

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Learners' Beliefs and Teachers' Practice of Grammar-focused Written Corrective Feedback in the Malaysian Primary ESL Classrooms: A Pilot Study

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**Abstract:** Written corrective feedback (WCF) is utilized by language teachers to address learners' mistakes in writing. Although WCF studies should strike a balance between the viewpoints of teachers and learners, studies that focused on learners, especially young learners, have been limited. This study investigated Malaysian primary school learners' beliefs of how they would like to receive written corrective feedback to grammatical mistakes (GWCF) in their essays, as well as what teachers actually did when providing GWCF in learners' essays. Findings from the survey showed that the majority of the learners believed all the grammatical mistakes in writing should be indicated and given direct feedback, while analysis of teachers' GWCF provision in learners' essays indicated that all the essays were given comprehensive feedback and the majority of the grammatical mistakes were given direct GWCF. The findings also revealed that the learners' GWCF beliefs aligned with the teachers' actual practice in terms of scope and types. This study hopes to probe primary ESL teachers to reflect on their current feedback practices in the classrooms while the teachers are encouraged to attend more WCF-related training to enhance the quality of feedback provision. Discussions with the learners can also be carried out to source for appropriate forms of GWCF.

**Keywords:** grammar-focused written corrective feedback, primary, teacher, beliefs, practice

Writing is considered an essential skill for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners as it encourages the coordination of fine motor and thinking skills (Steinlen, 2018), and more importantly, it also reinforces the previously acquired language items (Semie, 2020). Furthermore, to ensure the learners can write good pieces of writing in the future, Moses and Mohamad (2019) believed that the mentioned skill should be highlighted as early as primary school. However, Almutairi (2018) opined that writing in a second language (L2) requires much effort to plan and

revise the ideas in writing. Besides, the irregularities of the English language structures are often confusing to L2 learners (Farooq et al., 2012).

Written corrective feedback (WCF) refers to the written comments that are provided by teachers to help their learners write better (Mubarak, 2013). Though WCF is given to various aspects of writing, such as ideas, coherence, and conventions of writing (Sheen et al., 2009), Saeli and Cheng (2019) added that feedback could also be given to the grammatical mistakes found in the learners' writing to improve

the learners' grammar accuracy (hereby referred to as grammar-focused written corrective feedback).

Grammar-focused written corrective feedback (GWCF) can be given according to its scope and types. In terms of scope, a teacher can choose to provide comprehensive (i.e., feedback given to all grammatical mistakes) or selective feedback (i.e., feedback given to not more than five types of selected mistakes) in the learners' writing (Berg, 2020; Saeli & Cheng, 2019). Apart from that, different types of feedback could also be employed by teachers to indicate the learners' grammatical mistakes. For example, the learners' mistakes could be marked directly (i.e., indicate the errors and provide the correct linguistic forms) or indirectly (i.e., indicate the errors without providing the accurate forms; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008).

Past studies conducted in Malaysia have revealed that ESL learners, be it at tertiary (Amiri & Puteh, 2017), secondary (Nair & Liang, 2018), or primary education level (Harun & Abdullah, 2020) find English writing very challenging. Furthermore, among primary school learners, who are considered less proficient (Aoyama, 2020), it has been found that they make mostly grammatical mistakes in writing (Abdullah et al., 2019). This, in turn, emphasizes the need for Malaysian ESL teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of the current grammar instruction as well as the GWCF given on learners' writing.

Although past studies have investigated the feedback beliefs in the secondary (Abdullah & Aziz, 2020) and tertiary educational settings (Nemati et al., 2017; Şakrak-Ekin & Balçıkanlı, 2019), Lira-Gonzales and Nassaji (2020) argued that the findings may not apply to primary school learners since the educational contexts, learners' age, and proficiency levels are all different. Additionally, the existing studies conducted on primary school learners have either concentrated on their feedback beliefs in general (Saeli & Cheng, 2019) or merely on a few selected grammatical errors (i.e., verb, noun, and article errors; Jodaie & Farrokhi, 2012), making it hard to suggest an effective feedback strategy for the teachers. Therefore, more research is needed to fill the knowledge gap in the primary school setting (Cao, 2017).

Aiming to address the research gap mentioned, we conducted this pilot study to investigate the learner (i.e., aged 10 to 11) beliefs and teacher practice of GWCF in the Malaysian primary ESL context. The research objectives (RO) were:

1. To examine Malaysian primary ESL learner beliefs of GWCF.
2. To investigate Malaysian primary ESL teacher practice of GWCF.
3. To compare Malaysian primary ESL learner beliefs and teacher practice of GWCF.

Therefore, knowing what primary school learners believed about the feedback given to each grammatical error may suggest to teachers what primary school learners need in feedback to improve their writing. In terms of the alignment between primary school learner beliefs and teacher practice of feedback, the findings may be able to shed some light to teachers on the different types and scope of feedback that can be given to learners' grammatical errors to enhance learners' feedback uptake and later improve grammar accuracy.

## Literature Review

### *Learner Grammar-Focused Written Corrective Feedback Beliefs*

Although teachers could give different kinds of feedback to help learners notice their writing mistakes, Lee (2008) mentioned that learner factors, such as their beliefs about corrective feedback, may also determine the learners' motivation to engage with the feedback given. For example, Han and Hyland (2015) mentioned that learners may be demotivated and reluctant to accept, retain, or respond to feedback if the feedback is believed to be unhelpful. As beliefs cannot be seen directly (Borg, 2017), questionnaires were often employed by scholars to investigate learners' thoughts and preferences about the feedback given to their writing. However, most of these studies did not involve young learners, probably due to the perception that they are cognitively incapable of understanding their teachers' feedback (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Nevertheless, Wolf and Butler (2017) believed that children aged 9 and above do have the potential to engage with feedback as they can already recognize and deduce language structures.

Sewagegn and Dessie (2020) investigated 474 primary school learners' beliefs on the feedback practice using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire and found that generally, young learners positively perceived the value of feedback while the teachers' feedback was used by the learners to reflect and identify the gaps in

learning. Apart from that, Sewagegn and Dessie (2020) further explained that young learners would appreciate feedback that were “clear, positive and constructive” (p. 350). However, the mentioned research only studied primary school learners’ beliefs about the value of feedback. The study did not attempt to examine learner beliefs on specific aspects of feedback, such as the types and scope of feedback. The absence of this particular knowledge may cause language teachers to continue giving unhelpful feedback to the learners, which might lead to the fossilization of grammatical mistakes in learners’ writing (Plaza, 2020).

Besides, Alshahrani and Storch (2014) found that learners valued teacher feedback on grammatical errors more than other surface-level errors to improve their writing accuracy. However, past studies only investigated the learners’ beliefs of grammatical errors in general (Saeli & Cheng, 2019) or just a few selected grammatical errors (Jodaie & Farrokhi, 2012), leaving the learners’ beliefs on other grammatical errors (i.e., pronoun, determiner, conjunction) undiscovered. Therefore, this study proposed and employed a more comprehensive framework in investigating the primary ESL learners’ beliefs of GWCF.

### ***Teacher Grammar-Focused Written Corrective Feedback Practice***

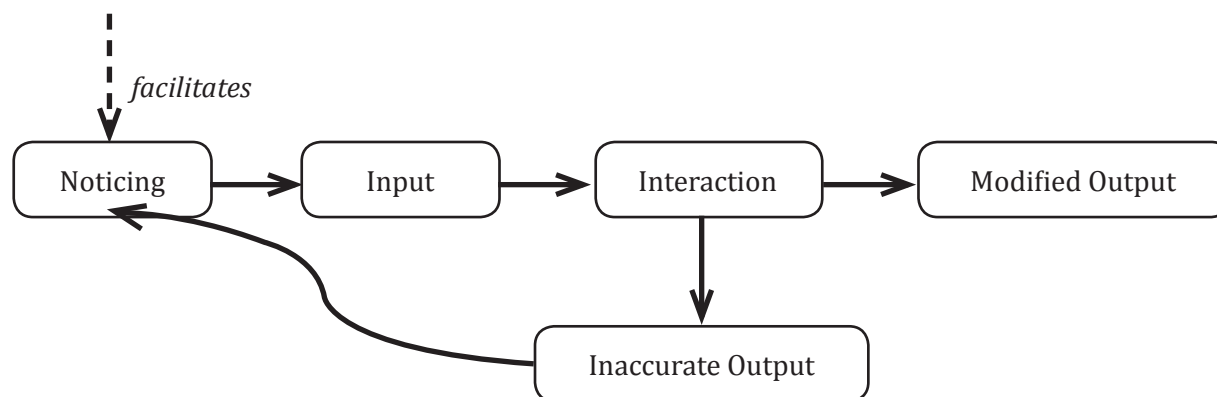
Teacher practice can be defined as “what the teachers do in the language teaching classroom” (Hidayah et al., 2021, p. 3), while in GWCF studies, the term generally refers to the corrective feedback given to the learners’ grammatical mistakes in writing (Saeli & Cheng, 2019). To investigate the teachers’ feedback practice, some scholars have employed pre-

designed error correction tasks for the teachers while others looked into the learners’ previous written work that the teachers have corrected.

Concerning studies on teachers’ feedback practice, there were limited studies about WCF given to grammatical mistakes as most of the studies did not specifically focus on WCF only given to grammatical mistakes, but also other aspects of writing such as coherence, cohesion, and organization of ideas (Alqurashi, 2022; Aquino & Cuello, 2020; Trabelsi, 2021). Furthermore, some of the studies lacked generalizability due to the small number of respondents (Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019), such as the study by Chong (2020), which investigated the feedback practice of only one primary school English teacher in Hong Kong. As only the teacher was interviewed, nothing was known about how the learners felt about the WCF given by their teacher, nor whether there was any alignment between the WCF preferred by the learners and the WCF given by the teacher. Given that learners’ motivation to engage with the received feedback largely depends on the alignment between their beliefs and teachers’ feedback (Zhang & Hyland, 2018), a study that seeks to examine WCF in terms of both its provision by teachers as well as what the learners perceived to be helpful is deemed essential to close this knowledge gap.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Many researchers (Abdullah & Aziz, 2020; Cao, 2017; Zohrabi & Ehsani, 2014) viewed L2 learning from the interactionist theory perspective. In the theory,



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework of Corrective Feedback in Interactionist Theory (Uscinski, 2015)

L2 learning focuses on how the learners interact and get the meaning across to the speakers of a target language (Zhao, 2021). Though the interactionist theory was formerly employed in research involving the learning of L2 speaking skills, it can also be applied to the field of L2 writing (Z. Mao & Lee, 2020). Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of corrective feedback in the interactionist theory.

Concerning feedback provision on the learners' writing, Uscinski (2015) believed that corrective feedback could help direct learners' attention to grammatical mistakes (i.e., inaccurate output) in writing and consequently convert noticing into language input (Schmidt, 1990). Then, the knowledge gap between the inaccurate output and the accurate input from feedback would trigger the learners to interact, such as to restructure and subsequently retest the hypotheses about grammar structures before producing a modified and accurate output (Uscinski, 2015).

## Methodology

The study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to examine learners' beliefs and teachers' provision of GWCF. We administered a questionnaire to collect scaled data about the learners' beliefs of GWCF while the learners' essays were analyzed for teachers' provision of GWCF.

### Participants

Through convenient sampling, we recruited Year 5 English language learners ( $n = 102$ ) from four national primary schools (SK) in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. These learners were around the age of 10 to 11, and were, therefore, young ESL learners. The learners in this study were also considered to have a low English proficiency level. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) target for Malaysian primary education is A2, described as having "basic functional English literacy and some limited ability to communicate in English in familiar social situations" (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015, p. 26).

### Instruments

A questionnaire, adapted from past questionnaires employed in Halimi's (2008), Lee's (2004), and Sewagegn and Dessie's (2020) studies, was constructed

to obtain the learners' beliefs on the scope and types of GWCF. With a Cronbach's alpha value of .871, the questionnaire employed in this study was found to have a high level of internal consistency. Although many researchers were concerned about the reliability of the data collected from young learners using questionnaires, Butler (2018) argued that questionnaires can actually be a suitable tool to obtain information from older children (i.e., above the age of 8) as these learners are capable of assessing their own performance accurately. In addition, to ensure that the learners understood the questionnaire items, one of the researchers stayed with the learners throughout the completion of the questionnaire to provide assistance with any inquiries. Furthermore, the questionnaire was also translated into Malay and Mandarin languages by four independent translators so that learners who were less proficient in English could still understand the questionnaire items. Translation was done following the guidelines for translating and adapting tests provided by the International Test Commission (2017). The two languages were chosen because Malay is the official language in Malaysia, whereas Mandarin is the primary language spoken by the Chinese, the second largest ethnic group in the country.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections, namely Section A and B. Section A consisted of five items that were aimed at gathering the respondents' demographic data (e.g., gender, ethnicity). Section B comprised 31 items that sought to find out the respondents' various beliefs about the scope and types of GWCF. The respondents had to select the option(s) that best represented their beliefs on GWCF as well as to indicate their level of agreement with the given statements, using a rating scale (i.e., 1 for *strongly disagree* to 5 for *strongly agree*). Five items were used to examine the learners' beliefs in terms of scope. The learners were asked regarding the needs of GWCF as well as the appropriate amount of feedback that should be received from the teachers. Apart from that, a total of 26 items were used to gauge the learners' beliefs on the types of feedback that should be given to their written work. Furthermore, as an extension to Jodaie and Farrokhi's study (2012), the learners in this study were also asked about the feedback types that should be given to the grammatical mistakes in eight parts of speech (i.e., noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, preposition, adverb, determiner, and conjunction) identified by Aarts and Haegeman (2021).

Besides, by employing Rajagopal's (2015) approach in analyzing teachers' feedback practice, 102 learners' essays were collected to identify whether the teachers marked the learners' writing comprehensively or selectively, and whether the learners' grammatical mistakes were given direct or indirect GWCF. The data collected were recorded using an analysis form.

### ***Data Collection Procedures***

The research had the approval from the university committee and the Malaysian Ministry of Education, as well as permission from each school prior to data collection. The whole data collection took a week.

At each research site, both the teachers and learners received a research briefing, followed by immediate distribution of questionnaires to the teachers. However, because the learners were minors, consent forms were initially provided to their guardians or parents through the learners. The learners were instructed to return the signed forms on the following day. Subsequently, questionnaires were distributed to learners who had obtained parental consent to participate in the research.

The questionnaire cover page outlined information on the research aim, objectives, and ethical considerations, particularly regarding anonymity and voluntariness. Participants were given explicit information that they could choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any point. Only participants who provided informed consent proceeded to respond to the questionnaire items. All surveys were anonymous.

After the filled questionnaires were submitted, the teachers and learners were informed that their essays would be collected for the purpose of the study, aiming to capture teachers' GWCF. Permission was sought from both the teachers and the learners to collect one essay from each learner for analysis. The essays were the learners' first draft of the essays that followed the latest English Paper 2 Section C format in the Primary School Achievement Test (UPSR) in Malaysia. Photos of their essays ( $n=102$ ) were taken, and the essays were then returned to the learners.

### ***Data Analysis Procedures***

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22 was used to present the data collected from the questionnaire and the analysis form

in terms of frequency statistics (i.e., raw counts and percentages). Frequency statistics was chosen in this study due to its suitability for displaying the discrete data collected from various sources (Larson, 2006).

The scaled data obtained from the questionnaire (i.e., feedback scope) were recoded (i.e., 1 to 3 were recoded as *No*, 4 to 5 were recoded as *Yes*). Likewise, the learners' beliefs on the feedback types (i.e., direct feedback, indirect feedback) for each part of speech were also identified. Frequency statistics was obtained and presented.

As for the analysis form to record teachers' GWCF, the learners' essays were first checked for GWCF scope (i.e., comprehensive feedback, selective feedback). Essays in which feedback was given to all types of grammatical mistakes were recorded as being given comprehensive GWCF. In contrast, essays whereby feedback was provided to not more than five types of grammatical mistakes were then considered as being given selective GWCF.

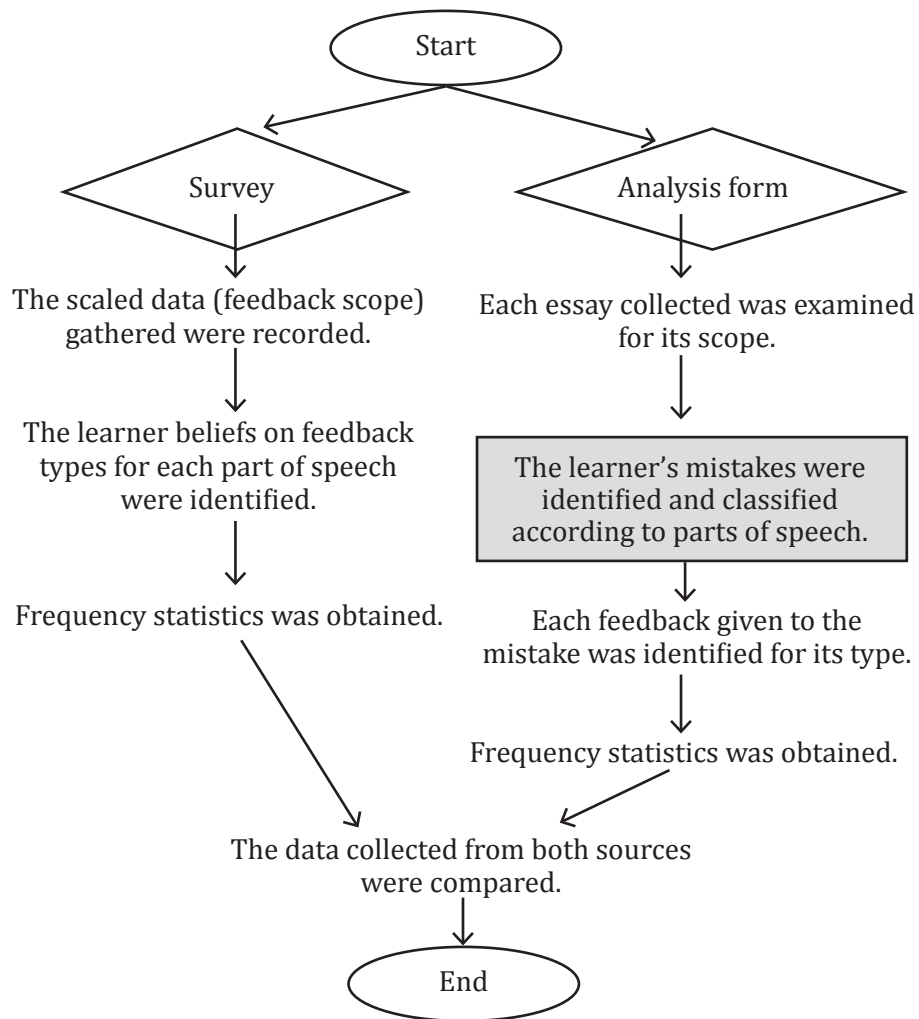
The next analysis stage of teachers' GWCF was the classification of GWCF based on type—direct GWCF or indirect GWCF. The grammatical mistakes were identified based on parts of speech, and subsequently, the GWCF provided was categorized as either direct or indirect GWCF. Frequency counts were then calculated for the total number of grammatical mistakes committed by the learners, direct GWCF, and indirect GWCF provided to the mistakes.

To investigate the alignment between learners' beliefs about GWCF and teachers' GWCF practice, the data obtained from the survey and the analysis form were compared. Figure 2 shows the summary of data analysis procedures.

## **Findings**

### ***Malaysian Primary ESL Learner GWCF Beliefs***

The findings for the learners' demographic data (Table 1) showed that there were 51 male (50.0%) and 51 female (50.0%) learners participating in this study. In terms of ethnicity, the majority of the learners (52.9%) were Chinese, a minority of the learners (31.4%) indicated that they spoke English at home, whereas the rest conversed in their respective mother tongue at home.



*Figure 2.* Data Analysis Procedures

**Table 1**

*Summary of Learners' Demographic Data*

Learners' demographic data	Response	n	%
Gender	Male	51	50.0
	Female	51	50.0
Ethnicity	Chinese	54	52.9
	Iban	17	16.7
	Malay	16	15.7
	Bidayuh	8	7.8
	Bisaya	5	4.9
	Kedayan	1	1.0
	Lun Bawang	1	1.0

*Note.* n = number of learners

Findings for the learners' beliefs on feedback scope revealed that 63 learners (61.8%) believed that feedback should be given to all the grammatical mistakes in their writing (i.e., comprehensive feedback), whereas 45 learners (44.1%) believed that their teachers should only provide feedback on a few targeted grammatical mistakes in writing (i.e., selective feedback; Table 2).

With regards to the types of feedback, although there were variations in percentages for learners' preferences to receive direct or indirect GWCF based on the different parts of speech, majority of them (i.e.,

at least more than 69% of the participants) believed grammatical mistakes should be given only direct GWCF (i.e., feedback with corrections provided; Table 3).

### *Malaysian Primary ESL Teacher Practice of GWCF*

Analysis of the 102 learner essays indicated that all the essays (100.0%) were given comprehensive GWCF (Table 4). None (0.0%) was given selective feedback.

**Table 2**

*Learners' Beliefs of GWCF Scope*

GWCF scope	Response	n	%
Comprehensive	Yes	63	61.8
	No	39	38.2
Selective	Yes	45	44.1
	No	57	55.9

Note. n = number of learners

**Table 3**

*Learners' Beliefs of GWCF Types According to Parts of Speech*

Parts of speech	Response	n	%
Noun	Only direct GWCF	83	<b>81.4</b>
	Only indirect GWCF	11	10.8
	Both	8	7.8
Verb	Only direct GWCF	78	<b>76.5</b>
	Only indirect GWCF	16	15.7
	Both	8	7.8
Adjective	Only direct GWCF	71	<b>69.6</b>
	Only indirect GWCF	20	19.6
	Both	11	10.8
Preposition	Only direct GWCF	82	<b>80.4</b>
	Only indirect GWCF	13	12.7
	Both	7	6.9
Adverb	Only direct GWCF	85	83.3
	Only indirect GWCF	11	10.8
	Both	6	5.9
Determiner	Only direct GWCF	73	<b>71.6</b>
	Only indirect GWCF	20	19.6
	Both	9	8.8
Conjunction	Only direct GWCF	85	83.3
	Only indirect GWCF	6	5.9
	Both	11	10.8

Note. n = number of learners

**Table 4***GWCF Scope (Comprehensive and Selective) Provided by Teachers*

GWCF Scope	n	%
Comprehensive	102	100.0
Selective	0	0.0

Note. n = number of essays

**Table 5***GWCF Types (Direct and Indirect) Given to Mistakes According to Parts of Speech*

Parts of speech	Direct GWCF	Indirect GWCF	Total GWCF
Noun	124	16	140
Pronoun	40	10	50
Verb	269	32	301
Adjective	11	0	11
Preposition	89	13	102
Adverb	22	10	32
Determiner	114	16	130
Conjunction	27	2	29
Total	696	99	795

Examination of learners' mistakes showed that 880 grammatical mistakes were made. However, out of the 880 grammatical mistakes, GWCF was given to 795 grammatical mistakes, in which direct GWCF was given to 696 grammatical mistakes, whereas indirect GWCF was given to 99 grammatical mistakes (Table 5). In addition, the findings also showed that direct GWCF was predominantly given, irrespective of the part of speech the mistake belonged to.

#### ***Comparison Between Malaysian Primary ESL Learner Beliefs and Teacher Practice of GWCF***

Comparison of GWCF scope (i.e., comprehensive feedback, selective feedback) and GWCF type (i.e., direct feedback, indirect feedback) between what the learners believe were useful and the GWCF provided by the teachers indicated that there was alignment between learner beliefs and teacher practice of GWCF. Generally, there was a marked preference for comprehensive and direct GWCF (Tables 2 & 3), and these were also the GWCF primarily given by their teachers (Tables 4 & 5).

## **Discussion**

### ***Malaysian Primary ESL Learner Beliefs of GWCF***

In terms of feedback scope, the findings of the study revealed the majority of Malaysian primary ESL learners believed that all their grammatical mistakes in writing should be provided feedback by their teachers (i.e., comprehensive feedback). In fact, the results concurred with the findings of past GWCF studies at both secondary (Jodaie et al., 2011) and tertiary (Saeli & Cheng, 2019) educational levels. A possible explanation for choosing comprehensive feedback could be due to the learners' age and proficiency level (Saeli & Cheng, 2019). Being young learners and not very proficient in the language (Aoyama, 2020), they might be highly dependent on their teachers to point out their mistakes. As stated by Saeli and Cheng (2019), learners with low levels of proficiency require more scaffolding and, hence, are in greater need of their teachers' guidance.

As for feedback types, the findings also showed that the majority of the Malaysian primary ESL learners



wanted to be given direct feedback as opposed to indirect feedback, regardless of the part of speech the mistake belonged to. Preference for direct feedback was also reported in several past related studies (Halimi, 2008; Jodaie et al., 2011; Saeli & Cheng, 2019). Again, possibly due to the learners' age and proficiency level, they might perceive they would benefit more from explicit feedback because mistakes were corrected by their teacher, leaving no ambiguity on what the corrected form should be (Ng & Ishak, 2018). Moreover, another advantage of receiving direct feedback is its potential to stimulate the learners' visual memory of accurate grammar structures, preventing them from committing similar mistakes in the future (Jodaie et al., 2011).

### ***Malaysian Primary ESL Teacher Practice of GWCF***

Analysis of teachers' provision of GWCF indicated that in all essays, feedback was provided for all grammatical mistakes (i.e., comprehensive feedback). The teachers in the study could have perceived it as their responsibility and duty to provide feedback on all their learners' grammatical mistakes (Rajagopal, 2015). They might view leaving out some grammatical mistakes unmarked as conveying the wrong impression that the structures were correct, thereby failing to direct the learners' attention to the mistakes and the need to correct them. The same sentiment was also expressed by Hidayah et al. (2021), claiming that teachers considered an important role they should play was as feedback providers to improve learners' grammar accuracy in writing. This aspect of the findings implied that feedback provided by teachers is not only a method of drawing learners' attention to the mistakes they make in their writing but is also regarded as an integral teaching tool.

In terms of feedback types, analysis of the teachers' feedback showed that most of them were direct feedback. This finding contradicted that of several past studies conducted at secondary (Mahmud, 2016) and tertiary (Purnomo et al., 2021; Şakrak-Ekin & Balçıkanlı, 2019) education levels. In the aforementioned studies, indirect feedback was the more prominent type of feedback given by teachers. The different educational levels of the learners could be a factor for the discrepancy in findings between the present study and those in past studies because Mulati et al. (2020) pointed out that young learners require

more support from their teachers. As such, the teachers in the present study might assess their learners as incapable of identifying and correcting their mistakes in writing, and, therefore, would need and expect their teachers to provide direct GWCF.

### ***Comparison Between Malaysian Primary ESL Learner Beliefs and the Teacher Practice of GWCF***

The findings showed an alignment between learners' beliefs and teacher practice of GWCF in two aspects: scope of feedback and type of feedback. Teachers were found to give mostly comprehensive and direct feedback, which were preferred by the learners. In a study by Şakrak-Ekin and Balçıkanlı (2019), the reasons quoted by teachers for their decisions to use comprehensive and direct feedback were to accommodate learners' proficiency levels and the lack of time required to go through learners' subsequent drafts. As such, the teachers in the present study could also have the same reasons for their GWCF practice, perceiving their learners to require help from teachers to identify and correct their mistakes, as well as to save time from having to re-mark their subsequent drafts several times due to grammatical mistakes. As argued by Sujarwati et al. (2019), direct feedback also has the advantage of making learners pay attention to the correct answers, hence reinforcing the correct structures and avoiding the fossilization of mistakes. With direct feedback, learners are also able to immediately notice where the mistake is and the corresponding correct form or structure, thus closing learners' knowledge gap in the language (Uscinski, 2015).

However, it is also noteworthy that although most of the learners in the study opted to have comprehensive and direct feedback, about 45% of them still favored selected feedback, and approximately 20% to 30% of the learners thought they preferred to receive either a mixture of both direct and indirect feedback, or only indirect feedback, depending on the parts of speech in which the mistakes occurred. By contrast, none of the essays was provided with selective feedback, and none of the adjectival mistakes were given indirect feedback. This finding suggests there may be a need for teachers to consider the heterogeneity of learners' wants and preferences. Even though the learners in the study were young learners and regarded as learners with a low level of English proficiency, some could be of higher proficiency levels and could correct

the mistakes themselves without the need for their teachers' help (Berg, 2022).

Nevertheless, no interviews were conducted, and therefore, it was not possible to determine the actual reasons why such feedback was preferred by the learners nor why the teachers chose to give feedback that way. In addition, teachers' feedback practice was determined based solely on learners' essays, which might not capture other ways of providing feedback. Further research could include both learner and teacher interviews to identify the actual reasons behind learners' preference and teachers' provision of GWCF, as well as whether there were other methods of providing GWCF.

## Conclusion

This pilot study looked at the learners' beliefs and teachers' practice of GWCF (i.e., feedback scope and feedback types) in the Malaysian primary ESL context. The findings revealed that most of the learners believed all grammatical mistakes in writing should be indicated (i.e., given comprehensive feedback), and that the feedback should be direct or explicit. When the learners' beliefs of GWCF were compared to teachers' practice of GWCF, there was an alignment between them, that is, majority of the teachers were found to also provide comprehensive and direct GWCF.

Despite the study's limitations of having a small sample size and relying solely on learners' essays to analyze teachers' GWCF, it still provides valuable insights into the perspective of young ESL learners regarding their teachers' feedback and what teachers do when providing GWCF to their learners. The findings revealed that although there was a general congruence between learner beliefs and teacher practice of GWCF, a sizeable percentage of learners were found to favor selective feedback, and some wanted to be given indirect or a combination of both direct and indirect feedback. This implies that teachers may have to continuously assess their learners' level of proficiency to decide the scope and type of GWCF that will most benefit their learners. This may also require a shift in the teachers' perceptions about their learners' level of dependency on their teachers to provide corrections in their writing, which could be a challenge as culturally, Malaysian teachers tend to spoon-feed their learners (Tay & Saleh, 2020).

In conclusion, this study has contributed to a better understanding of GWCF in the primary ESL context. By revealing the beliefs of Malaysian primary ESL learners on GWCF, as well as the current GWCF practice of teachers, this study hopes to probe teachers to reflect on their current feedback provision in the classrooms. The findings of the study suggest that teachers may need to vary their feedback styles to cater to learners' different needs and to train them to be engaging learners who are responsible for their own learning. This is especially crucial because comprehensive direct feedback is more likely to produce passive learners (Alkhatib, 2015), and it is also time-consuming for the teachers (Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). The findings of the study also imply the importance of teacher-learner communication about GWCF so that teachers are able to provide effective yet less demanding feedback (Wei & Cao, 2020), and for teachers to attend WCF-related trainings so that they can be exposed to various feedback methods in the effort to improve feedback quality (Alqurashi, 2022). Although this study focuses on examining learner beliefs and teacher practice of GWCF in the Malaysian primary ESL context, the study will also be relevant to teachers in the Asian Pacific region, especially in countries that share similar cultural and educational characteristics with Malaysia and where English is used as a second or foreign language.

## Declaration of Ownership

This report is our original work.

## Conflict of Interest

None.

## Ethical Clearance

This study was approved by our institution.

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