

# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN ENHANCING EFL LEARNERS' WRITING PERFORMANCES : A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Qiu Li, Suyansah Swanto and Noraini Binti Said

**Abstract – Purpose:** Therefore, this paper explores the effectiveness of corrective feedback from English teachers on EFL learners' English writing performances. To be precise, it will explain how do teacher's assessment and feedback affect EFL learners' English grammar learning through English writing performances. **Methodology:** the research adopts questionnaire survey and tests to have an empirical study. The experiment lasts for ten weeks with one hundred participants who are divided into two groups (one with corrective feedback and the other does not), thus comparing the differences of their English grammar via English writing performances to extract the effectiveness of TSCA and CBI-based model in English writing teaching. **Major findings:** The research has found that the corrective feedback based on TSCA and CBI could effectively improve grammar learning of students in English writing performances. **Applications:** The innovative point of this paper lies in improving the accuracy of grammar rule usage of students and their writing levels via teacher's corrective feedback assessment. It will provide a new model for grammar learning for EFL students. **Novelty:** This study combines both TSCA and CBI together to explore the effectiveness of corrective feedback on the grammar learning of students in English writing performances. It will supplement the limitations of the current studies and remedy the possible drawbacks of TSCA, thus providing a new teaching mode for English grammar learning.

**Keywords –** English writing, corrective feedback, direct feedback, indirect feedback

## I. INTRODUCTION

English writing is one of the most important aspects of assessing students' English comprehensive competence and writing competence. English writing is taken as a significant target of English teaching curriculum in China.

However, English writing is a weakness for students in China, especially those who have poor English levels and low interests in English study. The main reason of Chinese students in learning English lies in their mistake-making in English writing. Some of them use vague expressions and make mistakes in writing, especially grammar mistakes. Hence, to study the errors made by students in English writing is good for both the learning of students and the teaching of teacher. However, to find errors or mistakes is not the final target, to provide proper feedback and reduce mistakes made by students in English writing is the final purpose of English study.

Qiu Li: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia (lucy8648@163.com).  
Suyansah Swanto, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia (suyansah@ums.edu.my).

Noraini Binti Said, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia (noraini.idris@ums.edu.my)

Corrective feedback is taken as significant in language study. Corrective feedback is a hot spot studied by the research on second language acquisition and classroom teaching research. Theories and empirical studies on corrective feedback have gained achievements at home and abroad. For years, its effectiveness in second language acquisition is studied. As whether the written corrective feedback has positive effects on students or not, it is a topic discussed for quite a long time. However, most studies are based on ordinary classroom teaching. Former studies think corrective feedback could help learners to acquire and master the forms and structure of target language. However, Truscott argues that corrective feedback is harmful, because there is no related evidences to prove that corrective feedback could always help learners to improve their writing accuracy as time went by. Scholars represented by Ferris have made a series of researches with the intention of opposing Truscott's viewpoints that corrective feedback is not effective to students' second language learning in writing. While these foreign scholars' studies do not suit for domestic EFL learners. For the studies about the effectiveness of corrective feedback on EFL English writing, there are fewer studies on it. Hence, this provides space for doing the research. Based on the former studies, this paper tries to use empirical study to explore the effectiveness of corrective feedback on students' English writing.

## II METHODOLOY

### 2.1 Identification

#### 1) The Concept of TSCA

TSCA were better in such that it can point out the key points of assessment. During the TSCA process, students are instructed on how to find error points in the passage and correct them. Through repeated practice and assessment taking place, students' ability to process authentic language material will be improved. Students' insights, perspectives and thinking can also be continually broadened in the process, thus TSCA contributes to students' all-round development (Wen, 2017). Secondly, peer assessment and self-assessment can stimulate students' interest. The TSCA process covers a variety of assessment methods, enriching the form of teaching and learning in the classroom, which will help motivate students to learn the language. Peer assessment allows students to deepen their interaction with their peers and helps them to develop good social skills and teamwork. Under the professional guidance of the teacher, students develop and master the skills of self-assessment, which

will help them to develop their independence (Sun, 2017). Thirdly, TSCA combined 'learning' and 'assessment'. The core concept of TSCA is to break down the boundaries between 'learning' and 'assessment'; TSCA enables students to learn from the assessment process, which allows language learning to be deepened. Fourthly, TSCA has high applicability in ESL classroom learning. As an innovative approach to assessment, the TSCA concepts and procedures are highly adaptable. In addition to writing assessment, TSCA can also be used for written and oral assessment. In writing assessment, TSCA can replace the traditional mode of assessment and compensate for the time-consuming and inefficient disadvantages of traditional assessment methods. Overall, TSCA is an effective way to improve students' writing, to stimulate a positive attitude towards learning and even to promote a balanced development of the whole student.

## 2) The Concept of Corrective Feedback

In second language acquisition, feedback refers to the information for learners to correct the interlanguage. This feedback could be the feedback to positive information or the negative information at the same time. According to Lightbown, positive information refers to the information which conforms to the grammar of target language. Negative information refers to the direct or indirect information which expresses information that is not acceptable by the target language. Through corrective feedback, negative information indicates learners that they have used the target language wrongly.

Corrective feedback could be oralize and written. Oralize corrective feedback refers to the timely correction from teacher to students' mistakes in general classroom environment. Written corrective feedback refers to the written guidance from teacher to students in the non-classroom environment. In language teaching, especially in English writing teaching, the written corrective feedback is widely used. Therefore, the corrective feedback studied in this paper belongs to the written corrective feedback in English writing teaching.

According to Ferris, written corrective feedback could be divided into direct and indirect ones. Direct feedback is also called as explicit feedback which not only clears up the mistakes made by students, but also provides the right form of target language.

Direct corrective feedback usually has two manners, one is to provide right forms rather than understanding the reasons causing mistake; another is to provide right forms of target language with explanation. Indirect feedback is also called as implicit feedback which means teachers giving some wrong clues to use different strategies for students to correct rather than offering the right form of words or phrases and structure of the target language. To summarize, direct feedback of corrective feedback refers to teacher's provision of accurate language form and structure near the linguistic mistakes of students in writing practice, such as moving the unnecessary words and phrases, inserting the missed words or phrases, and so on.

Indirect corrective feedback refers to teacher's clues about the linguistic mistakes made by learners, such as providing meta-language explanation, circling the mistakes, recording mistake quantity in the blank, using

symbols to tell students the place and types of mistakes they have made, and so on. Being different from the direct form of corrective feedback, in indirect corrective feedback, teachers do not directly provide accurate language forms to students, they just intend to stimulate student's attentions about the mistakes they have made and thus correct these mistakes by themselves.

Indirect corrective feedback mainly refers to circling and labeling mistakes for arousing students' attentions. The direct corrective feedback mainly refers to teacher's direct point-out of mistakes in students' English writing. The research intends to explore the effectiveness of direct corrective feedback and indirect corrective feedback with circle of mistakes and annotation, specific feedback on writing contents from direct corrective feedback and the general feedback through indirect manner.

Scholars have studied different types of corrective feedback. Corrective feedback in English writing could be divided into different types according to different standards. There are conversational and written corrective feedback according to different modes; and there are positive and negative corrective feedback according to feedback contents. According to the mode of corrective feedback, there are direct and indirect modes. According to feedback focus forms, there are content corrective feedback and form corrective feedback. Form feedback also includes focus and non-focus corrective feedback.

In this research, the author mainly studies the written corrective feedback with direct and indirect manners.

## 3) The Concept of CBI (Content-based Instruction)

CBI is an approach to language teaching that emphasises that content should be based on what students are expected to acquire, rather than on a language syllabus, and incorporates knowledgeable topics, content and topics of interest to students in order to improve both subject and language knowledge (Liu, 2012). CBI is a model of teaching that integrates language theory with language practice. The pedagogical philosophy of this model replaces the focus from the form of language to the use of language meaning, thus reducing students' learning anxiety and achieving the goal of developing and improving language skills while learning language knowledge (Zou, 2019).

### 2.2 Screening

Truscott and his colleagues think that written corrective feedback has no help to improve the accuracy of learners' writing. Another part of scholars such as Ellis, Ferris and Chandler, they have done empirical studies and found that corrective feedback is effective to the EFL learners' English writing; and the effectiveness of corrective feedback differs due to different forms of corrective feedback. These studies are empirical but have many restraints in experiment design, such as no controlling groups. Ferris and Roberts' study has designed controlling group as reference, while the study results were based on the comparison between the rate of correctness before and after revising the original writing rather than the correctness rate of the target language structure in the original writing and the new writing through corrective feedback. As a result, effectiveness of

corrective feedback on the English writing performances of EFL learners in the new discourse context are not confirmed.

Scholars who support the effectiveness of indirect corrective feedback, such as Ferris and Helt (2000), they argue that indirect corrective feedback guide students to participate in the learning and problem solution process to foster reflection and be beneficial to the enhancement of long-term language acquisition. Some scholars also think that direct corrective feedback is more beneficial to learners, who may fail to understand the meaning of symbols provided by teachers through indirect feedback, and direct corrective feedback could solve this confusion. Besides, the direct corrective feedback could help learners to solve some complicated problems easily, such as the syntax structure and use of proverbs, and so on.

Through analyzing previous literature on each assessment, it shows that each has its own strengths and weaknesses and may be able to compensate for each other. There is no substitute for teacher feedback, as it is more emotionally accessible to students than other forms of feedback. Therefore, neither peer assessment, self-assessment nor automated computer assessment can be separated from teacher leadership and training. While teacher feedback is effective, teachers have limited capacity to provide detailed feedback assessments for each student in large classes. This disadvantage can be remedied by combining teacher assessment with peer assessment, self-assessment, and automated computer assessment. Other assessment methods can be made more effective in the classroom with clear instructions, instruction, and supervision from the teacher. The empirical studies described above show that the use of a combined assessment model is more effective than the use of a single assessment model. Based on these findings a research base has been laid for the development of TSCA. There is no denying that TSCA is a new trend.

Teaching English grammar in the CBI model can enhance high school students' motivation and interest in learning grammar and can help students to better understand and apply English grammar. In addition, English grammar teaching under the CBI model can also help high school students improve their grammar performance and English general English proficiency (Chen, 2016). The concept of CBI was first introduced in the 1960s and 1970s and the main foreign researchers include Leaver B. & Stryker S., Briton D., M. Snow & M. Wesche, Kasper L., Dupuy B., Mohan and Chumpavan (Zhang, 2011). The earliest research on the content of CBI in China was a paper by Wang, S. (1994) in Foreign Language World titled "CBI - A Method for Teaching Professional Reading", which theoretically explored the possibility of applying the CBI teaching model in foreign language teaching in China. The concept of CBI has attracted The concept of CBI has attracted a great deal of attention from academics, and many scholars have conducted research on CBI-related content, including Liu, X. & Cai, Y. (1997), Lee, L. (2002), Cai, J. (2002), Yu, L. & Han, J. (2003), Dai, Q. (2004), Yuan, P. (2008), Chang, J. et al. et al (2008). The main research direction of these scholars is how to integrate the concept of CBI into special-purpose English or bilingual teaching. Chinese

scholars have first focused on language teaching and the development of students' language skills regarding the application of CBI in English language education in higher education, with representative studies including Gao, L. (2009), Chang & Xia. (2011). Both studies provide support for the positive effects of CBI on students' language presence.

### **2.3 Eligibility**

The field of ESL writing in local contexts, writing theories that influenced classroom instruction, the study of TSCA and Content-Based Instruction, and finally traits of struggling ESL learners and writers have all been covered in this chapter.

Research and previous literature have confirmed that teaching writing is a difficult task. Writing is complex because it involves problem-solving and developing strategies to achieve writing goals, which is a cognitively demanding process (Liberty & Conderman, 2018). Writing instruction in ESL classrooms in China has previously been found to be pragmatic, with a strong emphasis on language components like grammar and the idea that writing is a procedural skill. Understanding the theories that have shaped the writing process and the strategies used in it are necessary for developing a successful module.

It can be concluded from the information gathering and discussion that low English proficiency learners' or writers' needs needed to be addressed to overcome the difficulties they encountered when it came to writing in English. When motivating students to write in a variety of contexts, strategy instructions and self-regulation techniques have been shown to be effective. Previous studies did, however, highlight the dearth of qualitative investigation into the participants' experiences. The abundance of prior research and literature on EFL writing and strategy instruction in various contexts, particularly China, emphasizes the need for a process writing appropriate, strategy-based intervention or instructional module that teachers could use to direct and assist China EFL writers in developing their writing abilities.

### **2.4 Data Extraction and Analysis**

SPSS software is used to do statistical analysis on the testing performances of students. To investigate whether students have paid attention to the corrective feedback and their attitudes towards corrective feedback, the questionnaire mainly has four questions, questionnaire questions for each group of the experiment are different. While doing statistic, the frequency of each group in choosing options of the questions are recorded, proportion between groups will be recorded as well. Effective questionnaire recovery is 100%.

## **III RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **3.1 Background Information of the Studies**

#### **1) Samples**

Research subjects are EFL learners from college. These learners are English majors from three natural classes. Most of them have more than six years' English study. The three classes are divided into three groups.

Group one receives the direct corrective feedback, group two receives the indirect corrective feedback, and group three is the controlling group without any corrective feedback at all.

Within three months, the research adopts the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test to compare the English writing performances represented by the accuracy of using past tense and past perfect tense of EFL learners. There are three groups with 100 students in total. All research subjects will participate in the questionnaire survey and the pre-test, the timely-test after one week and the delayed post-test after ten weeks.

## 2) Selection of Participants

The sample for this study is the students of AA University, which is a more focused sample and may have a low generalization. Secondly, the time constraint resulted in a short experimental period, which may have led to shortcomings in the findings. In addition, there is currently a lack of existing research on the topic of the effects of combining TSCA and CBI on the writing ability of EFL students. More scholar discussed the validity of TSCA alone or CBI alone. Therefore, there may be a situation where the researches cannot be validated.

The student samples in this research are English learners with middle levels, the non-real English environment from external has little impact on the students' ability of correcting grammar mistakes on their own. Therefore, direct corrective feedback to students is easier to pay attention to the wrong expression and its gap with target language expression, especially those complicated mistakes like grammar rules, the use of idioms and word selection, and so on. Compared with direct corrective feedback, indirect corrective feedback in group 2 has lower improvement in writing performances, while compared with controlling group which has no feedback. The group 2 with indirect corrective feedback has gained significant progress. As the research has adopted mother language to do indirect corrective feedback on students' English writing, it avoids students' difficulty in failing to understand feedback made by grammar terms and symbols, and thus greatly decreases bad factors in operating the effectiveness of indirect corrective feedback on students' English writing performances.

## 3) Levels of Proficiency

Table one is the total sample descriptive statistic on the level proficiency of three groups.

TABLE 1. SAMPLE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTIC

Group	NO.	Pretest		Timely post-test		Delayed post-test	
		Mean	Std. D	Mean	Std. D	Mean	Std. D
Group 1	35	54.91	6.06	74.69	5.16	73.97	5.53
Group 2	32	54.38	5.48	68.78	5.85	67.22	4.70
Group 3	33	52.64	4.78	52.61	4.94	53.27	4.94
Total	100	53.99	5.51	65.83	10.90	64.95	10.06

Through the above table, it can see that the accuracy

rate of students in using past tense and past perfection tense is not high, this shows that most students have not master the use of English past tense and past perfection tense. Thus, the participants could be samples of the research.

Test of grammar target structure lies in the right use of past tense and past perfection tense. The reason why the research selects the two tenses in English writing performances of EFL learners is that most EFL learners have contacted with them, and they know the basic concepts of the two tenses. Besides, the two tenses are frequently used in oral English, English reading and English writing. The two tenses are quite different from that of it in Chinese, and has brought barriers for many EFL learners, and the mistake-making rate of the two tenses is very high in the process of English writing.

## 3.2 Research Objectives

To fill the gap, the objective of current study is to investigate the effectiveness of applying CBI strategy to promote students' grammar learning in/based on TSCA. Specifically, objectives of the research are as follows:

First, the difficulties concerning students' grammar learning will be identified and discussed through questionnaire

Second, the strengths and limitations in TSCA for grammar learning will be identified in literature review.

Third, the effectiveness of CBI in promoting grammar learning in in TSCA will be analyzed by statistics collected via questionnaire and interview.

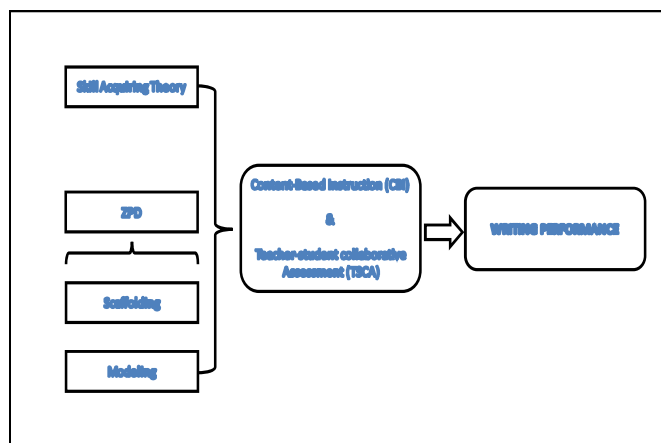
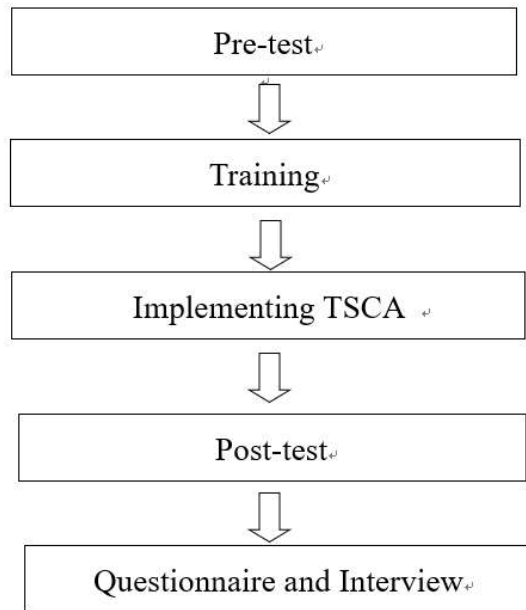
## 3.3 Research Process

The research has three stages:

In the first stage, the three groups will have a pre-test. In the second stage, different corrective feedback are provided according to different groups in the experiment, and controlling group has no corrective feedback at all. After one week, the pre-test is returned.

In the third stage, the three groups have delayed post-test. In the fourth stage, timely post-test is returned to students after one week. The experiment groups mark mistakes and correct according to the feedback from teacher. In the fifth stage, after ten weeks, the three groups of the experiment will do delayed post-test, which is not informed to students. And this action avoid affecting the scores of students while reviewing the former feedback or target language structure. In the sixth stage, the author collects experiment data and questionnaire date to do related analysis according to the research objects.

The difficulty levels of the three tests are basically the same, and data is calculated by proportion. The blank filling belongs to objective questions with fifteen items, each of the question scores 2 points, and accounts for 30% of the total scores. Translation from Chinese to English accounts for 30% of the test scores and translation scores are calculated by the accuracy of grammar rule application. Writing accounts for 40% with calculation of the proportion of using target grammar accurately. Writing elements like contents and structure and rhetoric are excluded.



### 3.4 Features and Outcomes of Interventions

#### 3.4.1 Features of Interventions

The research lasts for ten weeks with one hundred students who take part in the writing teaching experiment and questionnaire survey to explore the corrective feedback and its effectiveness on English writing performances.

The participants are divided into three groups, group one receives direct feedback with right answer reference. Group two receive indirect feedback with meta-language information. The controlling group receive no feedback at all.

According to the different types of groups, the research adopts different forms of corrective feedback. The controlling group receives no feedback in the experiment, while the direct corrective feedback group and the indirect corrective feedback group will receive different forms of corrective feedback accordingly before and after the tests.

When teachers provide feedback, they only correct the mistakes related to past tense and past perfection tense without handling other mistakes in learners' English writing. Group with direct corrective feedback marks with symbols and accurate forms of writing. Group with

indirect corrective feedback also marks the mistakes and provides meta-language clues without providing the direct right forms of phrases or words. While providing meta-language clues, to avoid learners in failing to understand the grammar terms and labels, it adopts mother language-Chinese.

Example:

Direct corrective feedback: he studied had studied English for five years before he came here.

Indirect corrective feedback: he studied English for five years before he came here (came here)

The written corrective feedback to EFL learners' English writing are provided to them by the form of word revision mode.

The testing method: The forms of three tests of the research are the same, and testing forms are blank filling, translation and writing. The blank filling asks learners to finish sentence making according to the given word. The translation exercise asks students to translate Chinese sentences into English ones.

The writing task is as follows: with clear picture and contents attached, with simple topic and guarantee of enough target language expression; the topic in the picture needs to use target language structure to express, which are the past tense and past perfection tense. Writing task has certain clues, such as what happened yesterday? What causes the happening? For guaranteeing students with enough target language expression, some verbs are given as reference.

To guarantee the same difficulty of three tests, while designing tests, the author adopts parallel tests. Each type of the questions are revised in rhetoric, for instance:

Pre-test: he \_\_\_ (study) English for five years before he came here.

Timely post- test: I \_\_\_ (learn) playing piano for six years before my mother bought me a piano.

Delayed post-test: She \_\_\_ (set up) her own company before she graduated from the university.

The proportion between past tense and past perfection tense is 1:1. each student is asked to finish the above tests within 45 minutes.

#### 3.4.2 Outcomes of Interventions

##### 1) Results of the Questionnaire

Questionnaire investigation

Question 1, Can you understand the corrective feedback given by teacher English writing?

TABLE II. INVESTIGATION ABOUT THE CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON ENGLISH WRITING

Options	Frequency	Intra-group proportion	Total proportion
	Group 1/group2/group 3	Group1/group2 /group 3	
Totally understand	12/18/6	34%/56%/18%	36%
Basically understand	23/14/25	66%/44%/76%	62%
Cannot understand	0/0/2	0%/0%/6%	2%

According to table 11, among the 67 students from group 1 and group 2, regardless of students who receive direct and indirect corrective feedback, all of them could

basically understand the corrective feedback provided by teachers in the experiment. As the controlling group (group 3) does not receive any kind of feedback on English writing, as for the same question, 18% students from controlling group choose the option of “totally understand”, another 76% of them choose “basically understand”.

Question 2: How do you handle the parts of corrective feedback that are not understandable?

**TABLE III. INVESTIGATION ON THE HANDLING OF CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK**

Options	Frequency	Intra-group Proportion
	Indirect corrective feedback (group 2)	
Searching instructions to have self-correction	18	56%
Asking help from teacher	3	9%
Asking help from classmates	9	28%
Ignore	2	6%

As shown in table 12, after receiving indirect corrective feedback from teachers, nearly 56% students from group with indirect corrective feedback (group 2) selects to correct mistakes on their own, 28% of them select to ask for help from classmates, and only 9% of the students select to ask for help from teacher.

**TABLE IV. PREFERENCE IN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK MANNERS**

Options	Frequency	Intra-group proportion	Total proportion
	Group 1/group2/group 3	Group1/group2/group 3	
Direct	11/12/8	20%/16%/33%	23%
Indirect	25/26/22	71%/81%/67%	73%
No feedback	3/1/0	9%/3%/0%	4%

As shown in table 13, for the preference of students in corrective feedback manners, in the three groups, nearly 60% of the students select the indirect corrective feedback, and 16% to 33% of the students from the three groups select direct corrective feedback. There are three students from from 1 and group 2 to select no corrective feedback, and two students from group 1 selects no feedback.

**2) Results of the Test**

The testing scoring is based on objective scoring, and accuracy is calculated by the proportion of using target grammar structure correctly with exclusion of other assessment elements, and do statistical analysis on the pre-test, timely posttest and delayed post-test of the three groups.

Comparability of the three groups

**Table V. Descriptive statistic of the pre-test scores of the three groups**

	Number	Mean/ std.d	Mean of total score/std. d
Group 1	35	7.234/2.296	7.170/2.065
Group 2	33	7.701/1.660	6.780/1.957
Controlling group	32	7.148/1,753	6.940/1.662
Total	100	7.361/1.903	6.960/1.873

The above table shows that the mean of language mistakes of the controlling group and experimental group (group 1 and group 2) is 7.361, with std. d of 1.903. the mean of comprehensive scores is 6.960, with std.d of 1.873. this shows that students in the experiment has many mistakes in English language form, and the writing scoring is not ideal enough.

**TABLE VI. ONE-FACTOR ANOVA OF MISTAKES IN LANGUAGE FORM AMONG THREE GROUPS**

Dependent variable	Variance source	Sum-of-square	freedom	Mean square	F	P
Mistake quantity	Inter-group	3.188	2	1.59	0.431	0.652
	intra group	188.7	53	3.70		
	group	49		1		
	Sum	191.9	37			
Comprehensive scores	Inter-group	1.370	2	0.68	0.189	0.828
	intra group	184.5	53	3.61		
	group	56		9		
	Sum	185.9	26			

According to the mistake quantity of the three groups in English writing, the p value of comprehensive scores of the three groups are 0.652,0.828, which are bigger than 0.05. this shows the English writing levels of the students from three groups are similar with comparability. The different writing performances of the three groups are stimulated due to different corrective feedback forms.

**TABLE VII. PAIRED SAMPLE T TEST FOR THE LANGUAGE MISTAKES OF AMONG THE THREE GROUPS**

	Allocation differences					T	F	p
	Mean deviation	St. D	Std. D	Bottom	Up			
Group 1 mistake Scores	3.437	0.859	0.203	3.010	3.864	16.974	17	0.000
	-2.889	1.323	0.312	-3.547	-2.231	-9.261	17	0.000
Group 2 mistake Scores	2.287	0.631	0.149	1.973	2.601	15.373	17	0.000
	-2.722	1.179	0.278	-3.308	-2.136	-9.800	17	0.000
Group 3 mistake Scores	0.219	0.499	0.228	-0.029	0.467	1.862	17	0.080
	-0.556	2.833	0.429	-1.462	0.351	-1.294	17	0.213

The mean of language form mistakes in group 1 (with direct corrective feedback) is 3.437, and mean deviation of comprehensive score is -2.889. the 95% confidence interval of mean deviation is not zero; besides the significant rate of t test is 0.000, which is much smaller than 0.05. this shows that the English writing of group 1 with direct corrective feedback has made great progress.

The mean of the language form mistake made by students from group 2 with indirect corrective feedback is 0.287, and the mean of comprehensive scores gained by 2.722, the 95% confidence interval of the mean of comprehensive scores has no zero, and the significant t test rate is 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05. Therefore, the English writing of students from group 2 with indirect corrective feedback gains significant progress.

The mean deviation of the controlling group with no feedback at all is 0.219, the standard deviation of the gap is 0.499. the 95% confidence interval is zero. Besides, the significance rate of the t test is 0.080, which is bigger than 0.05. this shows that the mean of language form mistake in the pretest and posttest are the same. Besides, the significance rate of the t test for comprehensive scores is 0.213, which is bigger than 0.05, this shows that the comprehensive quality rate of the controlling group has no significant improvement.

**TABLE VIII. ONE-FACTOR ANOVA OF MISTAKES IN LANGUAGE FORM AMONG THREE GROUPS IN THE POST-TEST**

Dependent variable	Variance source	Sum-of-square	freedom	Mean square	F	P
Mistake quantity	Inter-group	3.1888	2	1.594	0.4	0.6
	intra group	188.74	51	3.701		
	Sum	191.93	53			
Comprehensive scores	Inter-group	1.370	2	0.685	0.1	0.8
	intra group	184.55	51	3.619		
	Sum	185.92	53			

The above table shows that the significance level of mistake quantity and comprehensive scores among the three group in the posttest reach to 0.000 and 0.005, this shows that different forms of corrective feedback have significant effects on students' English writing performances. In other words, the mean of language form mistakes and comprehensive scores of the two groups from experimental group have significant differences.

**TABLE IX. PRE-TEST ONE-WAY VARIANCE ANALYSIS**

	Sum-of-square	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between group	95.111	2	47.555	1.584	0.210
Within group	2911.879	97	30.019		
Total	3006.990	99			

**TABLE X. TIMELY POST-TEST ONE-WAY VARIANCE ANALYSIS**

	Sum-of-square	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between group	9015.220	2	4507.610	159.176	0.000

Within group	2746.890	97	28.318		
Total	11762.110	99			

The variance analysis of timely posttest shows that, F(2.99) is 159.176, and the p value is 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05. this shows that after three different feedback forms, the three groups have significant differences in English writing performances.

**TABLE XI. TIMELY POST-TEST HOE SCHEME**

Group No.	Group No.	Mean Deviation	Std. D	Sig.	Bottom (95%)	Up (95%)
Group 1	2	4.9	1.3	0.001	1.6687	8.1402
	3	22.07	1.2	0.000	18.8696	25.2897
Group 2	1	-4.9	1.3	0.001	-8.1402	-1.6687
	3	17.1	1.3	0.000	12.8930	20.4574
Group 3	1	-22.0	1.2	0.000	-	-
	2	-	1.32026	0.000	25.2897	18.8696
		17.17519			20.4574	13.8930

The mean deviation is 0.05

The post hoe scheme of timely post-test shows that there are significant differences among the three groups, and the p=0.000, which is smaller than 0.05. Comparison of different stages of experiment

**Table XII. Delayed Post hoe Scheffe**

Group No.	Group No.	Mean Deviation	Std. D	Sig.	Bottom (95%)	Up (95%)
Group 1	2	6.75268	1.24342	0.000	3.6615	9.8439
	3	20.69870	1.23354	0.000	7.6321	23.7653
Group 2	1	-	1.24342	0.000	-9.8439	-
	3	13.94602	1.26129	0.000	10.8104	17.0816
Group 3	1	-	1.23354	0.000	-	-
	2	20.69870	1.26129	0.000	23.7653	17.6321
		13.94602			17.0816	10.8104

The mean deviation significance is 0.05

The delayed post-test hoe scheffe shows that there is significant difference among the three groups, with P=0.000<0.05.

**TABLE XIII. T TEST FOR THREE TESTS OF THE THREE GROUPS**

Group		T	Freedom	P
Group 1	Pre-test-- timely posttest	-22.911	34	0.000
	Timely posttest-delayed posttest	2.018	34	0.052
Group 2	Pre-test-- timely posttest	-13.449	31	0.000
	Timely posttest-delayed posttest	1.852	31	0.074
Group 3	Pre-test-- timely posttest	0.057	32	0.955
	Timely posttest-delayed posttest	-1.043	32	0.305

The allocated T value shows that there are significant difference between the pre-test and timely post-test of direct corrective feedback and indirect corrective feedback respectively, with  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . while there are no significant differences between timely post-test and delayed post-test between the two groups (the p value of direct corrective is 0.052, which is bigger than 0.05; the p value of indirect corrective feedback is  $0.74 > 0.05$ . the controlling group (group three) has no significant differences between pretest and timely posttest (pretest and timely post-test p values are 0.955, which is bigger than 0.05; the p value of timely post-test and delayed post-test is 0.305, which is bigger than 0.05).

### 3.4.3 Discussion of Results

#### 1) Discussion of the Questionnaire

As for the first question of whether corrective feedback could be effective to the English performances of students in using past tense and past perfection tense accurately, through the above statistics, the research finds that in the pretest, there are no significant differences in the experiment group (group 1 and group 2) and controlling group (group 3). However, after the experiment of corrective feedback in English writing, the scores of timely posttest and delayed posttest both show significant differences between experiment group and controlling group. Besides, the scores of experiment group are higher than the controlling group.

As for the question of whether the effectiveness of different forms of corrective feedback on students' English writing performances are different or not, the sum-of-square analysis shows that the timely posttest between group 1 (with direct corrective feedback) and group 2 (with indirect corrective feedback) has significant difference. After ten weeks, the delayed posttest between the two groups in the experimental group still shows significant difference, and the scores of timely and delayed posttests of the group 1 (with direct corrective feedback) are higher than that of it in group 2 (with indirect corrective feedback). This shows that the effectiveness of direct corrective feedback is better than the indirect corrective feedback.

As for the question three, the attitudes of different students towards corrective feedback, the experiment results show that in aspect of improving the accuracy of grammar use, direct corrective feedback is superior to indirect corrective feedback. While from the results of the questionnaire, indirect corrective feedback could have better understanding about the correction of teachers in their English writings. This indicates that the specific meta-language explanation could help students to comprehend the roots of their mistake-making. Besides, from the intra-group proportion, most students from controlling group (group 3 without any feedback) can basically understand the feedback from teachers in daily teaching, only individual students cannot understand teacher's feedback. This shows that in daily English teaching, teacher's feedback may be vague and not clear enough, and thus makes students with confusion in English study.

As for how to handle corrective feedback from teachers in English writing, most students from group

2( with indirect corrective feedback) select to look for references and instruction to solve the correction by themselves. Part of students incline to ask for help from classmates to finish self-correction. As for whom to ask for help, students incline to ask classmates rather than teacher. And this may be correlated to students' understanding about corrective feedback. Some of them may take corrective feedback from teacher as a kind of negative information, and treated it as a criticism, and thus unwilling to ask help from teacher in regards to correction of their writings.

As for the preferences of students in corrective feedback manners, most students hope teachers to provide clues to do self-correction. From the perspective of students' subjective willingness, in regards to the grammar use of English in English writing, students hope teachers to provide related explanation. However, there are individual students from both group 1 and group 2 in the experimental group to choose no feedback, this may be correlated with the excessive quantity of feedback in decreasing their English learning motives and self-confidence in English study. Hence, this enlightens that teachers should not use simple or single corrective feedback alone, they should try to consider subjective demands from students to give related corrective feedback accordingly, and try to satisfy students' expectations, and thus improve their enthusiasm in English writing study.

As for how do teacher handle the writing mistakes such as grammar mistake in English writing, most students hope teachers to correct most mistakes made by them. This shows that students have high expectation about corrective feedback provided by teachers. While they do not expect teachers to correct all mistakes for them. This means students still hope to find problems in their English writing through autonomous learning, and thus achieve the purpose of accuracy in writing.

Besides, individuals from group 1 (with direct corrective feedback) hopes teacher to give no feedback on grammar mistakes they have made with the intention of hoping teacher to pay more attention to the contents and ideas of the writing. If so, English teacher should pay attention to students' demands in English study, and avoid providing corrective feedback which are against the expectations of students with generation of negative effectiveness on students' English study.

The questionnaire results conform to the experiment results of the research done by Ellis (2006) and domestic scholar Wang Yixin. However, this result is against the results of research done by Ferris (2000), who makes a study on the effectiveness of corrective feedback on EFL learners. For English, as Chinese students lack of English language environment, they possess more English learning experiences based on grammar knowledge, and they have understanding about grammar while they lack practical experiences in using this knowledge. Being compared with indirect corrective feedback, direct corrective feedback facilitates learners to pay more attention to grammar usage process rather than the meta-language clues which is not correlated to the context of English language study.

#### 2) Discussion of the Tests



The English writing scores of the controlling group is basically the same, while the scores of two groups (group 1 with direct corrective feedback, group 2 with indirect corrective feedback) from experimental group presents the rising trend. Besides, the rise of scores in group 1 with direct corrective feedback is bigger than that of it in group 2 with indirect corrective feedback. This shows that English teachers have feedback on contents of writing process in the form of direct corrective feedback.

The direct corrective feedback facilitates learners to make comparison between themselves to the new expression of others. This process is easy to stimulate students' attention to the gap between their interlanguage and target language, and thus forms the necessary condition for English language acquisition. According to Schmidt's attention hypothesis, not all input are having same value, only the input paid attention by students can be absorbed and comprehended.

The research has proved that both direct and indirect corrective feedback could improve the accuracy of students' English expression in English writing. However, the indirect corrective feedback effectiveness on improvement of accuracy of students' language application is not as good as that of it in direct corrective feedback, this could be explained by the language levels of students. The group 2 with indirect corrective feedback has made relatively complicated mistakes such as the mistake in clause. And teachers just give clues while revising by writing "Clause is wrong". Even though the mistake is pointed out by the teacher, due to limited English level, students from group 2 cannot correct on their own.

The results show that the English writing performances of students from the experimental group (group 1 and group 2) have improved comprehensively. This result provides evidences to the effectiveness of teacher's corrective feedback in writing contents as well. Compared with controlling group which receives no feedback at all, students' English writings in the experimental group have made great progress. This shows the positive attitude of students towards the corrective feedback provided by English teachers. Students not only correct original writing of themselves, but also apply the feedback to the repeated writing of same kind.

The allocated T test shows that the post- test scores of both group 1 and group 2 from the experimental group are higher than the scores in pre-test. In addition, after ten weeks' experiment, the delayed post-test scores of the two groups decreased a little bit, while it is still higher than the pre-test scores. For the controlling group (group 3) which receives no feedback at all, the three times of tests of it have no significant differences at all. This illustrates that for the corrective feedback given by teachers regardless of indirect and direct manners, it is effective to improve students' English writing performances in using past tense and past perfection tense. With teacher's corrective feedback, the scores of delayed posttest between the two groups out of experimental group are compared without significant difference, this shows that the effectiveness of corrective feedback from teachers to students' English writing is not temporary nor incidental but prolong.

### 3) Summary of the Results

The comparative analysis on results of the delayed posttest and timely posttest and pre-test show that the scores of the timely post-test and delayed-test of experiment group are significantly higher than the pre-test. After the experiment, the writing scores of the controlling group has no significant changes. This illustrates that corrective feedback could effectively improve the accuracy of English writing in tense use. The questionnaire also shows that students have positive attitudes towards teacher's corrective feedback. The research further tests that for English students, the corrective feedback is effective for their English writing. Besides, direct corrective feedback has more significant effects on students' English writing performances than the indirect corrective feedback.

The research has used empirical study method to prove that the written corrective feedback provided by teachers in regards to the English language forms in English writing is effective to improve the accuracy of students' English language expression. The research also proves that direct corrective feedback is more beneficial to the long-term development of students than that of it in indirect corrective feedback.

Written corrective feedback has the merit of attracting students' attentions. Once students have paid attention to teacher's feedback, they will try hard to correct the mistakes. Therefore, the effective corrective feedback could help students to further master English grammar knowledge. Corrective feedback could give clues to students in regards to how to correct the mistakes made by them in English writing, and free students from making similar mistakes in the future study. From another point, students usually cannot find mistakes of themselves, even if they find their mistakes, they have no ideas how to correct them. At this time, it is necessary to have the third person who could point out the mistake. Besides, through constant feedback from others, it could generate conditional reflex of the mistake-maker to avoid making same mistakes the next time. The corrective feedback is also effective to English study.

Comparing to written corrective feedback, oralize corrective feedback is direct with time-saving. While written corrective feedback is more significant. To adopt written form to correct students' mistakes in English writing rather than pointing out students' mistakes in front of the whole class, protects and maintains students' self-dignity besides, teachers' written corrective feedback could whip students to master the grammar knowledge of students.

Indirect corrective feedback is also welcomed in second language writing. Ferris and Roberts (2001) have studied that the most welcomed feedback manner in learners is to mark under the mistake with related description, direct corrective feedback is secondary. Robbet (1986) proposed that indirect corrective feedback saves more time and energy than direct corrective feedback. In the research, students with indirect corrective feedback gained improvement in using target language with accuracy.

Therefore, indirect corrective feedback is worth exploration. As Lalande (1982) says, the indirect

corrective feedback provides opportunities for problem solution, and check the leakage with pertinence, and tries to make students to use their own ability to correct writing mistakes, and thus foster the development of interlanguage.

The research results conform to the research results of studies made by Ashwell, Ferris and Roberts and Bitchener who hold positive viewpoints that corrective feedback is good to improve students' English writing performances. The results of the research proves the limitations of Truscott's study which thinks corrective feedback is ineffective.

However, excessive corrective feedback from teacher to students may shock down students' self-confidence. Hence, while making corrective feedback on students' English writing, English teachers should master the degree of corrective feedback. Related studies have shown that when teachers have made written corrective feedback on the methods of using past tense, students' accuracy in using this grammar rule is improved. However, corrective feedback made by teacher in practical English writing teaching is hard to apply. For this problem, besides using written corrective feedback, English teachers should also combine oralize corrective feedback to highlight the grammar knowledge which are easy to misuse by students. In this way, by combining different manners of giving corrective feedback, it saves time and energy to spare more time on English teaching contents.

## IV CONCLUSION

### 4.1 Major Findings

This paper has done an empirical experiment on effectiveness of corrective feedback on EFL learners' English writing performances by taking the past tense and past perfection tense application as case study. It has proved that the corrective feedback has the positive effectiveness on improvement of accurately using target language structure. For students, direct corrective feedback has better effects than that of it in indirect corrective feedback in English writing performances. This enlightens teachers to provide direct corrective feedback to improve students' grammar accuracy and target language structure use in English writing. In corrective feedback manners, teachers should not simply provide direct corrective feedback, they should take students' demands into consideration to provide effective feedback with different forms. Besides, teachers should encourage students to discuss feedback on English writing between students and teachers to enhance the effectiveness of feedback. This study is significant to the acquisition of English grammar in English teaching, and can solve the problem of students' barriers in English study due to the shortage of effective communication between teachers and students.

To summarize, the research has proved the effectiveness of using written corrective feedback to improve students' English writing performances to a certain degree. While it also reflects the low efficiency of written corrective feedback given from teacher to students in English writing teaching. Hence, the research suggests

English teachers to combine cognition characteristics of different students to adopt the manner of combining different forms of corrective feedback to correct common grammar mistakes made by students with pertinence. Meanwhile, English teachers should encourage students to effectively utilize the written corrective feedback made by teacher to positively find and correct their writing mistakes in English, and achieves the purpose of using writing to foster English writing, and thus improves the efficiency of English writing.

According to the pre-test scores and the types of corrective feedback, students are divided into controlling group and experimental group (group 1 with direct corrective feedback and group 2 with indirect corrective feedback). Students in the whole experiment must revise their writing at least once. The research shows that written corrective feedback received by students have significant improvement in language form and structure. Compared with indirect corrective feedback, improvement on students' English writing form and structure generated by direct corrective feedback is higher. This further proves the positive effectiveness of corrective feedback on EFL learners' English writing forms.

### 4.2 Research Limitations

Despite of the above achievements of the research, the research results do not mean that teachers should simply give direct corrective feedback on students' English writing without providing indirect corrective feedback. Compared with indirect corrective feedback, direct corrective feedback has better effectiveness in helping students to improve their accuracy of using English grammar. As for whether direct corrective feedback has similar effectiveness on other skills of English language, it needs further study. Besides, indirect corrective feedback is irreplaceable, for it is the important manner of teacher in providing support and guidance to students in English study, and thus facilitates students to perceive the process of being guided and taught.

What's more, the research scope and scale are both small, and thus causes certain limitations. The research topic could be studied in a wider scope to prove the effectiveness of the research findings. Besides, the target language structure studied in the experiment has been learned by students in advance. As for whether the new language skills and knowledge could be enhanced through corrective feedback, it needs in-depth research. Besides, the research mainly focuses on written form of corrective feedback, the oralize corrective feedback is not included. Therefore, comparative study on the effectiveness of oralize and written corrective feedback on EFL learners' English writing performances could be the future research direction.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work was supported by Dr. Suyansah Swanto and Dr. Noraini Binti Said. They gave the author many suggestions for revision and specific instructions which really helpful and enlightening

## REFERENCES

- Almassi, E. & Tabrizi, A.R.N. (2016). The Effects of Direct vs. Indirect Corrective Feedback on Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Accuracy. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 3, 74–85.
- Bergner, Y. . (2021). "i know it when i see it": employing reflective practice for assessment and feedback of reflective writing in a makerspace classroom. *Information and Learning Sciences*.
- Ellis, R., Sheen, Y., Murakami, M., & Takashima, H. (2008). The effects of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback in an English as a foreign language context. *System*, 36, 353–371.
- Ene, E. & Kosobucki, V. (2016). Rubrics and Corrective Feedback in ESL Writing: A Longitudinal Case Study of An L2 Writer. *Assessing Writing*, 30, 3–20.
- Ferris, D.R. (1994). Lexical and Syntactic Features of ESL Writing by Students at Different Levels of L2 Proficiency. *Tesol Quarterly*, 28, 414–420.
- Ferris, D. R. (1999). The Case for Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes: A Response to Truscott (1996). *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8, 1–10
- Ferris, D. R. (2006). Does error feedback help student writers? New Evidence on the Short and Long-term Effects of Written Error Correction. In K. Hyland & F. *Feedback in Second Language Writing: Contexts and Issues* (pp.81–104). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guo Chusheng, Yang Liu. (2022). Research on the Feedback Effect of College Students' English Writing Ability Based on Automatic Writing Evaluation System. *Journal of Social Sciences, Jiamusi University*, 40(1), 225-228.
- Gu Yiting. (2021). A Comparative study of teachers' error correction feedback in high school English Reading and Grammar classes. *Cultural and Educational Materials* (14), 3.
- Qin Lili, Niu Baohui. (2022). The Influence of verbal activities based on written corrective feedback on learners' writing modification. *Contemporary Foreign Language Studies* (3)20-21.
- Jiang Yue, Liu Ya. The effect of individual differences on the effectiveness of written corrective feedback: Review and Prospect. *Examination and Assessment: College English Teaching and Research Edition*, (4):85-89.
- Liu Yan. (2021). A comparative study of College English writing teacher feedback and online correction feedback. *Journal of Heilongjiang Teachers Development Institute*, 000(003), 151-153.
- Pearson, W. S. . (2022). Student engagement with teacher written feedback on rehearsal essays undertaken in preparation for ielts. *SAGE Open*, 12(1), 1-20.
- Potovskaya, K. S. , & Sekret, K. A. . (2021). Motivating Role of Assessment and Feedback in Teaching English to Students of Non-Linguistic Specialties.
- Qin Lili, & Niu Baohui. (2022). The Influence of Speech activities Based on Written Corrective Feedback on Learners' Writing Modification. *Contemporary Foreign Language Studies* (3), 10.
- Sun Haiyang, & Qi Wenbo. (2022). The Impact of Corrective Feedback on Writing Accuracy and Language Knowledge Acquisition of College English Learners. *Chinese Applied Linguistics (English)*, 45(3), 18.
- Su Jianhong. (2021). The Effects of foreign language learning objectives and learner Cognition on written corrective feedback. *Language Education*, 000(001), P.49-54.
- Schenck, Andrew. (2022). How Choice of Target Characteristics Affects Corrective Feedback: A Meta-analysis of Chinese English Learners. *Chinese Applied Linguistics*, 45(2), 22.
- Schmidt, R. (1994). Deconstructing Consciousness in Search of Useful Definitions for Applied Linguistics. *AILA Review*, 11, 11–26.
- Sheen, Y. (2007). The Effect of Focused Written Corrective Feedback and Language Aptitude on ESL Learners' Acquisition of Articles. *Tesol Quarterly*, 41, 255–283.
- Shirotha, F.B. (2016). The Effect of Indirect Written Corrective Feedback on Students' Writing Accuracy. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, 6, 101–118.
- Shenk, Andrew. (2022). How choice of target characteristics affects corrective feedback -- finding answers through a meta-analysis of Chinese English learners. *Chinese Applied Linguistics*, 45(2), 22.
- Truscott, J. (1996). The Case Against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes. *Language Learning*, 46, 327–369.
- Truscott, J. (1999). The Case for "the case for grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes": A response to Ferris. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8, 111–122.
- Tran, T. , & Ma, Q. . (2021). Using formative assessment in a blended efl listening course: student perceptions of effectiveness and challenges. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching*, 11(3), 17-38.
- Wang, X. (2017). The Effects of Corrective Feedback on Chinese Learners' Writing Accuracy: A Quantitative Analysis in an EFL Context. *World Journal of Education*, 7, 74-88.
- Wang Yichen. (2022). On the Effectiveness of Different Types of Written Corrective Feedback Applied in College English Writing Classes. *Western Journal*, (9), 4-8.
- Wang Jiahao. (2021). Research on Automatic Correction Model of English Text Grammar errors. (Doctoral dissertation, Guilin University of Electronic Science and Technology).
- Wang Lingjuan, Wu Jiujiang. (2021). On the importance of learning English Grammar and its influence on writing. *Science in Public (Science Education)*, 000(002), 161.
- Yang Song. (2021). A Study on Oral corrective feedback Beliefs of College English Learners at Different language levels. *Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 9(6), 8.
- Zhang Juanli. (2021). A study on the effectiveness of

teachers' written corrective feedback in College English Writing Teaching -- A case study of Shaanxi International Business College. *Modern English* (6), 3.

Yi Zehui. (2022). The Theoretical Basis and Teaching Enlightenment of the Research on the Effect of Teachers' Written Corrective Feedback on ELF Learners' Writing Correction. *English Teacher*, 22(12), 4-6.

Zhang Jia. (2022). Analysis on The Influence of Teachers' Corrective Feedback on the Language Accuracy of College English Writing. *Modern English*, (15), 3-4.

Zhang Jing. (2021). The Effects of Oral corrective Feedback and Working Memory on English Writing Ability of Chinese learners. *Journal of Changshu Institute of Technology*, 035(006), 57-65,70.