



## Direct Written Corrective Feedback for Tenth Graders Recount Text: Adequate Practice to Boost Sentential Accuracy

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### Abstract

Teaching writing is considered a complex skill to learn for EFL learners due to its difficulties. Many students and teachers in foreign countries need help to develop their students' writing skills. Those can be solved by giving a technique that helps students develop ideas to write. One of the techniques is by using direct written corrective feedback. This study investigated the effectiveness of direct written corrective feedback in teaching writing recount text for the first-grade students in one Islamic Senior High School in Pare. Quasi-experimental research was used to determine the different scores between both classes after a treatment. Fifty-six (56) students participated in this study and were divided into two groups (experimental and control groups). The results were calculated using the Mann-Whitney U test since the data were not normal, and it was continued to find out the effect size to strengthen how far the influence of direct WCF was. The results revealed that direct WCF was effective at the medium level for the students' writing accuracy. Implementing direct WCF for EFL students is suggested since it provides many benefits for teachers and students to boost writing accuracy.

### Keywords:

*direct feedback,  
teaching writing,  
writing accuracy*

## INTRODUCTION

Writing becomes the most challenging skill to learn in class, a significant predictor of university students (Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2016), especially for EFL learners because of its steps. It is supported by the results of some research saying that writing skill becomes a complex ability for EFL students (Davies, 2003; Alagozlu, 2007; Suhartoyo, 2014). Thus, research on writing for EFL students starts to be beneficial because writing finds a spot in the literature context (Ekmekci, 2014), and it is influenced by the students' environments, approaches, and characteristics (Ekmekci, 2017). Students must comprehend several writing steps before producing their writing, such as choosing themes, drafting, revising, and rewriting. Because of those steps of writing, the most complex and challenging skill to be mastered in English is writing skill (Bailey, 2003 as cited in Wahyuni & Umam, 2017; Nosratinia & Razavi, 2016). Some aspects which make students encounter difficulties are linguistics and cognitive problems (Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2016), the comprehension and concepts of the ideas, the composition of the writing, the use of language (dictions, accuracy, and appropriacy), and the lack of time. Besides, they have to think of grammar and punctuation in their writing. Even though the students have had the ideas to write, they may need help developing their thoughts into well-structured drafts. An ability to construct coherent grammatical structures becomes necessary for the establishment of writing skills in the field of formal aspects (Noriega, 2016). The grammar class is classified as one of the language systems that go along with teaching language skills.

Due to the problems in Indonesian education, teachers sometimes have to overcome those problems learners face to reach the learning aims. At the beginning of the class, the lesson's aims are presented to illustrate what the students will reach after the lesson finishes. Those are related to the teaching methodologies which have to be undertaken by teachers to stimulate the students' interest in writing class. Students actively participate in the learning process if they find out how to deal with the hardness of writing and the easiest ways to conquer the problems. By implementing active and cooperative processes and product approaches, the teachers are expected to work harder to assist students in developing their writing abilities (Jumariati & Sulisty, 2017). Approaches can be a tool to solve problems if the approaches can be brought into students' real-life situations.

The student's lack of interest can influence the results of the writing achievement. On the other hand, learners must attain the learning objectives that align with the writing scores at the end of the lesson. Teachers are forced to provide techniques that lead students to rectify the errors. Thus, it can help students develop their ability in writing. Feedback is one of the assessments that can be conducted in class for all English skills; it is called a formative assessment. This assessment can be conducted during the teaching-learning process to support the students' scores in the summative assessment. Teachers will handle and control feedback to minimize errors when they produce the assignments. Giving feedback is an alternative way to fix the students' errors because students will lightly spot the errors and strive to avoid making the same errors for subsequent assignments.

In this research, providing feedback on the students' productions is expected to assist them in developing their understanding and guide them to do the assignments correctly. By applying feedback in the teaching-learning process, students will find it easier to analyze the errors. Teachers still assume that giving corrections, grammar instructions, and editing-strategy improve students' writing accuracy (Alimohammadi &

Nejadansari, 2014). When students produce their assignments, teachers can deliver feedback by correcting the errors or giving clues. Thus, using feedback is a tool to solve the problems faced by the students, and it will boost the students' interests so that their scores may be improved as well.

Feedback is categorized into two kinds; written corrective feedback (WCF) and oral corrective feedback (OCF). The use of this feedback will be beneficial for students because they can learn from their mistakes. Russel and Spada (2006) stated that an indication of the students who get incorrect creations in their target languages is called corrective feedback (CF). In written and spoken CF, teachers deliver comments to the students directly or indirectly, as each type has several feedback types. The choices of the feedback depend on the students' needs and preferences. Some students may be comfortable getting feedback. Meanwhile, others may be insecure and feel down because of the feedback. To solve writing problems, WCF is essential to apply in the teaching-learning process because it can encourage students to focus more on their writing errors. Different types of WCF will create different effects for the students.

This study was grounded on Ellis' (2009) theory of written corrective feedback. The theory describes how to give corrections to the students' errors in some ways, and it draws the advantages of using WCF. Those kinds of feedback from Ellis (2009) are direct WCF, indirect WCF, metalinguistics WCF, focused-unfocused WCF, electronic WCF, and reformulation WCF. Every feedback has its characteristics and detailed information about its functions and goals. The characteristics of feedback show how to apply this feedback in class, such as giving the correct answers in students' writing is direct WCF; giving some marks without providing the correct answers is indirect WCF; metalinguistic involves some grammatical terms in writing, like "art" is for article errors, and "prep" is for preposition errors; teachers elect to correct all students' errors for focused WCF, and students examine multiple corrections of a single error is unfocused WCF; electronic WCF means that teachers indicate and provide a hyperlink to available files providing examples of correct usage; reformulation is to provide students with a resource to correct the errors. In this research, direct WCF was applied to boost the student's ability in writing.

Some previous studies described that direct WCF had a lot of positive impacts on the teaching and learning process. Direct WCF is more beneficial for SLA because it is not ambiguous and provides direct information about correct writing (Westnacott, 2017). A direct WCF can have long-term effects on the students (Septiana, Sulistyono, & Kadarisman, 2016), such as having high confidence, good communication, and a good understanding of the writing components. Besides, students can improve their comprehension by studying foreign languages. The language system is a part of the positive impacts of direct WCF (Tangkiesirisin & Kalra, 2016; Ajmi, 2014) because it is related to the development of the students' writing accuracy to produce good writing projects (Iswandari, 2016; Westmacott, 2016). Writing accuracy becomes a crucial part of writing because the more the students comprehend the writing components, the better their writing accuracy is because a direct WCF can make the students' writing accurate (Pan, 2010; Mafulah & Basthomi, 2021).

So far, research on WCF conducted over the past five years has emphasized the implementation of WCF in English writing classes in the context of English as a second or foreign language. However, the effectiveness of direct WCF to improve students' accuracy in writing recount text still needs further exploration. Recounting text writing

for learners of English writing in the context of Islamic senior high school is still a challenge. It is due to the limited duration of English courses for them. Islamic senior high school has numerous subjects, both in general and Islamic aspects. The reason why the researcher chose the Islamic senior high school students was that those students needed to think more and to try harder in learning. They did not have enough time to learn the general lessons as they had to manage their time to study Arabic, Hadith, Fiqh, and others. It made them decrease their scores in English, especially in writing.

This research was intended to figure out the significant difference between the students in the experimental group and the students in the control group using different treatments. This research had two hypotheses about teaching writing to Islamic high school students. The first hypothesis was that there was a significant difference between the experimental and the control group. The second hypothesis was that those two groups had no significant difference.

This research aimed to investigate the use and the effectiveness of WCF, straightforward WCF for the students' writing in recount text. After knowing the results, it was expected to benefit the next researchers, the teachers, and the students to develop their writing ability and to understand to get higher scores after applying this treatment. This research answered a research question "Is direct written corrective feedback effective in teaching writing recount text?".

## **METHOD**

This study used a quasi-experimental research design because the researcher could not randomly select populations and samples. The researcher followed the advice of the English teacher at school as the teacher discovered that the students had almost the same ability in English. This research tested whether there was a significant difference between students getting direct WCF and students getting general comments on students' writing skills on Recount Text.

### **Participants**

In this study, the researcher chose the 1<sup>st</sup>-grade students of MA Sunan Ampel as the population because they had learned to write paragraphs in English since junior high school. There were six classes containing 28 students in each class. For the sample, the researcher chose X-Agama-1 and X-Agama-2 as they were in the same program having additional religious lessons, which caused them to have to manage or split their time in studying all subjects so that they had limited time to master the subjects taught at school. In addition, the teacher at the school also recommended two classes having the same ability and value on their reports. Students in X-Agama were around 15-16 years old, and they were divided by gender because they were majoring in religion, which did not allow different gender students to stay in one class; X-Agama-1 for male students was in the control class, and X-Agama-2 for female students was in the experimental class.

### **Instruments**

#### **Tests**

The tool used in measuring students' learning outcomes before and after treatment was a writing test. There were two types of tests carried out, namely pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was undertaken to determine students' abilities before getting treatment in class, while the post-test was used to find out the students' outcomes after getting treatment.

The writing test was conducted because the researcher wanted accurate results. After all, students produced tasks individually according to their abilities. Using a writing test, students applied their abilities without interference from other people or objects that could help them write their assignments. In correcting students' writing, the researcher used a scoring rubric adopted from Brown (2007) so that the researcher and the English teacher (two raters) had a reference for assessing students. The researcher and the rater assessed students' writing concerning a scoring rubric containing five elements, namely content (30%), organization (20%), grammar (20%), vocabulary (15%), and mechanics (15%), with the range from 1 (the lowest score) to 4 (the highest score). The scoring rubric was calculated as the form below to find the final scores, and the score was categorized based on their criterion.

$$\text{Score} = \frac{3C + 2O + 2G + 1.5V + 1.5M}{40} \times 10$$

The criteria of the score were included in this research as well to classify the level of the student's scores. The criteria of the score were fail (0-45), less (46-55), enough (56-65), good (66-79), and very good (80-100) based on Sudijono's classification of students' scores (2003), and the scores were from two raters.

### Procedures

After conducting the pre-test, students were asked to write a recount text of 150 words in each meeting. The researcher held five meetings (1 pre-test, three treatments, and one post-test) from March 3, 2020, to March 19, 2020. In the students' schedule, the English class started alternately in the first and second hours. When class X-Agama-1 learned English at 7 o'clock, class X-Agama-2 students started the class at the second hour, and vice versa. Students in the experimental class were given a direct WCF on each piece of writing that they submitted, and the researcher returned the writing to the students. The researcher provided a direct WCF after the students turned in the students' writing. The writing had been returned to the students to be analyzed and corrected for mistakes. The students rewrote the writing according to the researcher's justification. Students were expected to avoid repeating the same mistakes. When submitting their writing assignments, students were given general comments for the control class. Students wrote recount texts based on the themes determined by the researcher, and the themes used during this research were listed below:

**Table 1: Features of the Assigned Recount Texts**

Treatment	Experimental Class	Control Class	Themes
	Pre-test	Pre-test	Holiday
1	Direct WCF	General comments	Visiting my new school
2			Very tiring day
3			The worst unforgettable experience
	Post-test	Post-test	The best unforgettable experience

The scores from the pre-test and post-test were inputted into Microsoft Excel to facilitate further calculations. The scores generated from the pre-test and post-test were

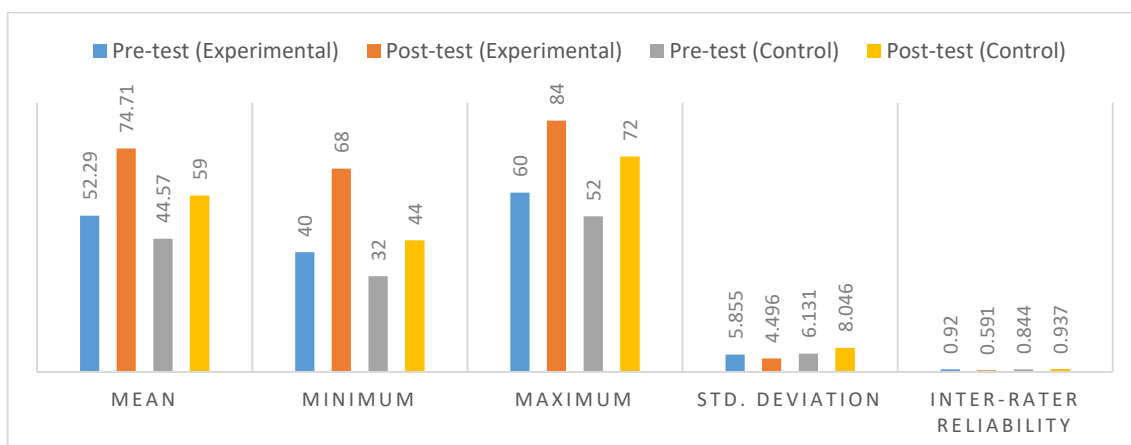
compared. Thus, the data which have been collected were calculated using SPSS. The researcher conducted several procedures to analyze and obtain valid data quantitatively. The researcher calculated the value and average between the pre-test and post-test. In the first step, inter-rater reliability was calculated to analyze the correlation of the scores given by the two raters and determine the reliability of the test undertaken in this research. The researcher applied the correlation coefficient to classify the inter-rater reliability from Guilford (1956). The criteria of relationship were very dependable (0.91-1.00), strong (0.71-0.90), substantial (0.41-0.70), definite but small (0.21-0.40), and almost no relationship (less than 0.20). The normality and homogeneity values of the data were calculated to define whether the researcher applied a parametric test using ANCOVA (normally distributed) or a non-parametric test using Mann-Whitney (not normally distributed) for the follow-up step. The researcher counted the N-Gain Score to determine the effectiveness of the treatment. Mann-Whitney was used in this research to analyze the data because the results were related to calculating the next step. Thus, for the last step, the researcher determined the effect size value to strengthen and find how much influence was generated from a treatment. The effect size for non-parametric was applied from Cohen's standard of Effect Size category (1998), which was divided into three based on the size;  $0.2 \leq d \leq 0.5$  (small),  $0.5 \leq d \leq 0.8$  (medium),  $0.8 \leq d \leq 2.0$  (big), meanwhile the formula was adopted from the field (2009) to find the  $r$  score.

$$r = \frac{z}{\sqrt{N}}$$

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

In this research, the MA Sunan Ampel Pare students in the first grade showed the performances between the experimental and control classes before and after the treatment.



**Figure 1. The Summary of Pre-test and Post-test Results**

In Figure 1, the results were drawn in detail to illustrate the scores between the two classes in the pre-test and post-test. In addition, to answer the hypotheses about whether there was a significant difference between the two classes and to know how strong the influence of the treatment was, the results were listed in the figure below consisting of the value of the Mann-Whitney U test and Effect Size.

**Table 1. The result of the Mann-Whitney U Test**

	Students Result
Mann Whitney U	26,000
Wilcoxon W	432,000
z	-6,059
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000

Table 1 shows the influence of a direct WCF on writing skills. This effect size was calculated to strengthen and count the power of the treatment used in this study. The result of the effect size was 0,79558 using the formula stated in the methodology.

### Discussion

This study aimed to find the difference between the experimental and control classes by applying direct WCF as a treatment and determining whether direct WCF is an effective treatment for writing classes. Some students would rather get WCF on their writing than not because they needed help identifying and knowing which parts were missing in their work if they got no hints (Westmacott, 2017). Several aspects closely related to the teaching-learning process influenced students' ability to understand and develop ideas for writing. In this case, students majoring in religion at MA Sunan Ampel Pare got many subjects in one week that they had to master. Moreover, most chose to live in Islamic boarding schools because they came from other districts. It was why the researcher conducted a study to improve the writing ability of MA Sunan Ampel Pare students. Based on the research taking place and the application of a treatment, namely direct WCF, the results could be seen that the scores of the two classes were not much different, which indicated that the class selection was indeed based on the similarity of abilities between the two classes in the pre-test. The scores showed the students' weakness in writing a recount text in English which was learned only twice a week. To improve their ability, it was necessary to have a stimulus that could support and develop students' ideas in writing a text.

WCF has an essential role in improving students' ability to correct errors when writing a text, which in turn will be able to develop the quality of students' writing after practicing regularly. Some students found it difficult to understand or apply a material even though the teacher had tried to use strategies and methods in teaching and learning activities in the classroom. With direct WCF, it could help writers to improve their ability to write something so that writers could avoid writing errors following what had been given when getting WCF (Ferris, 1995) because writers obtained information and knowledge that might not have been known before or already known but not implemented properly. In this study, it could be found that students getting direct WCF performed better than students only getting general comments on their writing through the scores at the end of learning because direct WCF reduced writing errors in grammar (Fhaeizdhyall, 2020) and improved students' ability to understand sentences based on lexical or grammatical structures (Ellis, 2009; Firwana, 2011) so that some of the above aspects became a unity that affected each other.

In the experimental class, students got almost the same pre-test score as the control class. Meanwhile, after getting direct WCF, the results showed a significant difference in scores between the experimental and control classes in the post-test results. To assess test writing in the pre-test and post-test for both classes, the researcher collaborated with the

class teacher to assess student writing in the pre-test and post-test to equalize perceptions in giving scores, which the inter-rater reliability results could prove. The greater the inter-rater reliability value (Pearson Correlation with the significant value at the 0.00 level), the higher the relationship between the two raters will be. By looking at the results in the table in the results section, it could be concluded that the application of direct WCF had a positive impact on students' writing skills at MA Sunan Ampel Pare by providing treatments that helped students avoid writing errors and also improving writing accuracy (Goksoy, & Nazli, 2017) by the correction of the researcher. On the other hand, students in the control class did not show improvement in writing a text because they did not get direct WCF in class.

From the results obtained during the research process, the researcher had the opportunity to encourage students to develop their ability to write accurately so that accuracy improvement could develop over time. In line with this, students would find it easier to create excellent and correct writing because students were accustomed to analyzing errors in their writing and continuing to correct these errors. When students correct mistakes, they will be more careful in writing the next task so that students can produce better writing than before (Chandler, 2003). It could be seen from the recount text of students in the experimental class who paid attention to past tenses (using words, grammatical structures, etc.) after getting direct feedback in the first treatment. When entering the second and third treatments, some students used tenses correctly for recounting texts. Still, some students needed to be able to use appropriate mechanics aspects, such as organization which deals with structuring ideas into good paragraphs (Iswandari, 2016), and content which pays attention to the unity and coherence of writing.

The provision of direct WCF regarding the organization explained what was missing and what needed to be eliminated from student writing. Students understood the comments from the teacher and rewrote by revising what needed to be improved because writing not only expresses one's feelings, thoughts, or plans but also can make someone communicate or explain something through writing. Research on the organization for writing needs to be held a lot because this is full of challenges and is a continuation of several researchers (Septiana, Sulistyono, & Kadarisman, 2016).

Content in writing is one thing that is no less important than other aspects. Students at MA Sunan Ampel need help in this section because they need the writing stimulus. In addition, they have few vocabularies that can hinder the writing process and development of ideas, so the use of direct WCF can help students to place the correct vocabulary according to the given theme, such as the use of vocabulary related to feelings when students get the theme "The worst / best unforgettable experience," and vocabulary related to tourist attractions when students get the theme "Holiday." With this, students in the experimental class experienced an increase in writing skills due to the provision of direct WCF, which can help students write content that is connected between paragraphs so that students can feel increased progress in English which is the target language at school (Akiah, & Ghazali, 2015).

In addition to the benefits of students' writing quality, direct WCF is also related to students' selves, such as motivation (Horbacauskiene & Kasperaviciene, 2015) and self-confidence. By knowing the location of errors written from direct WCF, students can increase their motivation to write better than students who do not get WCF (Siswanti, 2013). Students felt encouraged because their writing was not only blamed and corrected but also given the correct version, which made students feel they had support to improve



their writing. Their confidence also grows along with their high motivation to write. Students were more confident to explore English further, so their writing skills improved with minimal errors.

Increased student confidence could not be separated from the quality of communication between students and students or between students and teachers. With the application of direct WCF in the classroom, students and teachers communicated more quickly because discussing the errors in students' writing would be more intense after the teacher presented the individual evaluation results and continued to guide students in analyzing direct WCF (Shirota, 2016). At the same time, students could have a brief discussion with their classmates as they might get the same comments so that they could revise their writing easily. Students were also allowed to discuss the obstacles in understanding the direct WCF given by the teacher. Thus, direct WCF benefits students and teachers (Sarvestani & Pishkar, 2016) because it makes the class lively with discussions. Teachers can raise sensitivity about their connection to communicate with the students rather than just providing direct feedback or illuminating their errors (Virhan, 2022).

After identifying the difference in scores between the experimental and control classes and finding that WCF could have a positive effect (Alkhawajah, 2022) than the control class on writing quality, the results further showed the effectiveness of direct WCF as a method to improve students' accuracy to write a text in English. It could be obtained from the Mann-Whitney U test results, which showed that direct WCF was adequate to be applied. For the effectiveness category of direct WCF, researchers got the results from the calculation of Effect Size, which showed that direct WCF was in the medium category for its level of effectiveness from the three categories available and had been described, so it could be concluded that direct WCF was beneficial for students and teachers in teaching English, especially in teaching productive skills which do require others to assess one's shortcomings when producing something spoken or written.

By the results above, direct WCF was an important part that needed to be applied by teachers because of the many impacts it produces. Most students' writing skills improve after receiving written corrective feedback from the teacher (Saputri et al., 2023). Direct WCF could be implemented when students have completed writing a text. In this case, students would achieve success after learning how to improve their writing skills day by day. If students wanted to get WCF, they could get it outside the classroom by doing peer review with friends, and the discussion results could be consulted with the teacher in class. Providing WCF was one of the teacher's responsibilities to ensure that students were good at writing a recount text and that pedagogical practices aligned with the teacher's expectations (Fhaelzdhyall, 2020).

Based on the abovementioned hypothesis, other studies have shown that direct WCF showed a less significant difference. It was because the study conducted by the researcher was aimed at the SLA (Second Language Acquisition) context. Accuracy in the use of grammar increased when teachers applied direct WCF, while accuracy in non-grammar use improved when teachers applied indirect WCF (Westcott, 2017). Still, other opinions said that direct WCF could reduce grammar errors produced by students, and indirect WCF was effective because it could increase the accuracy of L2 students' writing in non-grammatical aspects (Fhaelzdhyall, 2020). Thus, differences in research results could be influenced by who was the subject or participant in a study. Since the researchers chose students majoring in religion at MA Sunan Ampel Pare as their participants, the use of

direct WCF was the proper treatment considering that many things needed attention for students when they had several additional subjects that they needed to master because the teacher would focus more and made small discussions so that the use of indirect WCF ran optimally (Alkhawajah, 2022).

In other areas, using other types of WCF also showed its effectiveness. WCF will have a more substantial effect if the researcher inserts WCF's metalinguistic explanation (ME) as support. Students will understand better if provided with specific and clear errors, especially those new to English and slow learners (Ajmi, 2015). In other studies, the use of focused-unfocused WCF occupies the highest place as a student preference when receiving WCF from teachers because it can facilitate the process of correcting and justifying L2 students (Valizadeh & Soltanpour, 2020). Overall, each type of WCF has its benefits according to environmental conditions, background knowledge, and other moderate variables. Still, in this case, this study presented that direct WCF was effective for students at MA Sunan Ampel Pare, as evidenced by the results of value calculations during the research process and supported by previous studies.

## CONCLUSION

This study was an attempt to unwrap and testify to the effectiveness of direct WCF for teaching writing in MA Sunan Apel Pare. Teaching writing to EFL learners enacts all parts of education to work harder. It is supported by several difficulties in encouraging students to be interested in learning foreign languages. Based on the results illustrated in the findings and discussions, the use of direct WCF showed that the students improved their writing skills, especially in the accuracy of writing, because students could analyze and find out the errors in their writing. From the results of the research that has been carried out, students improved grades in the writing class after getting direct WCF as a treatment in the experimental class. It overcame the writing problems faced by the MA Sunan Ampel Pare students, who had to manage their time to study many lessons, including Islamic lessons. The students could be one team with the teacher to achieve the study's objectives by implementing direct WCF. It was proven by the increased students' writing scores when they accurately created several recount text writings. This study was conducted in an Islamic Senior High School and showed the different performances between the experimental and control classes.

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