

# ประสิทธิผลของการตอบกลับงานเขียนที่ต่างกันที่มีต่อการเขียนของผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษในภาษาฐานะต่างประเทศในประเทศไทย

## The Effectiveness of Different Written Corrective Feedback on Thai EFL Learners' Writing

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### บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อ 1) เปรียบเทียบประสิทธิผลของการใช้การตอบกลับงานเขียนแบบตรง (Direct Written Corrective Feedback) และการตอบกลับงานเขียนแบบอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ (Electronic Written Corrective Feedback) ที่มีต่อการเขียนของผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศในประเทศไทย และ 2) เพื่อเปรียบเทียบประสิทธิผลเชิงวิธีการระหว่างการใช้การตอบกลับงานเขียนแบบตรง (Direct Written Corrective Feedback) และการตอบกลับงานเขียนแบบอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ (Electronic Written Corrective Feedback) ที่มีต่อการเขียนของผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศในประเทศไทย กลุ่มตัวอย่างคือนักศึกษาผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศที่ศึกษาอยู่ที่มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏมหาสารคามจำนวน 60 คน ได้มาจากการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบเจาะจง (Purposive Sampling Method) นักศึกษาถูกแบ่งเป็นสองกลุ่มที่ได้รับการตอบกลับงานเขียนภาษาอังกฤษที่ต่างกันสองชนิด คือการตอบกลับงานเขียนแบบตรงและการตอบกลับงานเขียนแบบอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ เครื่องมือวิจัยได้แก่ แบบทดสอบการเขียน การตอบกลับงานเขียน แบบประเมินการเขียน และ แบบสอบถาม สถิติที่ใช้ได้แก่ ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน T-test และ one way ANOVA ผลของการวิจัยพบว่าไม่มีความแตกต่างอย่างมีนัยสำคัญระหว่างความสามารถทางการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาที่ได้รับการตอบกลับงานเขียนแบบตรง และการตอบกลับงานเขียนแบบอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ อย่างไรก็ตามผลของการวิจัยพบว่ามี ความแตกต่างระหว่างการใช้การตอบกลับงานเขียนที่ต่างกันเชิงวิธีการทั้งในด้านของแนวคิดของผู้เรียนและเวลาที่ใช้ในการตอบกลับงานเขียนโดยมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ .05 ผลของการวิจัยเป็นประโยชน์และสามารถนำไปใช้ในการพัฒนาการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษทั้งในด้านการสอนและการวิจัย

**คำสำคัญ:** การตอบกลับงานเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ, อิเล็กทรอนิกส์ฟีดแบ็ค, เทคโนโลยีในการสอนการเขียน

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## Abstract

The purposes of the current study were 1) to compare the effectiveness of direct written corrective feedback and electronic feedback on Thai EFL learners' writing performance, and 2) to compare procedural effectiveness of direct written corrective feedback and electronic feedback. The participants were 60 Thai EFL students in Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University selected by purposive sampling. Two groups of participants received different feedback methods of direct written corrective feedback and electronic feedback. The instruments were writing tests, feedbacks, writing rubric evaluation, and a set of questionnaire. The statistics used in data analysis were Mean Score, Standard Deviation, t-test dependent sampling, and one way ANOVA. The results of the study showed that there was no significant difference between the two methods of written feedback. However, there were significant differences between the two methods in terms of procedural implementation at the statistical level of .05. The result of the study could contribute to EFL writing development in both academic and pedagogical aspects.

**Keywords:** Writing feedback, Electronic feedback, Technology in the Writing Classrooms

## Introduction

English writing has been established as a field in applied Linguistic since the 60s. It has been recognized among scholars in the area that in order to conduct a piece of writing, learners need to learn the different patterns of language production which they use in oral mode of communication (Silva, 1993). As a result, difficulties in teaching writing become a burden for instructors as learners need to be instructed about the rules of grammar, vocabulary, and organization of writing. Especially in the EFL context where learners have fewer opportunities to encounter English in their daily activities, the burden of writing teaching and problems in writing in the classrooms seem to be greater.

The problem is likely to occur in the Thai EFL context. Thai EFL learners seem to have

problems in writing both in accuracy and organization (Torwong, 2005). Despite the fact that Thai students learn English from the earliest level of the educational system (Ministry of Education, 2008), they still make mistakes when they write in English (Khamkhien, 2010). For instance, Kaweerea and Usaha (2008) claimed that a number of errors, including punctuation, grammar, adverb and adjective usage, together with noun and pronoun usage, occur in Thai students' writing. Likewise, Wongsbhindu (1997) stated that serious problems occur in Thai university students' grammar usage including tense use, parts of speech, and sentence components. Moreover, the problems in organization are also detected in the Thai context. According to Foley (2005), problems found in the Thai EFL context include un-organized writing. For example, Pawabunsiriwong (2008) stated that Thai

students' writing compositions are un-organized and lack components of paragraphs including topic sentence, supporting detail, and conclusion. The problems affect the quality of writing compositions.

Written corrective feedback has been considered to be one of the effective methods given in the writing classrooms. Although the method seemed to be a controversial issue in the 90s, Trustscott (1999) claimed that giving feedback could not benefit learners' writing performance. Recent studies in the area have indicated development of learners' writing performance (e.g., Bitchener et al., 2005; Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010 ). According to Peterson (2010), the benefit of feedback is the way it gives opportunities to learn from mistakes. In detail, feedback is the reaction to errors in speaking or writing which may be indicating where the errors are, providing correct forms of language, and giving explanation of error (Ellis, 2009). By this principle, students may learn what their mistakes are, and they could fix and improve their writing. However, in order to succeed in giving feedback, feedback givers need to know the dimensions of feedback giving. For example, Ferris (1999) claimed that to give students feedback on their writing task, correctors should focus on "treatable errors", which are obvious errors in grammar such as run on sentences, errors in subject-verb agreement, use of punctuation, missing articles, and verb form errors not "untreatable errors" such as the selection of words. Similarly, Ellis (1993) stated that grammar should be corrected in students' writing tasks. In addition, error

correction is a crucial factor to make feedback successful.

As a result, the center of discussion in the area moved to finding the best method to give feedback. Considering the traditional method of giving written feedback in the Thai context, limitations could be spotted. According to Tangkiengsirisin (2016), Thai, teachers mainly focus on giving direct feedback to writing compositions. These methods could not be implemented in the large writing classes for several reasons. Firstly, direct corrective feedback might not be salient enough to let students notice the comment, as space in written papers are limited. Student's unclear hand writing might make it more difficult to give feedback. Moreover, direct feedback giving is a time-consuming method. Teachers might spend hours giving feedback for large classes containing more than 30 learners. Lastly, the processes of the traditional method in traditional feedback might not be convenient for both learners and instructors. Teachers could only give feedback in classes or face to face appointments which sometimes are difficult to schedule. These traditional feedback problems should be solved by implementing an alternative feedback giving method.

Technology plays an important role in classroom language teaching. In today's world learners have access to the internet network technology, technological techniques and methods that could be beneficial. Moreover, technology could also be beneficial especially in written corrective feedback giving procedures. According to Ellis (2009), technology could be employed with feedback as electronic feedback

to support the processes of feedback giving. The current study employed Google document as a tool for solving limitation of the written corrective feedback. The purposes of the study were 1) to compare effectiveness of direct written corrective feedback and electronic feedback on Thai EFL learners' paragraph writing performance, and 2) to compare procedural effectiveness of direct written corrective feedback and electronic feedback.

## Review of Literature

### *Types of Written Corrective feedback (WCF)*

Strategies in giving written feedback affect success of feedback (Ellis, 2009). This study applied the principle of Ellis (2009) in reviewing feedback giving strategies. Direct written corrective feedback, considered as the Thai traditional method, in giving feedback and electronic, type could be seen below.

#### *Direct WCF*

Direct WCF is defined as the method that indicates learners' linguistic errors and gives the correct forms explicitly (Ellis, 2009). In case of the direct WCF, learners would have an opportunity to notice their linguistic errors and learn from the given correct forms. An example of direct corrective feedback could be seen below.

a	a	the
A dog stole <del>bone</del> from <del>butcher</del> . He escaped with having <del>bone</del> . When the dog was		
over	a	a
going <del>through</del> <del>bridge</del> over <del>the</del> river he <del>found</del> dog in the river.		

**Figure 1** Direct corrective feedback  
(from Ellis, 2009 P. 99)

### *Electronic Feedback*

Electronic feedback is a method in which teachers apply technology in the feedback giving processes (Ellis, 2009). Electronic feedback could be the way to improve feedback rather than the theoretical feedback itself. Electronic feedback could be provided by such technological methods as webs, word processing software, screen capturing software, and video software.

### *Procedural Aspects of Written Corrective Feedback*

Even though the effectiveness of written corrective feedback is no longer an issue, procedural aspects of the method have still to be considered. Nagode, Pižorn and Jurišević (2014) suggested practical aspects in giving feedback. Firstly, learner perception is an important aspect to be considered. The given feedback should be clear and comprehensible. Moreover, L2 learners seem to prefer feedback from teachers rather than their peers. Timing in feedback giving is another important issue to be discussed. Giving the most effective feedback is not only about providing details for learners. How much time is consumed using a method should be considered as it might not be applicable if the methods demand too much time on the feedback giving processes. Consequently, introducing an alternative feedback method that could fulfill both effective and procedural goals of feedback giving could contribute the area of research and pedagogical setting.

### *Related Studies*

Direct WCF has been recognized to be one of the effective feedback giving methods

in improving learners' writing skills. Studies indicated that learners could learn from their mistakes by noticing the mistakes from direct indications provided to their composition (e.g., Bitchener et al., 2005; Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010). Moreover, they could also learn from differences between the corrections and their performances. For example, Bitchener and Knoch (2010) studied the effects of direct written corrective feedback on 53 ESL learners. The students received direct WCF for 10 months, and the result of the study indicated improvement of writing skills. Moreover, direct WCF has also been integrated with technological methods and has proved to be effective. For example, Abu Seileek (2013) applied track change function in Microsoft-word software to give direct feedbacks for EFL writing. The results of the study indicated improving in writing skills both in grammatical and organizational area. Likewise, Wu (2006) employed an online blog as medium of feedback providing. The result of the study also suggested development of writing performance of the participants.

#### *This Study*

The benefit of direct written corrective feedback has been approved among scholars in the area as studies could indicate the development of writing skills of learners learning with the method. However, giving direct WCF has limitation in procedural aspects. Technological tools have been applied to improve direct WCF and found to be beneficial to the development of writing. However, the previous studies employing technology with direct feedback have not indicated the benefit of the tools in terms of

procedural aspects. The current study employed Google Document as a technological tool to improve processes of giving direct WCF with the following research questions.

1) Are there different effects of direct corrective written feedback and electronic feedback on Thai EFL learners' paragraph writing performance?

2) Are there different procedural effects of direct corrective written feedback and electronic feedback on Thai EFL learners' paragraph writing performance?

## **Research Methodology**

### *Sample and Population*

The populations of the current study were 203 students enrolling in the 3021109 formal paragraph writing courses, first semester, 2017 academic year in Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University (RMU). 60 participants were selected by the purposive sampling method. All participants were separated into 2 groups of 30 by the systematic sampling considering from the score of pre-test. Participants were treated anonymously.

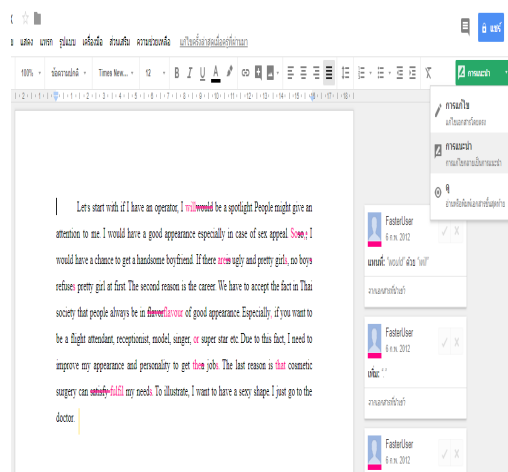
### **Research Instruments**

#### *Electronic feedback*

Utilizing the definition of electronic feedback given by Ellis (2009), the study employed Google documents (google docs) as the medium of feedback giving. Google docs is a web-based word processing feature freely provided for google customers. The web-based software enable users to create documents in the similar ways to the Microsoft Word software. The software has "recommendations" function

which shows how others edit the document file.

The function was used to give electronic feedback. The example of electronic feedback giving could be seen below.



**Figure 2** Electronic feedback method

The electronic feedback was operationalized by asking students to submit all written performances in the Google Drive form. Feedback givers could open the file in google docs. Feedback would automatically appear in the original uploaded file.

#### *Pre-post-test*

Pre and post-test is applied in this study in order to investigate the outcome of both feedback types. Moreover, the Pretest was also used to classify students in to groups. The topics were “Plastic Surgery and Thai Society” in pretest and “Living Together before Getting Married” for posttest.

#### *Rubric checklist*

The checklist is designed to be a holistic rubric scoring of the full score of 5 (Mertler, 2001). The criteria included the uses of tenses, punctuations, subject verb agreements, sentence structures, coherence, and unity. The criteria were listed from the most serious problems in the Thai EFL writing context reviewed by literatures (Wongshindu, 1997; Torwong, 2005; Kaweera & Usaha, 2008). The checklist was employed to rate paragraph writing prior to the experiment by co-raters and found strong coefficient ( $\alpha = 0.736$ ).

#### *Questionnaire*

The questionnaire was employed to the study in order to investigate learner perception toward receiving feedback from the different methods. The questionnaire was designed to be in 5 Likert scale. The questions were related to the clearness of feedback, comprehensibility of feedback, and preference toward feedback. The questionnaire question items were tested and found strong coefficient ( $\alpha = 0.871$ ).

#### *Timer*

Timer was employed to investigate time consuming of each feedback method. The procedural aspect could be used to identify practical aspect of each feedback.

#### *Data collection and Data Analysis*

**Table 1** Data collection and data analysis

Processes	Data Collection	Statistics
Pretest	Students took pre-test. The score of the test was used to group students.	$\bar{x}$ , S.D, and t-test (dependent sampling)
Feedback	Group 1 received electronic feedback, and group 2 received direct WCF. Both group revised their paragraph and submitted their work again.	$\bar{x}$ , S.D (time consuming)
Posttest	Students took posttest. The scores of students were compared. Students fill the questionnaire.	$\bar{x}$ , S.D t-test (dependent sampling), and one-way ANOVA

## Results

### *Participants Grouping*

**Table 1** The Result from Pretest

Test	N	$\bar{x}$	S.D	Sig
Pretest group 1	30	22.72	3.23	.154
Pretest group 2	30	22.76	3.05	

After tasking pretest, the participants were categorized into two groups by consideration of their scores. The comparison of groups' score show no significant difference between the participants of 2 groups ( $p=.154$ ). Consequently, it could be assumed that the participants of two

different groups started from having writing skills at the comparative level.

### *Effectiveness of the feedback methods*

**Table 2** In group Comparison

	N	$\bar{x}$	S.D	Sig
Pretest group 1	30	22.72	3.23	0.00**
Posttest group 1	30	28.32	2.51	
Pretest group 2	30	22.76	3.05	0.00**
Posttest group2	30	27.40	2.43	

The result of the study showed that both feedback methods could benefit the participants' paragraph writing performance since significant differences could be found between both the participants' pre and posttest in the group 1 ( $p=.00$ ) and the participants' pre and posttests in the group 2 at the statistical level of .05. ( $p=.00$ ).

**Table 3** Between group comparison

	N	$\bar{x}$	S.D	Sig
Posttest group 1	30	28.32	2.51	.136
Posttest group 2	30	27.40	2.43	

The result of the study showed that there was no significant difference between the students receiving different methods of feedback ( $p=.136$ ). Therefore, there was no difference between employing the two different feedback methods in terms of students' writing development.

### *Procedural effectiveness of the feedback methods*

	Electronic feedback	Direct WCF	Sig
Students' perception	4.65	4.32	0.023
Time consuming	6.45	8.48	0.015

The result of the study showed that learners receiving electronic feedback showed satisfaction toward the method at very high level ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.65) while learners receiving direct WCF reported satisfaction at high level ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.32). Comparatively, there was a significant difference between the two methods at the statistical level of .05 ( $p$  = .023). Similarly, the Mean Score of time spent in electronic feedback was at 6.45 minutes while for the direct WCF was of 8.48. Moreover, there was a significant difference between times spent in giving feedbacks of the different methods at the statistical level of .05 ( $p$  = .015).

## Discussions

### *The Effectiveness of Feedbacks*

According to the results of the study, students seem to have better performance when they were given feedback in both electronic and direct WCF. The results of the study provided evidence to support direct corrective feedback as it was in agreement with previous studies in the area (e.g., Bitchener et al., 2005; Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010). Theoretically, learners could notice the mistakes they made compared to the given feedback. According to Schmidt (1990), language could be acquired when learners notice the grammar mistakes. The given feedback highlighted grammatical mistakes and made it salient for learners to notice and learn from the given correct forms of grammar.

### *Benefits of technology on feedback giving*

The result of the study showed that electronic feedback could benefit the

participants' writing performance at the same level as the direct WCF did. However, electronic feedback seemed to be more effective in terms of procedural aspects as learners preferred the method, and less time was spent in the processes of feedback giving. The result of the study could be evidence showing how technology could benefit language learning in a procedural way. According to Weideman (2014), even though it is difficult to provide theoretical support to technology in terms of students' learning behaviors, the innovation could improve instructional aspects for example it could make teaching methods to be less time consuming, attractive, and more appropriate for learners of the current era.

Moreover, the participants' preference toward electronic feedback could suggest learning behaviors of learners in the current situation. Basically, direct WCF and electronic feedback are the same method. Changing medium from papers to a technological tool resulted in the greater satisfaction of learners. This might be a consequence that learners could check the feedback via their mobile phones all the time. The result of the study could show an example of how network technology has impact on the situation of language learning.

## Conclusion

The research questions could be answered as 1) there is no difference between using direct written corrective feedback on papers and electronic medias in terms of developing Thai EFL writing performance, and 2) the electronic feedback was the better

method considering its contribution of reduced time and learners' perception to direct WCF. The results of the study could contribute to EFL writing development as it introduced an effective feedback method that consumed less time and responded to learning environment in the current era. Further studies could employ more

technological tools in order to improve the method of electronic feedback. Moreover, the current study investigated only direct WCF. Other feedback methods could be integrated with technology in order to solve problems in the EFL writing classroom.

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