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**Students' Preferences over Error  
Correction and Feedback in English as  
Foreign language (EFL) writing Classroom**

**Case Study Third Year LMD Students in the English  
Departement of AmmarThelidji University of Laghouat**

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## **Dedication**

**To MY BELOVED HUSBAND and MY KIDS, source of my  
Happiness and success in life. May Allah bless them?**

**To MY FAMILY MEMBERS**

**MOTHER FATHER BROTHERS AND SISTERS**

**To my extended family and the many friends, who  
Have been so supportive and encouraged the  
Fulfillment of this work**

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## **Abstract**

Responding to students' writing is one of the most controversial topics in second language (L2) instruction and theory. Do students benefit from teachers' corrections and written comments on their writing? If so, are some types of feedback more effective than others? Just as importantly, in this research we shed light on students' preferences for feedback and error correction?

Students' beliefs about what constitutes effective feedback on writing and their expectations regarding teacher paper-marking techniques may influence the effectiveness of such feedback, therefore, it is important to investigate L2 students' preferences and expectations match those of their teachers. This research reports on a study investigating EFL university students' preferences for error correction and paper-marking techniques.

### **List of Abbreviations**

<b>EFL</b>	English as Foreign Language.
<b>ESL</b>	English as Second Lnguage.
<b>L1</b>	First Language
<b>L2</b>	Second Language.
<b>CA</b>	Contrastive Analysis.
<b>EA</b>	Error Analysis.

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# **General Introduction**

## General Introduction

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### General Introduction

Throughout the history of teaching writing to second language(L2) learners, there has been a constant dispute among scholars and teachers regarding the role of error feedback in helping students learn how to write. Although providing feedback is commonly practiced EFL writing classes but there is no general agreement regarding what type of feedback is most helpful and why it is helpful?

As a result of this, many teachers of writing English as a second or foreign language( ESL EFL )are often confused about how to help their students in writing classes. Some teachers still have the tendency to provide explicit and elaborate grammatical correction of their student' composition. Whereas others prefer to correct only the content of the given activity .

However, there is a serious question as to the usefulness of different kinds of feedback treatment. Error correction may not help students improve their accuracy when responding regardless of teachers' time and effort (Semke, 1984;Zamel, 1985). For example many students make the same error over and over even though they receive feedback from their teacher. For this reason, some researchers have questioned the effectiveness of error feedback offered in classroom instruction(Semek, 1984L; Truscott, 1996).

A number of research studies in various L2 contexts investigate the effect of different types of feedback on students' writing skills. One type of feedback that has been investigated is that of content and organization, such feedback are necessary and does results in improvement in students' writing (Fathma and Whalley, 1990; Huntly, 1992; Kapner, 1991; Shepredm1992). Huntly 1992 maintains that feedback on content and organization should be provided to students while feedback on form should be avoided, and she recommends that L2 teachers incorporate peer review and student-teacher conferences in their teaching as two valuable alternative feedback methods to traditional error correction.

Similarly, Hedgcock and Lefkowitz 1994 administered a 45-item questionnaire to 110 ESL and 137 foreign language (FL) learners in order to explore how L2 learners react when they

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receive teacher feedback on both first and final drafts, how these responses influence the evolution of students' perception of text quality and their composing processes, and finally, whether ESL and EFL students differ in terms of responses to feedback and self-appraisal patterns. Results revealed that although ESL and FL students revealed generally favorable attitudes towards teacher feedback, some variation in beliefs about teacher response between the two groups was also evident, indicating, according to Hedgcock and Lefkowitz, a close relationship between teachers' response behavior and students' beliefs about their effectiveness. Interview data confirmed further that instructional practice plays an important role in shaping students' expectations concerning the aims of written feedback (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996).

Assumingly, foreign language learners have negative attitudes towards writing because of two main reasons, first reason is that students expect to practise writing in the writing courses. The second reason is that students are rarely informed by writing teachers about their writing strengths and weaknesses, in other terms, learners express their need of receiving information that would help them improve their writing skills; nonetheless if it happens that the teacher writes a comment it is to justify a score and not to ask for revision.

All in all, the business of correcting students' writing composition is usually a frustrating endeavour for both teachers and students, but worst of all; it seems to be mostly unproductive. When the compositions are returned to the students' they read the over all mark given, shelve (or throw) the paper away to be forgotten, and then repeat the same errors on their next composition. Besides failing to raise students' interest, it also showed that splaterring the piece of writing with red ink killed any motivation that the student might had.

According to the researchers and teachers writing is a difficult skill for both native and non-native speakers. Learners must balance multiple issues as content, organization, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling. On the other hand it is especially difficult for non-native speaker to write as they are expected to create written products that demonstrates mastery of the skill in a new language. Moreover, acquiring a foreign language is a difficult task for students in Algeria; writing in English is a long term process and entails tremendous efforts to achieve it.

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Unfortunately, the main thing the teacher marks or takes note of on students' composition are grammatical and orthographic errors. Yet, the true reason for writing is to achieve the communicative end. That is to say, writing constitutes language and enables the learner to communicate with the others. Moreover, a piece of writing is not just a series of sentences and rules; it is rather a flow of ideas and thoughts that demonstrates the learners' way of thinking which are worth reading and appreciating.

Therefore, teachers should not just look to the surface level of grammar and vocabulary but also respond to the content before they correct editing, drafting and revising. Process writing allows for interplay between writing and thinking. Since the stages are not fixed and linear the piece of writing is not a final one and should be taken as a draft. Teachers have to know that writing is a process going through different stages like planning,.

Providing feedback is often regarded as one of the most important tasks for foreign language teachers of writing. The way that teacher structure the classroom for writing session and the type of feedback and will undoubtedly determine how their students approach the writing process. However the shift to focus on writing process has not eliminate the difficulties of providing effective feedback, teachers of EFL writing classes themselves are uncertain of the best way to provide it.

Over the last twenty years, much research has been conducted in the area of teachers' feedback in foreign language compositions, and the recent one have shown students with more positive attitude toward teacher feedback. Teachers and students agree that despite the time consuming nature of providing corrective feedback and revising, teacher feedback is both desirable and helpful. Nonetheless, teachers express concern about how to provide feedback and what are the students' preferences in doing so. It is important for EFL composition teachers to understand how feedback can be effectively used to improve students' writing quality.

The present study suggests that L2 writing teachers are faced with the dilemma of whether they should correct students' surface errors or not, since students seem to expect this kind of correction while research evidences generally suggests that such feedback is ineffective.

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Since the students' beliefs about the preferences for feedback on writing may influence the degree of effectiveness of such feedback. It is crucial to identify students' attitudes towards error correction and their expectations regarding teacher feedback on their writing thus the purpose of this study is to explore EFL university students' preferences for error correction and paper-marking techniques and their belief about what constitutes effective feedback. More specifically, the study addresses the following questions:

- 1- How concerned are EFL students with errors in their writing?
- 2- What features of their writing do EFL students believe is the most important for their teacher to respond to?
- 3- What are EFL students' preferences for marking -paper techniques?

The current research hypothesis is mainly based on two specific hypotheses which will be examined and verified through these two hypotheses: first, we hypothesize that third year students in EFL writing classes are against the use of red pen as paper marking techniques by their teachers to correct their compositions. Second, we hypothesize that our learners would like to receive detailed corrective feedback on their first draft rather than the final one.

In the current dissertation, we divide the work into two parts: theoretical and practical one. Theoretically speaking, we are going to deal with specific elements about certain issue which belong to our topic. In the first chapter, we are going to provide the reader with the difference between error and mistake, historical background of the study, difference between L1 and L2 and regarding L1 as source of error and error analysis as shortcoming to contrastive analysis.

In the second chapter introduces feedback on students' written work, explore its nature and shed light in its different types and some useful techniques in responding to students' compositions, the red pen effect on students' psychology in EFL writing classes. A number of answers will be provided to questions such as: what should we correct? When do we correct? How do we correct? What should we focus? Chapter three is the field work and it is devoted to analyse explain and discuss the students' questionnaire and analyse their attitude.

# **Chapter I:Error Correction in EFL Classroom**

### 1.0 Introduction

Error correction is seen as a form of feedback given to learners in EFL writing classes on their language use. No teacher can deny the fact that correcting the errors made by the students when they write is one of the most difficult tasks in teaching language. Thus every language practitioner or teacher should consider the following issues about error correction and evaluation to those errors: The difference between error and mistake the difference between first language acquisition and second language learning and regarding L1 as source of error, error analysis as shortcoming to contrastive analysis .All what have been said will be the main focus of this chapter.

### 1.1 The Historical Context

The process of education is one of the most important and complex of all human endeavors' (Williams and Burden, 2007:5). Traditionally education was a process carried out by one person , a teacher standing in front of a class and transmitting information to a group of learners who were expected to absorb it. Nevertheless, a successful educator could attempt to go beyond teaching-learning processes and teach issues which may have relevance for the students' future life. Education is " *contextualized social practice, a process which involves not only government and institution, but all of us well, especially teachers* " (Rodriguez Ascura 32).

### 1.2 Social Interactionism

Social interactionism is a Vygotskian approach to educational psychology which emphasized the essential role of learner in constructing their own knowledge and understanding while learning foreign languages by means of interaction and negotiation of meaning in communicative situation

*For social interactionism, children are born into a social world, and learning occurs through interaction with other people. From the time we are born we interact with others in our day to day life and through these interactions we take our own sense of the world* (William and Burden 39).

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In the same vein, William and Burden claims that "*social interactionism emphasized the dynamic nature of the interplay of learning as arising form of interactin with others*" (43). An important representative of this approach is Lev Vygotsky; the central of his psychology is the concept of mediation. The latter term used to refer to the part played by other significant people in the learners' live. The secret of effective learning lies in the nature of social levels of skill and knowledge. The role of the one with greater knowledge (a teacher, a parents or a peer) is to find ways of helping the other to learn (William and Burden 38). Donato (qtd in Cotterall and Cohen 158) describes the concept of scaffolding as follows:

In social interaction a knowleagble participant can create, by means of speech, suportive conditions in which the novice can participate in, and extend, current skills and knowledge to higher level of competence.

The notion of scaffolding "*emphasized the role of interacton with peers and with experienced others in learning, moving learners from thier existing level of performance (what they can do now) to a level of potential performance (what they will be able to dom without assistance)*" (Hylan 122).

Vygotsky's most widely known concept is that of THE ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT ( ZPD), which is used to refer the layer of skill or knowledge which is just achieving . Working togheter with an other person either an adult or a more competant peer at a level that is just above a learner' s present capabilities is the best way for the learner to move to the next layer ( William and Burden 39).

The majority of teachers now recognize that if students ,young and old, are given taskes to accomplish that are just beyond thier actual competence, but are able to secure the support of others, it is likely that will be able to manage the task than if they left struggle with it on thier own. The teacher's skill is to observe carefully and monitor a student's progress in order to provide a task with the proximal reach of that learner and to suggest who thier learning partner might be to provide a scaffold, or support to achieve this goal . Therefore, as Hyland claims in her book "*the teacher and the learner begin by working togheter ,with the teacher intially doing most of the work*

*but gradually passing on more and more responsibility to the learner as their skill increase ,so that they are eventually able to work independently” ( 157).*

### 1.3 The Definition of Errors

In order to discuss feedback and errors correction, a distinction between error and mistake must be done:

Before the 1960s, during the dominance of the behavioristic view upon language there existed a dominated view of language to consider learners' errors as something undesirable, making errors was seen a sign of mishearing and regarded as undesirable to proper processes of language learning. According to the behavioristic point of view, the reason behind making errors lies in inadequate teaching methods. Yet, with the appearance of the universal grammar concept proposed by Chomsky in 1965, teachers of ESL language shifted towards the cognitive approach (innate capacity that can guide him through a vast number of sentence generation possibilities).

The Importance of errors in language learning was first advocated by Corder he proved that strategies of L2 learners could be inferred through the analysis of their errors, and this could be helpful for researchers and teachers of L2 learning process.

There are a lot of definitions developed for the concept of errors according to Lenon (qtd. in Brown 2000) an error is "a linguistic form or combination of forms, in the same context and under similar conditions of production, would in all like likelihood, not be produced by the speakers' native speakers counterparts".

On the other hand, in linguistics, the definitions of terms mistakes and errors are diverse, even though the term " errors " is often assumed to incorporate the notion of a " mistake".

Furthermore in the field of psycholinguistics mistakes in writing is the result of a malfunctioning of the neuromuscular commands of the brain.

According to Brown, a mistake refers to performance errors that is either a random guess or a slip (are mistakes which students can correct themselves), in that it is a failure to utilize a

## Chapter I Error Correction in EFL Classroom

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know system correctly. Obviously, mistakes do not result from the learners' lack of knowledge (167), for instance when native speakers make mistakes they can identify and correct them immediately because they have almost full knowledge of the linguistic structure of their mother tongue, non-native speakers L2 learners do not only commit mistakes then also commit errors and as they have only an incomplete knowledge of the target language, they are not always able to correct the errors that they make. Thus the learners' errors reflect a lack of underlying competence in the language that they are learning.

In addition, Corder as cited in Tafani “*errors reflect gaps in learners knowledge and these occur because the learner does not know what is correct and what is not*” (161). For the same reason, second language L2 errors are considered **unwanted forms** and are regarded as something negative which must be avoided by any means. Lastly, even if errors are pointed out to the learner, they can not be self corrected

### 1.4 Types of Errors and their Sources

Errors are part of the learning process but why learners make errors? and why they find it so difficult to correct their errors? Researchers dealing with second language learning agreed that one of the major causes of errors is language transfer from L1 to L2, yet we can mention other errors' sources as follows:

#### 1.4.1 Language Transfer or Interlingual Interference:

In this type errors are caused by mother tongue interference

**eg1:** I followed him yesterday slowly in the street (Arabic thinking, negative transfer from Arabic to English).

**eg2:** I received confidential **information** from the police (negative transfer from French to English).

#### 1.4.2 Interlingual Interference

This kind of errors occurs during the learning process of L2 at a stage when the learners have really acquired the knowledge. In addition; errors are also caused by the difficulty of the

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problem of language itself. According to Richards(172), intralingual errors are also subdivided to the following categories:

A. Overgeneralization:

**Eg:** we can swims, insread of saying: she can swim or he swims

B. Simplification Reduncy/Reduction

**Eg:** I studied English for two years (instead of years).

C. COMMUNICATION BASE

**Eg:** using airball instead of ballons(coinage).

D. ENDUSEDERRORS: Due to the teacher presentation of the materials ,

**Eg:as if = like.** The learner will write the following sentence: she cries **as if** the baby cries, instead of writing she cries **like** a baby.

E. AnalogicalOrder: STARTED/ GOAD

**Eg:** he goed to school on foot (instead of sayinwent).

F. Ignorance of Rule Restriction:

The learner applies rules to the context where they are not applicable eg : " he asked me go to rest" through textention of the patern "he asked/ wanted me to go " .

G. Incomplete Application of Rules: The learner fails to use a fully developed structure.

**Eg:**you like to sing? Instead do you like to sing?

H. False Hypothesis:

The learner do not fully developed and understand a distinction in the target language .eg: the use of was as marker of past tense "one day i was travelled " .

-In the same vien, Richards cited four main types of interlingual errors namely:

1- Overgeneralization of rules, 2-ignorance of rule restriction, 3- incomplete application of rules, 4- false concept hypothesis. Later on he identifies six sources of errors:

1- Interference, 2- over generalization,3- performance errors,4- makers of transitional competence, 5- strategies of assimilation and communication ,6- Teacher induced errors ( 173)

### 1.5 First Language Acquisition Vs Second Language Learning

Applied linguistics is the attempt to put the insights resulting from linguistics research to practicle uses. This includes first and second language teaching such as: lexicography, translation.....etc. Our focus of linguistic application is the field of language teaching which

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focuses in turn on the learner and the language learning process. we have to investigate what happens in the mind of human being through mental processes to learn a language. In this respect two phenomena have been distinguished, Karshen (221) when he talked about first language acquisition and second second language learning:

### 1.5.1 First Language Acquisition

The term acquisition is used to refer to subconscious learning which is not influenced by explicit instruction made by the teacher. It takes place in the natural environment. Language data is not arranged as in language teaching situation, the infant is exposed to unlimited data, he is acquiring many things at the same time. Thus L1 acquisition is a mental psychological process which is natural, spontaneous and unconscious.

### 1.5.2 Second Language Learning:

The term learning on the other hand is a conscious process which results from an explicit instruction about errors against the L2 system. L2 is learnt later on in life. Learning in this case is conscious; the data is arranged by syllabus designer. The learner is not exposed to unlimited data like the infant, it takes place under formal instruction and the learner is not necessarily young

To sum up, infants are innately endowed with the ability to acquire a natural language and all they need to set the process of language acquisition going are natural language data. First language is easy and second learning is difficult.

### 1.6 Error Analysis

Errors are seen as systematic deviation made by learners who have not yet mastered the rules of L2. A learner can not self-correct his/her errors because they are a reflective product of his/her current stage of L2 development. Error analysis is one of the most influential theories of second language acquisition; it is concerned with the analysis of the errors committed by L2 learners by comparing the learners' norms with the target language norms and explaining the identified errors. For Crystal *"error analysis in language teaching and learning is the study of the*

*unacceptable forms produced by some one learning a language ,especially a foreign language " ( 108 ). An other definition of error analysis is given by Brown, he defined error analysis as" the process to observe, analyze and classify the deviation of the rules of the second language and then reveal the systems operated by learner"( 224 ).*

There are two main sources of errors, namely, interlingual errors and intralingual errors. Interlingual (interference) errors are those errors that are traceable to first language interference, these errors are attributable to negative interlingual transfer (qtd. in Brown 244). According to Kavaliauskiene, transfer of errors may occur because of the learners lack the necessary information in the second language or the attentional capacity to activate the appropriate second language routine (04).

### 1.6.1 Error Analysis Vs Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive analysis and error analysis have been regarded as the two main pillars in the domain of second and foreign language learning. Contrastive analysis (CA) was extensively used in the field of second language acquisition in the 1960s and early 1970s, as a method of explaining why some features of the target language were more difficult to acquire than others? According to the behaviourist theories prevailing at that time, language learning was a question of habit formation and this could be reinforced or impeded by existing habits. Therefore, the difficulty in mastering certain structures in L2 depend on the difference between L1 and the language they were trying to learn.

Generally, as Keshavars stated "*... there have been two major approaches to the study of learners' errors, namely contrastive analysis and error analysis*"(14). He further discussed that "*error analysis emerged on the account of the shortcoming of contrastive analysis which was the favoured way of describing learners' language in the 1950s and 1960s*"(42+). The process involves in CA is the comparison of learners' mother tongue and the target language, based on similarities or differences between two languages.

Unlike CA which tries to describe differences and similarities of L1 and L2 error analysis (EA) attempts to describe learners' interlanguage independently and objectivity. The of

EA, is in fact, to find what Corder claims is " *what the learner knows and does not know* ". He also claims that

*and to ultimately enable the teacher to supply him not just with the information that his hypothesis is wrong, but also importantly, with the right sort of information or data for him to form a more adequate concept of the rules in the language . . . . (Corder 170).*

### 1.7 The Role of the Teacher

It is believed that the role of the teacher is to assist students and to provide the students with the information and tools they need in order to learn. Teachers have become more aware of the roles they play as readers of their learners' written texts. Ferris (2004) emphasizes the importance of error feedback by teachers in L2 writing classes. At the same time, providing error feedback in writing classes is a difficult and time-consuming task.

Although correcting errors might seem like a daunting task, many teachers feel obligated to correct their learners' compositions simply in order to justify the grade the learners have been given. Hodgecock and Lefkowitz (1996:288) assert that teachers as evaluators fulfill the administrative and pedagogical function of assigning a grade, " *but may simultaneously attempt to provide feedback-an objective that may operate at cross-purposes with the evaluative goal* ".

However, K. Hyland and F. Hyland (2001) emphasize that, while responding to learners' writing is an important element of the teacher's role, it is a practice that carries potential dangers. Without doubt, every teacher will have different views on error correction and different ways of correcting their students. Unfortunately, most EFL teachers do not seem to realize the threats of their unmindful corrective practice. Goring Kepner (1991) emphasizes that many teachers fear the 'fossilization' of errors and feel morally obligated to correct all mistakes in student written work. However, it is important for teachers to be reminded that language learning does not happen overnight: " *teachers must not lose sight of the fact that second language acquisition is slow, gradual, and often arduous* ". (Guenette, 2007:52).

Evidently, learning does not happen in the mind of the teacher, but in the mind of the learner. For the same reason, Zamel (1985:96) claims that " *teachers should not act as authorities,*

but act as consultants, assistants, and facilitators since teachers have the power to build up or tear down a learner's self-esteem and motivation for writing, they should use their power carefully in order to guide learners and help them overcome barriers to a second language acquisition”.

Therefore, today's teachers should teach learners to be self-directed, but they should also strive to learn continuously from their learners. It is not clear whether or not teachers' hard work pays off because, as Lee (2011) points out” *learners continue to make the same mistakes, become more and more reliant on the teacher, impeding their own progress and improvement. Working together with learners towards their success should be every teacher's main goal*

### **1.8 Conclusion:**

All in all, error correction has been used in language teaching and learning for a long time, but its benefits have been questioned by foreign language teachers. Currently feedback seems to undergo a revival stage as a useful technique device in teaching English as Foreign Language. It is argued in favour of delivering feedback as a tool which can help develop writing skill as well as learn grammar and vocabulary. However, at university level the issue of feedback has been examined passingly and there is not sufficient research into students' attitudes to error correction and feedback in EFL writing classes.

## **Chapter II: Feedback as Marking Technique**

**2.0 Introduction**

How to respond to students' writing is a controversial topic in second language writing instruction and theory several studies have investigated the effect of various types of teacher feedback on students' writing skills, but little research has explored students' preferences for feedback and error correction. Students' preferences are important, if teachers and students both understand the purpose of certain correction techniques and agree on their use, feedback is likely to be productive. Controversially, if teachers and students have mutually exclusive ideas regarding correction techniques, the result will most likely be feedback that is ineffective and in the worst case, discouraging for students who are learning to write in their second language. The second chapter introduces feedback on students' written work, explore its nature and shed light in its different types and some useful techniques in responding to students' compositions, the red pen effect on students' psychology in EFL writing classes.

**2.1 Definition of Feedback**

Feedback can be regarded as a means of providing information and as a reinforcer for revision. It consists of comments and information about performance that someone has demonstrated. Beyond the specific focus of feedback in writing, there is a long, more general history of research on feedback. Overall, three broad meanings of feedback have been examined (Kulhavy and Wager 1993).

First, in a motivational meaning, some feedback, such as praise, could be considered as motivator that increases a general behaviour (e.g., writing or revision activities overall). This piece of the definition came from the research that tried to influence the amount of exerted effort through motivation (Brown, 1932, Symonds and Chase, 1929). Second, in a reinforcement meaning, feedback may specifically reward or punish very particular prior behaviours e.g. a particular spelling error or particular approach to a concluding paragraph. This piece of the definition came from the law of Effect (Thorndike 1927). Third, in an informational meaning, feedback might consist of information used by a learner to change performance in a particular direction. This piece of the definition came from information-processing theories (Pressey 1926).

**2.2 Kinds Of Feedback**

At various stages in a writing activity, teachers should intervene with editorial comments, motivating suggestions, or language advice. Students, indeed, expect feedback on what they are doing or what they have done.

The way teachers react to students' work depends not only on the kind of task the students are given, but also on what they want to achieve at any one point. There are a number of ways of reacting but these generally fall within two broad categories: responding or correcting.

**2.2.1 Responding and Correcting**

After finishing their compositions or while writing them, the students wait for the teacher's guidance and help. Here the teacher responds to his students' writings before correcting them.

**A-Responding**

When responding to our students' work we are not only concerned with the accuracy of their performance but also-and this is crucial- with the content and design of their writing. We might respond, for example, to the order in which they have made their points; we might respond by saying how much we enjoyed reading their work-and then recommend that the students have a look at a book which has more information about the same topic. When responding we are entering into a kind of affective dialogue with the students. That is, we are discussing their writing rather than judging it.

**B-Correcting**

On the other hand, there is the stage at which we indicate when something is not right. We correct mistakes in the students' written production on issues such as syntax (word order), concord (grammatical agreement between subjects and verbs), and collocation (word choice).

In a "process-writing" sequence, where the teacher's intervention is designed to help students edit and move forward to a new draft, responding is often more appropriate than correcting. The task teachers, is to say what is right or wrong, but to ask questions, make suggestions, and indicate where improvements might be made to both the content of the writing and the manner in which it

is expressed. Feedback of this kind becomes more and more appropriate as the students' level improves and they can take advantage of such help.

### **2.3 Ways of Correcting Students' Work**

Perhaps the most common way of correcting students' work has been to return it to students with a great deal of underlining, crossings-out, question marks, and the occasional tick. There may be a place for such correction especially in test marking for example, but this kind of intensive correction can be counter-productive. There are a number of more effective ways which make correction a positive and useful experience.

In what follows, some feedback methods are introduced. They are not meant to be definitive further development and refinement is needed-but they have been tried out by practicing teachers or researchers. These techniques reflect the rationale to use feedback and have been proved to work profitably with process writing.

#### **A. Selective Correction**

A way of avoiding the proliferation of red ink all over a student's work is through selective correction. In other words, we do not have to correct everything. We can correct only verb tenses or only punctuation, or focus instead exclusively on word order. We may only correct paragraph organization or the use of appropriate levels of formality. We may only correct two paragraphs in a composition and highlight mistakes in the others.

If we are going to apply a selective approach, students need to know about it. When we tell them that this time we are only going to be looking at punctuation, they will concentrate on that aspect.

Selective correction is a good learning tool. In other words, a way of making selective correction really effective is to discuss with students what the teacher should be looking out for. If the students are part of the decision-making process, they are likely to approach the task with more commitment and enthusiasm than usual, and they will pay a great deal of attention to the area earmarked for the teacher's correction.

**B-Using Marking Scales**

Many teachers use a range of different marking scales when correcting written works and tests. This means that though students may fall down on, say grammar, they can still perhaps do well in the way they answer a task or in their use of vocabulary. Teachers may want to give marks out of five (05) for each category they have chosen for students (e.g.: grammar, vocabulary, coherence, cohesion). Together with indications of mistakes, such marking scales will help students to focus on the particular area they need to work at, and this is the way the majority of my teachers correct our works.

**C-Using Correction Symbols (Codes)**

In order to avoid overabundance of red ink, many teachers use correction symbols. These also have the advantage of encouraging students to think about what the mistake is, so that they can correct it themselves. Many course books include correction symbols in their writing training. There is no set list of symbols. Different teachers and course books have their own ways of expressing different concepts. However, the following symbols are frequently used:

Symbol	Meaning	Example of Error
S	A spelling error	The answer is obvious
WO	A mistake in word order	I like very much it.
G	A grammar mistake	I am going to buy many furniture.
T	Wrong verb tense	I have seen him yesterday.
C	Concord mistake	People is angry.
A	Something has been left out	He told $\lambda$ that he was sorry.
WW	Wrong word	I am interested on Jazz music.
{ }	Something is not necessary	He was not {too } strong enough.
? M	The meaning is unclear	That is a very excited photograph
P	A punctuation mistake	Do you like London.
F/I	Too formal or informal	Hi Mr Franklin, Thank you for your letter.

**Table 2.1: Using Codes in Correcting Writing (Harmer 2004: 50).**

The teacher writes the symbols above or next to the place in the student's writing where the problem occurs. Students make the necessary adjustments to his or her writing because he knows what the symbols mean since they were given a copy of the correction symbols at the beginning of the term. To make students benefit from the use of symbols such as these, they need to be trained in their use.

**D- Tick Charts**

These can be designed in a variety of ways. Here is a sample:

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Inadequate
Interest and general force of Content		+		
Organization, Development And coherence of ideas		+	+	
A clear sense of audience and Purpose	+			
Overall task achievement	+			
Appropriacy of style and register of language used		+		
Range and complexity of grammatical structures	+			
Range of vocabulary		+		
Accuracy of grammatical structures	+			
Accuracy of vocabulary		+		
Use of cohesive devices			+	
Spelling				
Punctuation	+			
Effective and appropriate layout, general presentation and handwriting		+		

**Table 2.2: Tick Charts (Harmer 52).**

**E- Reformulation**

Reformulation is a way of showing students how they could write something more correctly. Instead of asking them to find the mistake and correct it, the teacher shows how he or she would write the incorrect sentence. The student then learns by comparing correct and incorrect versions. Reformulation is extremely useful during drafting and re-drafting.

**F-Referring Students to A Dictionary or a Grammar Book**

Sometimes the teacher indicates that mistakes has been made and then tell students to go and look the problem up in a dictionary or a grammar book. If, for example, the student writes I am not interested about sailing, the teacher can say " have a look at interested in your dictionary". In the same way the teacher can suggest that students consult a grammar book if they are having tense, grammar, or word order problems. The advantage of referring students to books in this way is that it encourages them to look at the information with a purpose in mind. They will learn as they correct.

Sometimes it is difficult to explain a mistake on paper, or it is impossible to understand exactly what the student wanted to write. In such cases the teacher can ask students to talk to them so that they can sort out the problem face-to-face.

**G- Remedial Teaching**

When teachers read students' written work and they come across mistakes which many students in the same class are making, remedial teaching will then be necessary. In such cases correction can be achieved by showing the class sentences produced by the students that exemplify the mistake and asking them to put them right. It is a good idea for the example mistakes to be anonymous so that no individual student feels held up to ridicule.

**H- Student Self-Monitoring Technique**

This is a very simple technique to implement. The learners number the parts that they are unhappy/unsure about as they write the texts and at the bottom of the page they then explain in a bite more detail what the problem is e.g. "I' m not sure whether I should say' to play aerobics or to do aerobics' ", Should I use the present perfect or the past simple here?'," Is it a good idea to start a

new paragraph here?". This could be done in the learners' first language if they were at a lower level.

When the teacher receives the work he can easily respond to the questions/comments and add in extra feedback. The technique gives the teacher a good insight into his students' intentions and problems. It also means that if the learners themselves indicate where they would like feedback, the motivation to act on that should be a lot higher. With this idea students are also taking more responsibility for their learning.

The basic assumption of the student self-monitoring technique is that teacher and student should meet on a one-to-one basis as editor and writer to discuss the draft text. This one-to-one dialogue is the best situation for providing feedback since both parties can work together to solve the problems that arise.

Unfortunately, the teacher may find it difficult to afford or arrange the time for an individual conference. To alleviate the difficulty students can annotate their drafts with comments and questions for the teacher's responses. The teacher responds, in return, by writing to these notes with direct and appropriate feedback. This technique not only facilitates the teacher's understanding of the writer's problems, but also allows students to play a more active role in gaining access to teacher feedback.

Self monitoring technique based on four phase activity:

**Step 1: Students draft and 'monitor' their texts**

Students write the first draft, underline and annotate the problem areas for teacher response.

**Step 2: Teacher/editor responds in writing to the monitored comments**

Teacher responds to the first draft and replies the written queries. He also adds further comments and returns the paper.

**Step 3: Students respond to editorial comments and rewrite their drafts**

Students produce a second draft and add further explanations or questions to the teacher's comments a First and second drafts are then handed in.

**Step 4: Teacher/editor responds to student comment and second drafts**

The teacher again notes down on the first draft any further explanations that are necessary. Teacher responds to the second draft checking whether the student is able to deal with the problems identified during the self-monitoring phase. Further revisions can go on depending on the students, the nature of paper and the time available. If not, the second draft may be the final revision.

The merit of the student-centered self-monitoring technique is that it encourages students to look critically and analytically at their writing as if they were the reader. Moreover, the teacher can give tailor-made feedback to individual students.

**I- Minimal Marking**

This technique is similar to using correction codes but not as obvious. Instead of having different symbols types of problems, the idea is that you write an X in the margin for every language error in the line i.e. two errors, two X's. The learners not only find the problems, but work out what type of problems they are as well. From the teacher's point of view the technique is a quick one and this idea again works well with surface errors. On the other hand, students can find it a lot more frustrating than the correction codes.

**J- Written Commentary**

This involves writing detailed comments on the problems that exist in the learners' work. The idea is to guide the learners so as they can try to self-correct. At times this may not be easy or possible for them so the teacher might want to give them the correct version or advise them where in their dictionaries or grammar books they could find the correct answer.

**K- Taped Commentary**

If teachers cannot give face-to-face feedback they might well consider taping their comments about a piece of student writing on tapes provided by the students. This has the advantage (for some) of allowing them to be more expansive than written responses sometimes are. Students may well enjoy getting reaction in this format since it is more personal and more immediate than written comments at the end of the paper (Harmer 114).

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### L. Correcting Spaghetti Writing

The teacher may often find that many students can communicate ideas and meaning, but they often write loose-jointed sentences without meeting the standards of grammatical accuracy and coherence. This kind of writing in terms of incoherent sentences is referred to as spaghetti writing by McDevitt (1989). To help students learn to be responsible for their own mistakes, students need to be trained to solve the problem of sentence-level incoherence. First of all, students must be taught what a sentence is. Then the teacher presents a completed paragraph of ungrammatical English to see whether students can locate and correct errors. If necessary, the teacher can underline the mistakes for students. Then students are asked to examine each of the previously marked sentences and divide them into meaningful word groups. If students end any sentence with no basic sentence or with too many basic sentences, students have to rewrite paragraph keeping the original ideas of the writer.

### M. Providing Interactive Feedback

Marking can be a tedious classroom chore. Teacher correction seldom brings improvement in subsequent writing since teacher correction is often regarded - by both teacher and student - as an ending of the writing process. By reducing the negative effects of marking errors without reducing the benefits of the teacher's diligent efforts, Hyland (2000) suggests 'minimal marking' and taped commentary to make feedback more productive and interactive. The means to 'minimal marking' is by using correction codes. This leaves a space for active correction by the student rather than reading the disheartening correction of the teacher written in red. By decoding the correction symbols, students have the opportunity to identify the mistakes and correct them for reassessment by the teacher.

If teacher needs to give more detail (which is always the case) and sophisticated comments in area other than mechanical errors, the technique of recorded commentary is useful. Instead of writing tedious comments, the teacher can just read through the paper and talk about the weaknesses and merits, recording them on a tape recorder. Hyland (2000) claims that this method is more effective since the writer "*can see how someone actually responds to [his/her] writing as it develops*" (78). However, Hyland reminds us that it is not possible to include all the mistakes in

terms of 'codes' and too many codes could be confusing. Also, codes do not represent all kinds of feedback.

### **2.4 Ways of Responding to Students' Work**

Correction has been applied to issues of grammar and lexis rather than to text design or issues of content. Many students value this kind of correction extremely highly and feel uncomfortable when other kinds of feedback are offered. Yet, if the teacher wants to respond to written work as an assistant or a guide (rather than as an evaluator or judge) a focus on only lexical and grammatical mistakes will not be appropriate. Responding to our students' work is about reacting to their ideas and to how they put them across.

#### **A- Responding to Work in Progress**

When students are involved in a writing task in class, especially where this is part of a process sequence, teachers will often "visit" students and talk to them about what they are writing. They may ask what a certain sentence means, or wonder why they have started a composition in a particular way, or suggest that they re-check some information they have made notes about.

When, as teachers, we are involved with work-in-progress we have to think carefully about the way we give advice or make suggestions. It is very easy to say "I wouldn't do it Like that, I would do it like this", which, because it comes from the teacher, is taken by the student to be more or less a command. Sometimes there may be good reasons for this, and students may be very happy to receive such comments. Nevertheless, it is sometimes preferable to ask questions such as "Why have you done it this way?" (Asked as neutrally as possible) or "What do you want the reader to understand here?", so that students have to come to their own decisions about how to revise and edit their work.

Students often get tremendous benefit from this kind of personal attention from teachers. For our part as teachers, we need to approach the task with great sensitivity, doing our best to draw decisions from the students themselves rather than telling them what to do (Harmer113).

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**B. Individual/Group Conferencing**

These involve face to face conversations between the teacher and the students so as the students don't come in cold. The teacher would be best advised to give the learners some questions to think about beforehand. Useful ones might be:

- What is the main point of your written piece?
- Who are you writing to?
- How have you organized things?
- Do you feel that you have achieved the set task?
- What specific area (s) do you want me (the teacher) to look at?
- Are there any parts that you feel not sure or unhappy about?

After the conference the learners could rewrite the work and hand in both versions. With group conferences you can let the students look at their work as a group first of all, using the same or a similar questionnaire and then intervene a little later.

With individual conferences you will need to think of what the rest of the group are going to do meanwhile. However, both group and individual conferences do at least have the advantage of helping to make the learners more independent and autonomous as well as being quite a realistic activity. It also helps to integrate shy students and show their problems and capacities as well.

Carnicelli (1980) makes it clear that although conferencing can take various forms; all conferencing has one common feature: It is a conversation between two parties, that is, between a teacher and a student. It is the conversation that yields the merits and strengths of the conference method. Conferencing is designed to help students find their own way in writing. Carnicelli lists six major teacher activities when a conference method is adopted:

1. The teacher should read the paper carefully;
2. The teacher should offer encouragement;
3. The teacher should ask the right questions;
4. The teacher should evaluate the paper;
5. The teacher should make specific suggestions for revising the paper;
6. The teacher must listen to the student.

He also summarizes five major advantages of the conference method:

1. Individualized instruction in writing is more effective than group instruction.
2. The teacher can make a more effective response to the paper in an oral conference than in written comments.
3. The student can learn more from an oral response than from written comments.
4. Conferences can promote self-learning.
5. The conference method is the most efficient use of the teacher's time.

**C- Responding by Written Comments**

Sometimes our response is delivered in written form when students hand us a draft of what they are working on. In such circumstances, it is always a good idea to write down what we think is good in the students' work. No one appreciate empty compliments, but encouragement is extremely important at this stage. If students have written compositions about their childhood memories, we may ask to see a draft version before they produce a final essay. Here it will be vital to be encouraging and helpful rather than judgmental. The teacher might write comments such as these: -I enjoyed your draft composition very much. I liked the description of of your grandparents. They sound like interesting people. In some ways they are the mosr interesting part of your story.

**I have one of two suggestions to make:**

- How about starting your composition with that description of your grandparents' house? It would be a good a good way in to the topic.
- I wuold not include the bit about your sister and the dog.
- Be careful with your use of past tense verbs. (Qtd.in Hedge 7).

Such advice can be extremely useful and should help students to avoid mistakes in their final version. It will almost certainly be constructed more effectively than it would have been without the teacher's intervention. Nevertheless, as with feedback on work -in-progress, these statements from the teacher may look more like commands and may close down the students thinking rather than encouraging it. We would instead put most of our comments in question form to overcome this problem.

**2.5Peer Feedback**

It is always the teacher who gives feedback by responding or correcting , since correcting written composition can be time consuming,yet, the teachers can also encourage students to look at

each other's work and give advice and make suggestions about how it could be improved. Peer tutoring approach based on vygotscy's(qtd. in Dekhinet,410) theory where “*competent learner scaffold weaker one and help thier progression throught the zone of proximal development*” . In fact, peer review allows a learner's colleagues to assess the individual performance. Such peer review is an important element in writing activities. Equallt important, Hyland asserts that“*peerfeedbackmay make learners less relaint on teachrs' feedback by helping them to internalize an audience and a checklist of evaluative questions to applay to thierwriting*” (35).

With this technique the students do the written work at home and then bring the piece to class. They hand it to their partners, who then assess the work and give comments. A good idea is to give the group some type of questions to work through while they are reading the written work. This can be done by giving the students guidelines that can be focused on a specific set of criteria such as paragraphing, linking Words, punctuation, etc. The learners then talk to one another through revisions and comments, asking the teacher for clarification or arbitration when necessary.

Again this idea helps learner autonomy and it is positive that the teacher is not always the only audience for the written work. Peer reviews can also be very effective, as the learners themselves can oftentimes be a lot more honest with one another than the teacher might decide or dare to be. Afterwards, if the teacher has time in the lesson itself, he could get the students to write the piece, taking the comments into account and then hand in both versions to look at.

Here is a sample of questions:

Now look at your partner's work and while you read it think about the following questions, make some notes and when you finish give your partner some feedback

- Is the piece of writing well organized?Is the piece clear?
- Are the ideas well presented and coherent?
- Is it the purpose?
- Is the overall message clear, coherent and intelligible?
- Does the work follow the guidelines for the word count?
- Are the style and the register of the language used appropriate?
- Is there awide enough range of lexic and expression used?
- Is there a wide enough range of syntax used?(Qtd. in Hedge 80)

Peer feedback may be referred to by many terms such as peer evaluation, peer critiquing, peer editing or peer response. Yet all of these names refer to the same kind of activity: Students read their peers' papers and make responses to them as a reader. This gives writing an authentic purpose rather than being only an assignment to be graded, and, in turn, develop a sense of a divergent audience, thereby motivating students to communicate better stories (Urzua, 1987).

Students presumably react more willingly and actively to the questions and feedback made by their trusted friends. They can all feel the joy of sharing their comments and their writing within the group (Lacy, 1989). At the same time, they become a better critic of themselves, for they become more aware of their own writing as they are reading another's writing. Students therefore learn more and become more confident as well. However, Urzua (1987) reminds us of how crucial the question of training learners to cope with the task is. Students may not be able to ask constructive questions for redrafting. Surely, students must be trained or guided to perform the task - for example, to be critical of the development of ideas and organization in written discourse.

### **2.6 The red pen effect**

For years, red pens have been used for error-marking in classroom. Presently, it is still the practice of many EFL and ESL teachers to correct their learners' written compositions with red pens. Lee (2008: 193) asserts that the newer research suggests that the use of red ink by teachers to correct learners' written compositions may be discouraging and harmful.

Bandura (1986, as cited in Zacharias, 2007:46) claims that *“such practise might lower student self-efficacy and prevent them from learning from the feedback Certainly”*, as Storch and Wigglesworth (2010, as cited in Lee, 2013) clarify it, papers flooded with red ink are likely to hurt learners' egos and damage their confidence in writing, affecting the uptake of feedback as a result. Lee (2013: 113) criticizes teachers for continuing to scrawl detailed comments on learners' compositions and doing what seems efficient to them, but is demotivating and disconcerting for learners. Likewise, Semke (1984: 195) strongly asserts that *“corrective feedback results in learners' disappointment and discouragement”*.

**2.7 Conclusion**

Overall , it may be said that there has always been much more concern and discussion on error correction and feedback in second language L2 and foreign language learning and teaching, studies on error correction have become a target of many researchers whose main goal is to investigate the role of corrective feedback in language learning .

**Chapter III:**  
**Findings Analysis and Recommendations**

**3.0 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodology employed in this study and data analysis. It represents the quantitative approach through the use of students' and teachers' questionnaire to obtain data regarding students' preferences and attitude to teachers' feedback in EFL writing classroom. This chapter devoted to describe the research procedures, tools participants and data analysis to explore the general findings. Through data collection this chapter examines how effective students' participation in feedback activities in EFL writing classroom are?

**3.1 Choice of the method**

The chosen method for conducting this research is descriptive due to a number of reasons. First, it is descriptive because it attempts to describe or provide information about students' attitude and preferences over error correction in EFL writing classes. It tries to show the importance of teacher's feedback on students' composition and to which extent does this feedback effect students' mastery of writing skills. Moreover, the descriptive Method is chosen to conduct the current work due mainly to the shortage of time allowed to carry out this study. Finally, it is considered as the researcher first experience in the field of research.

**3.2 Pertinence of the Study**

This study is intended to offer insights into theory and practice that underlie effective feedback in EFL writing classes. Concerning practice, this research may benefit three groups of people. First, for those teachers who used or are using error correction activities in their EFL writing classroom, the study may serve as stimulus to help reflect on their own teaching. Second, for those who are or who would be teaching EFL writing courses, yet have never incorporate or are not yet planning to use feedback in their EFL writing classroom, the study may serve as guide to show them what can be done and how. Third, for those who are skeptical about feedback as technique in correcting students' errors and those who had already use feedback but found their practice ineffective in one way or another?

The study provides concrete examples on students' attitudes to their teacher feedback and what are the preferences of EFL students' in correcting their drafts. If this kind of feedback reveals

itself successful in improving students' writing it will become an example of teaching strategy that has been demonstrated to work in the real classroom.

Regarding theory, this research may contribute to filling the gap in the current study, as it carried out to examine the actual effect of students' preferences over error correction and feedback on improving EFL students' writing.

To sum up, the study can advocates education in a number of ways.

The insights and understanding of collaborative learning and communicative teaching developed in this research can be useful for teacher education and for designing, implementing and evaluating EFL writing curricula. Insights into how these students participate in feedback activities can also be important to research knowledge because they contribute to an understanding of this instructional technique as experienced by its participants in the real world of classroom.

### **3.3 Instruments and Data Collection**

Methodologically, the study employs a quantitative approach in which the practice of feedback was examined from the perspective of EFL students' reaction collected from questionnaire data. The questionnaire consisted of 12 items following both Leki's (1991) as well as Hadgcock and Lefkowitz (1994) surveys. An effort was made in this study to include questionnaire items concerning both first and final draft similar to the survey administered by Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1994).

### **3.4 Students' Questionnaire**

The survey aims at exploring students' attitudes towards teacher feedback regarding various features of their writing such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary choice and teacher paper marking techniques. The study selected third year university students at Laghout University, the total number is 32 students but the sample of this research contains only 16 students.

The questionnaire consists of two sections: 04 item back ground information about the students. Secondly a 09 item questionnaire consisting of twenty five point likert items and 7 nominal items.

### 3.5 Teachers' Questionnaire

Ten teachers from the English Department at Amar Thelidji University were invited to participate and answer the questionnaire but unfortunately only four of them respond to my invitation. Teachers' questionnaire consists of 2 parts: part one search for personal information such as: situation, degree and teaching experience. On the other hand, the questionnaire concerned with teachers' practices in their classes while providing feedback and correcting students' works in EFL writing classroom.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

#### 3.7 Teachers' Questionnaire: Results and Analysis

In order to have an idea about teachers' views, perceptions and attitudes about the writing process and feedback mainly, and to know about their practices in the classroom a questionnaire is administered to teacher of writing. Unfortunately, only four teachers of written expression in the department of Laghouat participated in this research permanent whereas one of them is a part-time teacher.

Our teachers have an experience of about six to twenty six in teaching English as a foreign language.

Questions	Number	percent
1. What type of feedback do you apply when you correct your students' writings?		
Give the write answer	00	00%
Underline the errors without any explanations	01	00%
Circle the errors and label the type of errors	02	50%
Don't correct and let the students discover their errors and correct them	01	25%
2. Do you correct?		

All the mistakes	02	50%
Concentrate on a specific aspect or point	02	50%
3. Do you apply peer feedback?		
Yes	01	25%
No	00	00%
Sometimes	03	75%
4. When do you correct?		
While the students are writing	02	50%
Correct the final draft	02	50%
5. Do you respect your students' preferences concerning writing?		
Yes	01	10%
No	00	00%
Sometimes	03	90%
6. How much importance do you give to grammatical accuracy?		
Very important	02	50%
Little	01	25%
Consider it as a last stage	01	25%
Not important	00	00%
7. Do you give importance to?		
Form	00	00%
Content	00	00%
Both	04	100%

Table 3.1 Teachers Questionnaire Analysis

### 3.8 Teachers' Responses

One out of four teachers prefers to not correct the errors and let the students discover their mistakes and correct them. Whereas two teachers prefer to circle the errors and label the types of errors, i.e, using coded feedback. One other teacher answered that the type of feedback he uses depends on the activity itself.

Two teachers out of four correct all the mistakes (global correction) whether the other two teachers prefer to concentrate on a specific point or aspect (selective correction).

Two teachers out of four prefer to correct while the students are in the writing process, whereas the other two prefer correcting the final draft.

All the teachers sometimes respect learners' preferences concerning writing in selecting the topics.

Two teachers out of four consider grammatical accuracy very important, whereas one of them places it in the last stage after content and organization. One teacher answers that the importance of grammatical accuracy depends on the underlined objectives of the activity.

Teachers prefer to let the learners discover the errors for themselves. As a way to help and guide them, teachers circle the errors and use codes. This method will help the learners concentrate on the errors, explore them, correct them and learn the rules.

Some teachers see that feedback should be given during the writing process as a means to guide the learners while revising their drafts.

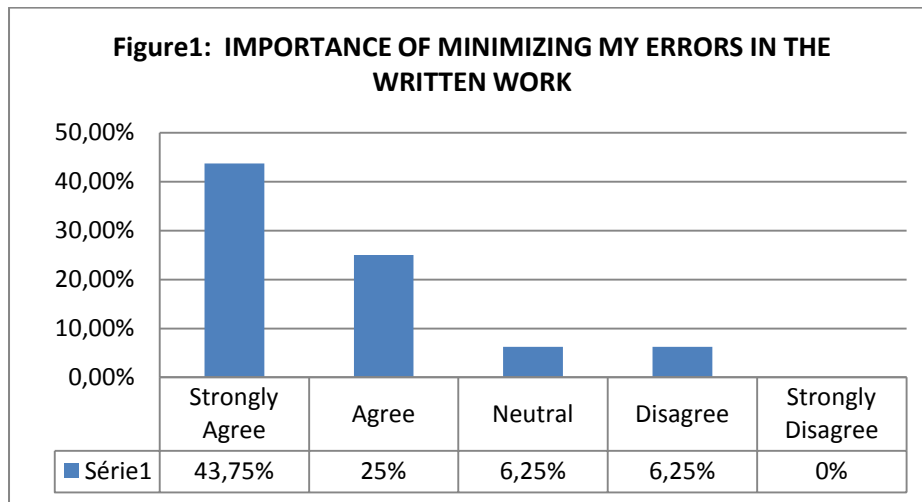
Grammatical accuracy and content are equally important according to teachers' point of view. Grammatical accuracy importance depends on the underlined objectives of the activity and can be left to the refining stage.

Teachers respect learners' preferences concerning topic selection as a way to trigger their motivation. They also use peer feedback as a means to make their students help each other to discover the errors and correct them, besides changing the reader who was always the teacher. Changing the audience breaks the routine and creates a good learning atmosphere in the classroom. It makes the writing class a pleasant one.

### 3.9 Students' Questionnaire Results and Analysis:

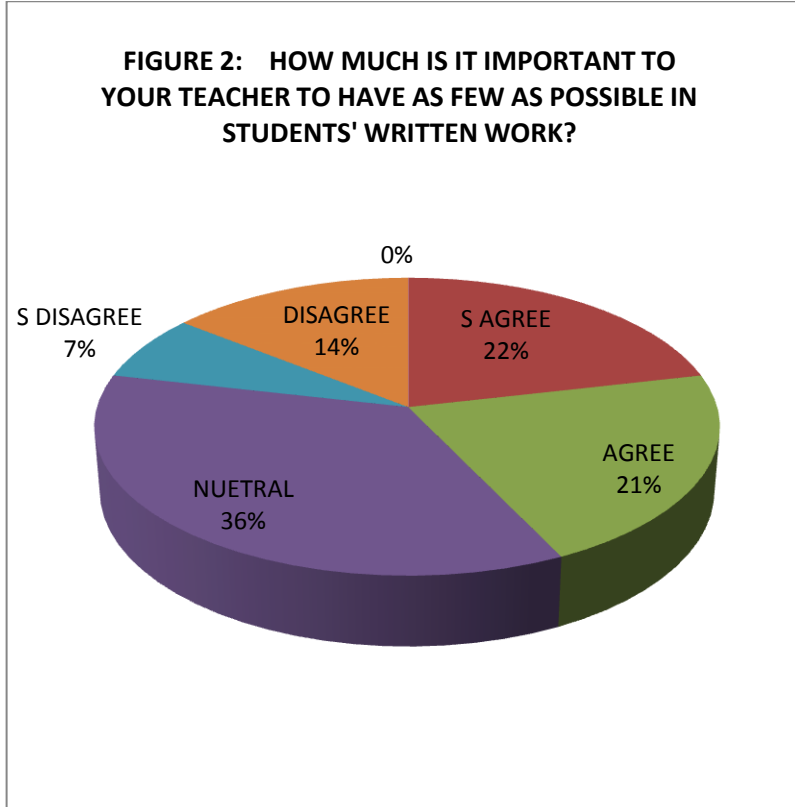
#### 3.9.1 Section one: Background information

**Question 1:** It is Important to me to have as few errors as possible in my written work.



Responses frequencies in figure 01 addressing students' general concerns with accuracy in their writing are in between strongly agree and simply agree, only 43,75% students show that it is really important to them to be accurate in their writing and that is important to have as few errors as possible in their writing which is somehow confusing, they are not too much concerned with the mastery of writing skill. In addition 25% of EFL students affirm that it is also a necessity for them to be accurate and error free while writing. If we add the previous frequencies and calculate them the result will be 68,75% of the total students agreed and assented that accuracy in writing is the first step towards the mastery of writing skills. That frequency, for me as a researcher in the field of teaching English as foreign language is not acceptable and our students should be more serious about the discussed issue.

**Question 02:** It is important to my English teacher to have as few possible errors in my written work



According to figure 02, students of EFL writing class appear much more neutral and no clear responses were given by them. Surprisingly, the results obtained from third year students indicate vibratility towards their teachers' of written expression, for instance 22% of the students strongly disagree that it really important to their teacher to have few errors as possible in their writing, whereas 21% agree on being accurate is one of the teachers main interests and focus .

The statistics obtained from question three are confusing for me as researcher and this needs another research to be done about the relationship between students of EFL writing classes and their teachers or the results of the coming questions will clarifay my ambiguity.

**Question03:**

S A = strongly agree, A = agree, N = neutral, D = disagree.

This is a clarification of the symbols used in table 04 in order to help the reader understand the tables below and later on the analysis.

<b>3. When responding to a first draft (that is, a paper you will rewrite at least once), the teacher should always:</b>	S A	A	N	D
A. Point out errors in grammar (verb tenses, subject/verb agreement, article use. etc).	31%	50%	06,25%	00%
B. Point out errors in spelling.	37,50%	43,75%	6,25%	06,25%
C. Point out errors in vocabulary choice.	18,75%	31,25%	43,75%	44%
D. Point out errors in punctuation.	18,75%	43,75%	37,50%	00%
E. Make comments on the organization of the paper.	31,25%	25%	31,25%	06,25%
F. Make comments on the writing style (the way you express your thoughts and arguments).	12,25%	25%	56,25%	00%
G. Make comments on the ideas expressed in the paper.	25%	37,50%	25%	00%
H. Use a set of correction or proof-reading symbols.	18,75%	43,75%	37,50%	00%
I. Use of red-colored pen.	18,75%	12,50%	50%	06,25%

**Table 3.2: Results and analysis of question 03 section 1**

Table 3.2 reveals students' beliefs about the relative importance of various features of their writing, at first 50% of them agreed upon pointing out grammar errors, 43,75% prefer spelling, whereas the choice of vocabulary gain 31,25% of agreement and 44% disagree with teachers' correction to their choice. 31% of students prefer comments on the organization of the first draft, pointing out errors in punctuation seems important to third year students so, 43,75 % agreed on

correcting it .Moreover, most students 56% state that they read every teacher remark or comment on their writing carefully than others . Nevertheless, the students' response to making comments on the ideas revealed that only some of them 37, 50 are interested in unlike what I had expected. Secondly, our students' show little interst in using correction symbols, 43, 75% agreed on using it whereas, 37, 50% stay neutral concering the issue. finally and surpriningly , the majority 50% of the students' were neutral towards the use of red pen in correcting their errors to the first draft, moreover 18,75 and 12,50 of the students agreed upon the use of red- colered pen which is not the expected.

**Question4:**when responding to the final draft (that is the paper will not be written and will receive a grade)

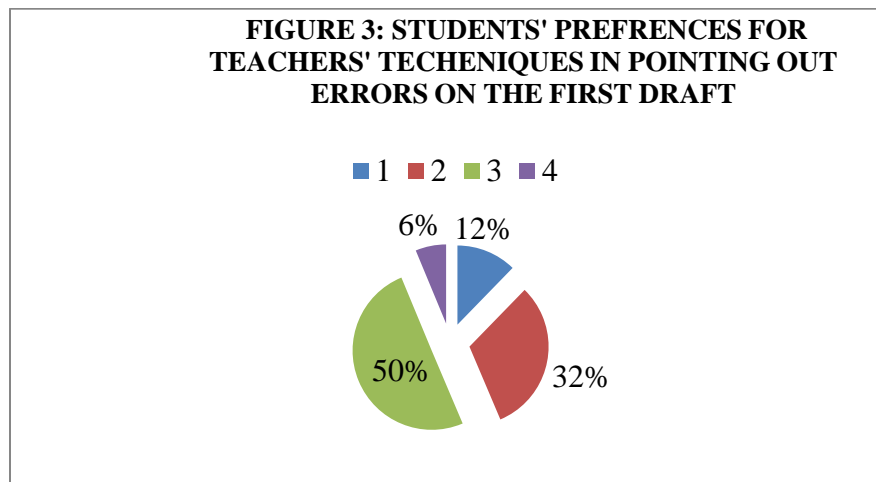
4. When responding to a final draft (that is, a paper that will not be rewritten and will receive a grade), the teacher should always:	S A	A	N	D
A .point out errors in grammar (Verbtenses, subject/verb, article use, ... etc....).	06,25%	18,75%	75%	00%
B. Point out errors in spelling.	43,75%	43,75%	12,50%	00%
C. Point out errors in vocabulary choice.	12,50%	37,50%	37,50%	06,25%
D. Point out errors in punctuation.	37,5%	12,50%	43,75%	00%
E. Make comments on the organization of the paper.	12,50%	43,50%	25%	00%
F.Make comments on the writing style (the way you express your thoughts and arguments).	12,50%	43,75%	25%	18,75%
F. Make comments on the ideas expressed in the paper.	25%	37,50%	31,25%	06,25%
H .Use a set of correction or proof-reading symbols.	56,25%	25%	06,25%	06,25%
I. Use a red-colored pen .	43,75%	% 18,75	06,25%	25%

**Table 3.3 : Results and Analysis of Question 04 Section 1**

From the results of the students' answers that are represented in this table (3.3) we can claim that at only 18% of them agreed upon pointing out grammar errors and the majority of them 75% are neutral, 43, 75% prefer spelling, whereas 37% of the students agreed on the choice of vocabulary. 43% of students prefer comments on non-punctuation in contrast 43, 75 stay neutral. The organization of the first draft, seems important to third year students so, 43, % agreed on correcting it. Moreover, most students 43 % state that they read every teacher remark or comment on their writing style carefully. In addition, our students' show little interest 37% concerning the comments on the ideas in their paper. It is important for third year students to read the proofreading symbols used by their teachers, 56% strongly agreed on the previous. Finally, the majority 43,75% of the students' strongly agreed towards the use of red pen in correcting their errors to the final draft which makes me surprised on their opinion, only 25% of the students disagree upon the use of red-colored pen, this generation proved to be different from the previous generations.

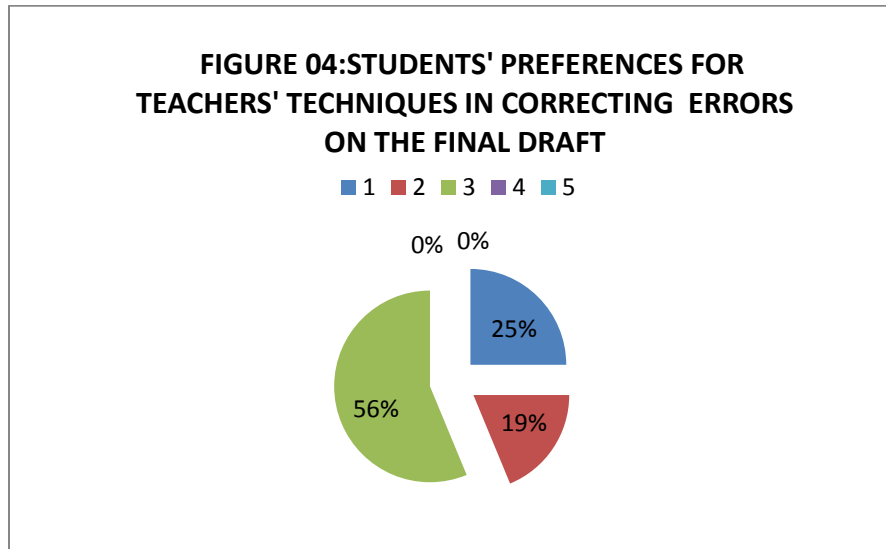
### 3.9.2 SECTION 2: Students' beliefs to the importance of various features in their writing drafts

**Question 5:** On the first draft, how do you prefer your English teacher to indicate error in your written work?



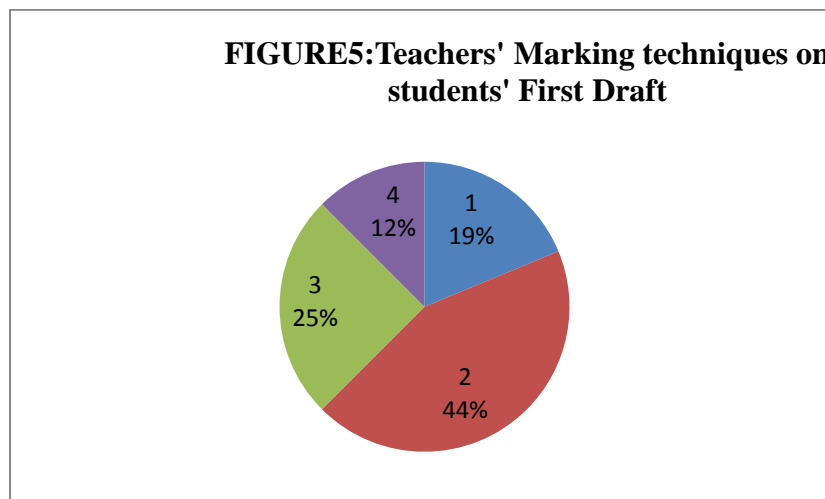
The results of the graph show that half 50% of the students prefer to indicate where the error is and 32,25% choose to show where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it and 12% of them were interested in crossing out where the error is and write the correct words or structure.

**Question 6:** On the final draft, how do you prefer English teacher to indicate an error in your written work?



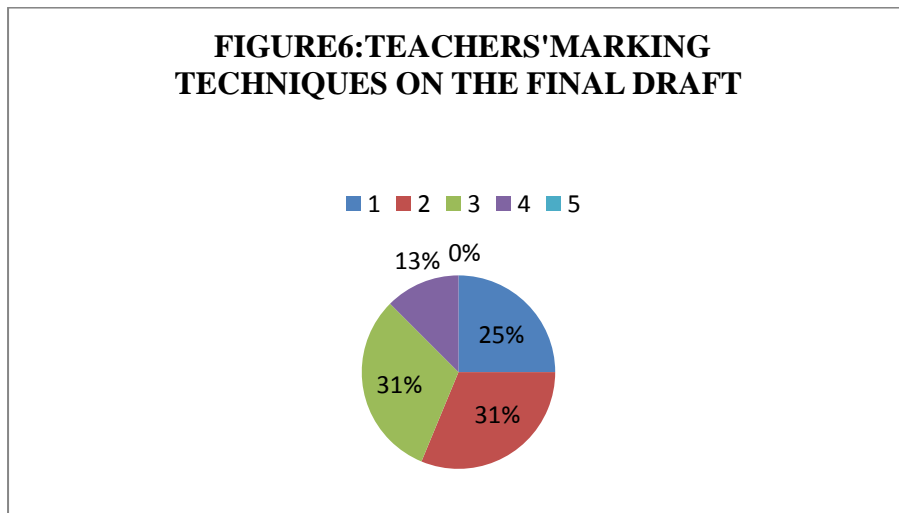
Similar to the previous graph analysis our students show the same interests concerning the final draft: 56% were interested in showing where the errors is, whereas 25% of the students would like their teacher to cross where the error is and correct the error, in addition 19% claim that giving clues in how to correct the error is important to them concerning the correction of the final draft.

**Question 7:** How does your English teacher currently indicate errors in your written work on the Firstdraft?



The results obtained from students' answers, are shown in this figure05, are concerned with the theevery day practice of EFLwriting teachers in their classes, so the frequencies indicates that 43, 75 of the teacher choose to show where the error is and give the clue how to correct it where as 25% of them preferonlyto show where the error is . In addition 18, 75 of the teachers cross out where the error is and give the correct word or structure, we can not ignore that 12, 5 of the teachers pay attention only to the ideas regardless of the accuracyerrors.

**Question 8:** How does your English teacher currently indicate errors in your written work on the final draft?



Concerning the final draft as it is displayed in figure 06, teachers of EFL writing classes show the same importance as in the first daft for the techniques used in correcting students' errors: 31,25% of them show where the error is and give some clues about how to correct it . The same frequency 31, 25go to: only showing where the error is, whereas 25% of the techniques use by the teachers is crossing out what is incorrect and writing the the correct word or structure. Little interst is shown by EFL writing techers to the content.

**Question 9: there if are many errors in your paper, what do you want your english teacher to do on a first draft**

<b>if there are many errors in your paper, what do you want your english teacher to do on a first draft</b>	percentage
1. Correct all errors, major and minor	12,50%
2. Correct all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones	31.25%
3. Correct most but not necessarily all of the major errors if there are many of them	25%
4. Correct only a few of the major errors no matter how many there are	06.25%
5. Correct all repeated errors whether major or minor	06.25%
6. Correct only errors that might interfere with communicating your ideas	12.50%
7.. Correct no errors and respond only to the ideas expressed	00.00%
8. Other (please specify.....)	00.00%

**Table 3.3 : Results and Analysis of Question 9 Section2.**

Results of question 9 as it is shown in table(3.3) are concerned with errors in students' papers, what do English teachers to do on a first draft. 31,25% of the students' would like to correct all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones whereas 25% prefer to correct most but not necessarily all of the major errors if there are many of them. Correction of ideas seems to be much more interesting to some students 12,50% .

**Question 10: If there are many errors on the final draft what do you want your teacher to do?**

<b>If there are many errors on the final draft what do you want your teacher to do:</b>	percentage
1. Correct all errors, major and minor	37.50%
2. Correct all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones	18.75%
3. Correct most but not necessarily all of the major errors if there are many of them	18.75%
4. Correct only a few of the major errors no matter how many there are	06.25%
5. Correct all repeated errors whether major or minor	06.25%
6. Correct only errors that might interfere with communicating your ideas	12.50%
7. Correct no errors and respond only to the ideas expressed	00.00%
8. Other (please specify)	

**Table 3.4 results and analysis of question 10 section 2**

Results obtained from question 10 as it is shown in table ( 3.4) are concerned with errors in students' papers, what do English teachers do on a final draft, 37,50% of our students' prefer to correct all errors major and minor ones. 18,75 % would like if the teacher correct what he consider major and minor errors in students' final draft. Some of the students 12.5% focus on the correction of ideas than other features.

**Question 11: How carefully do you look at the teacher marks/comments on your written**

How carefully do you look at the teacher marks/comments on your written work	Percentage
1. You read every one carefully.	56,52%
2. You look at some marks/comments more carefully than at others	37,50%
3. You mainly pay attention to comments on the ideas expressed in the paper	06,25%
4. Other (please specify)	00%

**Table 3.5 results and analysis of question 11 section 2**

From students' responses we can conclude that most of them 56,52 % look carefully at the teacher marks and comments on their written work ,unlike 37,5% of them who mainly pay attention to comments on the content and especially the ideas discussed in the draft.

**Question12: If you look carefully at of the marks/comments your English teacher makes on your written work, which ones do you consider most important to look at (Please circle ALL that apply).**

<b>If you look carefully at of the marks/comments your English teacher makes on your written work, which ones do you consider most important to look at (Please circle ALL that apply).</b>	Percentage
1. Marks indicating errors in grammar	37,50%
2. Marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice	37,50%
3. Marks indicating errors in spelling	25%
4. Marks indicating errors in punctuation	00.00%
5. Comments on the ideas/content	00.00%
6. Comments on the writing style	00.00%
7. Comments on the organization of the paper	00.00%

**Table 3.6 results and analysis of question 12 section 2**

As it is clearly shown in the final responses of our questionnaire , students of EFL writing classes pay too much importance to the use of grammar and vocabulary with the same frequency 37,5% in addition to spelling errors with 25% . A total neglection to content punctuation and w style writing as it is claims by the students.

### **3.10 Summmary of Findings**

EFL students in this study revealed a great concern with accuracy and error-free writing, in spite of the research evidence arguing that surface-level error correction is effective. Nevertheless, it is essential to consider whether students who report benefiting from such correction actually need it and improve because of it.The EFL students in this study generally equated the importance of various features of their writing such as grammar, spelling, vocabulary

choice, organization, writing style, and content; most students, however, some comments on the writing style and on the ideas expressed in the questionnaire as important teacher marks they look at, while few students chose comments on spelling and punctuation. Moreover, the EFL students in this study did not generally differentiate between responding to various writing features on a first draft as opposed to a final draft.

On the other hand, the students' preferences for teachers' techniques in pointing out errors did seem to differ regarding first and final drafts. More specifically, most students chose the correction technique showing where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it as the best teacher feedback technique in response to a first draft, while concerning a final draft, most students chose crossing out an error and writing the correction as the best teacher feedback technique. Findings also revealed that students' preferences for teacher techniques in pointing out errors on first and final drafts generally correspond to what students perceive as actual teacher practice. Since an interdependent relationship exists between teachers' behaviors and students' views, this finding may indicate that teachers seem to be behaving according to students' preferences or, perhaps just as likely, that students preferences for teacher feedback reflect instructional practices.

Regarding students' preferences for the amount of feedback/marks on their papers, most students stated that they would prefer their teacher to correct all errors, especially when responding to a final draft. Considering that in most cases a final draft includes a final grade for the paper, this finding is encouraging; these students seem to care about having their written errors corrected, for reasons beyond that of obtaining a good grade on the paper. Another positive finding is that most of these students would rather receive a clue about correcting errors on their first drafts rather than the correction itself, even though the latter would presumably make it "easier" to revise the draft.

According to this study teachers should review their perceptions of teaching methods and principles as writing teachers. They should give more importance to content and not put accuracy (form) as the main aim and neglect meaning (Content). Teachers should also use the process approach in their Writing classes instead of evaluating the paper as a final draft, teachers can

evaluate multiple drafts and provide feedback which help the student to refine his/her writing gradually and learn from his/her errors.

It seems that students could better correct their mistakes when the teacher provided (coded) feedback on content. This result helps EFL writing teachers see the need to consider the effect that their feedback may have on student's ability to self-correct. Although whether or not successful self-correction could lead to acquisition is not dealt with in this study. Furthermore, the need for teacher feedback arises from the students' responses. As shown in the questionnaire results; most of the students wanted to receive feedback from their writing teachers.

As shown in the results of students' questionnaire, most of the students wanted to receive feedback. Also, they preferred to receive coded feedback. One possible reason why EFL students like coded feedback is that it is quick and easy indicator in helping them to correct their errors. In addition, they might feel it is less risky when correcting their errors in writing if codes are provided.

### **3.11 Recommendation and Suggestions**

From this study, a few recommendations can be suggested to ensure that the feedback given to students' writing can enhance their process of improving their writing. Teachers should know the type of feedback to give to students. This depends on the objectives of the writing course; either the focus is on fluency or accuracy. Hence, the students will better understand what is expected of them from both the course and the teacher.

Teachers should give feedback to only one of minimal problem at a time. Thus, this helps students to have focused when they deal with the feedback and at the same time they will clearly see their problems and rectify them.

By identifying which type of feedback is most effective teachers can help the students to significantly improve their writing. Students are advised to revise their writing immediately after receiving the feedback as this provides an "opportunity to engage students at a teachable moment.

Learners should be aware that language learning takes place not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom provided that they are ready to engage in some form of independent learning, thus, learners must be ready to take necessary action to respond to the feedback given.

### 3.12 Conclusion

This chapter attempted to analyze data collected from students' and teachers' questionnaires and the interpretation of the result. It intended to gather information that may provide a slight vision of students' preferences over error correction in EFL writing classes. Providing feedback to student writing is definitely a tedious process to ESL teachers. However, making sure that the feedback is effective; that the students understand the feedback given, thus knowing how to make corrections on the error made and eventually turn them into better writers is even more difficult. However such efforts should be undertaken by all writing teachers to ensure that each student is capable of becoming lifelong learners who seek to improve the quality of their writing in order to turn out as truly competent writers.

# **General Conclusion**

## **General Conclusion**

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### **General Conclusion**

Corrective feedback is important in EFL teaching and learning. There are numerous studies that investigate error correction methods since implementing error correction properly can be challenging even for experienced teachers. Active student participation and engagement in corrective practice is necessary in the EFL writing.

This study did not intend to provide definitive answers but rather to investigate learners' attitudes in order to suggest some preliminary findings which may help further research. The data that has been analyzed makes it possible to make some general conclusions about learners' attitudes towards error correction in EFL writing. Even though this study does not investigate the link between error correction and language acquisition, it does suggest that learners pay attention to it and believe it helps them in language acquisition. This study shows that EFL writing learners generally react positively to error feedback, take error correction seriously, and pay a lot attention to it. Teacher corrective feedback might be a big investment of time and energy for teachers, but it is clear that students highly appreciate and want it.

The following conclusions have been drawn from the study. Learners believe that in order to improve writing skills, it is necessary to receive teacher's correction of their written work. Accuracy in writing (as few errors as possible) is essential to EFL learners. Learners report positive feelings towards teacher feedback, as well as other corrective methods. Similarly, learners find teacher feedback most beneficial to their language acquisition as they expect to improve their writing and learn more when their teachers high light their errors and correct them.

However, some learners prefer peer correction or self-correction since correcting errors alone or collaboratively is surely more motivating for learners than copying correct forms provided by the teacher. On the whole, the learners agree that they find error correction useful and motivating. Many of them believe that the teacher is the one who should correct written errors. Learners report positive feelings towards teacher feedback and show that they value the opportunity to share the responsibility for language acquisition with teachers and peers. In conclusion, even though some students express some concerns about the mechanics of the error correction, such as red pen, they generally feel it is beneficial for their writing and language acquisition.

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# Appendices

## Appendices

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## Appendices

### Questionnaire for students 1

Dear students you are kindly invited to answer a set of questions. This questionnaire is data gathering tool for research conducted to get the master degree. The research is entitled  
STUDENTS' PREFERENCES OVER ERROR CORRECTION AND FEEDBACK IN EFL  
CLASSROOM

**Directions:** Below are some beliefs that some students have about feedback to writing. Read each statement and then decide if you: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree. Please write the number of your response in the space provided.

There is no right or wrong answers. We are simply interested in your opinions.

**REMEMBER:**

(1) Strongly agree (2) agree (3) neither agree nor disagree (4) disagree (5) strongly Disagree

1. It is important to me to have as few errors as possible in my written work.
2. It is important to my English teacher to have as few errors as possible in my written work.
3. **When responding to a first draft (that is, a paper you will rewrite at least once), the teacher should always:**
  - A. Point out errors in grammar (verb tenses, subject/verb agreement, article use ... etc.) .....
  - B. Point out errors in spelling .....
  - C. Point out errors in vocabulary choice .....
  - D. Point out errors in punctuation .....
  - E. Make comments on the organization of the paper.....
  - F. Make comments on the writing style (the way you express your thoughts and arguments).....
  - G. Make comments on the ideas expressed in the paper .....
  - H. Use a set of correction or proof-reading symbols .....
  - I. use a red-colored pen .....

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**4. When responding to a final draft (that is, a paper that will not be rewritten and will receive a grade), the teacher should always:**

- A .point out errors in grammar  
(Verb tenses, subject/verb, article use, ... etc.) .....
- B. Point out errors in spelling .....
- C. Point out errors in vocabulary choice .....
- D. Point out errors in punctuation .....
- E. Make comments on the organization of the paper .....
- F. Make comments on the writing style (the way you express your thoughts and arguments)...
- G. Make comments on the ideas expressed in the paper .....
- H .Use a set of correction or proof-reading symbols .....
- I. Use a red-colored pen .....

**Directions: Answer the following questions by circling the number of the appropriate response.**

**5. On a first draft, how do you want your English teacher to indicate an error in your written work**

- 1. By crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure
- 2. By showing where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it
- 3. By only showing where the error is
- 4. By ignoring the errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation ... etc. and only paying attention to the ideas expressed
- 5. Other (please specify): -----

**6. On a final draft, how do you want your English teacher to indicate an error in your written work?**

- 1. By crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure
- 2. By showing where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it
- 3. By only showing where the error is
- 4. By ignoring the errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation ... etc. and only paying attention to the ideas expressed
- 5. Other (please specify): .....

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### **7. How does your English teacher currently indicate errors in your written work**

#### **On a first draft:**

1. By crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure
2. By showing where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it
3. By only showing where the error is
4. By ignoring the errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation ... etc. and only paying attention to the ideas expressed
5. Other (please specify): .....

#### **8. on a final draft:**

1. By crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure
2. By showing where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it
3. By only showing where the error is
4. By ignoring the errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation ... etc. and only paying attention to the ideas expressed
5. Other (please specify):

### **9: if there are many errors in your paper, what do you want your English teacher to do on a first draft?**

1. Correct all errors, major and minor
2. Correct all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones
3. Correct most but not necessarily all of the major errors if there are many of them
4. Correct only a few of the major errors no matter how many there are
5. Correct all repeated errors whether major or minor
6. Correct only errors that might interfere with communicating your ideas
7. Correct no errors and respond only to the ideas expressed
8. Other (please specify)

### **10:if there are many errors in your paper, what do you want your English teacher to do on a final draft?**

1. Correct all errors, major and minor
2. Correct all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones
3. Correct most but not necessarily all of the major errors if there are many of them
4. Correct only a few of the major errors no matter how many there are

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5. Correct all repeated errors whether major or minor
6. Correct only errors that might interfere with communicating your ideas
7. Correct no errors and respond only to the ideas expressed
8. Other (please specify)

### **11: How carefully do you look at the teacher marks/comments on your written work**

1. You read every one carefully.
2. You look at some marks/comments more carefully than at others
3. You mainly pay attention to comments on the ideas expressed in the paper
4. Other (please specify)

### **12: If you look carefully at of the marks/comments your English teacher makes on your written work, which ones do you consider most important to look at (please circle all that applied).**

1. Marks indicating errors in grammar
2. Marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice
3. Marks indicating errors in spelling
4. Marks indicating errors in punctuation
5. Comments on the ideas/content
6. Comments on the writing style
7. Comments on the organization of the paper