



## Written Corrective Feedback: EFL Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

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### ABSTRACT

*This mixed method study aimed to investigate (i) EFL instructors' beliefs about written corrective feedback (WCF) (ii) whether these beliefs are congruent with their classroom practices. Firstly, a questionnaire was administered to 25 English instructors to understand their beliefs regarding WCF. Later, randomly chosen 175 student writing assignments corrected by the same instructors were collected. WCF actions were categorized under four headings to evaluate instructors' classroom practices. Finally, five instructors were interviewed to understand their beliefs and underlying reasons of WCF practices in class. The overall study findings indicated that most of the instructors believe in the benefits of WCF. However, the analysis of writing assignments identified some mismatches among instructors' beliefs they stated in the questionnaire, interviews sessions and also their classroom practices. Qualitative findings displayed that the discrepancies mainly stem from time constraints, low levels of students, and not having a general policy about error correction. In the light of the findings, there is a need to reach a consensus on the type, way and amount of WCF on institutional base. Additionally, the need for training both for instructors and students seems to be necessary to benefit from WCF more efficiently.*

### INTRODUCTION

Corrective feedback has always been a controversial issue as a result of continuous focus shifts in popular instructional methods and their perception of errors. According to behaviouristic approach, errors are dangerous and should be eradicated by the teacher immediately in order to avoid bad habit formation (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). On the other hand, in cognitivist approach, errors are not seen as a failure, but a sign of advancement in learning process (Ellis, 2009). In communicative approach, errors are tolerated and accepted natural in the learning process (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011), thus immediate corrective feedback should be avoided. Changing approaches have adopted dissimilar attitudes towards corrective feedback, which can be defined as any indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect (Lightbown, Spada, Ranata & Rand, 1999, p. 171). In the literature, sometimes corrective feedback is used interchangeably with “error correction” or “grammar correction”. Whichever name is chosen, it is a fact that corrective feedback is a complex phenomenon due to the controversies such as whether to correct, what to correct, how to correct and when to correct (Ellis, 2009).

Kormos (2012) emphasizes that writing in L2 is both a complex and time consuming task which requires determination and concentration. Apart from learners effort, from teachers perspective, teaching writing can be viewed as a “tedious” and “unrewarding” task (Hyland, 1990) because despite correcting the mistakes, similar mistakes might carry on appearing on learners’ papers (Hu, 2002). In spite of the time and effort given to correct learners’ errors, the effectiveness of written corrective feedback has been a hot issue (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Rummel & Bitchener, 2015; Shintani, Ellis & Suzuki, 2014). Whether to provide feedback for learners’ errors or not has caused debates among the researchers. The proponents of written corrective feedback (WCF) emphasize that as writing is one of the most difficult skills to improve in L2, both teachers and students feel that teacher written feedback is an important part of the writing process (Ataman & Mirici, 2017; Evans, Hartshorn & Tuioti, 2010; Ferris 1995; Kisnanto, 2016; Min, 2013; Montgomery & Baker, 2007).

On the other hand, for some researchers, WCF in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs is a waste of time as WCF lacks of empirical or theoretical justification (Sheen, 2007; Truscott, 1996, 2004, 2007). As one of the most well-known opponents of WCF, Truscott (1996) even makes a stronger argument that WCF should be abandoned since the type and amount of feedback may discourage students, and therefore it is harmful. Furthermore, Truscott (2007) emphasizes that WCF can be useful as a revision tool but not for learning in long term and the time spent for correcting mistakes can be used for more productive learning activities. Yet, Ferris (1995) puts forward that Truscott’s claims are premature and overly strong and supports the idea that WCF can improve both students’ writing and also their grammar knowledge. Similar to Ferris (1995), Hyland and Hyland (2006) support the idea that feedback is essential for second language writing skills and also learners are in favour of getting feedback due to motivational reasons. They also remind of us the fact that second language acquisition happens gradually; therefore, mistakes should be considered complex elements of a developmental process of learning the target language.

Starting from the beginning of the 2000s, more research studies which focused on the contextualization of error correction in L2 writing have been conducted (Wang, 2017). As there are some inconsistencies of findings about the benefits, types, and frequency of WCF, Hyland and Hyland (2006) assert that published studies may need to be reanalyzed and also more studies are needed to provide a clear conclusion. They also imply the source of this difficulty to reach clear conclusions and generalisations might be as a result of varied populations, research designs and treatments in the research studies. Consistent with Hyland and Hyland’s (2006) claims, other researchers (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Rummel & Bitchener, 2015) support the idea that dissimilar designs of studies and flaws both in the design and data analysis procedure might be the underlying reason of conflicts regarding the findings of previous research. Additionally, Ferris and Hedgcock (2013) emphasize that teachers’ voice is the missing link in WCF research and teachers should be involved with the aim of comprehending the complex issue of WCF.

### **Teachers’ Beliefs**

In the literature, there have been various definitions of beliefs and belief related concepts which caused some confusion. Pajares defines teachers’ beliefs as a “messy construct” and highlighted that “the difficulty in studying teachers’ beliefs has been caused by definitional problems, poor conceptualizations, and differing understandings of beliefs and belief structures” (1992, p. 307). According to Borg (2003), beliefs can be defined as one of the unobservable

dimensions of teaching which can be considered under the umbrella term teacher cognition and he states that “a belief is a proposition which is consciously or unconsciously held and accepted as true by the individual” (Borg, 2001, p. 187). In the last three decades, the results of research studies have revealed that teachers’ beliefs are complex, dynamic, contextualized, systematic and personal, practical and sometimes unconscious (Borg, 2003; 2006, p. 272).

It has been known that teachers’ classroom practices do not always correspond to their beliefs (Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis, 2004; Lee, 2009; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Wang, 2011). The reasons for a mismatch would seem to be highly complex, but there is evidence to suggest that teachers’ ability to teach in line with their beliefs is influenced mainly by contextual factors including class time, students’ expectations, teaching the test rather than teaching the subject and focusing on classroom management concerns (Borg, 2006). As suggested by Borg’s research (2006), the findings of a case study carried out by Wang (2011) revealed that although the stated beliefs and classroom practices of her participant was consistent in most of the cases, there were some mismatches as a result of contextual factors such as time pressure, workload, and school curriculum.

WCF studies have so far mainly been conducted in ESL contexts but not very much in non-Western EFL countries (Melketo, 2012). Lee (2009) states that many of studies focusing on second language teacher’s feedback practices are conducted with high level students in ESL environment and there is a need for similar research in EFL environment. Additionally, even though corrective feedback has been a popular topic recently, teachers (practitioners) perspectives have been fundamentally absent in the published literature (Evans et al., 2010). In other words, there is a need to investigate teacher’s beliefs on WCF in various educational contexts. Thus, the current study aims to fill a gap by investigating the teachers’ beliefs, classroom practices and the match between these two regarding WCF in Turkish EFL context.

The present study has two main aims (i) to contribute to a deeper understanding of instructors’ beliefs about WCF (ii) to compare instructors’ beliefs and their classroom practices regarding WCF by analyzing students’ writing assignments corrected by the participants. The research questions are:

1. What are Turkish EFL instructors’ beliefs about written corrective feedback (WCF)?
2. Is there a consistency between instructors’ beliefs and classroom practices regarding WCF?

## **METHODOLOGY**

A mixed-method research study, combining the data collection techniques of questionnaires, corrected student assignments and semi-structured interviews, was conducted in order to find out the beliefs of EFL instructors about WCF and their classroom implications concerning WCF.

### **Instructional Context and Participants**

The university at which the participants are working is a state university and applies compulsory one year intensive English program for the most of the departments. In the beginner and elementary groups, writing is constrained with the activities provided by the main course book. In the syllabus, two or three hours in a week are planned as writing classes; however, there is not a specific writing instructor; thus, all of the instructors are responsible for writing classes and

assignments. None of the writing assignments are graded, yet in each progress test and level achievement test, there is a 20 point writing task which is similar to the tasks done in the class.

The participants of this study were 25 Turkish instructors of English who are working at a preparatory school of a state university. During the week of questionnaire administration, all of the instructors (totally 55) were informed and invited to participate in the study, yet 25 of them showed interest. As expected, all the instructors have the minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree; moreover, 40 % of the participants are holding a master's degree. As more than 96 % of the participants had at least 4 years of experience, it can be said that the participants were experienced enough to comment on their beliefs and also classroom practices. Details of participants' demographic information are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Information of Participants

Variable		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	3	12%
	Female	22	88%
Age	20 - 29	6	24%
	30 - 39	14	56%
	40 - 49	5	20%
Educational Background	English Language Teaching	17	68%
	English Literature	6	24%
	Translation and Interpretation	1	4%
	Other	1	4%
Teaching Experience	1 - 3 years	1	4%
	4 - 7 years	5	20%
	8 - 10 years	5	20%
	11 years and more	14	56%

### Data Collection Instruments and Data Analysis

In this mixed method study, three different data collection tools were utilized. The first tool was a questionnaire, developed by Lee (2009), consisted of two parts, seven main questions and 15 sub-questions. In the first part, there were various types of questions including as open-ended, multiple choice, yes/no questions and Likert scale items in order to evaluate instructors' beliefs and classroom practices.

Quantitative data were analyzed statistically by IBM SPSS Statistics 20 software program and percentages of instructors' WCF choices were presented (See Table 4). To evaluate the instructors' classroom practices, randomly chosen 175 corrected writing assignments were collected from classes. The frequency and the choice of assignments that would be included in study had not been shared with the participants for the sake of reaching writing assignments that reflect their usual WCF practice. In the collected assignments, totally 1039 WCF actions were detected. The analysis of these WCF actions involved first identification, categorization and counting the frequency of them. The researchers grouped the WCF actions under four headings: language forms, vocabulary, content, mechanics and then analyzed according to instructors' WCF the type, amount and their way of providing it.

In order to comprehend instructors' beliefs better and the reasons of their classroom implications, face to face interviews were conducted with five volunteer instructors. Parallel to

the questionnaire items, 10 semi-structured interview questions and nine follow-up questions developed by Lee (2009) were asked to participants. Qualitative analysis was conducted on the participants' explanatory responses. To this end, the participants' explanations on the open-ended questions were translated in to key words and categorized according to common themes. The samples of students' written work were triangulated with data obtained through the questionnaire and the interviews.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to gain better understanding of the findings, the data collected from 25 EFL instructors by questionnaires, 175 corrected writing assignments and five interviews are presented together under the title of two research questions.

### Research Question 1: Turkish EFL Teachers' Beliefs about WCF

The first item of the questionnaire was an open-ended question (*In your opinion, what is the main purpose of providing feedback on students' errors in writing?*) and it revealed some important findings related to the first research question. This question aimed to gain information about instructors' beliefs about the main purpose of providing feedback on students' errors in writing. The answers were grouped under two general headings. In the light of the responses, one can easily allege that 68% of the instructors expressed that the main purpose of WCF was to raise students' awareness on their errors and to prevent students from doing the same mistakes again. Additionally, the rest of the instructors stated that they provided WCF to improve students' both general English knowledge and their writing abilities. In other words, majority of the instructors perceive WCF as a tool which can raise awareness and decrease the amount of future mistakes. This finding is not surprising because the main purpose of providing WCF is explained as to raise students' ability to identify and analyze their errors; therefore, they will be able to learn their mistakes (Hyland, 2003).

For the second questionnaire item, which described instructors' existing error practice, 52% of the instructors chose the option *'I mark all errors'*, 44% chose *'I mark errors selectively'*, and 4% chose *'I don't mark errors'*. This data indicated that 96% of the participants provided some amount of corrective feedback. Similarly, previous studies (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Ataman & Mirici, 2017; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Lee, 2005) conducted in different cultures highlighted that both students and teachers believe that it is teachers' duty to provide feedback because they perceive WCF as a learning tool. Although almost all of the instructors in the current study were in favour of providing WCF, the amount of feedback was not obvious as the number of instructors who preferred correcting all the errors was close to the ones who preferred selectively correction.

In order to gather information about the use of error codes, in the third item of the questionnaire, the participants were asked whether they used an error code or not. 80% of the instructors responded as 'yes' and only 20% responded as 'no'. In a similar vein, another study conducted by Lee (2009) displayed that 87% of the teachers support the idea of using error codes since they believe this type of feedback provides students opportunity to think and self correct and is beneficial to students learning process. As for the same item of the questionnaire, instructors were asked whether their institution required any error codes or not. 48% of them responded as 'yes' and 52% responded as 'no'. In other words, approximately half of the instructors believed that the institution was expecting them to provide a certain way of feedback; on the contrary, nearly the other half of the instructors were not sure about the expectations of the institution. Additionally,

the sixth item in the questionnaire was a yes/no question (*Does your school prescribe the error feedback technique(s) you indicate you always or often use in Question 5?*) which aimed to understand the general policy of the institution. 68 % of the instructors participated in this study chose the option “no”; on the other hand, 32% of them chose the option “yes”. Based on the percentages, it is possible to say that majority of the instructors considered that the institution did not prescribe them any technique of WCF. However, it was surprising as 32% of the participants thought the opposite. Thus, it is inferred that the institution the participants affiliated to did not prescribe a clear correction technique.

As for the fourth question in the questionnaire (*How would you evaluate the overall effectiveness of your existing error feedback practice on student progress in grammatical accuracy in writing at the end of one academic year?*), 88% of the participants stated that they believed as a result of their existing WCF practices students were making ‘good progress’ or ‘some progress’ and only 12% of the participants chose the option ‘little progress’. In the interview sessions, the responses were similar to questionnaire results. Concerning the questions “*Why are you correcting students’ mistakes?*” and “*Do you think it’s a good idea to provide WCF?*” the following comments are representative of the instructors’ views.

*... it’s a second chance for my students to check their product...*

*... telling students their mistakes so that they don’t make the same mistakes again and they learn the correct form...*

During the interview sessions, participants emphasized that they consider WCF has an important role in students’ language learning process. One of the instructors expressed that they did writing assignments in class as a pair work activity. Later she took photo of some of the students’ papers and reflected it on the board. They corrected the chosen papers as a whole-class activity and it raises students’ awareness; therefore, it was worth the time and effort. This finding is in line with those of Evans et al. (2010) who suggest that WCF helps students to be aware of language patterns and provides them examples of good language. Being aware of the language patterns can be considered the first step of learning. Similarly, Schmidt (1990) suggests that according to his Noticing Hypothesis, nothing is learned unless is noticed and unlike learning one’s L1 and learning L2 is conscious. Thus, providing corrective feedback can reinforce students noticing of linguistic forms.

In the fifth questionnaire item, English instructors were expected to rate the frequency of different ways of providing feedback (See Table 2). This part of the questionnaire basically aims to gather information about how instructors provide feedback for the erroneous parts such as indicating, categorizing, correcting or all. All in all, the frequency rates revealed that participants tend not to correct the errors directly (items 5a and 5b). Additionally, majority of them (88%) are in favour of using an error code but not correcting the errors (item 5d). Although the frequency of techniques provided by English instructors might differ (items 5e and 5f), in the interview sessions, all of the participants were in favour of providing WCF. In accordance with this finding, Bitchener and Knoch (2009a) suggested that after 10-month WCF practice, students, who got one of the feedback types (direct corrective feedback, written or oral meta-linguistic explanation), outperformed the control group who did not get any WCF. However, no difference in effectiveness was found between the treatment groups. Consequently, it is possible to say that regardless of type of WCF provided, giving WCF enhances students’ progress (Diab, 2005; Kisnanto, 2016; Rummel & Bitchener, 2015; Sheen, 2007; Yang, Badger & Yu, 2006).

**Table 2.** Frequency of WCF Techniques Provided by English Instructors

How often do you use the following error feedback techniques?	Never or Rarely	Sometimes	Always or Often
<b>5a.</b> I indicate (underline/circle) errors and correct them, e.g., has <u>went</u> gone.	52%	36%	12%
<b>5b.</b> I indicate errors, correct them and categorize them (with the help of a marking code), e.g., has <u>went</u> gone (verb form).	72%	16%	12%
<b>5c.</b> I indicate errors, but I don't correct them, e.g., has <u>went</u> .	36%	28%	36%
<b>5d.</b> I indicate errors and categorize them (with the help of a marking code), but I don't correct them, e.g., has <u>went</u> (verb form).	12%	40%	48%
<b>5e.</b> I hint at the location of errors, e.g., by putting a mark in the margin to indicate an error on a specific line.	68%	20%	12%
<b>5f.</b> I hint at the location of errors and categorize them (with the help of a marking code), e.g., by writing 'Prep' in the margin to indicate a preposition error on a specific line.	52%	32%	16%

As for the seventh item and its nine sub-questions, participants were asked to mark the items that reflected their beliefs on WCF. The quantitative data for this question is presented in Table 3. As for the item 7a, the participants' response was very clear since all of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that there is need for themselves to provide feedback on students' errors in writing. This finding corresponds with the other items of questionnaire and interview extracts. In item 7b, it is possible to see that 68% of the instructors supported the idea that teacher should provide selective feedback and 64% of them disagreed with the idea that it is teachers' job locate and correct errors (item 7c). 88% of the participants agreed that teachers should vary their feedback techniques according to errors (item 7d). In item 7e, great majority of the participants (92%) agreed that using error codes is useful for students. In addition, in item 7f, 88% of the instructors were in favour of providing easy marking codes for students. Regarding students' role in WCF process, 76% of the instructors supported the idea that students should take part in the location of errors (item 7g) and both location and correction of errors (76%, item 7h). Finally, in item 7i, 80% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that students should learn to analyze their own errors.

When participants' overall responses are taken into consideration (items 7b, 7c, 7e, 7f, 7g, 7h), it can be inferred that instructors give importance to students' role in WCF process and they want students to take active part in order to promote student autonomy. In a similar vein, previous studies (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Lee, 2009) assert that teachers value autonomy since more autonomous students tend to be good at self-correction, which helps students remember their errors. In addition, in the interview sessions, all of the participants restated that they believed it was instructors' responsibility to locate the errors. In the light of instructors' statements, it can be suggested that instructors considered WCF important since they believed in EFL context students could not get any corrective feedback apart from theirs and it was their responsibility to locate students' errors in order to avoid fossilization. Similarly, the results of another study conducted by Evans et al. (2010) reveal that WCF is commonly practiced by experienced teachers in SLA because they believe its usefulness and according to the researchers the reasons of this belief is logical for pedagogical reasons.

**Table 3.** English Instructors' Beliefs on WCF

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

7a. There is no need for teachers to provide feedback on student errors in writing.	92 %	8%	0%	0%
7b. Teachers should provide feedback on student errors selectively.	4%	28%	52%	16%
7c. It is the teacher's job to locate errors and provide corrections for students.	0%	64%	20%	16%
7d. Teachers should vary their error feedback techniques according to the type of error.	0%	12%	68%	20%
7e. Coding errors with the help of a marking code is a useful means of helping students correct errors for themselves.	4%	4%	48%	44%
7f. Marking codes should be easy for students to follow and understand.	8%	4%	20%	68%
7g. Students should learn to locate their own errors.	4%	20%	56%	20%
7h. Students should learn to locate and correct their own errors.	4%	20%	56%	20%
7i. Students should learn to analyze their own errors.	4%	16%	44%	36%

## Research Question 2: The Mismatches between Teachers' Beliefs and Classroom Practices

After the analysis of all the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the participants, it was found out that the inconsistencies between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices could be categorized under four headings. We analyzed 1039 WCF actions of instructors in students' writing assignments, the frequencies and percentages of categories of WCF actions are presented in Table 4. In the light of the findings, these discrepancies were presented below one by one.

**Table 4.** Categories of WCF Provided by English Instructors

Category of WCF	Frequency	Percent
Language forms	779	75 %
Vocabulary	156	15 %
Mechanics	83	8 %
Content	21	2 %
Total number of WCF actions	1039	100%

### *Comprehensive versus Selective Feedback*

According to instructors' responses in the questionnaire regarding their WCF, 52% expressed that they marked all the errors (comprehensively); on the other hand, 44% were in favour of providing selective feedback. In addition, Likert scale items related to the same issue revealed that 68% of the instructors supported the idea that teachers should provide feedback on students' errors selectively. However, when the corrected student assignments were analyzed, it was found out that almost 95% of the instructors corrected errors comprehensively. All of the mistakes, except for clarity issues related to the meaning of the sentence, were corrected by the instructors. In order to understand this discrepancy between instructors' beliefs and classroom implications the following question was asked to the teachers in the interview sessions "Are you in favour of comprehensive or selective feedback?". In response to this question, instructors had the following opinions.



*... selective correction is better in higher levels because I don't want to focus on structures, I only correct mistakes related to content. But my students are just beginners so I feel like I need to correct everything because they cannot...*

*...of course selective is the ideal way as students take part in the correction process but I'm very busy and I feel terrible when they come and ask a lot of questions about their papers that's why I correct all the mistakes...*

Instructors' statements made it clear that although almost 70% of them were in favour of selective WCF, yet they corrected students' errors comprehensively because they were short of time and they did not want to deal with more than one draft in the writing classes. In addition, qualitative data yielded that low proficiency level of the students was a crucial factor while they were deciding their WCF strategy. They were highly concerned about the lower levels inability to define and correct the mistakes if they tried to apply a selective correction approach to writing papers. As 84% of the instructors who participated in the study were giving classes mostly in A1 or A2 levels, their tendency to correct the errors comprehensively was not surprising in the light of their statements. It has been known that regardless of proficiency level, students are contend with getting feedback from their teachers, but lower level students might react feedback more negatively (Lee, 2008). Thus, level of proficiency can be one of the crucial factors that should be considered in the complex process of WCF (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009b; Ellis, 2009).

In ELF contexts, most of the teachers feel that they are the only source of input and control mechanism for their erroneous output. Borg (2006) puts forward the fact that language teachers tend to accept the errors of learners much more than teachers of other subjects like maths or geography. However, language teachers still feel the responsibility of correcting mistakes as unlike ESL context, in EFL context learners have very limited opportunity to improve their writing skills which are mostly improved in the class (Kisnanto, 2016).

### ***Direct Feedback versus Indirect Feedback***

Data collected through the questionnaire displayed that 88% of the instructors claimed that they were using a kind of indirect WCF while evaluating the writing assignments. However, when the writing assignments were analyzed, there were total 1039 WCF actions in the student papers and only 38 of them were given in an indirect way such as using an error code or underlying the incorrect part. In other words, only 6.5% of the instructors preferred indirect correction methods. There was an obvious mismatch between instructors' statements and classroom implications. Regarding the question "*Do you use error codes? Why/Why not? What problems can you see in using error codes?*" the following extracts from instructors' interviews captured some of the significant responses to this question.

*...I taught my students the error code system and carried on doing it for a month, and then I realized that some of the students lost their motivation because of not understanding the code or finding the correct answer...*

*... I used to apply a coding system in B1 and B2 levels. This year my classes are A2 level and when I use the coding system, the weaker students have great difficulty and they avoid rewriting as they cannot understand the code or cannot correct it...*

According the instructors' responses, it can be inferred that great majority of them were in favour of using error codes as coding system, which gave students opportunity to take some responsibility of their own learning process. Yet, instructors stated that in lower levels students were incapable of understanding and correcting their mistakes. Besides, motivational issues had an important role in instructors' choice. Instructors claimed to quit using a coding system in order

to increase student motivation. A study conducted by Kisananto (2016) examined the effect of direct and indirect WCF on 43 university students' L2 writing accuracy in an EFL context. The findings displayed that direct WCF helped students to improve their writing skills significantly more than indirect one. Similar to the interviewees of the current study, the participants in Kisananto's (2016) study explained that low level of the students was the reason why direct WCF outperformed indirect one.

From another perspective, although indirect error feedback is more effective in students' long term writing Ferris (2003), Bitchener and Knoch (2010) propose that direct feedback can be more effective for learners who have low proficiency levels. It is then possible to say that participants' beliefs about the use of an error code did not reflect on their classroom practice in the present study because during their classroom practices, they experienced that students could not benefit from indirect feedback. This finding was not surprising since Borg (2003) states that there are many factors such as school policies, curriculum, and colleagues etc. that may hinder teachers reflect their beliefs into classroom implications. Here the factor that hinders instructors to reflect their beliefs was the needs of the students. As a solution to this mismatch, for the lower levels of students, a training program that focuses on the error codes and other indirect WCF techniques and the rationale behind using them might assist students to become familiar with indirect forms of WCF.

### ***Local versus Global Errors***

In the current study, local errors were accepted to include incorrect language forms (grammar) and mistakes of mechanics (spelling, punctuation and capitalization); on the other hand, issues regarding content, task achievement, organization and vocabulary were accepted as global errors. In relation to the question "*What areas do you focus on in your WCF? Why?*", instructors have the opinions below.

*... I am not a grammar mistake hunter and I believe the most important thing is the style. If they understand the task and use the correct style such as writing an informal letter, grammar mistakes are not that important...*

*...In the writing assignments, I gave importance to the developing ideas and flow of ideas...*

Among the five interviewed instructors, only one of them admitted that she mainly focused on local errors. The other participants stated that structure was not the most important issue in their WCF process. Nevertheless, analyzed papers indicated that was not the case. Among the 1039 total WCF actions 75% was about grammar and only 2% was related to content. In addition, 8% of the feedback focused on mechanics, and 15% aimed to correct vocabulary problems. Consequently, the percentages of different categories revealed that although instructors believed that they did not mainly focus on the local issues, 83% (75% language forms + 8% mechanics) of their WCF dealt with local errors; however, only 17% (15% vocabulary + 2% content) focused on global issues. This finding is in line with those of two previous studies. Montgomery and Baker (2007) state that unlike what teachers suppose doing, teachers provided more feedback on local than global issues throughout the writing process. In fact, they claim that teachers might not be fully aware of the amount of feedback they provide on local and global issues. In a similar vein, in their case study, Junqueira and Payant (2015) suggest that although the novice teacher in their study believes that she provides more feedback on global concerns and less extent to local issues, a detailed analyse of her practice displays that 84% of her WCF is on local issues, but only 16% of her feedback is on global issues.

In this current study, there was not concrete evidence to explain this mismatch between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices regarding local and global mistakes. Similar to findings of Lee (2008), Montgomery and Baker (2007), and Pearson's (2018) studies, instructors simply might not be aware of how much feedback they provide on global and local issues. Another possible cause of teachers' choice may be related to the general policy of the institution or content of the writing classes. During the interviews, two of the instructors mentioned the easiness of the writing tasks in their level as most of the writing tasks were based on the activities of the main course book and students only imitated the examples in the book and they did not need to create something new. Therefore, there were not many problems related to the content, style, or task achievement; therefore, instructors focused on grammatical mistakes.

### ***Institutional Correction Policy versus Personal Choices***

In the questionnaire, approximately half of the instructors (48%) expressed that the institution was expecting them to provide an error code; in contrast, nearly the other half of the instructors asserted that there was not an agreed way or type of feedback in their institution. This surprising finding indicated that there was an uncertainty about general policy of the institution concerning WCF. Regarding this uncertainty, the instructors expressed the ideas below during the interviews.

*... in previous years we used to have a portfolio system and this system directed us to use some kinds of WCF techniques. This year we don't have this system but I'm used to it so I keep on using the same system...*

*... last year, before the semester started, the syllabus department distributed us some kind of guide about error correction; but this year there is no system and I read the papers in my own way...*

In consideration of the interview extracts, it is possible to say that there was not a common WCF approach among instructors and they provided WCF in their own ways according to their working load and students' choice. It can be inferred that this inconsistency stemmed from the lack of a general institutional policy. Similar to the findings of qualitative data of the current study, Borg (2003) identifies the context as one of the most prominent reasons to hinder teachers from implementing their states beliefs. Even though the participants of this study were in favour of implementing a common approach to WCF, attitude of their institution prevented them doing it. As most of the participants of this study do not have any previous training on WCF, the source of this discrepancy might be lack of training. Lee (2008; 2010) emphasizes that in EFL context as teachers regularly concerned with the question of how to integrate best writing practices, including written corrective feedback; therefore, there is a need for teacher training.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study aims to provide insight about teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF in Turkish EFL context. Majority of the participants are in favour of providing students WCF as they believe WCF gives students chance to be aware of their mistakes and prevent them from making the same mistakes again. Instructors also reckon that WCF not only improves students' writing ability but also it has a positive effect on the other aspects of language such as vocabulary and grammar. In addition, all of the participants support the idea that it is instructors' responsibility to correct students' mistakes, especially in EFL context because instructors see themselves as the only ones who are able to provide feedback to students. Moreover, instructors believe students' mistakes may be fossilized unless they give students adequate amount of WCF. However, most of

the instructors do not have specific training on how to, what amount of or when to provide feedback and they usually benefit from their experience by making decisions on WCF. Lee (2010) highlights that there is a gap to fill in teacher education to improve teachers' writing competence and professionalism in evaluating writing products of learners. Thus, teachers need to be given training or institutional guidelines (Pearson, 2018) in order to comprehend how to provide WCF more effectively to learners (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Wang, 2011).

In response to the second research question, four major mismatches between instructors' beliefs and classroom implications were detected. The prominent mismatches occurred between comprehensible versus selective WCF, direct versus indirect WCF, local versus global WCF and institutional correction policy versus personal choices. In the questionnaire and interview sessions, most of the English instructors claimed to be in favour of selective, indirect, global WCF based on the institutional correction policy. Nevertheless, the analysis of actual corrected writing assignments revealed that instructors tended to use comprehensible, direct, local WCF based on their personal choices. When the reasons of inconsistency were asked to the participants of the current study, they asserted the following reasons: (a) time constraints, (b) low level of students, (c) not having a general policy about error correction, (d) fear of not providing enough input and e) motivational issues.

Pedagogically, the results suggest that although instructors believe the importance of WCF in Turkish ELF contexts, there is not a consensus about how to provide WCF. In institutional base, there is a need to have in-service training where instructors can share their personal experiences and decide on a common practice of WCF in their institutions. Additionally, instructors claim that the reason they cannot collect more drafts or use a coding system is heavy workload. Therefore, the curriculum development units in the institutions may decrease the pacing of the writing lessons; therefore, most of the writing tasks can be done in the class instead of assigning as homework. Another important point is reaching a consensus with the students on WCF and explaining them the importance of it. A short training for students at the beginning of the academic year might decrease the number of problems instructors encounter during the year. Finally, the writing task itself seems to be effective in instructors' attitude towards WCF. In the current study, the writing tasks themselves did not involve creating new information but only imitating the examples that were given in the main course book. The nature of tasks affected instructors' way of giving feedback and the value of WCF for students as there was no need focus on global issues. Thus, it might be proposed that using more meaningful and creative writing tasks might increase both students and instructors' attention to writing and WCF.

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