The Role of Written Corrective Feedback in Second Language Writing Practice[*]

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Abstract—**This paper argues that corrective feedback is effective in improving L2 student writers' written accuracy, and what educational researchers should be concerned with is not only *if* corrective feedback should be used in writing practice, but also *how*. Two studies are analyzed to argue that corrective feedback is beneficial for students' writing performance, but some types of feedback can lead to writing development in some aspects, while can result in negative effects in others. Also, an interaction approach and the skill acquisition theory are used to provide theoretical framework to each of the two studies, and to back up the usefulness of corrective feedback. In addition, some of the argument about the ineffectiveness of corrective feedback is refuted empirically and theoretically to further prove its effectiveness in L2 writing practice.**

Index Terms—**written corrective feedback, effectiveness, L2 writing, empirical studies, theories**

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a difficult language skill and also an important one for language learners. It is difficult because, among the four language skills -- listening, speaking, reading, and writing, writing is one of the output skills and it usually demands relatively higher mental thinking ability than the other three skills. Writing is important in that it can help develop students' critical thinking ability, which is one of the most essential qualities for students' language development. In addition, for novice student writers, making errors is a natural and indispensable part when they are moving forward. In this case, written corrective feedback (WCF) to students' errors from instructors plays a key role in helping them improve written accuracy so that they can move smoothly to a higher language level.

However, there have long been controversial views on the effectiveness of WCF in improving students' second language (L2) written accuracy. Some researchers argue that WCF is effective in L2 writing practice (Ferris, 1999; Chandler, 2003; Bitchener, 2008; Sheen, 2007), while others claim that WCF should not be utilized in L2 writing practice (Truscott, 1996, 2004, 2007; Kepner, 1991). Encountering these controversial views, educational practitioners may feel hesitant about the utilization of WCF in their instructional practice. Meanwhile, researchers of L2 writing may still want to spend time and energy proving whether or not WCF is useful in writing, which deviates their attentions from more meaningful questions, such as what specific types of direct feedback (written or oral meta-linguistic explanation, direct error correction, etc.) are more effective in improving student writers' written accuracy. After all, the improvement of students' written accuracy is the ultimate goal of the provision of WCF. In addition, it is agreed among L2 writing researchers that students' individual factors can have an effect on their written accuracy. Among these factors, motivation is always playing a significant role in the students' improvement. In this case, if the students are not sure of the effectiveness of WCF when encountering these controversial views, then their motivation of accepting the WCF will be decreasing, which can cause a harmful effect on their writing because the written errors can not be corrected well. Thus, the settlement of this controversy can let the researchers focus their attention on some more meaningful questions, such as how to use WCF effectively to improve the students' written accuracy.

The purpose of this paper is to argue that WCF is effective in improving L2 student writers' written accuracy, and what educational researchers should be concerned with is not only *if* WCF should be used in writing practice, but also *how*. First, in terms of the empirical evidence, two empirical studies are used to argue the effectiveness of WCF, and how to use WCF effectively is the question that teachers should consider because the same type of WCF can have different effects on students' writing. Second, in terms of the theoretical evidence, two theoretical frameworks--an interaction approach and the skill acquisition theory, are used to argue the effectiveness of WCF. In addition, some of Truscott's argument about the ineffectiveness of WCF is refuted empirically and theoretically to further prove the effectiveness of WCF in L2 writing practice.

II. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WCF

A.   Is WCF Useful?

In Sachs and Polio's (2007) article, they conducted a study to argue that WCF is useful in improving students' written accuracy. In that study, there were 54 ESL students divided into four groups: 12 in the error correction method, 11 in the reformulation method, 16 in the reformulation with think-aloud method and 15 controls. Specifically, in the written error correction method, students' written errors were directly corrected by teachers. In the reformulation and the reformulation with think aloud methods, teachers gave students the reformulations provided by native speakers. The controls did not receive feedback in their writing.

The result shows that in the error correction method, the mean of the T-units (an independent clause and all of its dependent clauses) showing changes in accuracy is 87.6%; in the reformulation method, it is 70.5%; in the reformulation with think aloud method, it is 72.9%; the worst mean of accuracy percentage is from the control group, which is 55.2%. Subsequently, with a nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis test performed to compare the mean ranks of percentages across the various methods, the result was significant, x^2(3, 54) = 19.676, p < .01, and the mean rank of each method was 42.63 for error correction (n=12), 28.14 for reformulation (n=11), 26.84 for think-aloud (n=16), and 15.63 for the control group (n=15). The findings suggested that the error correction method produced the most accurate revisions, followed by the reformulation with think aloud method and the reformulation method; the control group, who did not receive error correction in their writing, produced the least accurate revisions. Thus, the provision of error correction, at least in short terms, could help students improve written accuracy in their revisions more than those who did not receive error correction. The argument that error correction is not effective in L2 writing should be taken with caution.

B.   How to Use WCF Effectively in L2 Writing Practice

Based on Hartshorn, Evans, Merrill, Sudweeks, Strong-Krause, & Anderson's (2010) study, an alternative instructional strategy in L2 writing--dynamic WCF will be introduced in this section to argue that there are no absolute criteria that one type of feedback is better than the other for good. Every type of feedback has its positive and negative sides. Thus, teachers should be concerned with how to use the proper types of WCF in L2 writing practice because they can make a difference in students' written accuracy.

In their study, Hartshorn et al. (2010) divided participants into two groups. A treatment group who received the dynamic WCF and a control group who received traditional feedback. The differences between these two types of feedback could be explained by the distinctive features of the dynamic WCF. They pointed out that in the dynamic WCF, writing tasks and feedback should be "*meaningful, timely, constant, and manageable* for both student and teacher" (p.87, emphasis is original).

First, the dynamic feedback is meaningful in that systematic indirect feedback should be provided for the students who can correct their written errors, and explicit instruction for their common errors should be given by teachers. In that study, the treatment group was required to write 10-min compositions every class and indirect feedback was provided by the teachers in the form of coded symbols. Then they continued to rewrite their compositions until all errors were corrected (Figure 1). In other words, the dynamic WCF required the students, with the help of the teachers, to keep revising their writing until it was error free. During this process, the teachers' feedback was coded and the students used tools such as tally sheet and error log to help them improve their written accuracy, which made the dynamic WCF meaningful and distinguished from traditional WCF. Contrasted with the dynamic WCF, the traditional WCF received by the control group in this study was detailed feedback on four multidraft papers they wrote. This group also emphasized both a variety of rhetorical writing skills and linguistic accuracy.
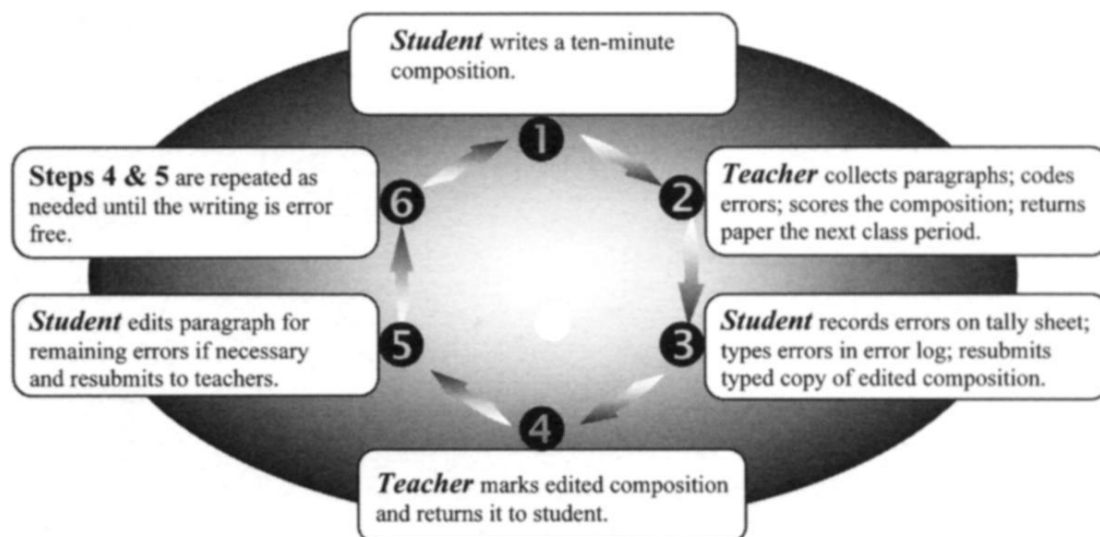

Figure 1. Feedback cycle for dynamic written corrective feedback. (Hartshorn et al., 2010, p.90)

Second, the dynamic feedback is timely and constant. In Hartshorn et al.'s (2010) study, dynamic feedback received by the treatment group was timely "in that student writing is consistently marked with the coded symbols and returned the following class period" (p. 88). It was constant "in that students produce new pieces of writing and receive feedback nearly every class period of the course" (p. 88). However, for the control group receiving the traditional feedback, they did not receive timely and constant feedback.

Third, dynamic feedback is manageable. Hartshorn et al. (2010) pointed out that "feedback is manageable for teachers when they have enough time to attend to the quality and completeness of what they communicate to their students" (p. 88). In their study, the teachers provided the students in the treatment group with feedback by coding errors and scoring the composition after they turned in their writing every time. Subsequently, the teachers marked students' edited versions again and returned them to students. The process continued until the students' composition is error free. In addition, Hartshorn et al. (2010) continued claiming that "feedback is manageable for the students when they have the time and ability to process, learn from, and apply the needed feedback from their teachers" (p. 88). In order to make their composition error free, the students first should learn from the feedback provided by the teachers and apply it to their next version of composition. Conversely, for the control group receiving the traditional feedback, they did not receive this sort of manageable feedback from their teachers. In other words, they were not required to keep revising their composition until it was error free.

The results of the two research questions in Hartshorn et al.'s (2010) study can be used to claim that how to use WCF is the question that the instructors should be more concerned with. The first research question in Hartshorn et al.'s (2010) study was whether there was a significant difference in mean accuracy scores between posttest essays of the treatment group and those of the contrast group. The result of this study showed that the treatment group receiving the dynamic WCF had significantly higher accuracy scores than the control group receiving the traditional WCF, with mean 15.04 from the control group and 19.09 from the treatment group. However, the dynamic WCF was not always better in improving students' writing ability than other types of feedback, which was shown in the second research question of this study. The second question was to explore whether there was a difference in means between the rhetorical competence scores, fluency scores, or complexity scores from the treatment group posttest essays and those from the contrast group. The result of this question showed the dynamic WCF might have a slight negative effect on writing fluency and complexity.

Some alternative types of feedback, such as dynamic WCF analyzed in this section, could provide the students with both positive and negative effects on their written accuracy. As Bitchener & Ferris (2012) claimed that the 10-minute in-class freewrites used in Hartshorn et al.'s (2010) study "may not elicit the types of errors or writing challenges that students will encounter on other types of writing assignments" (p. 143). Thus, the teachers should discern the distinctions among different types of feedback, the different effects generated by the same type of feedback in different situations, and select those that are profitable for their students to use.

III. THEORETICAL EVIDENCE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WCF

A. A General Introduction to the Interaction Approach

The interaction approach stems from Long's (1983, 1996) interaction hypothesis. Long's (1983) interaction hypothesis held that meaning negotiation and interactional modifications are two phases in communication with the former leading to the existence of the latter. Put it simply, meaning negotiation occurs when the interlocutors have difficulty in understanding each other. It mainly works through the forms of "clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks and repetition" (Pawlak, 2014, p. 53). The phase of interactional modification involves "simplification or elaboration of the initial message, thus making input comprehensible" (p. 53). However, this version of interaction hypothesis was criticized for its failure to address the link between the negotiation of meaning and language acquisition. In his revised version, Long (1996) claimed the importance of negotiation of form, "which covers responses to inaccurate use of target language features, both when the error impedes the flow of conversation and when it is addressed for pedagogic purposes" (p. 54). In this case, the benefits of negotiation activities should include three aspects: the provision of the positive language input produced in form-meaning-function mappings; the provision of negative (corrective) feedback through the forms of vocabulary, morphology and language-specific syntax or other language-facilitated knowledge; the produce of modified output as a result of the feedback provision, cognitive comparison and noticing the gap (Pawlak, 2014). In terms of WCF, these three aspects can be used to refer to the input, the feedback, and the output respectively, which will be discussed next.

Polio (2012) pointed out that the origins of the interaction approach are from the works on oral interaction, and "this approach emphasizes the role of input, output, and feedback, all of which occur during interaction in the L2" (p. 383). When it comes to WCF, the input can be the process of exposure to the feedback, and the output can be the students' production. In other words, in the interaction approach, input, output, and feedback can constitute a chain through which students' written accuracy can improve. More importantly, he pointed out that the most important component in the interaction approach is attention. In the phases of receiving input and producing output, and in receiving implicit or explicit feedback, attention is always playing an important role (Polio, 2012). Furthermore, Long (1996) argued that a learner's "*degree of attention* to linguistic form may determine the extent to which L2 input becomes L2 intake (i.e., is incorporated into the learner's developing L2 system)" (emphasis is original, as cited in Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, p. 17).

In other words, in terms of WCF, attention plays an essential role in determining whether or not the input and the feedback received by students are effective in improving the students' written accuracy. If the students pay appropriate attention to the input and the feedback, then it is more likely for them to produce more accurate output.

B.   The Application of the Interaction Approach

In fact, Sachs and Polio (2007) conducted their research under the framework of an interaction approach even though they do not state clearly the use of this approach in their article (Polio, 2012). Based on the interaction approach, L2 writers can benefit from WCF from two aspects: the first aspect includes input, output, and feedback, while the second aspect is attention (Polio, 2012; Bitchener, 2012).

First, in terms of input, output, and feedback, the ways how the input and the feedback are provided can affect the students' output. In fact, in his reformulation of Interaction Hypothesis, Long (1996) argues that negative feedback plays a key role in developing learners' language ability. In L2 writing domain, students can notice the negative feedback in their writing and they also tend to learn from it. In this case, the negative feedback can serve as WCF through which can help improve students' written accuracy. In Sachs and Polio's (2007) study, students in the error correction method are more directly exposed to the WCF, which is a key factor leading to their higher accuracy in the revisions. However, in the reformulation method and the reformulation with think-aloud method of Sachs and Polio's study, because the students' written errors are not *directly* pointed out and corrected, their revision accuracy is lower than the error correction method. Moreover, after the controls are added to the study, they show the least accuracy of revisions among all of the four groups because there is no error correction provided in their writing. In other words, the extent of exposure to input plays an important role in the effectiveness of students' output and feedback. For example, in this study, students who are provided with error correction are more thoroughly exposed to the corrected forms of their writing than the other three groups of students. Thus, the students in the error correction group can produce better revisions than the other three groups of students.

Second, students' proper attention to error correction can have a positive effect on their accuracy of revisions. Bitchener (2012) points out that "attention is also necessary in the written context if learners are to uptake the feedback" (p. 351). Thus, in Sachs and Polio's (2007) research, they explored the association between participant verbal protocol on feedback and the changes in their revisions. The participants from the reformulation with think-aloud method are interviewed by one of the researchers. The results show that there was an association "between the noticing that learners demonstrated during the think-alouds and the changes they made in their revisions the next day" (p.82). In other words, the more errors the participants were aware of (through use of metalanguage and provision of a reason), the better their revisions would be.

Based on the interaction approach, Schmidt (1990, 1994) points out that there are three types of attention that can be used to explain the effectiveness of corrective feedback: noticing, understanding, and awareness. Specifically, Schmidt (1994) pointed out that "noticing refers to the process of bringing some stimulus into focal attention (i.e., registering its simple occurrence) while understanding and awareness refer to explicit knowledge (e.g., awareness of a rule)" (as cited in Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, p. 17). Thus, in Sachs and Polio's (2007) study targeting the participants of the reformulation with think-aloud method, the reasons why the participants who are more aware of their errors can produce better accurate revisions are as follows: in the noticing type, the focal attention of these participants is stimulated through the occurrence of the reformulations; then, in the types of understanding and awareness, students compare their writing with the reformulations produced by native speakers, and explicate their own written errors through the use of metalanguage and provision of a reason. Those who can be more aware of their written errors can write revisions with higher accuracy.

In addition, the evidence on studies of focused WCF can also explain the fact that WCF is effective in L2 writing practice and the usefulness of the interaction approach in improving students' L2 writing accuracy. This range of recent studies investigated "the effectiveness of focusing WCF on only one or a few targeted linguistic errors" (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, p. 57). Bitchener and Ferris (2012) presented the effectiveness of focusing WCF by discussing a set of studies utilizing this sort of feedback. One result in common among this set of studies is that the treatment groups (who receive focused WCF) outperformed the control groups (who do not receive WCF) in terms of written accuracy. Moreover, as discussed above, attention and understanding play a key role in the interaction approach, which is also the reason for the effectiveness of focused WCF in improving students' written accuracy. Obviously, if the students' attention is focused on one or a few errors they made, then it will be easier for them to attend to them, understand them, and hopefully, uptake them. In fact, focused WCF derives its rationale from a theoretical perspective by Schmidt (1994) and Ellis (2005) which emphasizes the importance of attention and understanding in learning. (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Thus, attention and understanding in interaction approach are useful in improving students' written accuracy.

In short, the interaction approach can be utilized to argue that WCF is useful in L2 writing because this approach emphasizes the importance of the input, the output, and the feedback during the process of improving students' written accuracy. Moreover, the interaction approach also presents that the students who can explicate their written errors through the types of noticing, understanding, and awareness can write more accurate revisions than others. In addition, the effectiveness of focused WCF in improving students' written accuracy is also an evidence to prove the helpfulness of the interaction approach in L2 writing. Thus, the interaction approach is useful in L2 writing practice.

C.   A General Introduction to Skill Acquisition Theory

This section will elaborate on the significance of skill acquisition theory in WCF. Skill acquisition theory, which is used in Hartshorn et al.' (2010) study to frame the dynamic WCF, can also predict that the proper utilization of WCF can help improve students' L2 written accuracy. Skill acquisition theory is originated from "rule-based theories of automatization, in particular Anderson's (1983, 1995) Adaptive Control of Thought Theory, and has been extended to the area of language learning mainly through the work of Johnson (1996) and Dekeyser (1998, 2001, 2003, 2007a, b, c)" (Pawlak, 2014, p. 60).

The concept of explicit and implicit learning and knowledge plays a basic role in skill acquisition theory. Hulstijn (2005) pointed out that "explicit learning is input processing with the conscious intention to find out whether the input information contains regularities and, if so, to work out the concepts and rules with which these regularities can be captured. Implicit learning is input processing without such intention, taking place subconsciously" (as cited from Pawlak, 2014, p. 12). Based on this point, we can assume that explicit learning is the precondition of implicit learning, and it is implicit learning that can have a decisive effect on the development of learning. Thus, the key question here is how explicit learning can be converted to implicit learning. In fact, Bitchener (2012) points out that skill acquisition theory "accommodates the view that explicit learning and explicit knowledge from instruction and CF (including written CF) can be converted to implicit knowledge considered necessary for acquisition" (p. 350). In other words, teachers explicated WCF to students who can internalize it as implicit knowledge which is vital to language development.

When discussing the use of skill acquisition theory in second language acquisition, Dekeyser (2007) argues that "declarative knowledge (what one knows) is required for the development of procedural knowledge (what one can do) and that it must be based on explicit rules and numerous examples" (as cited in Hartshorn et al., 2010, p. 87). The purpose of learning language is to transfer declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge. In this case, WCF is provided as a source of declarative knowledge which is expected to help students improve their written accuracy through transferring this knowledge to procedural knowledge. In fact, Hartshorn et al. (2010) further hold that "proceduralization requires extensive and deliberate practice, which then leads the learner toward greater automatization" (p.87). Similarly, when discussing Anderson's skill acquisition model, Bitchener & Ferris (2012) also pointed out that "practice leads to automatization" (p. 13). Thus, through the process of feedback and practice, students' written accuracy can improve if they can *automatically* avoid making errors that have already been corrected.

D.   The Application of Skill Acquisition Theory

Hartshorn et al. (2010) pointed out that there were two additional concepts from skill acquisition theory that are important to their study. The first one was that "the theory predicts that accuracy is a function of practice" (p. 87). The second concept was that "the theory predicts that procedural knowledge does not transfer well" (p. 87). In their study, Hartshorn et al. designed the dynamic WCF that required the students to write 10-minute freewrites every day and to keep revising them until they are error free. When it comes to skill acquisition theory, this sort of practice plays an essential role in promoting the transformation from explicit knowledge to implicit knowledge, during which the students' written accuracy can improve. Conversely, if the students are lack of practice after receiving feedback, then it must be hard for them to transfer declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge. Also, it will be hard for them to arrive at automatization phase in which they have acquired the knowledge with which they can automatically avoid making errors. Thus, skill acquisition theory plays an essential role in Hartshorn et al.' (2010) study.

In fact, Bitchener & Ferris (2012) presented three stages of converting declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge, which can also be utilized to explain the effectiveness of skill acquisition theory in WCF. The first stage is the cognitive stage which is "a description of the procedure is learned" (p. 14). For example, when a student writer's written error of not including an indefinite article *-a* before a first utilized noun is corrected by teachers, he or she must know that an *-a* should be added before this noun. The second stage is the associative stage through which "a method for performing the skill is worked out" (p. 14). In other words, through association, the student writer in this stage may know how to add an *-a* when other similar contexts require it. The third stage is the autonomous stage through which "the skill becomes more and more rapid and automatic" (p. 14). In this stage, the student writer can add an *-a* more and more automatically in his or her writing. Thus, through these three stages of converting declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge, a student writer's written accuracy can be moved to a higher level.

In short, through the concepts of declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, automatization, and the cognitive, the associative, and the autonomous stage, skill acquisition theory can provide a solid rationale for the effectiveness of WCF in L2 writing.

IV.   THE ARGUMENT OF INEFFECTIVENESS OF WCF AND ITS REBUTTALS

Contrary to the studies and the theories that support the effectiveness of WCF in L2 writing, there are other researchers who argue that WCF is not useful, such as Kepner (1991); Truscott (1996, 2004, 2007). Among them, Truscott's argument, which seems a strong and consistent one, and its rebuttals will be discussed in this part. One of the argument claimed by Truscott is that students tend to simplify their writing because they do not want to encounter the situations that might lead them make errors. In addition, he argues that WCF is not useful because it only leads to

"pseudo-learning" which can not really improve students' language ability (Truscott, 1996). This part argues that Truscott's argument is not valid.

A. Truscott's Avoidance Phenomenon and Its Rebuttals

One of the harmful effects of WCF proposed by Truscott (2007) is called avoidance phenomenon in students' writing. Truscott (2007) argues that the immediate goal of correction "is to make learners aware of their errors" (p. 268), which is distinguished from understanding and applying these error corrections to other contexts. In other words, being aware of their written errors cannot guarantee that the students can utilize them in their future pieces of writing. Furthermore, he claims that "this awareness creates a clear motivation for avoiding the type of construction corrected" (p. 268). Thus, he argues that "corrected students tend to shorten and simplify their writing, apparently to avoid situations in which they might make errors" (p. 268). In this way, the students' improvement of written accuracy should not be attributed to the effectiveness of WCF because what they do is just to avoid utilizing the corrected errors they may not understand. So, WCF should not be used as an effective way to improve students' written accuracy.

However, this avoidance effect is argued by van Beuningen et al.'s (2012) study which investigates the evidence on the effectiveness of comprehensive error correction in L2 writing. In their study, van Beuningen et al. (2012) divided two hundred sixty eight participants from four Dutch secondary schools into four groups, with two groups receiving experimental treatments and the other two receiving control conditions. The two experimental groups received comprehensive direct CF and indirect CF respectively, while the two contrast groups were required to do self-correction and additional writing practice respectively. The research question was whether error correction led to avoidance of lexically and structurally complex utterances. The authors utilized ANCOVA to answer this research question. The results included two aspects, both of which could be used to refute Truscott's claim of avoidance phenomenon. The first result was that there was no significant between-groups difference of structural and lexical complexity in both of the posttests involving new pieces of writing. In other words, subjects who received WCF did not tend to avoid writing more complex structures in their new writing. The second result was that there are "significant between-groups differences concerning the structural complexity, ... of the output produced during the treatment/control session" (p. 31), $F(3, 262) = 7.94$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. Specifically, the practice group, who were required to write a new text, wrote less complex structures than those who received direct or indirect WCF. Therefore, Truscott's avoidance phenomenon is not valid in that, instead of avoiding writing more complex structures, the participants receiving WCF do write more complex structures than those who write a new text.

In addition, Truscott used some examples to argue the existence of avoidance phenomenon, but the examples he used are flawed, which made his argument weak. For example, when claiming the avoidance phenomenon, Truscott (2007) argued that "signs of avoidance are not hard to find in correction studies" (p. 269), and he used Sheppard's (1992) study as an example to prove his argument, saying that students in that study "tend to avoid using complex structures or grammar points they are not sure of" (p. 269). However, Sheppard's (1992) study is flawed, so its result should be taken with caution. There were two groups of participants in that study with a treatment group receiving WCF on discrete items and a control one receiving feedback on holistic meaning. All participants in both groups had a one-on-one conference with the teacher after receiving the feedback. In the conference, the participants from the treatment group had their errors corrected by the teacher, while the participants from the control group had their writing commented by the teacher (e.g., request for clarification if their writing can not be understood). After a ten-week period of study, the result showed that the treatment group used fewer complex sentences than the control group. However, as Bitchener and Ferris (2012) pointed out that it was hard to say that the control group in that study is a strictly control group. In other words, it is possible that participants from the control group receive feedback on their written errors during the conferences, which makes the result of that study doubtful. Thus, with the use of Sheppard's (1992) study, Truscott's argument of the avoidance phenomenon is weak.

B. The Critique of Pseudo-learning

Some Truscott's argument is not valid under the examination of the related theories in SLA. For example, Truscott (1996) claimed that WCF "would promote 'pseudo-learning' or at best self-editing and revision skills, without fostering true accuracy development" (as cited from van Beuningen et al., 2012, p. 2). He based his claim on the argument that WCF could only lead to explicit knowledge, but not implicit knowledge, which would promote language acquisition. Thus, WCF should not be used in L2 writing practice because it is not useful in improving students' language ability. However, according to the skill acquisition theory, it is true that WCF can provide students with explicit knowledge, but through consistent practice, and with the use of some instructional strategy, such as the dynamic WCF, this sort of knowledge can be converted to implicit knowledge which is helpful for the improvement of students' written accuracy. In other words, it seems that Truscott disregarded the connection between explicit and implicit knowledge in terms of WCF.

In short, based on van Beuningen et al.' (2012) study, the avoidance phenomenon claimed by Truscott is not convincing. Specifically, instead of avoiding complex structures in their pieces of writing, students receiving WCF turn out to writing more complex structures than those who do not receive feedback, which can be a rigorous argument against Truscott's claim that WCF is harmful because it only makes students simplify their writing. In addition, Truscott used Sheppard's (1992) study as an example to argue the avoidance phenomenon. But that study is flawed in design, so

its result is doubtful. The claim of pseudo-learning by Truscott is also weak under the examination of the skill acquisition theory.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper argues that WCF is effective in improving L2 student writers' written accuracy, and teachers should take into more consideration how to utilize it in L2 writing practice. In terms of the empirical evidence, first, Sachs and Polio's (2007) study was used to prove that WCF is useful in the improvement of the students' written accuracy. Second, Hartshorn et al.'s (2010) study was used to argue that even the same type of WCF instruction strategy can have different effects on the students' writing. Thus, how to use WCF in practice is the question of which the teachers should be more aware. In terms of the theoretical evidence, both the interaction approach and skill acquisition theory are used to prove the effectiveness of WCF. In addition, through the analyses of van Beuningen et al.' (2012) study, this paper rebuts the avoidance phenomenon claimed by Truscott. Also, this paper further argues the effectiveness of WCF in L2 writing practice by pointing out the flaw of Sheppard's (1992) study and the weakness of pseudo-learning.

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