feedback did not provide

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any significant change for the L2 learners. Most of these studies focused on the teachers' feedback on grammar and vocabulary. Meanwhile, feedback on learners' writing processes, strategies and the content were more welcomed as these were perceived as useful too (Ashwell, 2000; Zimmerman and Kitsantas, 2002). Another part that needs to be considered in providing feedback is the timing and the techniques. To Hyland and Hyland (2001) and Williams (2003), feedback can be given during the writing as it can assist the learners in noticing the errors before they end the text. They add that the feedback is suggested to be neither extremely detailed, which may overwhelm and demotivate the learners, nor extremely limited that the learners hardly revise. Furthermore, the learners' most recent L2 proficiency, learning experiences, motivation, attitudes towards the teacher and in class, and clarity level need to be considered before delivering the feedback (Hyland and Hyland, 2001). When the learners are familiar with how the teacher gives feedback, they can take a further step to learn about the feedback they receive. This can be done by analysing, evaluating, and discussing the reasons and the focused aims of the feedback they receive. By doing this, the learners are encouraged to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential to level up their writing performance (Williams, 2003).

As feedback is certainly one aspect that has been crucial in teaching and learning L2 writing, further discussion on this will be elaborated on in the following section.

Written Corrective Feedback

Providing feedback in the form of written corrective feedback (WCF) on improving L2 learners' writing skills has been a paramount discussion since the 1970s (Bitchener, 2021), and in the past three decades, WCF has also been a major topic in L2 teaching (Ferris, 2003; Truscott, 1996, 1999). From a theoretical perspective, there is still an ongoing dispute about the methodology, terminology, and interpretation of the study results (Ferris, 2010). Nonetheless, the essential parts of WCF, such as the definition, significance, and types explain further in the sections below.

Definition and Significance of WCF

Kulhavy (1977) defines feedback as a procedure to let the learners know if their instructional response is right or wrong. The quality and effectiveness of feedback are based on "presearch availability", a term to describe the availability of information for the learning to happen without the initial search through or reading the lesson. In other words, if the "presearch availability" is low, the learning is more likely to be successful because the learner is encouraged to search for the necessary information to locate the correct answer instead of merely receiving the correction from others (Kulhavy, 1977). Therefore, when a student is offered the right answers, the learning is seen as less successful than in the illustration mentioned above, in which learners must take action to search for the information. Further, Kulhavy (1977) asserts that performance-related feedback is the potential to lead to successful learning. Additionally, Hattie et al. (1996) argue that feedback is one of the most influential factors that are useful and effective when students are provided with specific information about their actions so that they can have a better understanding and make more effort to improve their performance. Many researchers, including Kulhavy and Stock (1989) and Hattie et al. (1996), propose verification and elaboration as the two general feedback categories. Verifications confirm whether the answer is correct or incorrect, while elaboration gives more clues to guide the learners towards the right answers. This general description of feedback is then concluded by Ellis et al. (2006) as corrective feedback, a response to errors in the learners' utterances to modify their thinking or behaviour so they can keep improving their learning (Shute, 2008).

WCF is a written response to the linguistic error detected in L2 learners' writing (Bitchener and Storch, 2016). However, WCF, also known as 'grammar correction' or 'error correction', has been a controversial topic in SLA research and theory because the role of error in language acquisition has not reached a conclusion (Ferris, 2010; 2012). Krashen and Terrell (1983) argue that

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error correction is unnecessary and potentially harmful for the learners. They also add that teachers better deemphasise grammar error corrections for it can encourage the learners to lead their own way through the writing process. This claim is supported by Truscott (1996), who observed this area. Though the study result shows that the students strongly prefer grammar correction, he assumes it does not mean the teacher should provide it to them. However, Ferris (2003, 2012) and many, including Casanave (2007) and Brown (2012), state their opposite claim stating that error feedback given to the L2 writing students is strongly required, so it should not be ignored.

Reflecting on that discussion, the focus was mainly on whether or not error correction in writing was necessary (Ashwell, 2000; Ferris and Roberts, 2001). Yet, at the same time, many more teachers in the real world and researchers strongly state the significance of WCF in improving L2 learners' writing. The growing number of such results has shifted the discussion slightly to investigate the most useful methods or types of feedback that can facilitate the L2 learners to learn from their errors or mistakes, which eventually maximise their potential in writing (Ellis, 2009).

Types of WCF

L2 writing teachers struggled to seek the most effective types of WCF as they are primarily concerned with assisting the L2 learners in improving the accuracy of their written products (Hendrickson, 1980). As such topic has been paramount among SLA scholars, Ellis (2009) concludes six types of WCF teachers in the L2 classroom can implement. The first type is direct WCF or explicit feedback, a strategy used by the teacher by marking the errors and then providing the correct form. This can be done by crossing out unnecessary words, phrases or sentences and then inserting the right or more appropriate words or phrases near the errors or on the text margin. Otherwise, feedback in the form of comments, information, or questions is likely to be the teachers' option to provide a further specification of the nature of the error, which may contain some metalinguistic knowledge (Lyster and Ranta, 1997; Sheen, 2007). The second type is the opposite of the first type as it is a strategy that points out the errors by underlining or circling the mistakes, but the teacher does not provide the correct form; thus, this is called indirect WCF or implicit feedback. Additionally, Lalande (1982) states that implicit feedback can encourage the learners to learn from their mistakes and be more reflective and careful during the process of writing, which eventually leads them to their autonomous learning and develop their cognitive problem-solving competence (Ferris, 2004). The third type is metalinguistic WCF which uses metalinguistic clues as to the error codes. For example, the teacher writes a code 'WW' for wrong words near the error, such as in the margin.

The fourth type concerns the focus of the feedback. The first kind is focused feedback, in which the teacher's main concern is only a few linguistic errors. Meanwhile, the second kind is unfocused or may also be called comprehensive WCF because the feedback is provided to most or all of the mistakes in the learners' writing. Based on van Beuningen et al. (2012)'s opinion, unfocused feedback is more genuine than focused feedback because the depth of information is deeper than in the focused feedback. Meanwhile, according to Sheen et al. (2009), unfocused feedback may cause more problems in the learners' memory capacity because of an overload of attention to their errors.

The fifth type is called electronic WCF, where the strategy requires electronic media to correct or give feedback on the learners' electronic text. The teacher can indicate the errors by hyperlinking the mistakes and typing down the correction in the margin or using the feature "comment". The last type is called reformulation. This strategy requires a native speaker to touch up on the learner's entire text to make it seem nativelike without removing the initial aim or topic of the text.

According to Bitchener (2021), each type of WCF can be moderately used based on the classroom situation. To learners in low elementary levels, Ellis (2009) states that direct WCF is an explicit strategy that potentially reduces their confusion. Thus, it is perceived as the more effective feedback type for it can resolve more complex errors in their writing. Additionally, Bitchener

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(2021) explains that they are at the stage where a combination of the most explicit type of WCF, such as direct feedback, and the most elaborative type, such as unfocused, is more appropriate; because it is helpful for the learners to comprehend the errors they make since the explicitness of this combination of feedback likely provides clarity.

Research on WCF in EFL Writing Classroom

In EFL writing class, the learners are guided to take the process of expressing their ideas, knowledge, information or experience into a good structure of writing text (Ellis, 2012). The role of a teacher in this classroom is necessary to improve their skills in writing. As the previous chapters have explained about both teaching and learning of L2 writing and the significance of WCF in this kind of classroom, this particular chapter presents the results of chosen studies in the past eight years to get the most recent progress on the learners' opinions and preferences on the WCF in their writing class.

In Irwin (2017)'s, Yunus (2020)'s, Saragih et al. (2021)'s and Nugroho (2021)'s studies, the vast majority of their learners believed WCF given by the teacher could facilitate improving their language knowledge and writing skills. These findings are also supported by a study in Sweden, in which most of the upper secondary schools perceived that feedback was important and useful because they wanted to become more aware of what errors they made so that those could be avoided in future writing (Lie, 2022). Furthermore, these students elaborated that it is not a matter of whether the feedback seems positive or negative, as long as it clearly describes their strengths and weaknesses. Lie (2022) also discovered that feedback with grades was received well as it could motivate them to improve their writing performance. However, a few students in a study by Nugroho and Benecia (2022) revealed that the positive impact of written corrective feedback on their writing progress only lasted momentarily for it was challenging to avoid making the same errors.

Speaking of preferences, most of the learners opted for a direct or explicit type of feedback. In a study conducted in Japan, the second EFL learning writing class preferred their teacher to provide direct lexical and grammatical error corrections (Irwin, 2017). This finding is echoed by Raza (2019), who found that Arab students expected their teachers to provide corrective and self-explanatory explicit feedback consistently. In the following year, the Malaysian students in Yunus's (2020) study also stated how important and beneficial direct, specific and comprehensive feedback is to them. Moreover, in a survey by Saragih et al. (2021), Indonesian learners claimed that direct feedback was the most favoured way to improve their writing skills. Such a strong notion has been consistent that was seen by Zhang et al. (2021)'s. Taking a Thai EFL classroom as the context, the learners strongly preferred metalinguistic explanation and overt correction as the more favourable kinds of explicit feedback. As these Thai learners were at a low proficiency level, Zhang et al. observed that the linguistic features of the learners' L1, the existing knowledge of English, affective feelings, such as positive feelings, and the teacher's role were the main reasons to the learners' preference.

Even though the vast majority chose direct or explicit feedback as their preference to provide feedback or correction to the forms, some preferred the teachers to be more focused on the content and organisation of their writing instead. Vasu et al. (2016) revealed that the students perceived the feedback on their vocabularies and grammar was useless compared to feedback on their writing structure. This finding was similarly found in a study by Song et al. (2017), in which their students expected the feedback to be more focused on macro issues and rhetoric structure that discussed the clarity of their topic statements and the logical development of ideas or topic. Slightly different, Nguyen et al. (2021) found that Vietnamese students preferred their teachers' feedback on the content, idea development, and writing style. However, they still expect a correction of the form-related. Such findings support Krashen's (1994), and Ferris's (1995) statements that two prevailing conditions are necessary for successful SLA: comprehensible input and low affective

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filter. To scholars, this is a current pedagogical trend that meaning-focused instruction should receive more attention so that the learners can gain grammatical competence naturally.

The amount of explicitness also matters, despite either form-focused or meaning-focused that the learners chose. Too extensive feedback was not preferred, as this could overwhelm the students (Lie, 2022). Irwin (2017) explained that the direct feedback given by the teacher was leading the learning process to be more teacher-centred. As a result, the students had a somewhat passive role during the feedback process. Meanwhile, Halim (2021) pointed out that the peer feedback was equally accepted and expected, providing more balanced inputs from both sides – the teacher and the peers. Saragih et al. (2021) add that this may affect the students' affective feelings such as confidence, pride, and anxiety and how they perceive their own writing.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of students in these studies have a strong preference for direct or explicit feedback over indirect or implicit feedback. The students in studies by Elwood and Bode (2014) and Raza (2019) even stated that the teachers' detailed feedback in both form-focused and meaning-focused was better handwritten than electronically because the students were already accustomed to the handwritten kind since the early years of their learning. Another method to complement WCF is for the students to expect by discussing their writing verbally, in person or in class so that it can be an interactive learning activity where students can also learn from their peers. As for the reformulation type of WCF, there is a limited study dedicating this particular type of feedback, and many of the students in the studies mentioned above highly appreciate their own English teachers' WCF.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology

This study primarily focuses on the opinions and preferences of WCF in the learners' writing classroom. Mixed methods research (MMR) was chosen to gather quantitative and qualitative data. Greene et al. (1989) identified five primary reasons for using MMR: to seek corroboration of results from different methods, to seek clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method, to use the results from one method to support the other method, to seek discovery of new perspectives from one method with questions or result from the other method and to extend breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components. In brief, MMR potentially provides a more multidimensional and accurate view because it allows teaching and learning researchers to conceptualise their study and effectively communicate their research expectations to their readers (Riazi and Candlin, 2014).

Research Site

The study took place at a private university in North Jakarta, Indonesia. The English language and culture as one of the programmes offered by this university was chosen as the domain to obtain the data. During the even semester, a few classes were running in every cohort, hence providing opportunities to conduct this study.

Research Participants

The participants of this study were active students who attended writing classes. They were from the second and fourth semesters with a total of 102 students. They were highly potential participants for being Indonesians who use the English language as their second or foreign language.

Research Instruments

This study employed MMR with two instruments: a questionnaire to gather the quantitative data and an interview to obtain the qualitative data. The questionnaire was adapted from a survey by

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Saragih et al. (2021), which examines a similar topic. The first main topic of the study has 18 statements that reflect the first research question concerning the learners' opinions on the WCF they receive in their writing class. Meanwhile, the second main topic has 20 statements designed to answer the second research question about the learner's preferences in types of WCF in their writing class. All statements are close-ended and use a 4 Likert scale from strongly agree, agree, disagree, to strongly disagree.

In the interview, the data was obtained by asking questions concerning this study's two main topics, leading to answering the two research questions. The interview was done online using a web conferencing platform, namely Zoom or Google Meeting, as they have a recording feature that allows automatic recording. The questions were arranged by asking their background in the beginning and completed with some questions to cover the two main topics, their perceptions of WCF and their preferences on types of WCF in their writing classroom. Some prompts to gain more thoughts will be provided.

Data Collection Procedures

The initial effort to conduct this research was by getting permission from the head of English program. Once the agreement was made, communication was arranged with the lecturer of each class and required their assistance to send out the questionnaire through Google Forms. The time estimation was about three days to gather the students' answers. This data was then analysed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, frequencies, and ranking.

For the qualitative strand, the researcher conducted 10 of 20 – 25-minute online meetings and post-hoc interviews with ten students. The interview questions addressed two main topics: their opinions on WCF in their writing class and their preferences on types of WCF feedback. The responses to open-ended questions and interview transcripts were coded and analysed around the two research questions to produce categories and themes. At this stage, the students' writings with feedback were presented as evidence and used to support and analyse the findings from both data types.

The results from both quantitative and qualitative strands were then combined and examined thoroughly to seek the common trends and ample reasons to support the highest frequencies in the quantitative data. This was done by coding, arranging, and matching the statements on the quantitative data with explanations obtained in the interview. Any strong and relevant findings were then synthesised with past studies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To reveal overall responses of the university learners' opinions on WCF in their writing classrooms and their preferences on types of WCF, the findings and analysis of each concern are presented in two sub-sections below, with a quantitative result shown in a table. The number of answers representing each statement is given in percentages, and the number of respondents is in brackets (n = 102). The interviewees' names are replaced with an abbreviation 'S' for 'Student' and followed by a chronological number based on the interview's turn. The questionnaire statements and excerpts from the interview are translated from Bahasa Indonesia to English, and non-verbatim transcription is applied for more brief elaboration.

Learners' Opinion on Written Corrective Feedback in Writing Class

This sub-chapter answers the first research question: "What are the learners' opinions of written corrective feedback in their writing classroom?" The quantitative data (please see Appendix A) reveals the students' opinions and feelings regarding WCF by their lecturers in English writing classrooms.

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The major result of the quantitative data above reveals that the lecturers' WCF could bring the learners some positive feelings such as happiness (73.5%) that made them proud (75.5%) and confidence (68.7%). As most of the interviewees claimed:

> S8: *"Happy to receive the feedback because I always expect this anytime I submit the writing. So, I never feel negative like feeling depressed or all."*

Apparently, such positive feelings could encourage them to be better writers (93.1%) too:

> S5: *"The feedback encourages me to be a better writer because I love writing. So the feedback is a lesson for me to hone my skills hence motivates me to learn more and I have gained more knowledge from there."*

Their positive feelings towards the lecturers' WCF were strongly kindled by the quality of the feedback itself. Almost every learner stated that the WCF they received was helpful (98.1%). Especially the kind of feedback that pointed out their good progress and weaknesses was in their favour.

The favourite kind of feedback told them the good parts of their writing (84.3%) and the feedback that pointed out their errors or mistakes (96.1%), was deemed helpful in a way that the feedback encouraged them to do better (97%) and such feedback was impactful to assist the learners to write better next time (96.1%).

On the other hand, the learners also experienced the opposite feelings towards the WCF they received in writing classes. The data in the table above displays that thirty of them felt frustrated when reading the feedback but did not necessarily demotivate them. Only a few of them (22.7%) considered the feedback demotivating to the point they considered themselves bad writers and (16.7%) felt hopeless. Nonetheless, those negative feelings such as frustration, demotivated, and hopelessness, were only the initial reactions to the lecturers' WCF but those feelings did not affect the learners' opinion of how helpful the feedback was. Such perspectives were elaborated from the interview:

> S2: *"It's a lot of mixed feelings. There is anxiousness, and anticipation, depending on how many comments I receive, to be honest. If it is little, then I will feel happy and I can change quickly and improvise. I once felt negative though. Nonetheless, I could manage to not make it linger long and I quickly made a move to fix my writing."*

> S5: *"Actually, at first, I felt under pressure, feeling like I didn't do well. But later on, I felt grateful for I learned a lot from the given feedback, and from the mistakes that were pointed out clearly."*

> S6: *"I felt a quite mental breakdown when receiving the feedback for the first time, as I thought I did alright. Then I overthought it and I felt hopeless. Until I received more feedback or clarity from the verbal feedback afterwards in class, I understood better and was even motivated to do better so I could be ready for another challenge later when doing my thesis."*

Although the students could narrate their feelings when receiving feedback and how the feedback shaped the way they think about their writing skills, another level of thought was expressed by a learner on how the WCF was perceived and analysed with his self-awareness:

> S4: *"Concerning how the feedback helps me to be a better writer, I guess for me is a no. because I focus more on how I can improve the quality of my writing, not me as a writer.*

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> *So, as for motivation to be a better writer, that solely depends on me as a person though. The feedback from externals like my lecturer does not influence me as a person. I might want to be a competent writer, but only I guess when I am inspired by great writers."*

The students' opinions on WCF in their writing class reflect much of how they felt when receiving it at first until they felt the main purpose of it to their writing skills development. Hartshorn et al (2010) asserted the significance of purposeful feedback in students' writing for many ESL or EFL students commonly face challenges in writing. Moreover, it is often the students feel overwhelmed by the density of feedback they receive at first, despite their competent linguistic knowledge (Tangmpermpoon, 2008). Based on findings from Hartshorn et al (2010) and Tangmpermpoon (2008), the current study reflected similarly and even emphasised that having the feedback designed for their writing improvement could dampen their initial feelings towards the feedback. Notably, students' self-awareness of the relation of feedback to their writing quality rather than defining themselves as a competent writer could be an assertion that feedback indeed could modify the learner's way of thinking (Shute, 2008).

Further, the interviewees expressed the necessity of verbal feedback after receiving the WCF, which was not much reflected in the quantitative data:

> S3: *"I am aware too that I need her feedback, be it in class or through Google Drive. So, the combination of written and oral feedback works wonderfully for me."*

> S1: *"Sometimes I can feel overwhelmed and anxious especially when the rest of the class receives lots of comments, like more than 20. Meanwhile, I don't receive that many. So I think, is it okay? Does it pass the mark? So I do need some verbal feedback once I meet her after that."*

> S7: *"I do appreciate the lecturer's written corrective feedback, but that is not sufficient for us. Because the written feedback can majorly point out the mistakes, errors, or areas to improve but do not really in a comprehensive manner, it is not sufficient. So, the lecturer's verbal feedback we receive in classes is very complementary and we get a better idea of how to revise our writing."*

> S8: *"Since the verbal feedback is in the form of direct face-to-face communication, it helps me to have choices and solutions. The more elaboration in verbal feedback compared to the written feedback, the more thorough the understanding. it provides concrete solutions."*

From their explanations, it can be perceived that the combination of WCF and followed with verbal feedback is complementary to each other. the students received more thorough feedback that assisted them in gaining a better understanding hence resulting in good progress in their writing. This finding is not far different from that found in Hyland (2006). He proposes the idea of tailoring the feedback delivery to students' needs. Noticing the remarks from the interviewees, the student's needs were fulfilled. The written feedback they received was highly expected. However, it was surely insufficient for the students to feel the necessity of dialogue or verbal feedback to gain a more thorough comprehension of improving the students' writing quality. As Ellis et al (2006) have concluded, the most efficient and highly expected kind of feedback is those that are effective and constructive. On top of that, the feedback should also be able to facilitate students in making good progress (Lee, 2017).

Nevertheless, the aforementioned feelings towards the WCF by the lecturers show consistency in the learners' understanding of its importance as a 'fuel' to encourage them to write better and be better writers. Aligning with findings by Irwin (2017), Yunus (2020), Saragih et al. (2021) and Lie (2022), the learners generally perceived WCF was important and helpful in making

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them aware of what to improve and what to avoid hence cultivating their writing skills and language knowledge. However, the WCF solely is not sufficient, and the learners need more support from further verbal feedback from the lecturer in class.

Learners' Preference for Written Corrective Feedback Techniques in English Writing Class

This second sub-chapter is to figure out research question number two: "What types of WCF are preferred by the learners in their writing classroom?" The quantitative data (please see Appendix B) on learners' preference for WCF techniques in English writing class displayed a dominant preference for the direct or explicit type of feedback (97.1%) since this type was considered encouraging (92.2%) and helped them to reflect on their errors (97.1%). The interview results support this strong preference:

> S4: *"I don't mind any feedback, be it trivial or not. but if it's possible, all of them to be concrete and specific, so sort of giving suggestions rather than just pointing out where the errors are only. I can also build a connection with the lecturer because I will know better what she expects."*

Moreover, the quantitative data also exhibited the learners' neutral option of the feedback to be focused on some linguistic errors (94.1%), be it either on the crucial errors or not. For the learners, focusing on the crucial errors was seen as motivated to learn more from their mistakes (71.6%) because that made them more aware of their writing process (97%) and motivated them to gain more knowledge (96.1%):

> S8: *"Be the errors are crucial or not, I can accept whatever it is because I can be always aware of my common mistakes."*

> S1: *"My lecturer can be very specific but also can be very broad, depending on the necessity, I guess. For example, if the parts I need to improve have actually been discussed earlier in class, then she usually provides short feedback, and vice versa. For the longer comments, normally insert some advice or suggestions on how I can improve."*

The students' preference for direct or explicit types of written feedback has been the major finding, which is not far different from studies done by Irwin (2017), Raza (2019), Yunus (2020), and Saragih, et al (2021). Regardless of the differences in English proficiency levels between these past studies and the current study, most students substantially opted for the feedback to be unfocused or comprehensive for they saw the necessity to learn from their mistakes and receive opinions or suggestions from the lecturer, hence they took them as the tools to improve their writing skills. As Lee (2017) has claimed, feedback is not all about pointing out writing errors, but it should be able to facilitate the students' progress in their writing skills, therefore feedback is expected to be effective and constructive (Ellis, et al., 2006).

Concerning the metalinguistic type, the result consistently showed the learners' high interest in direct or explicit feedback which could be done by locating their writing errors explicitly and the use of error codes or brief grammatical explanations (93.2%) and underlining or circling the errors (59.8%). Majorly, the learners opted for this metalinguistic type for this type was found helpful for a better understanding (68.7%) and also could encourage their learning motivation (83.4%). Whichever method, either provide or not provide the cues, as long as the lecturers locate the errors in their writing, that could help them to analyse and think critically (92.1%). Hence, the learners highly suggested this way to improve their learning (97%).

Similarly, the interviewees expressed further their thoughts on how the lecturers' written feedback has developed their analysis and critical thinking skills:

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S2: *"My lecturer's feedback can actually help me to improve my critical thinking skills, especially after receiving feedback regularly, just so that I will not repeat the errors/mistakes. The more it is repeated, the more I am aware of my common mistakes so I will do better in avoiding the same mistakes and it helps me to build the habit and being more critical."*

S1: *"Maybe not much different than the rest, the general feedback can actually help me to do more of self-reflection and being more thorough in revising my writing. I can look back and seeing the process and that is interesting to me because it leads me to see how much I improved, what I did to fix problems, and I can feel my writing has improved with her feedback."*

S5: *"For me, I gain more analytical than critical. Just because I have never thought that writing requires me to think that deeply. I believe this is because I understand very well that this is my responsibility to improve my writing hence, I feel I want to learn more and improve my writing. With the lecturer's feedback, I got some help in measuring the quality of my writing and I realised which areas needed to be improved and which are to keep up. But with my own willingness, I can revise my writing. It would be better if I was provided with some real examples. But I can get the examples when we meet in class, during the verbal feedback session. So without my own willingness to be better at writing, any feedback would not be worthy hence would be of no use to develop my analytical and critical thinking skills."*

S6: *"Apparently, the feedback leads me to be a more independent thinker because it is quite challenging for me. With my self-awareness, I am aware of the importance of feedback, and revision, and continuously challenge myself to be a more critical and deeper thinker."*

S10: *"Yes. The written feedback received on Google Drive might not be super detailed. But it actually leads me to think further about having 'why' and 'how' questions, which force me to do more reading and gain a deeper understanding."*

S7: *"Yes, especially when the lecturer gives me some suggestions so I can think more purposely."*

From the interview excerpts above, the students demonstrated their opinions on how the lecturers' written feedback could improve their critical thinking skills. It started with the lecturers' written feedback that was direct and comprehensive. The elaboration on the feedback ignited their curiosity about revising based on the feedback and thought ways to revise since solutions were not always provided. Therefore, the students were challenged to find ways to improve their writing through more extensive reading and searching (Hyland and Hyland, 2001). Not only that but their extra efforts to revise concurrently developed their critical thinking. Interestingly, some students here openly displayed the significance of self-awareness and a strong willingness to accept the feedback and turn it into action for improvement:

S4: *"I think feedback has less impact on me overall. Critical and analytical come only from the inner self. During this writing class, there must be a willingness to explore the field of study. Feedback might lead to a better direction, but then it is up to us as students to think more critically. So the combination of feedback and self-will or awareness to write well and think critically will be very good."*

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> S5: *"The biggest challenge is to develop awareness within oneself to study in depth, because writing, especially academic one requires deeper understanding so the intention must be greater too. So, the new feedback I receive will be more meaningful and help me to think critically and analytically."*

Although there are still limited studies on the correlation among WCF, critical thinking skills, and writing, Ceylan (2019) acknowledges that it is necessary for students to thoroughly comprehend what is required of them to become acquainted with how a decent piece of writing is constructed. The structure, format, and form of the English text might be different from the student's first language. However, the essence of well-written content requires logical coherence which can be gained through feedback and how the students utilise the feedback, despite of the writers' first language. Therefore, feedback is one of the supportive methods in the teaching and learning process that encourages students to modify or improve their way of thinking to be more critical (Shute, 2008; Williams, 2003). For that purpose, hence the feedback is expected to be effective and constructive (Ellis et al, 2006) for achieving a logical and cohesive piece of writing.

Regarding the reformulation type, the learners also expected the lecturers to provide feedback using more natural words or phrases (97.1%) rather than the native-like version of writing (84.3%). The learners' inclination on this can be understood through the interview excerpts below:

> S1: *"I don't think it is necessary, because context-wise, we are not English natives, so it does not come naturally to us. I just expect content-based feedback rather than style-based feedback. but I don't mind learning about the structure from the native-like writing, but not the style though."*

> S9 and S3: *"Native-like writing may be fine just as an example to look at, but not to force us to be like them."*

> S8: *"It is not necessary to have a native-like writing sample in class to improve our skills. For me, it is much more necessary for the lecturer to guide us in composing a proper structure because I still have problems arranging my thoughts into a decent piece of academic writing."*

> S10: *"I don't see its [being guided to have native-like writing] importance because I'm familiar already with this kind for I read a lot for my research."*

> S7: *"Honestly, from my point of view, Western and Eastern values are not similar hence writing can be authentic in its own way. It is more appreciated when the writing is natural and not sleek perfect. For a student who does not use English as their first language, such writing is not digestible and easily reachable. So for me, at this stage, academic papers written by non-natives are more reachable or understandable."*

It can be deduced that the learners' concern was more on the proper English writing structure and coherence rather than the writing style. Such elaboration in the interviews explains more about their preference for the direct or explicit type of feedback. The learners were much more interested in feedback that explored how polishing their English writing is coherent and cohesive and assists them in expressing their thoughts or ideas eloquently, as stated by one of the interviewees below who highlighted the importance of creativity in writing:

> S2: *"Revision can be overwhelming to me, so revision should be able to increase creativity and help me to my own writing style, so it enhances my creativity."*

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> S3: *"The better is like, feedback needs to be more clearly described. We can think analytically better. Without feedback, I can lose track, have no inspiration, and do not know what to do with my writing."*

Though Hyland (2002) proposes the idea that a successful L2 writer needs to be able to "act effectively in new cultural settings", it may take a while for the current students to get the English native nuance in writing. The students in the current findings emphasise more on the necessity of making their writing understandable and meeting the academic writing standard rather than aiming for native-like sounds in their writing. In other words, the current students much prefer to have their writing quality as "reader-considerate" (Reid, 1989).

Nonetheless, the current findings regarding the reformulation type have depicted the consistent preference in WCF to be explicit and comprehensive. The explicitness of the feedback was more on discussion about the writing content rather than the writing style, especially that focuses on the native-like. Such results are not far different from past studies by Vasu et al (2016) which proposed the idea that feedback is far more useful for students when it discusses the writing structure rather than scrutinises the grammar aspect. Moreover, students in a study by Song et al (2017) claimed that the most beneficial feedback was that was more focused on macro issues and rhetoric structure that covered the clarity of their topic statements and the logical development of ideas or topics. On top of that, Nguyen et al (2021) found that the students in their studies saw the importance of feedback that touches more on idea development and writing style. Hence, it can be concluded that students perceive that feedback matters more to their writing development and writing quality when the lecturer focuses more on the non-linguistic aspects.

Above all WCF types, the electronic feedback type given by the lecturers was deemed advantageous to reviewing the learners' progress and making revisions (98%), which also means it was clearer for them to revise through electronic devices (91.2%). Further elaboration is captured during the interview:

> S1: *"I don't have any issue with the format/system of how Google Drive provides room for my lecturer to highlight and comment on my writing. Because it helps me to navigate more easily so I can scroll immediately to the highlighted ones and see how I can improve the highlighted areas."*

Such opinions on the electronic type of WCF provide more justification for feedback by lecturers not only about being present to facilitate the learning progress (Lee, 2017) but also about being feasible to the students' needs.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to answer two research questions by investigating the opinions and preferences of lecturers' WCF from university students in a private university in Jakarta, Indonesia. The key findings related to the first concern were that the learners generally felt positive when receiving written feedback from their teacher. The feedback was regarded as important and useful since it pointed out where the errors or mistakes were, their good progress and weaknesses. It was completed with some corrections or explanations. Moreover, their feedback could encourage them to be better writers, develop their writing skills and make continuous efforts despite their initial negative feelings. Essentially, the students felt that the WCF only was not sufficient. The combination of WCF and verbal feedback is much more favourable to polishing their writing skills and their critical thinking skills.

To answer the second concern, the direct or explicit type of feedback is the dominant preference compared to the indirect or implicit type. Though the students had no particular interest

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in feedback that focused or unfocused on linguistic errors, they instead rather expected feedback that was more comprehensive to build their awareness of their writing process and to gain more knowledge from the feedback. Besides, the students were quite impartial towards the metalinguistic type. Locating the errors in the forms of codes, cues, or highlights was not their main concern. Yet, any correction forms would do well for them as long as those forms are complemented with further explanations or suggestions. Furthermore, more often than not, the WCF given by their lecturers encouraged them to challenge their critical thinking skills. Their curiosity regarding editing in response to the WCF was piqued by the elaboration on it, and they considered revision strategies because answers were not always given. As a result, the students were concomitantly encouraged to research and read more widely to discover strategies for improving their writing. In regard to the reformulation type, the students expressed their urgency in polishing their skills at composing a proper, logical and cohesive writing structure. However, this does not necessarily mean that their writing sounds native-like, but more to be comprehensible to all readers regardless of their English as the first or foreign language. Additionally, the electronic type of feedback has matched their current situation hence it has always been their common approach.

Besides contributing information on learners' opinions and preferences on WCF in their writing class, this study can be beneficial for ESL and EFL lecturers to understand the university students' needs in developing their writing skills, especially in academic writing. At this tertiary education level, students are not only aware that linguistic competence is the basic competence, but cohesion and coherence in their writing are predominant hence highly expected from the lecturers. On top of that, lecturers can also consider the students' idea of complementing the WCF with oral feedback as it can provide more clarity.

This study can be consolidated with further research to obtain a vivid view of WCF. A longitudinal study with teachers' and students' opinions and class observation could be an alternative for future research. It may be done in a certain type of classroom setting or classroom subject where various types of feedback have been practised within a classroom. Therefore, the more kinds of feedback that teachers and students have experienced, the more inclusive or in-depth the outcomes of the WCF can be. What's more, with the technological advancement and many EFL classrooms nowadays integrating online classes, the study in this area may stimulate more new perspectives on the concept and types of feedback that suit the contemporary way of L2 teaching and learning. Undoubtedly, these implications will be beneficial not only to the body of knowledge of SLA but also to the practical level in a real-world situation.

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APPENDIX A

	The Question Items	1 – SD	2 - D	3 – A	4 - SA
1	The lecturer's written feedback on my writing makes me frustrated.	32.4% (33)	38.2% (39)	22.5% (23)	6.9% (7)
2	The lecturer's written feedback on my writing makes me feel proud.	2.9% (3)	21.6% (22)	53.9% (55)	21.6% (22)
3	The lecturer's written feedback on my	2.9%	23.5%	48%	25.5%

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	writing makes me feel happy.	(3)	(24)	(49)	(26)
4	The lecturer's written feedback on my writing demotivates me.	39.2% (40)	37.3% (38)	15.7% (16)	7.8% (8)
5	The lecturer's written feedback on my writing motivates me to become a better writer.	2% (2)	4.9% (5)	49% (50)	44.1% (45)
6	The lecturer's written feedback on my writing makes me feel like I am a bad writer.	29.4% (30)	44.1% (45)	20.6% (21)	5.9% (6)
7	The lecturer's written feedback makes me feel like I am a good writer.	4.9% (5)	37.3% (38)	50% (51)	7.8% (8)
8	The lecturer's written feedback on my writing makes me feel confident.	2% (2)	29.4% (30)	47.1% (48)	21.6% (22)
9	The lecturer's written feedback on my writing makes me feel hopeless.	42.2% (43)	41.2% (42)	10.8% (11)	5.9% (6)
10	The lecturer's written feedback on my writing is unhelpful.	68.6% (70)	27.5% (28)	2.9% (3)	1% (1)
11	The lecturer's written feedback helps me write next time.	0% (0)	2% (2)	38.2% (39)	59.8% (61)
12	The lecturer's written feedback tells me what I did well in my writing.	3.9% (4)	11.8% (12)	46.1% (47)	38.2% (39)
13	The lecturer's written feedback explains what I did wrong in my writing.	0% (0)	3.9% (4)	39.2% (40)	56.9% (58)
14	The lecturer's written feedback makes me a better writer.	1% (1)	7.8% (8)	52% (53)	39.2% (40)
15	I use the lecturer's written feedback to help me write better next time.	0% (0)	3.9% (4)	39.2% (40)	56.9% (58)
16	The lecturer's written feedback on my writing encourages me to do better next time.	1% (1)	2% (2)	48% (49)	49% (50)
17	The lecturer's written feedback on my writing is helpful.	0% (0)	2% (2)	42.2% (43)	55.9% (57)
18	The lecturer's written feedback tells me how to make my writing better.	1% (1)	2.9% (3)	49% (50)	47.1% (48)

APPENDIX B

	The Question Items	1 - SD	2 - D	3 – A	4 - SA
19	I like it when the lecturer provides the correct answer for my writing errors.	1% (1)	2% (2)	41.2% (42)	55.9% (57)
20	I find it encouraging when the lecturer provides the correct answers.	2.9% (3)	4.9% (5)	45.1% (46)	47.1% (48)
21	I like it when the lecturer provides the correct answers since it assists me in reflecting on the errors.	1% (1)	2% (2)	42.2% (43)	54.9% (56)
22	I like it when the lecturer gives codes or cues to locate my writing errors.	1% (1)	5.9% (6)	46.1% (47)	47.1% (48)
23	I like it when the lecturer provides only codes or cues since it is helpful for a better understanding.	8.8% (9)	22.5% (23)	47.1% (48)	21.6% (22)

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24	I like it when the lecturer provides codes or cues since they encourage my learning motivation.	2.9% (3)	13.7% (14)	47.1% (48)	36.3% (37)
25	I like it when the lecturer underlines or circles the errors without any codes or revisions because it is better for learning.	16.7% (17)	23.5% (24)	33.3% (34)	26.5% (27)
26	Locating the errors trains me to analyse and think critically.	2% (2)	5.9% (6)	57.8% (59)	34.3% (35)
27	Locating the errors is highly suggested for learning improvement.	1% (1)	2% (2)	62.7% (64)	34.3% (35)
28	The correction should be specific.	0% (0)	5.9% (6)	39.2% (40)	54.9% (56)
29	Feedback should focus only on certain crucial errors.	13.7% (14)	36.3% (37)	31.4% (32)	18.6% (19)
30	Focusing on crucial errors only motivates me to learn more.	3.9% (4)	24.5% (25)	47.1% (48)	24.5% (25)
31	Correcting all errors encourages me to be more aware of my writing.	0% (0)	2.9% (3)	49% (50)	48% (49)
32	Correcting any errors motivates me to gain more knowledge.	0% (0)	3.9% (4)	46.1% (47)	50% (51)
33	Correcting any errors is helpful for me.	0% (0)	2% (2)	41.2% (42)	56.9% (58)
34	Providing corrections by giving more natural words/phrases in writing enriches my language knowledge.	0% (0)	2.9% (3)	51% (52)	46.1% (47)
35	Giving the native-like version of writing is highly suggested.	1% (1)	14.7% (15)	52.9% (54)	31.4% (32)
36	Correcting my writing errors through electronic means allows me to review the corrections.	1% (1)	8.8% (9)	50% (51)	40.2% (41)
37	The use of electronic devices eases my revision process.	0% (0)	2% (2)	49% (50)	49% (50)
38	It is clearer for me to review the feedback through electronic devices.	0% (0)	8.8% (9)	45.1% (46)	46.1% (47)

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