



Student Responses to Written Corrective Feedback on Multiple Draft Essays in an EFL Context

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Abstract

This study discusses tertiary level student beliefs and reactions to written corrective feedback to multiple draft essays in an EFL setting where the students were in a process-based writing program for two semesters. As the study design, a structured survey approach was adopted. The variable tested was the effect of foreign language proficiency on student beliefs and reactions. Through convenience sampling, a total of 208 students from four different levels of foreign language proficiency took part in the study. The results showed that all proficiency groups believed in the necessity of written corrective feedback to their multiple draft essays. Yet, higher proficiency groups read more and paid a lot more attention to the teacher feedback when compared to the lower proficiency groups and all the groups asked for more written corrective feedback on grammar, lexis and structure. Lower level proficiency groups paid more attention to preliminary draft corrections. All the groups preferred to be given oral metalinguistic explanations on their multiple drafts to indirect feedback tiered through symbols. The advanced group rated their essay writing skills in a second language as *good* and the other groups rated themselves as *adequate*. The study offers implications for tertiary level academic writing instructors.

Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretilen Ortamda Çok Taslaklı Kompozisyonlara Verilen Yazılı Düzeltici Geribildirim Öğrenci Tepkileri

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Makalesi

Öz

Bu çalışma, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretilen bir ortamda hazırlık okulu öğrencilerinin çoklu taslak içeren kompozisyonlarına aldıkları yazılı düzeltici geribildirimine dair inanışlarını ve reaksiyonlarını tartışmaktadır. Test edilen değişken öğrencilerin yabancı dil yeterlilik düzeylerinin inanışlarına ve reaksiyonlarına etkisidir. Çalışma deseni olarak yapılandırılmış anket yaklaşımı kullanılmıştır. Seçkisiz örneklem yöntemiyle dört farklı dil seviyesinden toplamda 208 öğrenci çalışmada yer almıştır. Sonuçlar, tüm seviye gruplarındaki öğrencilerin yazılı düzeltici geribildirim gerekliliğine inandıkları yönündedir. Fakat ileri seviye grupları, daha düşük düzey dil gruplarına göre, öğretmen dönütlerine daha çok dikkat etmektedirler. Tüm gruplar dilbilgisi, kelime bilgisi ve de yapısal dönüte daha fazla değer verdiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Alt düzey dil grupları ilk müsveddelerdeki düzeltmelere daha çok dikkat etmektedirler. Tüm gruplar, çoklu taslaklarına sözel üstdilsel açıklamaları içeren direkt dönütü, sembol kullanılarak verilen dolaylı dönüte yeğlemişlerdir. İleri seviye grupları ikinci dilde kompozisyon yazma yeterliliklerini *iyi* olarak değerlendirirken, diğer gruplar kendilerini *yeterli* olarak değerlendirmişlerdir. Bu çalışma akademik yazma dersi veren hazırlık okulu öğretmenlerine öneriler sunmaktadır.

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Introduction

Most college instructors dedicate hours to giving feedback on any piece of student writing including essays written in a second language (L2). Yet, instructors and students express disagreement as to the form, amount and attention given to written corrective feedback (WCF) (Diab, 2005). For instance, although 45% of the teachers believe that every student mistake needs to be corrected, more than 90% of the students believe that every mistake they make requires correction (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010). Students strongly believe that having good knowledge of grammar is an essential component of academic writing skills (Balanga et al., 2016) and favor feedback on grammar use, structure and content the most (Irvin, 2017). Instructors do their best to give WCF on every draft the student sketches; however, students are reported to pay more attention to the feedback given to their preliminary drafts rather than the subsequent ones (Ferris, 1995).

In order to improve learner uptake in L2 writing, some instructors favor direct feedback, by correcting and rewriting the erroneous parts regardless of whether the student has problems with grammar, content or organization. Others give indirect feedback by following the symbols and codes dictated by the head of the academic unit. Some writing instructors may refrain from giving indirect forms of WCF especially to low level proficiency groups who may have problems understanding what correction is required and how it is made (Ferris, 2004; 2011). Although the contribution of direct feedback is reported to be restricted to the improvement of certain grammatical structures that low proficiency groups struggle to master (Sheen 2007), it is known to reduce confusion in comprehending and resolving the error codes, especially in cases of complex errors (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Van Beuningen et al., 2008). Still, direct feedback helps to quickly recognize and overcome errors in L2 writing (Chandler, 2003).

Previous research on the role of foreign language proficiency on student beliefs and preferences about WCF in L2 is far from being conclusive. The level of learners' foreign language proficiency is suggested to determine the kind of feedback instructors use (e.g., Park, 2011; 2013; Van Beuningen, 2010). After a pre-test-post-test comparison, Eslami (2014) states that lower level proficiency groups benefit more from indirect feedback. Learners from different levels of proficiency agree on the benefit of direct feedback (Nemati et al., 2017). More specifically, direct feedback is proven to improve L2 writing skills of the advanced groups (Göksoy & Nazlı, 2017; Salimi & Ahmadpour, 2015) as well as the learners with lower levels of proficiency (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2013). In the long run, direct feedback is said to help learners grasp the knowledge of grammar and lexis (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). On the other hand, it has been found that the level of proficiency does not play a role in the effectiveness of direct or indirect feedback (Budianto et al., 2017). Similarly, the use of indirect feedback in the form of codes or just underlining the erroneous parts is reported to make no significant difference in improving accuracy in L2 writing in the sense that both feedback forms work equally well (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Robb et al., 1986). However, indirect feedback such as underlining grammatical errors and scaffolding students on those can result in improved accuracy (Amirghassemi et al., 2013; Rahimi & Asadi, 2014) which may not last over time including the next writing assignment (Rouhiand & Samiei, 2010). To wrap up, a certain bias in the design of the studies regarding student WCF preferences has led researchers to test the effectiveness of direct feedback on lower level proficiency groups (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; 2009) and the effectiveness of indirect feedback on students with higher levels of language proficiency (Bitchener et al., 2005; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010). That is why, the finding that less proficient language learners benefit from direct feedback whereas higher proficiency learners benefit from indirect feedback is quite common (e.g., Park et al., 2016).

In addition to the contradictory findings in the effectiveness of direct and indirect feedback, researchers in the field do not seem to have reached a consensus on the most effective feedback providing agent. First, it has been found that teacher feedback helps reduce errors of grammar and improve the writing quality (Purnawarman, 2011). Second, self-correction of errors after receiving indirect feedback is believed to improve student accuracy (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). Third, feedback from trained peers is highly valued since it is reported to improve student revisions and the quality of the L2 writing (Berg, 1999; Eksi, 2012; Harmer, 2004). Students acknowledge the advantages rather than the disadvantages of peer correction (Van Zundert et al., 2010; Yüce & Aksu-Ataç, 2019). Especially high proficiency groups are better able to self-correct their mistakes pointed out through indirect forms of feedback (Park et al., 2016). Despite the trust in trained peer feedback, most students still prefer to incorporate more of the teacher feedback than feedback from peers in their written drafts (Miao et al., 2006).

In the midst of this unsettled discussion on student beliefs and preferences in L2 writing, let aside the role language proficiency plays, the main aim of this study is to explore the role of foreign language proficiency in student beliefs and reactions to the WCF on their multiple draft essays. Despite abundant research findings in the field, the role of foreign language proficiency on student beliefs and reactions remains inconclusive and there is certainly a need to explore the phenomenon with a focus on varying levels of foreign language proficiency to offer implications for tertiary level academic writing instructors. The specific research questions addressed are:

- (i) Does foreign language proficiency determine
 - a. student preference to have their each and every mistake corrected?
 - b. the preference and comprehension of the language of WCF?
 - c. how much of the returned essays from the instructors is read?
 - d. student beliefs about instructor comments and corrections on multiple draft essays?
 - e. how much attention is paid to WCF on multiple draft essays?
 - f. the kind of WCF students benefit from?
 - g. student beliefs about the content of WCF?
 - h. the preferred feedback providing agent?
 - i. students' self- evaluation of proficiency in (non) academic writing skills in L2 English?

The outline of the study is as follows: First, the methodology of the study is presented, next the results pertaining to each research question are reported and finally the paper is concluded with a discussion of the main findings in the light of the recent literature.

Method

Research Design

The design adopted for this study is a structured survey approach, a purely quantitative one. The aim was to discover what learners thought on the basis of the quantity of responses.

Population and Sample

The participants were recruited through convenience sampling and participation to the study was on voluntary basis. A total of 208 students studying at Boğaziçi University School of Foreign Languages in Turkey were recruited for the study in the 2019 spring semester. As a result of the nationwide university placement test, these students were placed in the faculty of business and administrative sciences (n=29), the faculty of arts and sciences (n= 63), the faculty of engineering (n=44), the faculty of education (n=57) and the faculty of applied disciplines (n=15). An equal number of students from four different proficiency levels responded to the given questionnaire. The beginner group (half males, half females) was the oldest with a mean age of 19.12 (SD=.758), followed by the pre-intermediate, intermediate and the advanced students (see Table 1). The mean age the beginner group reported to be fluent in writing in the L2 was 10.92 (SD=2.094). The reported mean age of fluency in L2 writing for the pre-intermediate (20 females, 32 males) and the intermediate group (21 females, 31 males) was the same. The advanced group (27 females, 25 males) had a mean age of 18.85 (SD=.724) and the mean age they reported to have developed fluency in writing in English as an L2 was 11 (SD=2.990).

Table 1. Demographics of the Participants

Proficiency Level	n	Sex		Age			Fluency in L2 writing		
		female	male	\bar{X}	SD	Range	\bar{X}	SD	Range
Beginner	52	26	26	19.12	.758	18-21	10.92	2.094	7-18
Pre-intermediate	52	20	32	18.98	1.146	18-25	10.29	1.840	6-16
Intermediate	52	21	31	18.85	.849	18-22	10.29	1.840	6-16
Advanced	52	27	25	18.85	.724	18-20	11	2.990	6-18
Total	208	94	114	18.95	.886		10.63	2.251	

ANOVA analyses revealed that these groups were not statistically different in terms of their chronological age ($F(3) = 1.10, p = .35$), or their reported age for fluency in L2 writing ($F(3) = 1.57, p = .20$). The participants took the survey at the end of the second semester after completing an intensive program offering instruction in academic listening, reading, writing and speaking skills in L2 English. As a part of the program, every student was required to keep a portfolio demonstrating showcase of their development in L2 writing. The components of the showcase portfolio included certain writing tasks ranging from expository and descriptive writing to writing argumentative essays and research proposals. In order to prove proficiency in L2 writing and start their undergraduate courses at this English-medium university, the students have to receive a score of 60 from the writing component of the institutional language proficiency test (BUEPT), a score of 22 out of 30 from the TOEFL (IBT) writing part or a score of 6.5 from the writing part of IELTS (academic).

Data Collection Tools

The participants were given a language background questionnaire which was followed by a student reactions and beliefs survey on WCF to multiple draft essays. The instrument was adapted from Ferris (1995) and Lee (2008). The responses to the survey were presented on a five-point Likert scale where 1 meant *never, none of it* or *poor* and 5 meant *always, all of it* or *excellent*. The survey questions were in line with the addressed research questions. The validity of the survey was established through 3 expert opinions and the results supported a good internal consistency of the overall scale scores ($\alpha = .88$).

The survey initially asked students to rate whether every mistake they made deserved correction, and whether they preferred feedback in English and how much of it they comprehended. Next, it dealt with student beliefs, attention and reactions to the WCF given to multiple draft essays. It specifically investigated how much of the instructor feedback, which included grammar use (i.e. tense, preposition), structure (i.e. sentence fragments, coherence, organization), content (i.e. feedback relating to support, details and ideas), lexis (i.e. incorrect word choice and collocations) and general comments (i.e. words of praise and encouragement) the students read and paid attention to.

The form of the WCF given to the essays was also explored. It ranged from direct to indirect feedback. Direct feedback was comprised of direct written correction of the mistakes and oral conversations between the student and the teacher. The teacher-student oral metalinguistic feedback exchange was included in the survey since this one-on-one feedback form was a commonly practiced form of feedback employed by both the writing centre and writing class instructors across proficiency groups in this preparatory school. Indirect feedback, on the other hand, constituted of feedback given through underlining (e.g. It believen that...), using codes (e.g. It is believen^{SP} that...), symbols (e.g. It is believen* that...) and categories (e.g. It is believen that... [V]). In this system of indirect feedback, the symbol * signalled that there was a problem with the fragment, [V] indicated that the problem had to do with the category VERB and the code SP showed that the spelling of the word had to be revised.

The survey also dealt with how beneficial students viewed the content of the feedback. They were asked to rate the benefit they derived from instructor corrections, comments and grading and a combination of these three. The students were then asked to rate what WCF providing agent they trusted the most; namely, the classroom instructors, peers, writing centre instructors and students themselves. Finally, they were asked to evaluate their general and academic writing skills in L2 English.

Data Collection

Necessary ethics clearance was obtained from Boğaziçi University Institutional Review Board for Research with Human Subjects (no: 2019/15). Data collection took place in the 15th week of the second semester after the students of all proficiency levels had been exposed to a process-based writing approach for two academic terms. Data collection took place during the class hour with the help of the instructors who were given a training on data collection. Participation to the study was on voluntary basis. It took around 15 minutes for each participant to respond to the survey.

Data Analysis

Both descriptive and referential statistics were reported. A series of one-way analyses was conducted for each item on the survey and post hoc Bonferroni adjustments were made to explore within and between group differences by using SPSS version 25 to analyse reactions to and beliefs about WCF on multiple draft essays.

Limitations

This study comes with some limitations. A larger sample of students across different public and private universities could be recruited. Instructor responses and reactions about WCF to multiple draft essays can also be added in further work. Undergraduate students taking critical reading and academic writing courses could be included for future studies for a fair comparison. Data from (semi-) structured interviews and think-aloud protocols can be integrated in future studies, too.

Findings

Descriptive and referential statistics on beliefs regarding each research question were reported separately.

I want my teacher to correct every mistake I make in my essays

As given in Table 2, students across proficiency groups believed in the necessity of feedback and they reported the need to receive WCF to every mistake they could make most of the time.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Frequency of WCF

Proficiency Level	n	\bar{X}	SD	Level*
Beginner	52	3.90	.934	4
Pre-intermediate	52	4.06	1.074	4
Intermediate	52	3.81	1.205	4
Advanced	52	3.85	1.109	4
Total	208	3.90	1.081	4

*5= *always*, 4= *usually*, 3= *sometimes*, 2= *occasionally*, 1= *never*

Although the pre-intermediate group craved for WCF, the difference between groups was not statistically significant ($F(3,204) = .534, p = .660$).

Language of Feedback

Not surprisingly, students with higher levels of foreign language proficiency preferred to be given WCF in English at a higher rate than students with lower proficiency levels (see Table 3). That is, the intermediate and the advanced groups always wanted to be given WCF in English and the beginner and the pre-intermediate group thought WCF could usually be given in English.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Student Comprehension and Preference for Feedback in L2

Proficiency Level	n	Preference			Comprehension		
		\bar{X}	SD	Level	\bar{X}	SD	Level*
Beginner	52	4.12	.900	4	2.60	.685	3
Pre-intermediate	52	4.27	.819	4	3.23	.528	3
Intermediate	52	4.65	.556	5	3.73	.505	4
Advanced	52	4.65	.683	5	3.73	.269	4
Total	208	4.42	.783	4	3.32	.611	3

*5= *always*, 4= *usually*, 3= *sometimes*, 2= *occasionally*, 1= *never*

The comprehension of WCF given in English was also subject to language proficiency. To investigate the differences within and between groups, ANOVA analyses were conducted as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. ANOVA Results for the Student Comprehension and Preference for Feedback in L2

	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	p	Significant difference
Preference	Between groups	11.692	3	3.897	6.909	.000***	Beginner<intermediate
	Within groups	115.077	204	.564			Beginner<advanced
	Total	126.769	207				
Comprehension	Between groups	22.362	3	7.454	27.733	.000***	Beginner<intermediate
	Within groups	54.827	204	.269			Beginner<advanced
	Total	77.188	207				Pre-intermediate<advanced
							Pre-intermediate<intermediate

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

As the table above indicated, the advanced and the intermediate groups preferred feedback in English more often than the beginner group ($p = .002$) and the students with higher proficiency levels comprehended feedback in English much better than the beginner group ($p < .001$).

How much of each essay do you read over when your instructor returns it to you?

The responses given to this question ranged from *all of it* to *none of it*. As shown in Table 5, all the proficiency groups read most of the feedback given to their first drafts. As for the final drafts, low level proficiency groups stated that they read only some of the feedback given to their final drafts, whereas high level proficiency groups treated the final drafts more attentively.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Student Attention given to WCF in Multiple Drafts

Proficiency Level	Preliminary drafts			Level	Final draft		Level*
	n	\bar{X}	SD		\bar{X}	SD	
Beginner	52	3.46	1.23	4	2.60	1.28	3
Pre-intermediate	52	3.92	1.25	4	3.23	1.35	3
Intermediate	52	4.29	.96	4	3.73	1.31	4
Advanced	52	4.31	1.05	4	3.73	1.34	4
Total	208	4.00	1.17	4	3.32	1.39	3

*5= *all of it*, 4= *most of it*, 3= *some of it*, 2= *a little of it*, 1= *none of it*

Table 6 presented differences in student attention paid to WCF between groups. The beginner group differed significantly from the intermediate and advanced groups in that they paid less attention to the WCF they received to their preliminary drafts ($p = .001$). No meaningful difference existed as to how learners across groups treated their final drafts.

Table 6. ANOVA Results for the Student Attention given to WCF in Multiple Drafts by Level of Proficiency

	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	p	Significant difference
Preliminary drafts	Between groups	24.630	3	8.210	6.433	.000***	Beginner<intermediate Beginner<advanced
	Within groups	260.365	204	1.276			
	Total	284.995	207				
	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	p	Significant difference
Final drafts	Between groups	45.207	3	.135	.234	.872	
	Within groups	358.212	204	.574			
	Total	403.418	207				

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Student beliefs on instructor comments and corrections on essays

Table 7 summarized what the students believed WCF from instructors should include. Students of all levels demanded detailed feedback across categories especially to their earlier drafts. The advanced and the intermediate groups asked for grammar correction even in their final drafts. The pre-intermediate group believed that their time and effort dedicated to the preliminary drafts needed to be appreciated more than the other groups.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics for Student Beliefs on WCF to Multiple Drafts

		Preliminary drafts				Final drafts			
		n	\bar{X}	SD	Level	n	\bar{X}	SD	Level*
Structure	Beginner	52	4.50	.83	5	52	4.37	.82	4
	Pre-intermediate	52	4.56	.64	5	52	4.06	1.02	4
	Intermediate	52	4.52	.75	5	52	4.33	.96	4
	Advanced	52	4.62	.80	5	52	4.37	.99	4
	Total	208	4.55	.75	5	208	4.28	.95	4
Content	Beginner	52	4.13	.93	4	52	4.10	1.10	4
	Pre-intermediate	52	4.12	.92	4	52	3.63	1.08	4
	Intermediate	52	4.27	.87	4	52	4.00	1.10	4
	Advanced	52	4.37	.89	4	52	4.06	1.11	4
	Total	208	4.22	.90	4	208	3.95	1.11	4
Grammar	Beginner	52	4.83	.43	5	52	4.40	.98	4
	Pre-intermediate	52	4.60	.66	5	52	4.27	.93	4
	Intermediate	52	4.77	.61	5	52	4.48	.96	5
	Advanced	52	4.73	.69	5	52	4.48	.96	5
	Total	208	4.73	.61	5	208	4.41	.95	4
Lexical	Beginner	52	4.40	.82	4	52	4.10	1.19	4
	Pre-intermediate	52	4.48	.78	5	52	4.08	1.04	4
	Intermediate	52	4.56	.90	5	52	4.38	1.14	4
	Advanced	52	4.62	.77	5	52	4.42	.93	4
	Total	208	4.51	.82	5	208	4.25	1.08	4
General	Beginner	52	4.21	.99	4	52	4.15	1.32	4
	Pre-intermediate	52	4.52	.85	5	52	3.94	1.27	4
	Intermediate	52	4.44	.75	4	52	4.29	.89	4
	Advanced	52	4.29	.98	4	52	4.02	1.06	4
	Total	208	4.37	.90	4	208	4.10	1.15	4

*5= always, 4= usually, 3= sometimes, 2= occasionally, 1= never

As dictated in Table 8, the differences between groups were not statistically meaningful when student WCF beliefs regarding the first and the final drafts were considered.

Table 8. Differences in Student Beliefs on WCF to Multiple Drafts

Preliminary drafts	Resource of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Means of Squares	F	p	Significant Difference
Structure	Between groups	.404	3	.135	.234	.872	
	Within groups	117.115	204	.574			
	Total	117.519	207				
Content	Between groups	2.173	3	.724	.892	.446	
	Within groups	165.654	204	.812			
	Total	167.827	207				
Grammar	Between groups	1.500	3	.500	1.352	.259	
	Within groups	75.423	204	.370			
	Total	76.923	207				
Lexical	Between groups	1.322	3	.441	.658	.579	
	Within groups	136.635	204	.670			
	Total	137.957	207				
General	Between groups	3.077	3	1.03	1.267	.287	
	Within groups	165.154	204	.810			
	Total	168.231	207				
Final Drafts	Resource of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Means of Squares	F	p	Significant Difference
Structure	Between groups	3.442	3	1.147	1.270	.286	
	Within groups	184.385	204	.904			
	Total	187.827	207				
Content	Between groups	7.014	3	2.338	1.928	.126	
	Within groups	247.404	204	1.213			
	Total	254.418	207				
Grammar	Between groups	1.553	3	.518	.566	.638	
	Within groups	186.712	204	.915			
	Total	188.264	207				
Lexical	Between groups	5.284	3	1.761	1.502	.215	
	Within groups	239.212	204	1.173			
	Total	244.495	207				
General	Between groups	3.630	3	1.210	.917	.434	
	Within groups	269.250	204	1.320			
	Total	273.880	207				

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Student attention to WCF on essays

This set of results was concerned with how much attention students paid to the WCF that they received. As given in Table 9, for the preliminary drafts, the advanced group reported to pay a lot more attention to structural, grammatical and lexical corrective feedback. As for the final drafts, nearly all the groups reported that they paid attention to the corrective feedback of all dimensions; yet, the beginner and the intermediate group valued grammatical corrections given to their final drafts more than the other groups did.

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics for Student Attention to WCF in Multiple Drafts

		Preliminary drafts			Final drafts			
		n	\bar{X}	SD	Level	\bar{X}	SD	Level*
Structure	Beginner	52	4.29	.133	4	4.44	.998	4
	Pre-intermediate	52	4.27	.129	4	4.10	.975	4
	Intermediate	52	4.37	.135	4	4.25	.988	4
	Advanced	52	4.62	.117	5	4.33	1.08	4
	Total	208	4.38	.065	4	4.28	1.01	4
Content	Beginner	52	4.29	.133	4	4.29	1.01	4
	Pre-intermediate	52	4.10	.143	4	3.73	1.17	4
	Intermediate	52	4.27	.140	4	4.17	.985	4
	Advanced	52	4.37	.132	4	4.04	1.19	4
	Total	208	4.25	.068	4	4.06	1.10	4
Grammar	Beginner	52	4.67	.081	5	4.58	.75	5
	Pre-intermediate	52	4.62	.103	5	4.42	.87	4
	Intermediate	52	4.63	.099	5	4.50	.83	5
	Advanced	52	4.67	.102	5	4.37	1.03	4
	Total	208	4.65	.048	5	4.47	.87	5
Lexical	Beginner	52	4.17	.139	4	4.33	1.04	4
	Pre-intermediate	52	4.56	.093	5	4.33	.83	4
	Intermediate	52	4.46	.133	5	4.37	1.03	4
	Advanced	52	4.73	.103	5	4.40	1.03	4
	Total	208	4.48	.061	5	4.36	.982	4
General	Beginner	52	4.23	.152	4	4.19	1.25	4
	Pre-intermediate	52	4.19	.145	4	3.85	1.26	4
	Intermediate	52	4.48	.089	5	4.44	.75	4
	Advanced	52	4.33	.155	4	3.98	1.31	4
	Total	208	4.31	.069	4	4.12	1.18	4

*5= always, 4= usually, 3= sometimes, 2= occasionally, 1= never

In terms of the general feedback such as praises and appreciation, the intermediate group, among other groups, paid more attention to whether their efforts in writing the preliminary drafts were appreciated by the writing instructor (see Table 10). The results showed that the four proficiency groups did not significantly differ from each other in terms of the attention they paid to WCF with the exception of one group. That is, the beginner group differed significantly from the other groups in terms of the attention they paid to the lexical feedback given to their preliminary drafts ($p=.006$).

Table 10. Differences in Student Attention to WCF in Multiple Drafts

Preliminary drafts	Resource of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Means of Squares	F	p	Significant Difference
Structure	Between groups	3.962	3	1.321	1.537	.206	
	Within groups	175.269	204	.859			
	Total	179.231	207				
Content	Between groups	2.014	3	.671	.089	.966	
	Within groups	199.481	204	.978			
	Total	201.495	207				

Grammar	Between groups	.130	3	.043	1.352	.259	
	Within groups	99.250	204	.487			
	Total	99.380	207				
Lexical	Between groups	8.500	3	2.833	3.868	.010**	Beginner<advanced
	Within groups	149.423	204	.732			
	Total	157.923	207				
General	Between groups	2.577	3	.859	.869	.458	
	Within groups	201.731	204	.989			
	Total	204.308	207				
Final Drafts	Resource of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Means of Squares	F	p	Significant Difference
Structure	Between groups	3.288	3	1.096	1.072	.362	
	Within groups	208.538	204	1.022			
	Total	211.827	207				
Content	Between groups	7.038	3	3.013	2.516	.059	
	Within groups	244.269	204	1.197			
	Total	253.308	207				
Grammar	Between groups	1.322	3	.441	.575	.632	
	Within groups	156.442	204	.767			
	Total	157.764	207				
Lexical	Between groups	.212	3	.071	.072	.975	
	Within groups	199.4622	204	.978			
	Total	199.673	207				
General	Between groups	10.577	3	3.526	2.600	.053*	Intermediate>pre-intermediate
	Within groups	276.654	204	1.356			
	Total	287.231	207				

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The intermediate group was nearing significance from the pre-intermediate group in terms of the general comments such as appraisals that they would like to receive from the instructor ($p = .058$).

Student beliefs on the benefits of the type of correction given to essays

The results in this group included student preferences for WCF with a focus on the benefit they derived from a specific form of WCF. Tables 11 and 12 summarized student preferences for direct and indirect forms of WCF. Direct feedback was mostly favoured by the advanced group. And all the groups believed that listening to the explanations the instructors offered about the mistakes in their essays and receiving direct correction helped them

more than the other forms of feedback in the route to acquire academic writing skills in L2 English. The beginner group favoured categorized feedback the most.

Table 11. Descriptive Statistics for Student Preferences on Corrective Feedback Types

		n	\bar{X}	SD	Level*
Direct feedback: Direct correction	Beginner	52	3.40	1.361	3
	Pre-intermediate	52	4.25	.813	4
	Intermediate	52	4.02	1.213	4
	Advanced	52	4.63	.687	5
	Total	208	4.08	1.139	4
Indirect feedback: Underlining	Beginner	52	4.23	.983	4
	Pre-intermediate	52	3.44	1.259	3
	Intermediate	52	4.12	.983	4
	Advanced	52	3.92	1.026	4
	Total	208	3.93	1.103	4
Indirect Feedback: Use of symbols	Beginner	52	3.27	1.087	3
	Pre-intermediate	52	2.73	1.300	3
	Intermediate	52	3.29	1.273	3
	Advanced	52	3.33	1.167	3
	Total	208	3.15	1.226	3
Indirect Categorized Feedback: Use of codes	Beginner	52	3.94	1.074	4
	Pre-intermediate	52	3.38	1.223	3
	Intermediate	52	3.88	1.215	4
	Advanced	52	3.38	1.286	3
	Total	208	3.65	1.223	4
Direct oral metalinguistic feedback	Beginner	52	4.60	.693	5
	Pre-intermediate	52	4.54	.779	5
	Intermediate	52	4.25	1.027	4
	Advanced	52	4.71	.667	5
	Total	208	4.52	.816	5

*5= always, 4= usually, 3= sometimes, 2= occasionally, 1= never

As presented in the table below, direct feedback was the least favoured form of feedback for the beginner learners when compared to the pre-intermediate ($p<.001$), intermediate ($p=.020$) and the advanced learners ($p<.001$). Underlining as a form of indirect feedback was the least desired one for the pre-intermediate learners who differed from the beginner group significantly ($p=.001$).

Table 12. ANOVA Results for Student Preferences on Corrective Feedback Types

	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	p	Significant difference
Direct feedback: Direct correction	Between groups	41.462	3	13.821	12.403	.000***	Beginner<pre-intermediate
	Within groups	227.308	204	1.114			Beginner<intermediate
	Total	268.769	207				Beginner<advanced
Indirect feedback: Underlining	Between groups	18.861	3	6.287	5.503	.001***	Pre-intermediate<beginner
	Within groups	233.058	204	1.142			
	Total	251.918	207				
Indirect Feedback: Use of symbols	Between groups	12.500	3	4.167	2.847	.039*	Pre-intermediate <advanced
	Within groups	298.577	204	1.464			
	Total	277.880	207				
Indirect Categorized Feedback: Use of codes	Between groups	14.630	3	4.877	3.375	.019**	Beginner>pre-intermediate
	Within groups	294.750	204	1.445			Beginner>advanced
	Total	309.380	207				
Direct oral metalinguistic feedback	Between groups	6.014	3	2.005	3.102	.028*	Intermediate<advanced
	Within groups	131.865	204	.646			
	Total	137.880	207				

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

As for the use of symbols, the pre-intermediate group differed from the advanced group in that they did not think that the use of symbols helped them improve the necessary academic writing skills ($p = .001$). The beginner group preferred to be given categorized feedback as opposed to the preferences of the pre-intermediate and the advanced group ($p = .025$). The last form of direct feedback which included a metalinguistic discussion on the essay was the most favoured form of feedback across all the proficiency groups. Interestingly, the intermediate group did not ask for that specific form of feedback all the time and this was one aspect that they differed from the advanced group significantly ($p = .023$).

Student beliefs about the content of WCF

Tables 13 and 14 presented student beliefs about what needed to be included in the WCF. Groups of all levels of language proficiency agreed that receiving only grades and only corrections did not contribute much to their learning process. The advanced group, on the other hand, believed that comments alone could usually act as a useful form of feedback. Overall, all the groups agreed that being given a combination of a score, corrections and comments served for their benefit most of the time and that would be the most helpful strategy to be followed by the instructors.

Table 13. Descriptive Statistics for Student Beliefs in the content of WCF

		n	\bar{X}	SD	Level*
Grades	Beginner	52	1.65	.861	2
	Pre-intermediate	52	1.96	1.120	2
	Intermediate	52	2.21	1.091	2
	Advanced	52	1.83	.834	2
	Total	208	1.91	.999	2
Corrections	Beginner	52	2.87	1.048	3
	Pre-intermediate	52	3.08	1.045	3
	Intermediate	52	3.15	.998	3
	Advanced	52	3.19	.951	3
	Total	208	3.07	1.012	3
Comments	Beginner	52	2.77	1.059	3
	Pre-intermediate	52	2.81	.930	3
	Intermediate	52	3.42	.893	3
	Advanced	52	3.46	.999	4
	Total	208	3.12	1.020	3
Comments+ corrections	Beginner	52	3.73	.843	4
	Pre-intermediate	52	3.98	.896	4
	Intermediate	52	4.56	.574	5
	Advanced	52	4.63	.525	5
	Total	208	3.65	.818	4
Comments+ corrections+ grades	Beginner	52	4.35	.861	4
	Pre-intermediate	52	4.21	.977	4
	Intermediate	52	4.58	.605	5
	Advanced	52	4.69	.466	5
	Total	208	4.52	.773	5

*5= *always*, 4= *usually*, 3= *sometimes*, 2= *occasionally*, 1= *never*

As given in Table 14, even though none of the groups favoured being given a score only, the beginner group differed from the intermediate group in that the beginners believed that such a strategy would not contribute much to recovery from errors ($p=.026$). The advanced group favoured instructor comments on its own more than the beginner ($p=.002$) and the pre-intermediate group ($p=.004$) did. All the groups thought that it was sometimes beneficial to receive only corrections from the instructor.

Table 14. ANOVA Results for Student Beliefs in the Content of WCF

	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	p	Significant difference
Grades	Between groups	8.635	3	2.878	2.968	.033**	Beginner<intermediate
	Within groups	197.808	204	.970			
	Total	206.442	207				
Corrections	Between groups	3.322	3	1.107	1.083	.357	
	Within groups	208.596	204	1.023			
	Total	211.918	207				
Comments	Between groups	22.308	3	7.436	7.863	.000***	Beginner<advanced
	Within groups	192.923	204	.946			
	Total	215.231	207				
Comments +corrections	Between groups	30.284	3	10.095	19.051	.000***	Beginner<intermediate Beginner<advanced Pre-intermediate <intermediate Pre-intermediate <advanced
	Within groups	108.096	204	.530			
	Total	138.380	207				
Comments +corrections +grades	Between groups	7.399	3	2.466	4.329	.006**	Pre-intermediate <advanced
	Within groups	116.212	204	.570			
	Total	123.611	207				

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

When it comes to a combination of feedback content, compared to the students with lower levels of language proficiency, the high-level proficiency groups, namely the intermediate and the advanced groups, held the opinion that comments and corrections always helped them ($p < .001$). In addition, the advanced learners trusted the effectiveness of a combination of feedback forms more than the pre-intermediate group ($p = .008$).

Student beliefs on the feedback providing agent

Tables 15 and 16 reported descriptive and referential statistics on the beliefs about the trustworthiness of the feedback providing agents including the classroom instructor, peers, writing centre instructors and students

themselves. Student trust in the feedback received from the classroom instructor stood out among feedback received from the other agents.

Table 15. Descriptive Statistics

Proficiency Level	Instructors			Peers			Writing centre instructors			Students themselves		
	\bar{X}	SD	Level	\bar{X}	SD	Level	\bar{X}	SD	Level	\bar{X}	SD	Level*
Beginner	4.40	.774	4	3.17	1.15	3	2.10	1.537	2	2.67	.139	3
Pre-intermediate	4.33	.810	4	3.02	1.229	3	1.21	.696	1	2.46	.136	3
Intermediate	4.73	.564	5	2.58	1.073	3	1.42	1.073	1	3.04	.148	3
Advanced	4.73	.528	5	2.65	1.163	3	1.37	.991	1	3.25	.142	3
Total	4.55	.700	5	2.86	1.165	3	1.52	1.159	2	2.86	.073	3

*5= always, 4= usually, 3= sometimes, 2= occasionally, 1= never

Trust in the feedback providing agent was shaped by the level of proficiency (see Table 16). Instructor feedback was definitely a lot more favoured feedback type for the advanced and intermediate learners than the pre-intermediate learners ($p=.017$).

Table 16. ANOVA Results for Student Beliefs on the Feedback Providing Agents

	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	p	Significant difference
Instructors	Between groups	7.096	3	2.365	5.110	.002**	Pre-intermediate <advanced Pre-intermediate <intermediate
	Within groups	94.423	204	.463			
	Total	101.519	207				
Peers	Between groups	12.890	3	4.297	3.270	.022**	Intermediate<beginner
	Within groups	266.762	204	1.314			
	Total	279.652	207				
Writing centre instructors	Between groups	23.938	3	7.979	6.410	.000***	Beginner>pre-intermediate Beginner>intermediate Beginner>advanced
	Within groups	253.942	204	1.245			
	Total	277.880	207				
Students themselves	Between groups	19.677	3	6.559	6.341	.000***	Beginner<advanced Pre-intermediate <advanced
	Within groups	209.975	204	1.034			
	Total	229.652	207				

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

Peer feedback, on the other hand, was not that much preferred by any of the groups. Still the beginner group trusted feedback from classmates more than the intermediate group ($p=.052$). Feedback received from the writing centre instructors was not much favoured across groups. The beginner group held the opinion that they benefited from the feedback given at the writing centre more than the pre-intermediate ($p<.001$), intermediate ($p=.014$) and the advanced group ($p=.006$). Not surprisingly, advanced students believed that they could correct their mistakes on their own when compared to the beginner ($p=.025$), and the pre-intermediate group ($p=.001$).

Student self-evaluations in L2 Writing

After having been exposed to a process-based writing approach for two semesters, language proficiency was a determining factor in students' self-evaluations of their general and academic writing skills in L2 English (see Table 17). All the proficiency groups rated their general and academic writing skills as *adequate* except for the advanced students who rated their general and academic writing skills as *good*.

Table 17. Descriptive Statistics for Student Self-Evaluation in L2 Writing

Proficiency Level	Writing in L2 English			Writing essays in L2 English			
	n	\bar{X}	SD	Level	\bar{X}	SD	Level*
Beginner	52	3.27	.888	3	3.08	1.40	3
Pre-intermediate	52	2.77	1.148	3	2.62	1.35	3
Intermediate	52	3.31	.875	3	3.04	.106	3
Advanced	52	3.78	.637	4	3.56	.089	4
Total	208	3.28	.969	3	3.07	.064	3

*5= *excellent*, 4= *good*, 3= *adequate*, 2= *fair*, 1= *poor*

Bonferroni adjusted corrections revealed significant differences in students' self-evaluations of their L2 (non) academic writing skills (see Table 18). The pre-intermediate group believed that they were poorer L2 writers in general than the beginner ($p=.032$), intermediate ($p=.016$) and the advanced students ($p<.001$). The intermediate group did not trust their writing skills as much as the advanced group did ($p=.044$).

Table 18. Differences in Student Self-Evaluation in L2 Writing

Writing in L2 English	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	p	Significant difference
							Pre-intermediate<beginner Pre-intermediate <intermediate Pre-intermediate<advanced Intermediate<advanced
Writing in L2 English	Between groups	27.053	3	9.018	11.002	.000***	
	Within groups	167.212	204	.820			
	Total	194.264	207				
Writing Essays in L2 English	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	p	Significant difference
							Advanced>beginner Advanced> pre-intermediate Advanced>intermediate Beginner> pre-intermediate
Writing Essays in L2 English	Between groups	23.168	3	7.723	10.451	.000***	
	Within groups	150.750	204	.739			
	Total	173.918	207				

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

A similar pattern of difference existed in students' perception of proficiency in L2 academic writing. The pre-intermediate group rated themselves more poorly than the advanced ($p<.001$) and the beginner group ($p=.040$) when it came to be possessing the necessary L2 writing skills to survive in the world of academia. Advanced students rated themselves academically better equipped than the beginner ($p=.29$), pre-intermediate ($p<.001$) and the intermediate students ($p=.014$).

Discussion

This study investigated the role of foreign language proficiency in student beliefs and preferences on multiple draft essays with respect to the following issues: (i) whether students asked for a thorough correction, (ii) the language of feedback, (iii) how much of the feedback students read (iv) beliefs on the kind of instructor comments and corrections (v) the amount of attention students paid to the WCF, (vi) the preferred form and (vii) the content of the WCF as well as (viii) the desired feedback providing agent and (ix) self-evaluation of the (non) academic writing skills in L2 English.

Along with the other findings in the literature (e.g., Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Kavaliauskienė et al., 2012), students of all levels of proficiency preferred to receive corrections to every mistake they made. The reason behind this inclination could be the belief that every mistake they make and every correction they receive would give them a chance to learn. That is, they might have the opinion that the more feedback they receive, the more self-sufficient they would feel in writing in L2 English. With respect to the preference and comprehension of the language of feedback, the higher proficiency groups, namely, the advanced and the intermediate learners, always preferred feedback in English than the learners with lower levels of proficiency, namely, the beginner and the pre-intermediate learners. Feedback in English was more comprehensible for the advanced and the intermediate groups than the beginner and the pre-intermediate groups. This showed that higher level proficiency groups trusted their command of English and the more they understood the feedback, the more willing and able they would be in engaging in the correction process (Price et al., 2010, p. 279).

Upon receiving their essays, the pre-intermediate and the beginner group read most of the feedback given to their preliminary drafts and only some of the feedback given to their final drafts. This finding is in line with the other studies in the literature (e.g., Ferris, 1995; Ferris & Roberts, 2001) stating that students read most of the feedback given to the earlier drafts whereas they read only some of the feedback given to the subsequent drafts. The level of language proficiency seemed to be a determining factor on how much of the WCF students read in the first and final drafts of their essays. It is also worth mentioning that the high-level proficiency groups differed from the low-level ones in that they read most of the feedback given to their earlier and subsequent drafts whereas the low-level proficiency groups read only the feedback given to their first drafts more attentively.

The prevailing opinion across groups was that the instructors were responsible for giving detailed feedback on lexis, grammar, and structure both to their preliminary and final drafts. The advanced students constituted the most demanding group of all. The reason why the advanced and the intermediate groups asked for grammar correction even in their final drafts could be related to their preference for a grammar-based approach and their fear of making grammar mistakes at a high level of proficiency (Ferris, 1995). Contrary to what one would expect, it was not the beginner, but the pre-intermediate group that wanted to be appreciated more for their efforts in the process of writing.

Despite expecting a lot from the instructor, students of all levels reported not to pay as much attention as they were expected to do to the WCF from the instructor. Advanced learners specifically looked out for structural, grammatical and lexical feedback in their preliminary drafts all the time. This trend continued for the subsequent drafts which the learners attended less. The trend for paying more attention to the earlier drafts than the final drafts was what was exactly reported by Ferris (1995). In this study, learners across levels always worried more about the difficulties with grammar than problems in the other areas. This finding is also compatible with the previous research (e.g., Balanga et al., 2016) suggesting that students strongly believed that having a solid knowledge in grammar immensely contributed to their academic writing skills.

Recall that in the field, learners with lower language proficiency levels were reported to benefit more from direct feedback, whereas learners with higher levels of language proficiency were reported to benefit more from indirect feedback. This is because beginner level learners who are less proficient in the language worry about learning what is acceptable in the L2 (Bruton, 2009), whereas advanced learners, with a higher proficiency level, are more into getting guidance on cognitive problem-solving skills (Tocelli-Beller & Swain, 2005). In this study, a reverse picture emerged. The high proficiency learners appreciated direct correction more than the beginners. Especially, the advanced group always asked for direct feedback including one-on-one metalinguistic oral feedback and direct correction. The reason for the reversed pattern could be related to what different proficiency groups understand from the direct feedback they receive from the instructors. For example, the beginner group may believe that indirect correction can contribute to their comprehension and correction of grammatical errors

more than direct correction of such errors. Advanced learners, on the other hand, may prefer direct correction to their grammatical errors which may be viewed as the slips of the pen most of the time. They would rather spare time for negotiation of meaning and content than grammatical error fixation. Getting direct feedback in the form of corrections and metalinguistic explanations are two reportedly most beneficial strategies for L2 learners in the literature, too (Diab, 2005; Diab, 2015). Bitchener and Knoch (2010) also agrees that metalinguistic feedback increases learner uptake though it can be potentially challenging especially in large classrooms. This study also lends support to the work by Göksoy and Nazlı (2017) who states that direct feedback contributes to the L2 writing skills of advanced learners. Overall, the findings in this study contradict with the previous work (Budianto, et al., 2017) claiming that language proficiency does not determine the effectiveness of the feedback. In addition, the findings of this study do not fully support Chandler (2003) who reports that the use of indirect forms of feedback such as underlining will help advanced learners improve their writing skills.

Students across different levels of proficiency believed that receiving a score, along with instructor comments and corrections contributed to their academic writing skills in L2. This finding is also in line with Lee (2008) in that different from the beginner and the pre-intermediate students, the advanced and intermediate students felt that a combination of comments, corrections and assigned scores would contribute to the development of their academic writing skills.

As the most effective feedback providing agents, all the groups trusted their instructors, peers and finally themselves as the main feedback providing agents especially when their mistakes were pointed out. This is in line with previous findings in the field (Eksi, 2012; Ferris & Hedgcock 2013; Purnawarman, 2011). The learners in this study were not of the opinion that teachers are unhelpful and damaging since according to Truscott (1996), teachers may be inconsistent and sometimes inaccurate in providing feedback. As the final component, student self-evaluations of their efficacy in L2 (non) academic writing was far from being excellent. This could be related to the detailed feedback they got throughout the process and the constructed belief that writing is a never-ending process.

Implications

This study offers certain implications for university instructors who teach academic writing skills. The instructors should not ignore the student plea to get detailed feedback on any kind of error they might make. First, instructors working with low proficiency L2 learners have to train these learners and raise their awareness in terms of how to treat the WCF provided to them. That is, the lower proficiency groups should be reminded that they have to read and pay attention to all the feedback given to their multiple draft essays. Second, instructors need to dedicate time and effort to train students to become trustworthy peer correctors so that they could act as teacher assistants to mentor the slow learners especially. Finally, the role of metalinguistic feedback cannot be ignored even when the class sizes are large. Students can be given oral metalinguistic explanations about their academic writing progress in small groups regularly if the class sizes are large.

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The research has no unethical problem and research and publication ethics have been observed.

Researchers' Contribution Rate

I acknowledged the help of my colleagues in the data collection process. I am responsible for every other phase of the study.

Conflict of Interest

This study has no conflict of interest.

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