INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Vol 15, Issue 01, (2025) E-ISSN: 2222-6990

Exploring Teachers' Beliefs in Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) in Kuala Lumpur Secondary Schools

Noradzlina Adzhar, Marlia Puteh, Nurhasmiza Abu Hasan Sazalli

School of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities University Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)

Email: noradzlina@graduate.utm.my, marlia.kl@utm.my, nurhasmiza.kl@utm.my

To Link this Article: http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v15-i1/24483 DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v15-i1/24483

Published Date: 08 January 2025

Abstract

This study investigates secondary school teachers' beliefs in Kuala Lumpur concerning written corrective feedback (WCF) and examines the factors influencing these beliefs. Understanding teachers' perspectives on WCF is essential for enhancing language learning and refining instructional practices. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research combines quantitative data from questionnaires administered to 54 teachers with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews with 7 participants. Key findings indicate that teachers believe in the effectiveness of targeting specific errors and using coding symbols, but various factors, including classroom dynamics, student proficiency levels, cultural norms, and institutional constraints, shape their feedback practices. These factors influence how teachers implement WCF and perceive its impact on student learning. The study highlights the need for more personalized WCF strategies and emphasizes the role of professional development and policy support in aligning teachers' practices with best practices. This research contributes to the field by providing practical recommendations for improving WCF practices and informing policy adjustments to support teachers better. Future research should further explore how different factors influence teachers' beliefs and WCF practices in diverse educational contexts.

Keywords: Written Corrective Feedback, Teachers' Beliefs, Teacher Cognition, ESL Writing

Introduction

In English language teaching, written corrective feedback (WCF) is indispensable in advancing students' language development. WCF can have a substantial effect on the target language accuracy and proficiency of students significantly over time (Nguyen & Renandya, 2023). In the realm of ESL composition instruction, teacher feedback remains a crucial element. However, some studies suggest that WCF in product-oriented settings may not

always yield the desired results (Irwin, 2018). Since writing is often a complex skill for EFL students, WCF proves to be an effective method for improving their writing capabilities (Perend, 2023). In Malaysia, providing written feedback is seen as essential for helping students improve their writing skills. This method highlights the importance of enhancing teaching strategies and tackling the difficulties in teaching writing effectively (Kasim & Ismail, 2023). Research by Ganapathy et al. (2020) indicates that students acknowledge the importance of written corrective feedback (WCF) and view it as an essential factor in enhancing their writing skills and the overall effectiveness of instructional practices. Although there are differences in the preferred amount and type of feedback between teachers and students, teachers generally agree on the value of WCF in developing students' writing abilities (Yunus, 2020). Furthermore, Malaysian students tend to prefer getting detailed feedback, including scores and advice based on rubrics. Teachers believe that this method helps improve learning outcomes (Ngim et al., 2021). Hence, this study mainly aims to explore what secondary school teachers believe about written corrective feedback (WCF) and to uncover the factors that shape these beliefs.

Research Objectives

Based on the study conducted on teachers' beliefs in written corrective feedback (WCF) within Kuala Lumpur secondary schools, the following research objectives have been identified:

1) To examine secondary school teachers' beliefs regarding the importance and effectiveness of WCF.
2) To identify the factors that influence secondary school teachers' beliefs about WCF.

Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions have been formulated:

1) What are secondary school teachers' beliefs about the importance and effectiveness of WCF?
2) How do various factors shape and influence secondary school teachers' beliefs about WCF?

Literature Review

Introduction to Written Corrective Feedback (WCF)

In L2 writing, a variety of strategies are employed in providing written corrective feedback (WCF), addressing instructional methods, student responses, and stakeholder perspectives (Mao et al., 2024). These approaches include direct and indirect feedback, each with distinct effects. Direct Corrective Feedback, commonly employed by teachers, addresses specific mistakes such as singular-plural agreement, word choice, and verb forms in students' English writing (Utami & Arianti, 2023). Research suggests that while direct feedback can significantly boost accuracy, indirect feedback may sometimes lead to even better results (Lu, 2023). The methods of WCF also encompass straightforward correction, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, and prompting. Among these, metalinguistic feedback, which offers students explanations or questions related to the nature of their mistakes, has been found to be the most effective in enhancing grammatical precision (Sadeghi & Esmaeeli, 2022). Studies indicate that students who receive metalinguistic feedback show greater progress in writing accuracy compared to those who receive other types of feedback, and all feedback methods surpass control groups with no feedback (Mao et al., 2024).

Additionally, WCF plays a pivotal role in second language (L2) development by fostering deep cognitive engagement, facilitating the abstraction of language rules, and reinforcing linguistic knowledge through an iterative process of writing, receiving feedback, and revising (Rastgou, 2024). WCF also supports the enhancement of both written and spoken language accuracy, with its effectiveness influenced by the learner's proficiency level. By utilizing both direct and indirect feedback, WCF significantly contributes to improving accuracy in L2 writing (Ng & Ishak, 2018). However, the preferences for feedback type and focus can differ among teachers and students, impacting its overall application in language learning. This variability suggests a need for more individualized feedback approaches tailored to the specific needs and preferences of learners to maximize the benefits of WCF.

Theoretical Frameworks

Several models and theories, like Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis, Long's Interaction Hypothesis, and Swain's Output Hypothesis, have been developed to show how effective written corrective feedback (WCF) can be. Li's research (2023) examines these theories, providing a basis for understanding how corrective feedback fits into the larger picture of language learning. The study's findings can help refine feedback strategies by combining different theoretical perspectives. For instance, the Long Interaction Hypothesis proposes feedback aids in language learning align with Li's research demonstrating interaction's role (Long, 1981). Similarly, Swain's Output Hypothesis underscores how feedback fosters production and how feedback supports this process (Swain, 1993). Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis, on the other hand, contributes to the claims that the efficiency of feedback provided depends to a higher degree on teachers regarding their ability to spot and interpret feedback (Schmidt, 1990).

Various models and theories of written corrective feedback, such as Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis, Long's Interaction Hypothesis, and Swain's Output Hypothesis, have been examined to understand effective feedback practices that boost student performance. Although these theories offer significant insights, further exploration is needed into the feedback process, including its components, principles, and impact on student growth. Overall, these frameworks underscore the importance of teachers' cognitive processes, emphasizing their role in providing targeted and effective feedback based on an understanding of learners' needs.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Teachers' Beliefs About WCF

Examining teachers' beliefs about written corrective feedback (WCF) from a cross-cultural perspective reveals notable differences in how feedback strategies are applied and perceived. Research in mainland China shows how environmental factors influence teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF (Liu, 2024). In this setting, inexperienced teachers exhibited variability in their use of direct versus indirect WCF, reflecting adaptations to their specific contexts (Liu, 2024). These findings highlight the need to account for cultural contexts when evaluating teachers' beliefs about WCF and designing effective feedback strategies across diverse educational environments. In the Middle East, teachers' beliefs about WCF are influenced by a combination of cultural, pedagogical, and contextual factors. Research indicates that many educators view WCF as essential for improving students' writing skills, seeing it as beneficial for language development and encouraging learner autonomy (Kharusi & Al-Mekhlafi, 2019). However, opinions differ widely on its impact and use. Some educators

express concerns that excessive correction may undermine student motivation and confidence (Trabelsi, 2018). Additionally, attitudes towards authority and feedback affect how WCF is perceived and applied, with some teachers advocating for a more integrated approach that includes self-evaluation by students (Shahrani & Aziz, 2017).

In essence, cross-cultural perspectives on teachers' beliefs about written WCF reveal significant variations shaped by cultural, pedagogical, and contextual influences. Educators across different settings recognize WCF as a crucial tool for enhancing students' writing skills and supporting language development, yet their approaches to its implementation and perceived effectiveness differ widely. These differences highlight the importance of considering cultural contexts when designing and evaluating feedback strategies, ensuring that they are tailored to meet the specific needs of diverse educational environments.

Contextualizing WCF in Malaysia

In the Malaysian context, teachers' beliefs about WCF are influenced by various factors, including social, instructional, and institutional considerations. Studies suggest that Malaysian educators typically view WCF as vital for enhancing students' writing abilities and language precision (Selvarajoo et al., 2023; Mahmood et al., 2021). Their study emphasizes that direct feedback, providing clear and straightforward corrections, tends to be more beneficial for students than indirect feedback, leaving students to interpret the corrections independently. Cultural norms also play a role, with Malaysian students often placing high value on teacher's assistance and direction (Ganapathy et al., 2020). Ganapathy's research reveals that Malaysian teachers view WCF as essential for language learning, especially in enhancing students' writing proficiency. However, their feedback practices are frequently shaped by cultural norms that prioritise positive relationships and avoid direct criticism, leading to a preference for indirect feedback. These cultural influences frequently result in teachers adopting a more authoritative stance, where corrective feedback is perceived as a tool for directing and improving student outcomes rather than fostering a collaborative learning environment. In addition, the efficacy of WCF also depends on teachers' beliefs regarding language acquisition and their assessments of students' writing abilities (Rajagopal, 2015). Evidence suggests that these beliefs directly influence teachers' approaches to implementing WCF and their perceptions of its effectiveness. Rajagopal's research indicates that educators who perceive language acquisition as a progressive process are more likely to provide comprehensive feedback. Conversely, those who view language acquisition as a way to demonstrate skill might concentrate mainly on fixing mistakes, which could prevent them from helping students understand the material more deeply.

The challenge of teachers' beliefs in implementing WCF in Malaysia is evident, as teachers face practical obstacles such as overcrowded classrooms, limited time, and diverse student proficiency levels. These factors make it difficult to provide thorough, personalized feedback and may lead educators to adopt more generalized or selective feedback methods (Saidon et al., 2018; Hashim & Shaari, 2020). Additionally, there are apprehensions that extensive corrections might discourage students, potentially affecting their self-esteem and willingness to engage (Min et al., 2017). Hence, the complexity of teachers' beliefs regarding WCF in Malaysia necessitates a nuanced understanding of the local educational context and a commitment to adapting instructional practices to enhance student learning outcomes effectively.

Gaps in the Literature

The gap between teachers' beliefs and the actual effectiveness of WCF has been examined in numerous studies. Teachers often have varying perspectives on the role and impact of WCF in student learning, which shapes their feedback methods. Research generally shows that teachers believe WCF is a key factor in enhancing students' writing skills. However, a gap often exists between their beliefs and the actual practice of the written feedback they provide. Some teachers may overrate the effectiveness of their feedback due to limited awareness of how students interpret and apply the feedback given (Khattak & Saad, 2024). This discrepancy can be influenced by factors such as teachers' educational backgrounds, courses on WCF they attended, and the teaching environment. Additionally, the success of WCF depends not only on teachers' beliefs but also on how students respond to the feedback. Some studies indicate that students may not always fully comprehend or value the feedback, resulting in a misalignment between teachers' intentions and student outcomes (Al-Ahmadi & Khadawardi, 2024).

Various complex factors influence secondary school teachers' beliefs about WCF, but there are significant gaps in the current research that warrant further exploration. Research highlights how teachers' educational experiences and instructional training significantly impact their beliefs about WCF (Liu, 2024). Teachers who receive extensive training in language acquisition and teaching methods often hold more positive perceptions of the effectiveness of WCF, indicating that ongoing professional growth plays a crucial role. A gap exists in understanding how school policies and available resources impact teachers' beliefs about WCF. While some educators may feel restricted by stringent institutional regulations, others may benefit from environments that encourage creative feedback practices (Jenkins, 2017).

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-method research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the research questions thoroughly. This approach involves the simultaneous collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, which are then integrated or compared to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the topic. The study utilises this design explicitly to examine teachers' beliefs about written corrective feedback (WCF) in ESL writing classrooms. Quantitative data were collected via a survey aimed at assessing teachers' perspectives on WCF. To enhance the depth of the study, qualitative methods, including interviews, were incorporated to capture a richer understanding of the participants' experiences and the factors influencing their beliefs about WCF in ESL settings. Thus, qualitative data were obtained through individual interviews that delved into the influences shaping secondary school teachers' beliefs about WCF in ESL classrooms. By adopting a mixed-method research design, this study effectively integrates both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a comprehensive exploration of teachers' beliefs about WCF in ESL writing contexts. This integrated approach not only offers a well-rounded understanding of the research questions but also fills existing gaps in the literature, offering valuable insights for educators, researchers, and policymakers regarding the implementation of effective WCF practices in ESL classrooms.

Participants

In the quantitative phase of this research, a survey was administered to 54 secondary school teachers from ten different schools. The questionnaire aimed to capture teachers' beliefs, particularly regarding the implementation of written corrective feedback (WCF) in the context of English language instruction. The participants' willingness to engage in the survey highlighted their ability to provide nuanced and detailed insights, thereby strengthening the credibility of the research outcomes. Qualitative data were collected through interviews with seven ESL teachers from the participating schools, offering a deeper understanding of their beliefs and practices concerning WCF. These interviews explored factors influencing their perspectives, enriching the study's findings. Conducted immediately after the survey, the interviews minimized potential priming effects, allowing teachers to share their thoughts more openly. Participants were informed about audio recordings beforehand, ensuring their focus on the discussion. After data collection, the survey responses and interview transcripts were promptly analysed to maintain the integrity of the findings.

Data Collection Methods

Survey

Building on the work of Çakrak-Ekin and Balçıkanlı (2019), this study adapted and refined a set of questionnaires to collect quantitative data. The revised questionnaire, tailored to the specific objectives of the current research, was designed to assess teachers' beliefs regarding the implementation of written corrective feedback (WCF) in classroom settings. Each teacher received a customized questionnaire suited to their professional context. The study employed close-ended questions, including Likert scale items, to gather quantitative data. Participants selected responses that best reflected their experiences or preferences related to WCF. The questionnaire, detailed in Appendix A, was distributed to teachers and included two sections. The first section collected demographic information, such as educational background, years of English teaching experience, and additional professional duties. The second section, comprising 11 items, explored teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards WCF, with responses rated on a four-point Likert scale: "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree."

Interview

This study utilized interviews to gather in-depth and relevant information from participants, focusing exclusively on the research topic to obtain authentic and informed perspectives. The interviews aimed to explore teachers' views on the effectiveness of corrective feedback in improving students' writing skills. Semi-structured interviews were employed during the qualitative phase to probe specific and nuanced aspects, eliciting detailed responses from the participants. Participants were selected voluntarily, and informed consent was obtained before their inclusion in the interview process. They were briefed on the use of audio recordings, which were solely for research purposes, allowing the interviewer to concentrate fully on the dialogue. The analysis of the interview transcripts began immediately after the interviews concluded. The seven participants who were interviewed had extensive experience in evaluating students' writing and providing written corrective feedback. The semi-structured interview format allowed for a thorough examination of the factors influencing teachers' beliefs about WCF, providing flexibility to

explore areas of particular interest. The interview questions addressed topics such as teachers' beliefs about WCF and the factors shaping those beliefs. By comparing the interview findings with survey data, the study aimed to identify any discrepancies or gaps in teachers' beliefs, informing the development of targeted interventions. The insights gained from these interviews contributed to enhancing ESL writing instruction by fostering the development of effective feedback practices.

Findings and Discussion

Quantitative Analysis

	Teachers should provide feedback to students' error selectively	There is no need for teachers to provide feedback on student errors in writing	It is the teacher's job to locate errors and provide corrections for students	Teachers should vary their error feedback approach according to the type of error	Coding errors with the help of marking symbols is a useful means of helping students correct errors for themselves	Written corrective feedback will assist my students to improve their writing skills	Written corrective feedback will assist my students in improving their grammatical accuracy	Students should learn to locate their own errors	Students should learn to correct their own errors (self-correct)	Written corrective feedback is an important aspect of L2 writing pedagogy
Strongly Agree	15 (27.8%)	5 (9.3%)	14 (25.9%)	21 (38.9%)	19 (35.2%)	18 (33.3%)	16 (29.6%)	15 (27.8%)	14 (25.9%)	19 (35.2%)
Agree	28 (51.9%)	1 (1.9%)	33 (61.1%)	31 (57.4%)	31 (57.4%)	34 (63%)	35 (64.8%)	27 (50%)	25 (46.3%)	33 (61.1%)
Neutral	3 (5.6%)	0	2 (3.7%)	0	2 (3.7%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	7 (13%)	10 (18.5%)	1 (1.9%)
Disagree	6 (11.1%)	25 (46.3%)	5 (9.3%)	2 (3.7%)	2 (3.7%)	0	1 (1.9%)	4 (7.4%)	4 (7.4%)	0
Strongly Disagree	2 (3.7%)	23 (42.6%)	0	0	0	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)
Total	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54

Table 1.1

ESL Teachers' Beliefs on Written Corrective Feedback (WCF)

To address Research Question 1, which investigates secondary school teachers' beliefs about the importance and effectiveness of written corrective feedback (WCF), the survey data offers a detailed overview. Analysing responses from 54 ESL teachers, the survey explores various aspects of WCF, including feedback selection, the necessity of teacher corrections, the utility of coding symbols for self-correction, and the overall effectiveness of WCF in enhancing students' writing and grammatical accuracy. Additionally, it examines teachers' perspectives on fostering students' self-correction abilities and the role of WCF in L2 (second language) writing instruction.

Table 1.1 shows that a majority of teachers favour selective feedback on errors, with 27.8% strongly agreeing and 51.9% agreeing on its effectiveness. This preference suggests a belief in focusing on specific errors. However, some reservations exist, with 5.6% neutral, 11.1% disagreeing, and 3.7% strongly disagreeing, possibly indicating concerns about selective feedback's limitations. In contrast, the table also reveals teachers' views on the necessity of feedback for student writing errors. A significant majority, with 46.3% disagreeing and 42.6% strongly disagreeing, affirm the critical role of feedback, indicating broad agreement on its importance. Only 11.2% believe feedback is unnecessary, with 9.3% strongly agreeing and 1.9% agreeing.

The data on teachers' belief in varying WCF methods, with 38.9% strongly agreeing and 57.4% agreeing that feedback should be adapted to error types. This widespread support emphasizes the perceived effectiveness of targeted feedback, though 3.7% of teachers disagree, indicating some reservations. Conversely, teachers' belief in coding and marking symbols is notably strong, with 92.6% supporting their use—35.2% strongly and 57.4% agreeing. This consensus highlights the method's effectiveness in facilitating self-correction, although 3.7% are neutral and another 3.7% disagree, reflecting minor dissent. Overall, the data underscores the value teachers place on marking symbols for independent error correction.

The findings in Table 1.1 clearly indicate a strong belief among teachers regarding the effectiveness of WCF in enhancing writing skills and grammatical accuracy. Nearly 96.3% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that WCF significantly improves students' writing abilities. This broad agreement highlights teachers' belief in the critical role of written feedback in advancing students' writing skills. Similarly, 94.4% of participants recognize WCF's essential contribution to improving grammatical accuracy in students' work. This widespread acknowledgement underscores WCF's perceived importance in refining grammatical precision and overall writing. Minimal dissent, with only 1.9% expressing neutrality or disagreement regarding writing skills and grammar accuracy, suggests a strong, near-universal agreement on WCF's efficacy development.

The findings also indicate that ESL teachers' belief in the importance of students identifying their own errors is strong, with 50% agreeing and 27.8% strongly agreeing. This belief underscores the value teachers place on empowering students to recognize their mistakes as a key component of language learning. In contrast, 13% were neutral, 7.4% disagreed, and 1.9% strongly disagreed, indicating some teachers believe that students can identify errors independently of feedback. Similarly, the data highlights the recognition among ESL teachers of the need for students to self-correct, with 46.3% agreeing and 25.9% strongly agreeing on its importance. However, 18.5% were neutral, 7.4% disagreed, and 1.9% strongly disagreed, indicating varied opinions on whether students should be encouraged to correct their own errors.

The survey results provide a clear overview of secondary school teachers' beliefs regarding the importance and effectiveness of written corrective feedback (WCF). The findings indicate strong support for WCF's role in enhancing students' writing skills and grammatical accuracy while also fostering their ability to self-correct. This reflects a general consensus among the surveyed teachers. Overall, the data demonstrates that educators recognize WCF as an essential tool for improving student outcomes in writing. They believe that effective feedback not only helps to address errors but also empowers students to take ownership of their learning through self-correction. Although the survey provides insightful information about teachers' viewpoints, it's crucial to recognise that other variables could also have an influence on their perspectives and strategies for providing feedback. Nonetheless, the findings underline the importance of WCF in the educational process, as well as teacher dedication to using this method to help their students grow and succeed as writers and language learners.

Qualitative Analysis

To address Research Question 2, which explores the factors that influence secondary school teachers' beliefs about written corrective feedback (WCF), the interviews with teacher respondents provide valuable insights. These interviews reveal evolving teachers' belief in selective feedback in ESL classrooms and the necessity of addressing student writing errors. The findings highlight varied perspectives on the best approach to delivering WCF. Participant 1 (P1) stressed the importance of focusing on critical errors and endorsing a strategic approach. She believes that selectively correcting key mistakes can significantly improve students' understanding, suggesting that prioritizing major errors while gradually addressing others creates a more balanced and effective feedback strategy. This perspective is further illustrated in Excerpt 1.1 from the interview, which underscores the thoughtful considerations behind her approach.

Except 1.1

P1 For sure it's going to be **selective**, it's like this: it's helpful for teachers to **focus on the most important errors** that really affect the understanding of the students. But I can also guide students on how to improve in other areas over time without needing to correct every little thing. It's a bit of a balance!

A different participant emphasized the importance of selectivity, especially in advanced classes. Participant 3 (P3) believed it is the teacher's duty to identify key issues and provide brief comments to improve student comprehension without overwhelming them. This view reflects one factor influencing her beliefs about WCF. She advocated a balanced approach, acknowledging the drawbacks of focusing solely on certain aspects. P3 noted that while there may be a central focus for correction, other feedback elements should also be addressed, as shown in Excerpt 1.2 below.

Except 1.2

P3 For sure it's going to be **selective**, it's like this: it's helpful for teachers to **focus on the most important errors** that really affect the understanding of the students. But I can also guide students on how to improve in other areas over time without needing to correct every little thing. It's a bit of a balance!

The interview discussions also reveal several factors shaping teachers' beliefs about the necessity of written feedback on student errors. One participant stressed that feedback is essential for helping students identify areas for improvement, as it refines their skills and aids in their development as proficient writers. Another participant identified two key reasons for valuing feedback: it helps students comprehensively recognize their mistakes and allows teachers to assess student progress and adjust instructional strategies. These perspectives underscore the critical role of feedback in the learning process, countering any arguments for its lack of necessity.

Participant 1 (P1) highlighted factors influencing her belief in the necessity of written corrective feedback (WCF) across different proficiency levels. She pointed out that insufficient feedback can impede student learning and emphasized the importance of students actively engaging with and learning from their mistakes. Consequently, the role of written feedback

provided by teachers is seen as crucial (see Excerpt 1.3). In a similar vein, Participant 5 (P5) underscored the vital role of feedback in ensuring fairness and enhancing student learning outcomes. She noted that various feedback methods are crucial for improving comprehension and driving progress based on results. This viewpoint is reflected in Excerpt 1.4, which highlights the diverse but essential functions of feedback recognized by the participants.

Except 1.3

P1 It's **necessary**! While some might argue against feedback, I believe it's **essential**. Feedback helps students understand where they can improve, what they're doing well, and how to refine their skills.

Except 1.4

P5 It's just **not right** for teachers **to not give feedback** on students' writing at all. It's really unfair to the students. Sometimes, there are moments when I assign a writing task but don't give grades. But I **never miss** out on feedback. Even if it's just general feedback, it's something. If there's plenty of time, sure, I'll give detailed feedback. But sometimes, students don't get it if we give too much detail. They prefer it **simple, and straight to the point**, and the end result matters to them too.

The interviews reveal key aspects of teachers' beliefs, particularly highlighting factors that shape their views, such as the need to tailor feedback to address specific errors and meet individual student needs. For example, Participant 1 (P1) highlighted the effectiveness of this personalized approach, noting that customizing feedback enables teachers to focus on critical errors and offer targeted support. This approach aligns with the quantitative data supporting the benefits of adaptive feedback (see Excerpt 1.5 below).

Except 1.5

P1 Absolutely! **Customizing feedback** based on the types of errors and individual student needs can be **incredibly effective**. Not all errors are equal; some are foundational while others are more stylistic or nuanced. Adapting the feedback approach **allows teachers** to **prioritize critical errors** that impact comprehension while providing **tailored guidance** for specific areas where students need improvement.

Likewise, the interview findings underscore a widespread agreement on the belief in the effectiveness of using coding and marking symbols for correcting errors. Participants consistently highlighted the advantages of these symbols, viewing them as an efficient tool for quickly identifying and addressing mistakes. P1 referred to these symbols as a "private code," enabling rapid error correction with minimal explanation (see Excerpt 1.6). Additionally, Participant 2 (P2) and Participant 3 (P3) discussed the factors shaping their belief in the importance of incorporating these symbols into written feedback, emphasizing the need to customize feedback to optimize their use in students' learning (see Excerpts 1.7 and 1.8).

Except 1.6

P1 Using symbols or codes for errors is like using a **'secret language'** between teachers and students. It's a **faster way** to point out mistakes without needing long explanations. This way, **students know** what needs fixing and can **focus** on making their writing better!

Except 1.7

P2 In my class, I've got some low proficiency students, right? So what I do is, I **underline** errors, of course with the **codings and symbols** and stuff, and then sometimes I write the feedback in their writing scripts.

Except 1.8

P3 I think **coding and symbols** will only become **useful** once students are **familiar** with it as well yeah if not it would just be well gibberish to them. I always get the students to **familiarize with the symbols** and the comments that we usually use to point out the errors

A large majority of participants shared the belief that feedback plays a crucial role in improving writing skills and grammatical precision. During the interview, Participant 1 emphasized a key factor influencing her belief in the value of WCF: the importance of providing students with sufficient time and clear guidance to enhance their writing abilities. She also pointed out the significant effect of feedback on improving grammar, which aligns with the views of most participants regarding its positive impact on grammatical accuracy. The alignment between the insights from Excerpt 1.9 and the statistical data reinforces the factors shaping the collective belief in feedback's effectiveness in strengthening both writing proficiency and grammar.

Excerpt 1.9

P1 **Writing Skills**
Yes, it can! When **feedback** is **clear, timely**, and students use it to revise their work, it often **helps** them **get better** at writing.
Grammar Accuracy
Yes, that's often the case! When students **receive feedback** on grammar and **apply** it to their writing, it **helps** them become **more accurate** in their use of language.

During the interview, Participant 3 (P3) identified a key factor influencing her belief in the role of feedback, noting its importance not only in correcting mistakes but also in preventing them from recurring. She emphasized how this approach contributes to the overall improvement of writing proficiency. P3 stressed the critical impact of WCF, particularly on grammatical accuracy, highlighting its role in enhancing students' linguistic precision. Whether through verbal or written feedback, her belief in the feedback process was shaped by the goal of helping students recognize and correct their grammatical errors, thereby improving their accuracy (see Excerpt 1.10).

Excerpt 1.10

P3 **Grammar accuracy**? Yes, it does **improve** because they **know** what they have done **wrong** may not be completely ingrained in them but

when they have a **chance** to **refer** perhaps to get the verbal or written feedback confirmation so then **they'll be able** to do it **right**.

Overall, the interview interpretations provide a comprehensive view of the factors that influence teachers' beliefs about WCF. The participants' insights underscore the significance of these beliefs in guiding effective feedback strategies, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of their impact on classroom practice.

Discussion of Findings

The survey findings on secondary school teachers' beliefs about WCF reveal a strong consensus on its importance in enhancing students' writing and grammatical skills. A significant majority of teachers agree on the effectiveness of WCF in improving writing abilities and grammatical accuracy, aligning with the broader theoretical perspectives that underscore the role of feedback in language development (Li, 2023). Teachers' preference for selective feedback, where 79.7% either agree or strongly agree, reflects a belief in focusing on key errors to maximize the impact of feedback (Table 1.1). This finding is supported by Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis, which suggests that highlighting specific errors can enhance students' ability to notice and correct their mistakes (Schmidt, 1990). The strong support for coding and marking symbols among 92.6% of teachers indicates a shared belief in their effectiveness in facilitating self-correction. This aligns with the findings of Ganapathy et al. (2020), who emphasize that clear, direct feedback is often more beneficial than indirect feedback. The use of symbols allows for quick identification of errors, which is crucial in the context of crowded classrooms and time constraints, as noted by Saidon et al. (2018) and Hashim & Shaari (2020). Additionally, the belief in students' self-correction abilities, with 50% agreeing and 27.8% strongly agreeing, supports the idea that empowering students to recognize their mistakes is vital for language learning. This perspective resonates with Long's Interaction Hypothesis, which posits that active engagement with feedback during interactions aids language acquisition (Long, 1981).

The interviews reveal nuanced factors shaping teachers' beliefs about WCF. Participant 1 (P1) and Participant 3 (P3) emphasize the importance of selective feedback in addressing critical errors while balancing broader feedback needs. This selective approach reflects the insights from Rajagopal (2015), who found that teachers' beliefs about language acquisition influence their feedback practices. By focusing on major errors, teachers aim to improve comprehension without overwhelming students, a strategy also supported by Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis. Participant 5 (P5) highlights the role of feedback in ensuring fairness and enhancing learning outcomes, which aligns with the findings of Selvarajoo et al. (2023) that direct feedback is crucial for student progress. The emphasis on clear, targeted feedback methods underscores the importance of adapting feedback strategies to meet students' needs, as noted by Liu (2024). The widespread agreement on the efficacy of coding and marking symbols in feedback, with contributions from P1, P2, and P3, supports the views expressed by Ganapathy et al. (2020). The use of these symbols facilitates quick and effective correction, helping students improve their writing and grammar without extensive explanations. This method aligns with the practical challenges identified by Min et al. (2017), who caution against overloading students with detailed corrections.

Overall, the integration of these theoretical frameworks and empirical findings underscores the importance of tailored, clear feedback in enhancing student learning. The alignment between teachers' beliefs and established theories highlights the critical role of WCF in supporting language development and improving instructional practices. Additionally, the findings reveal that teachers' beliefs are influenced by factors such as student proficiency levels, the need to prioritize certain errors, and the effectiveness of specific feedback methods. These considerations emphasize the importance of a thoughtful approach to WCF, one that adapts to the unique challenges and contexts within each classroom.

Implications and Recommendations

Practical Recommendations for Teachers

The results of this study suggest that teachers should adopt a more personalized and focused strategy when providing WCF. Given the strong belief in the effectiveness of addressing specific errors and utilizing coding symbols, it is recommended that teachers prioritize errors that significantly impact comprehension while gradually addressing less critical ones. This approach not only helps manage the workload but also prevents overwhelming students, particularly those with varying levels of proficiency. Enhancing students' ability to self-correct or respond to indirect feedback should be a central aspect of the feedback process. However, it is crucial to recognize that some students, especially those with lower proficiency, may struggle with or prefer not to engage in self-correction or indirect feedback. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to involve students actively in the feedback process, providing clear guidance and support to help them understand and apply corrections effectively. This approach is consistent with the Interaction Hypothesis, which emphasizes the importance of interactive feedback in facilitating language acquisition (Long, 1981).

Professional Development

Ongoing professional development is essential for understanding and addressing the factors that influence teachers' beliefs about providing written corrective feedback (WCF). Training programs should focus on equipping teachers with strategies to implement the most appropriate WCF methods, particularly in diverse classroom settings with varying proficiency levels. By incorporating theories such as the Schmidt Noticing Hypothesis and the Swain Output Hypothesis, professional development can help teachers refine their feedback techniques, ensuring they are both effective and manageable. Moreover, professional development should address how different factors, including personal beliefs and educational experiences, impact teachers' approaches to WCF. This comprehensive training can enhance teachers' ability to deliver precise and actionable feedback, ultimately supporting their effectiveness in improving students' writing skills.

Recommendations for Educational Policymakers

Policymakers should acknowledge the critical role of written corrective feedback (WCF) in enhancing language development, as highlighted by the findings of this research. It is crucial to incorporate WCF as a key component in curriculum design and teacher evaluation criteria. Policies should be designed to support a more adaptable approach to WCF, giving teachers the flexibility to tailor feedback strategies according to individual student needs and varying proficiency levels. This includes revising assessment guidelines to prioritize the effectiveness and impact of feedback rather than focusing solely on the number of corrections made. Additionally, policies should address the need for training programs that equip

teachers with the skills to manage and implement feedback effectively, considering factors that influence their beliefs about WCF. By fostering an environment that values quality feedback and supports teachers in customizing their approach, educational policymakers can contribute to more effective language instruction and improved student outcomes.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings

This study offers detailed insights into how secondary school teachers in Kuala Lumpur view written corrective feedback (WCF). The results indicate that most teachers favour selective feedback and using coding symbols to address student writing errors. Secondary school instructors in Kuala Lumpur are convinced that employing chosen feedback and coding symbols is an excellent way to improve pupils' writing abilities and grammar. They believe that this targeted approach will considerably improve pupils' abilities. Recognizing its importance in the educational process, teachers also emphasize the need to provide students with the tools to spot and fix their own mistakes independently. By helping students develop these skills, they aim to ensure long-term success in their learning journey. However, teachers are also aware that self-correction and indirect feedback might not always work well, especially for students with lower English proficiency. These students often need more hands-on guidance and support to make real progress. Additionally, teachers' views on written corrective feedback (WCF) are shaped by various factors, including their teaching methods and the specific challenges they face in their classrooms. In summary, these findings highlight just how challenging it can be to provide effective feedback. No single method works for every student, so teachers need to be adaptable, using various feedback strategies to meet their students' different needs and abilities. By doing this, they can help each student reach their full potential as both writers and language learners.

Research Contributions

This study makes a substantial contribution to the field of language education by providing an in-depth examination of secondary school teachers' beliefs about written corrective feedback (WCF). It extends the current body of knowledge by critically analysing how teachers' beliefs about WCF intersect with established theoretical frameworks such as the Schmidt Noticing Hypothesis, the Swain Output Hypothesis, and the Long Interaction Hypothesis alongside the practical experiences of teachers. The findings reveal not only how teachers' beliefs influence their WCF practices but also how these beliefs are shaped by contextual factors such as school policies, classroom dynamics, and student proficiency levels.

The study also challenges the common belief that WCF strategies are universally applicable. It reveals the complexities and differences in teachers' approaches, which are influenced by their beliefs and the specific educational environment in Kuala Lumpur. By combining quantitative survey data with qualitative interview insights, this research offers a richer and more detailed understanding of how effective WCF is both conceptualized and applied in practice. This dual approach highlights the gap between theoretical ideals and practical realities, offering critical insights into how teachers navigate these in their daily practices. The findings emphasize the importance of aligning WCF strategies with teachers' beliefs and the specific needs of their students, contributing to more contextually responsive language instruction.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is limited by a lack of exploration into the long-term effects of various written corrective feedback (WCF) strategies on student outcomes, which leaves a gap in understanding the sustained impact of these strategies over time. Additionally, it did not thoroughly examine how different feedback methods affect students with varying proficiency levels. The study focused on teachers' beliefs about WCF and the factors that influence these beliefs. Nevertheless, it did not fully consider how teachers' beliefs align with students' responses to feedback, which would have provided a more comprehensive view of the feedback process. Future research should address these limitations by examining the effectiveness of WCF strategies over time, exploring their influence on diverse student proficiency levels, and evaluating the role of professional development in aligning teachers' beliefs with best practices. Expanding research to include varied educational contexts and comparing findings across different regions could offer a broader understanding of WCF practices and their implementation in different educational settings.

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work the author(s) used the AI-powered tool ChatGPT, in order to enhance clarity through paraphrasing, and SciSpace, for finding and citing references. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

References

Al-Ahmadi, S. O. A., & Khadawardi, H. A. (2024). Students' beliefs toward the effectiveness of receiving written corrective feedback for developing L2 writing skills. *English Language and Literature Studies*, *14*(1), 30. https://doi.org/10.5539/ells.v14n1p30

Bradley, I. (2018). Written Corrective Feedback: Student Preferences and Teacher Feedback Practices.. 3(2):35-58. doi: 10.22492/IJLL.3.2.02 *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *50*, 158–164. doi:10.3138/cmlr.50.1.158

Ganapathy, M., Tan, D. A. L., & Phan, J. (2020). Impact of written corrective feedback on Malaysian ESL secondary students' writing performance. *Journal of Language Teaching, Linguistics and Literature*, *26*(3), 139–153. https://doi.org/10.17576/3l-2020-2603-11

Hashim, N. A., & Shaari, N. D. (2020). Malaysian teachers' perception and challenges towards the implementation of flipped learning approach. *Asian People Journal (APJ)*, *3*(2), 62–76. https://doi.org/10.37231/apj.2020.3.2.196

Jenkins, G. (2017). Contextual factors that affect secondary school teachers' agency in noncore subjects, in AARE 2016 : SIG: Teachers' Work and Lives: Proceedings of the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, AARE, Deakin, A.C.T., pp. 1-16.

Kasim, R., & Ismail, H. H. (2023). Malaysian Teachers' Perceptions on Effective instructional Practices and the Challenges in teaching writing Skills: a Conceptual paper. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *13*(12). https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v13-i12/20175

Kharusi, F. M. A., & Al-Mekhlafi, A. M. (2019). The practice of teachers' written corrective feedback as perceived by EFL teachers and supervisors. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *8*(6), 120. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v8n6p120

Khattak, A. I., & Saad, M. A. (2024c). The Comparative Effectiveness of focused and comprehensive written corrective feedback on writing Accuracy: A Mixed-Methods

Perspective. *IIUM Journal of Educational Studies*, *12*(2), 33–52. https://doi.org/10.31436/ijes.v12i2.519

Li, H. (2023). A Review on Corrective Feedback Research of the Recent 20 Years. *International Journal of Education and Humanities*, *9*(3), 190-195

Liu, X. (2024). Understanding the development and implementation of teachers' beliefs of written corrective feedback: A study of two novice transborder teachers in mainland China. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *142*, 104519. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.104519

Long, M. H. (1981). Input, interaction, and second language acquisition. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 379, 259-278.

Lu, Y. (2023). Written Corrective Feedback: How can it influence adult ELL's writing performance? *Journal of Education Humanities and Social Sciences*, *8*, 825–831. https://doi.org/10.54097/ehss.v8i.4367

Mahmood, S., Mohamed, O., Mustafa, S.M.S., & Noor, Z.M. (2021). The influence of demographic factors on teacher-written feedback self-efficacy in Malaysian secondary school teachers. Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 17(4), 2111-2122. Doi: 10.52462/jlls.152

Mao, Z., Lee, I., & Li, S. (2024). Written corrective feedback in second language writing: A synthesis of naturalistic classroom studies. *Language Teaching*, 1–29. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444823000393

Min, W. Y., Mansor, R., & Samsudin, S. (2017). The challenge of producing progressive teachers in Malaysia: A case study of reflective writings among UPSI student teachers. *Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, *11*(7). https://www.ukm.my/geografia/images/upload/3x.geografia-jul15-wong-bi-edam.pdf

Ng, L. L., & Ishak, S. N. A. (2018). Instructor's Direct and Indirect Feedback: How do they Impact Learners' Written Performance? *3L the Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, *24*(3), 95–110. https://doi.org/10.17576/3l-2018-2403-08

Ngim, C. F., Fullerton, P. D., Ratnasingam, V., Arasoo, V. J. T., Dominic, N. A., Niap, C. P. S., & Thurairajasingam, S. (2021). Feedback after OSCE: A comparison of face to face versus an enhanced written feedback. *BMC Medical Education*, *21*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-021-02585-z

Nguyen, M. T. T., & Renandya, W. A. (2023). Written corrective feedback. In H. Mohebbi & Y. Wang (Eds.), Insights into teaching and learning writing: A practical guide for early-career teachers. (pp. 127-138). London, UK: Castledown. doi: 10.29140/9781914291159

Perend, N. Y. (2023). Students' perception of the implementation of written corrective feedback on under-graduated students' thesis writing. JoLLA Journal of Language Literature and Arts, 3(4), 569–578. https://doi.org/10.17977/um064v3i42023p569-578

Rajagopal, N. (2015). *A teacher's written corrective feedback : beliefs and practices / Nilaasini a/p Rajagopal*. http://studentsrepo.um.edu.my/6021/

Rastgou, A. (2024). Cyclical interplay between L2 writing, WCF processing and rewriting: Explaining modification and consolidation in L2 development. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *63*, 101078. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2023.101078

Sadeghi, K., & Esmaeeli, M. (2022). Probing into Non-native Learners' Written Accuracy: Does Feedback Type Matter? *RELC Journal*, 003368822210927. https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882221092795

Saidon, M. A., Said, N. E. M., Soh, T. M. T., & Husnin, H. (2018c). ESL students' perception of teacher's written feedback practice in Malaysian classrooms. *Creative Education*, *09*(14), 2300–2310. https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2018.914170

Schmidt, R. (1990). The Role of Consciousness in Second Language Learning. *Applied Linguistics*, *11*(2), 129–158.

Selvarajoo, P. C. B., Thomeeran, H., Anbalagan, G. A., Ghazali, N. H. M., & Mokhtar, M. A. M. (2023). Written Corrective Feedback in an ESL Malaysian Primary Classroom: Teachers' beliefs and practices. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, *12*(2). https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarped/v12-i2/17087

Shahrani, A., & Aziz, A. (2017). *Investigation of written corrective feedback in an EFL context: beliefs of teachers, their real practices and students' preferences*. https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/handle/11343/38637

Swain, M. (1993). The Output Hypothesis: Just Speaking and Writing Aren't Enough.

Trabelsi, S. (2018). Comparing the General Foundation Programme's English teachers' beliefs and practices regarding written corrective feedback in an Omani EFL context. *International Journal of Language & Linguistics*, *5*(4). https://doi.org/10.30845/ijll.v5n4p5

Utami, S. I., & Arianti, T. (2023). Teacher's use of written corrective feedback for students' writing errors. *Foremost Journal*, *4*(2), 7–16. https://doi.org/10.33592/foremost.v4i2.3668

Yunus, W. N. M. W. M. (2020). Written corrective feedback in English compositions: Teachers' practices and students' expectations. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, *3*(2), 95. https://doi.org/10.12928/eltej.v3i2.2255