

TEACHER WRITTEN FEEDBACK AND STUDENTS' WRITING: FOCUS AND
NATURE
A THESIS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

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AN ABSTRACT IN AN AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH THESIS:

TEACHER WRITTEN FEEDBACK AND STUDENTS' WRITING: FOCUS AND NATURE

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ABSTRACT

Over the last twenty years, the focus on the teaching of writing has shifted from product to process. Students' writings today undergo a series of drafting stages which teachers correct and comment on, and students need to revise these corrections and respond to them accordingly. Teacher written feedback, as a result, has emerged as a major component of the process approach and has received a great deal of attention recently (Morra & Asis, 2009). Casual observation of English teachers' practices in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) suggests that most teachers' written feedback tends to focus more on form (i.e. correctness of grammatical structures and mechanics) rather than on content (i.e. ideas, coherence, and organization). Consequently, students start to produce writings that are formally correct but have poor content. In addition, sometimes teachers' written comments seem to be vague or holistic in nature, which mostly results in unsuccessful revisions on the part of students.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature and the focus of English teachers' written feedback on their students' papers. A second purpose was to examine the nature of students' responses to their teachers' written feedback. A third purpose was to examine the extent to which the participating teachers were satisfied with their students' responses to their comments.

Thus, this study sought to answer the following three questions: (1) What is the nature and focus of teacher written feedback on students' writings? (2) What is it that students pay attention to while revising their drafts in light of their teachers' written feedback? (3) To what extent are teachers satisfied with their students' responses to their comments?

In order to answer the above questions, students' writing samples of first and second drafts were collected and analyzed. Students' first drafts were collected to analyze teachers' comments on them in light of Ferris' (1997) model. Then, students' second drafts were collected with the purpose

of understanding the nature of students' revisions based on their teachers' comments on their first drafts. Faigley and Witte's (1981) model was used to analyze students' revision changes. Finally, the assigned grades on both drafts were compared in order to measure the degree of teachers' satisfaction with their students' revisions. Following the analysis of teachers' comments on students' writing, follow-up interviews with the participating teachers and a sample of participating students (total of twenty) were conducted. Teachers' interviews were used to gain more insight about teachers' comments on students' papers as well as their degree of satisfaction of their students' writing. Results showed that both teachers focused while correcting their students on formal aspects of writing at the expense of content issues. As for the data collected from analyzing students' revisions, the findings revealed that the most frequent types of revision changes were formal changes. Whether teachers were satisfied with their students' revisions or not, the results showed that teachers were a little bit frustrated because they expected the second drafts to be much better and to contain more ideas and examples related to the chosen topic.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wonderful parents, Qassim AL Kafri and Fatima AL Kafri, for their love, care, and constant prayers. Throughout this journey, they took care of my two young children and helped me a lot in collecting data, especially my mother, for my research papers and for this thesis. I couldn't have accomplished this without their support. It is also dedicated to my dear husband, who encouraged me by all means, especially financially, to continue my studies. I should not forget my two sisters; Lina and Heba Qassim AL Kafri. Finally, I have to mention my two angels, Albatool and Jana for all the happiness they have added to my life. They accompanied me during this journey to achieve my dream. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Providing written feedback on students' writings has become one of the most challenging tasks for English language teachers. Whereas many studies have stressed its effectiveness, much controversy has been provoked among researchers on its focus and nature. In government schools in the UAE, I have noticed that many L2 teachers encounter some challenges when responding to students' writing. That is, they may be unable to determine which methods are appropriate to use when responding to students' writing assignments. In other words, L2 teachers often cannot stop following traditional ways of responding to students' writing, particularly in L2 classrooms. Among these traditional practices is that they usually concentrate on correcting and commenting on students' language errors. Thus, issues related to syntactic patterns and use of cohesive devices and lexical items have become the priority for most English language teachers in the UAE. In contrast, content aspects such as coherence and relevance are mostly ignored. Of a more serious nature is that when teachers try to comment on content aspects, their feedback tends to be obscure, which doesn't help students understand what they need to do.

Another popular practice among teachers is that most of them tend to correct students' errors. They provide students with the right answers assuming that they are helping their students by clarifying everything for them. Perhaps one justification for such practices is due to a lack of training on the part of the teachers. In fact, feedback is a new concept, only very recently introduced to English teachers at the public schools in the UAE. The traditional methods of correcting students' papers were mostly grade oriented. Consequently, not all teachers necessarily know about the various methods of providing written feedback to their students. What also complicated this issue are the methods used to assess students' writing in the UAE. The major problem with these methods is that the rubrics used to assess students' writing mainly stress language aspects. However, when it comes to content issues, teachers' 'impression' is only used without having a clear system to assess these issues. Unfortunately, these 'impressionistic criteria' have led most English teachers to concentrate on language aspects while responding to students' writing in order to meet the assessment requirements. A third determining factor could be students' expectations and beliefs. Previous research (Ferris, 1997; Hyland & Hyland, 2003; Leki, 1990) on ESL/ EFL students' expectations of their teachers' written feedback revealed that there is a common conviction among ESL students that places high value on a composition free of surface errors (Morra & Asis, 2009). This belief has probably led some English teachers to pay more attention to language accuracy while responding to their students' writing in order to meet their students' expectations. Therefore, my research was to investigate the nature and the focus of teacher written feedback in the UAE, in

addition to examine how students responded to it. Finally, I wanted to find out to what extent teachers were satisfied with their students' responses to their comments.

Although numerous studies have been conducted on examining the nature, the focus, and the impact of teacher written feedback on students' revisions, little has been done to shed light on these issues in the UAE context. Therefore, this study will be the first to examine this issue in UAE public schools. I believe the results of this study may draw some useful implications which enable teachers who were participating in this study, as well as other teachers, to provide their students with clear feedback that helps them improve their writing and prepare them to better meet the writing demands of higher secondary level of their education. Finally, I think the overall findings may raise teachers' awareness of their own practices while commenting on their students' papers.

Research Questions

Paying a great deal of attention to how teachers provide feedback on students' writing, and how accordingly students respond to it, have received little consideration in the UAE context. Thus, this research intends to answer the following questions:

- (1) What is the nature and the focus of teacher written feedback on students' writings?
- (2) What is it that students pay attention to while revising their drafts in light of their teachers' written feedback?
- (3) To what extent are teachers satisfied with their students' responses to their comments?

The Context of the Study

The UAE government provides free education for both boys and girls from primary to secondary level through government schools. In general, all government schools are single-sex schools. Although the medium of instruction is Arabic, there is a strong emphasis on teaching English at all levels. In the UAE, the primary stage, which is known as the first cycle, includes grades 1 to 5; whereas, the preparatory stage, which is called the second cycle, includes grades 6 to 9. The third stage, which is the secondary stage, includes three grades which are grades 10, 11, and 12. Students in grades 8 and 9 have been studying English on a daily basis as a foreign language from grade one. Normally, each lesson lasts for fifty minutes.

Overview of the Chapters and Appendices

Chapter one presents the purpose and the significance of the study as well as the research questions and assumptions. Moreover, it discusses the educational context in the UAE government preparatory schools and describes both the writing instruction and assessment. Chapter two consists of a review of the literature that discusses the nature of teacher written feedback and the nature of students' revisions.

Chapter three includes a full description of the methodology and procedures which were followed in this study. It provides detailed information about the participants and the instruments

utilized for data collection. In chapter four, a detailed description of the data analysis and the findings of the study are presented. The presentation of the findings is divided into three sections: Nature and Focus of Teacher Written Feedback, Nature of Students' Revisions, and Teachers' Satisfaction with Students' Revisions. Finally, chapter five contains the summary of the findings and the conclusion. It also discusses the implications for teachers, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research.

Eleven main appendices are also included. Appendix A includes the model used for analyzing teachers' written comments which is Ferris (1997) Model. Appendix B includes Faigley and Witte's (1981) model for analyzing students' revisions. Appendices C, D, and E include samples of six students' first and second drafts (before and after being corrected). Appendix F presents the consent form that was given to students' parents. Appendices G and H present the questions asked during teacher and student interviews. Appendix I includes the consent form that was given to the teachers who were interviewed. Appendices J and K include types and examples of the two teachers' endnotes.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this section is to review the literature in an attempt to survey research that sheds light on the studies that investigate the characteristics of teacher written commentary (i.e. its nature, its focus, and its types) on students' papers. Moreover, literature that refers to teachers' error correction practices will be surveyed. Furthermore, this section will review studies that examine the nature and focus of students' revisions. Finally, literature which deals with difficulties that face students while revising their paper will be also reviewed.

Process Writing

Unlike the product approach, which regards students' composition as a product to be evaluated, the process approach considers writing as a complex developmental task in which attention should be paid to discovering how a piece of writing has been created. This emphasis on the whole process of writing calls for teachers to attend to the various processes involved in the act of composing, in order to help students produce coherent, meaningful and creative discourse. Therefore teachers' role has been shifted with this new orientation from evaluators of the written product to facilitators and co-participants in the writing process (Joe, 1992).

Process writing or the process approach as a classroom activity consists of four basic writing stages: planning, drafting (writing), revising (redrafting), and editing. Matsuda and Silva (2002) argue that "understanding the strategic aspect of writing is important for writing teachers because it enables them to teach writing rather than teach about writing" (p. 255). When teachers, as Harmer (2007) points out, spend time with learners on pre-writing phases, editing, re-drafting, and finally producing a finished version of their work, "a process approach aims to get to the heart of the various skills that most writers employ- and which are, therefore, worth replicating when writing in a foreign language" (p. 326). Thus, in this sense, writing procedures do not follow a linear order of planning and organizing, as they were viewed in the product approach. Instead, writing becomes a "cyclical process during which writers move back and forth on a continuum, discovering, analyzing, and synthesizing ideas" (Hughey, et al., 1983 cited in Joe, 1992).

Advocators of the process approach believe that following this method of editing and re-drafting is even more important when practicing writing in L2 contexts. Ferris (2003) argues that second language acquisition is a complex process in which learners need far more assistance to develop their writing skills. Therefore, in the process approach, "students have a chance to develop their ideas in some depth, benefit from the suggestions of interested readers, and revise and rewrite

the parts of their compositions that are difficult for this very real ‘audience’ to understand” (Tyson, 1999, p. 6).

Since the emphasis in process writing is on the whole discourse, students have the chance to receive feedback on different aspects of their writing. In the traditional approach, the focus of feedback was on the surface-level mechanics. However, this does not allow the students to realize the importance of other aspects such as the discovery and construction of meaning in the writing process. Therefore, "by offering feedback on both content and form, the process approach is more embracing, in that it helps students from the beginning stage of generating ideas to the final stage of refining the whole written discourse" (Joe,1992, p. 48).

Teacher Written Feedback

Since the appearance of the process approach as a new means of teaching writing, teacher written feedback has been highlighted as a major component of that process. Its role is viewed not only as a means to inform students about their errors, but has also been viewed as “a means of channeling reactions and advice to facilitate improvements” (Hyland & Hyland, 2001, p. 186). Because of its significant role on students’ improvement, Hyland (2003) argues that the written feedback that teachers provide on their students’ writing should be “more than marks on a page” (p. 184). Accordingly, he argues that whenever teachers provide feedback, they should take into consideration all aspects in students' writing such as the structure, organization, style, content, and presentation. In this part of the literature, discussion of written feedback will be divided into three sections: The Nature and Focus of Teachers’ Commentary on Students’ Assignments, Error Correction in L2 Writing, and finally the Use of Direct/Indirect Feedback.

The Nature and Focus of Teachers' Commentary

A substantial body of research has been conducted to investigate the major characteristics of teachers’ written comments on students’ assignments, its types, focus, and form. Types of teacher written feedback, according to Ferris (1997), can be categorized into three main types: requests, criticism, and praise. Hyland and Hyland (2001) also add the terms “suggestions” and “constructive criticism” to refer to feedback that includes a clear recommendation for remediation (p.186). Praise, as Brophy (1981) defines it, is a means to “commend the worth of or to express approval or admiration” of someone’s work (p. 5). In this condition, as Cardelle and Corno (1981) explain, teachers only comment on correct forms and “effectively suppress student errors” (p. 253). Praise can also function as a means to “build confidence in the choices that students make as they compose and as they revise” (Goldstein, 2004, p. 67). However, in their study which focused on the important aspects of teacher feedback and considered them in terms of their functions as praise, criticism, and suggestions, Hyland and Hyland (2001) warn that in cases where students are aware of their

weaknesses, use of praise can be inappropriate. Therefore, in order to be effective, teachers' praise should be sincere, credible, and specific (Brophy, 1981).

Criticism, on the other hand, emphasizes "feedback which finds fault in aspects of a text" (Silver & Lee, 2007, p. 31). Here, as Cardelle and Corno (1981) explain, "students receive feedback only on errors and there [is] no consideration of possible motivational effects" (p. 253). Thus, to avoid negative consequences, Cardelle and Corno suggest in their study that a combination of criticism and praise can make "students' errors salient in a motivationally favorable way" (p. 260).

Requests and advice are considered as moderate models between the two extremes of criticism and praise. That is, teachers point to students' errors but in a less critical way (Silver & Lee, 2007). Requests are found to be the most frequent type of feedback in Ferris' study (1997) and Treglia's (2009). Ferris also finds that the students in her study take "the teacher's requests quite seriously, regardless of their syntactic form" (p. 325).

These different types of teacher written feedback can have different focuses. Hyland (2003) talks about six major focuses of teacher written feedback: focus on language form, focus on content, focus on text functions, focus on creative expression, focus on the writing process, and focus on genre. Focus on language structures, as Hyland explains, implies teachers' emphasis on checking students' vocabulary choices, syntactic patterns, and mechanics. Second, when teachers focus on content, they are concentrating on students' ideas and information. The third category, text functions, is concerned with "constructing a functional and fluent text" (Kontinen, 2009, p. 9). Fourth, in focusing on creative expressions, teachers are focusing on students' personal styles of writing and individual ideas. Fifth, focusing on the writing process means focusing on how students first plan the essay, define a rhetorical problem, and then present solutions. The final focus is on genre. This focus, according to Hyland (2003), is very important in order to teach students how to achieve some communicative purposes when they write.

Though there is a need to address issues related to accuracy and language in the feedback stage of writing, as it was in the traditional product approach, some research points to the need for teachers to pay attention to content issues. Moreover, some researchers "have recommended emphasizing matters of content, development, focus, and organization, and holding off giving any appreciable attention to local matters until the paper has taken shape" (Straub, 2000, p. 34). Straub adds that focusing on content allows teachers "to view the student's text in light of the larger contexts that inform the writing, taking into consideration such concerns as the assignment, audience and purpose, voice, the background and experience of the writer, the students' writing processes, genre conventions, and institutional standards" (p. 34).

In spite of this stress on content feedback, several studies examining teachers' feedback on students' papers find that teachers tend to give feedback mostly on grammar. The early study of

Zamel (1985) finds that most of the teachers' comments focus on language errors ignoring content. More interestingly, she notices that even when teachers sometimes start to focus on message and content, most often they end up circling language errors. Several ESL studies (see Cohen, 1987; Ferris, 1995, 1997; Lee, 2004; Morra & Asis, 2009; Treglia, 2009) come to similar conclusion. In his study, Cohen (1987) finds that the nature of teacher written feedback is "unclear inaccurate and unbalanced focusing only on certain elements in the written output" (p. 80). These elements, according to Cohen (1987), are primarily grammar and mechanical issues, vocabulary and organization come next, and finally is the content. Some teachers claim, as one justification for focusing on grammatical aspects, that students revise formal issues more successfully than feedback on content. Thus, instructors and teachers possibly become "discouraged when the impact of content feedback doesn't appear with the immediacy of feedback on grammar" (Shine, 2008, p.33). Shine also points out that "giving written feedback on written work is at least in part determined by how they conceive of their role....If instructors perceive themselves as language teachers first, content will take a secondary position to a focus on form" (p. 33).

Error Correction in L2 Writing

Error correction in writing is one of the most common forms of teachers' responses to students' writing. Despite its popularity, there is one segment of researchers, led by Truscott, that calls for the abolishment of grammar correction in L2 writing classes (Truscott, 1996). His view is based on the argument that error correction is not only useless to students but that it is actually harmful in that it diverts time and energy away from more productive aspects of writing instruction. Truscott (2004) also adds that error correction encourages avoidance behavior. That is, students tend to write shorter essays in order to avoid committing too many mistakes. Sheppard (1992) also supports Truscott's stand. He conducts a study in which he analyzed the effects of indirect error coding and holistic comments in the margins on the development of L2 students' accurate use of verb tense, punctuation, and subordination. In that study, Sheppard (1992) reports that the group that received holistic comments outperforms the group that received corrective feedback (CF) and further notes that the CF group regressed over time.

In her attempt to contest Truscott's claims, Ferris (2002) states that "Because L2 students, in addition to being developing writers, are still in the process of acquiring the L2 lexicon and the morphological and the syntactic systems, they need distinct and additional intervention from their writing teachers to make up these deficits and develop strategies for finding, correcting, and avoiding errors" (p. 4). Hendrickson (1980) also explains that error correction helps to discover the functions and limitations of the grammatical structures and the lexical forms of the language they are studying. Cohen (1975) suggests that error correction can prevent learners from being misunderstood. Furthermore, Cohen points to the stigmatizing or irritating effects that errors have on the listener or

the reader. Ferris (2002) also stresses this point when she found in her study that professors feel that ESL errors are irritating. Thus, she concludes that accuracy is important because a lack of it may both interfere with the comprehensibility of the message and mark the writers as inadequate users of the language.

However, Ferris (2002) cautions that in order for error correction to be most effective it should focus “on patterns of error, allowing teachers and students to attend to, say, two or three major error types at a time, rather than dozens of disparate errors” (p. 50). Ferris' suggestion of selectivity has been viewed by many researchers as one way to avoid the negative consequences of error correction (Bitchener, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Ferris, 2002; Sheen, Wright, & Moldawa, 2009). Selectivity or the “focused approach”, as it is called by some researchers (Sheen, Wright, & Moldawa, 2009, p.567), implies that teachers select specific grammatical problems that they have observed and make these problems the focus of their feedback for a limited period. Focused corrective feedback, according to Sheen et al (2009), helps “students notice their errors in their written work... and monitor the accuracy of their writing by tapping into their existing explicit grammatical knowledge” (p. 567). The “unfocused approach”, on the other hand, overloads students' attention (Sheen et al, 2009, p. 559). Lee (2003) also mentions that marking all students' errors can be a fatiguing process for teachers as well as an annoying experience for students themselves.

Selectivity requires the instructors to judge which areas they need to focus on while providing feedback. One suggestion is that teachers need to concentrate on global errors (i.e., errors affecting the message of the text). Olsson (1972) also emphasizes on semantic errors more than on syntactic ones, because they can break the communication between speakers. Decisions about what teachers need to select are also connected to other factors such as students' proficiency levels and students' needs during each stage of their learning. However, this can't be achieved “unless instructors have the opportunity to get to know the students” (Shine, 2008, p.37).

Direct and Indirect Feedback

Based on the method of delivery, most scholars have classified teachers' feedback into direct feedback and indirect feedback. Direct feedback according to Bitchener & Knoch (2008) is defined as “the provision of the correct linguistic form or structure by the teacher to the student above or near the linguistic error” (p. 413). On the other hand, indirect corrective feedback indirectly refers to students' errors. As Lee (2004) explains, indirect feedback refers “to providing feedback on student errors without giving the correct forms or structures” (p. 286). Indirect error feedback has two forms: coded and uncoded error feedback. According to Bitchener, Young, & Cameron (2005), coded feedback points to “the exact location of an error and the type of error involved is indicated with a code. [On the other hand], uncoded feedback refers to instances when the teacher underlines an error, circles an error, or places an error tally in the margin, but, in each case, leaves the student to

diagnose and correct the error” (p. 193). Another recent form of indirect feedback is mitigation. Mitigation, as Treglia (2009) states, is “a form of politeness intended to buffer and mediate the emotional involvement and possible sense of inadequacy related to receiving critical responses to one's writing” (p. 70). Ferris’ (1997) findings reveal that hedged comments are more likely to lead to positive revisions than those without hedges. In contrast, Hyland and Hyland (2001) find that “the effect of mitigation was often to make the meaning unclear to the students, sometimes creating confusion and misunderstandings” (p. 207). However, in a later study conducted by Treglia (2009), the study reveals that although mitigation is not a determining factor in revising successfully, it is viewed by students as a “face-saving technique and as a tool to engage students to take responsibility for their writing” (p. 83).

Recent literature on corrective feedback shows that researchers favor indirect feedback because, as Liu (2008) points out, while direct correction seems to be “one of the easiest ways to correct errors, yet students may not understand why they made those errors and tended to make the same errors when they wrote different sentences” (p. 76). Shine (2008) also mentions that “less explicit feedback” might allow students to self-edit their work (p. 39). Moreover, Lee (2004) warns that overt correction can be harmful for the students in the sense that it makes them become reliant on teachers in error correction. Lee (2003) also adds that another danger of direct feedback is that “teachers may misinterpret students’ meaning and put words into their mouths” (p. 218).

Although indirect feedback seems to be more effective in improving students' accuracy, recent research has not yet provided enough empirical evidence on the efficacy of indirect feedback. In one study conducted by Chandler (2003), the results show that direct written corrective feedback leads to the greatest improvement in students’ accuracy both in immediate revisions and in subsequent writing. Thus, Chandler concluded that direct written corrective feedback has the largest impact on the development of students’ accuracy. However, Chandler’s study does not include a control group that did not receive any feedback, which is considered by Truscott as a weakness. In Ferris and Roberts' study (2001), the researchers try to examine the effects of different types of feedback (direct feedback, indirect feedback, indirect coded feedback) but with the existence of a control group that received no feedback. It is found that students who received feedback, whether direct or indirect, outperform the control group. However, there is no significant difference in editing success between the group that received coded feedback and the group that simply had errors underlined. Therefore, Ferris and Roberts recommend not using codes because they might be difficult for students to understand them. Similar conclusions are reached by Lee (1997) in her investigation into ESL students' writing performance in Hong Kong. She finds that students face some difficulties when dealing with codes. Thus, in her implications, Lee suggests that when using codes, teachers need to be careful.

The argument about whether to use direct or indirect feedback is sometimes related to Ferris' (1999) terms of classifying errors as treatable and untreatable (i.e. errors not amenable to self-correction such as sentence structure and word choice). Ferris and Roberts (2001) notice that teachers are more likely to use direct feedback with untreatable errors because they assume that their students will not correct them. Ferris (2002) suggests that this can be suitable for beginner students when teachers want to draw students' attention to other error patterns which require student correction. However, in their implications, Ferris and Roberts (2001) recommend that teachers try using indirect feedback with untreatable errors in order to give students the chance to self-correct before offering direct feedback.

Students' Revisions

Much research has been conducted to examine students' revisions in light of their teachers' feedback. The term revision, according to Zhang and Lee (1998), means "making any changes at any point in the writing process. It involves identifying discrepancies between intended and instantiated text, deciding what could and should be changed in the text and how to make desired changes" (p. 3). In their attempt to understand the nature of students' revisions, researchers have come up with different models that helped them to classify students' changes. In 1965, Wallace Hildick (cited in Faigley and Witte, 1981, p. 401) identifies six types of changes:

- Tidying-up Changes (i.e. mechanical and grammar changes)
- Roughening-up Changes (i.e. changes related to coherence)
- Power Changes (i.e. the power of the argument)
- Structural Alterations (sweeping changes)
- Ideologically Determined Changes
- The Ragbag of Types (miscellaneous).

However, Hildick (1965) notes the fact that these categories are not strictly conclusive.

A taxonomy developed by Faigley and Witte (1981) is based on the distinction between revisions that affect the meaning of the text and those that do not. Changes which do not affect the meaning are called "Surface Changes". Two subcategories, "Formal Changes" and "Meaning-Preserving Changes" are included under the category of surface changes. Formal Changes are divided into changes in spelling, tense, number, and modality, abbreviations, punctuation, and format. Meaning-Preserving Changes are those changes which "paraphrase the concepts in the text but do not alter them" (Faigley & Witte, 1981, p. 403). This category includes subcategories such as deletions, additions, substitutions, distributions, permutations, and consolidations. On the other hand, changes which affect meaning are referred to by Faigley and Witte as text-based changes. This category is also divided into two subcategories: microstructure and macrostructure changes. A

microstructure change is a meaning change that would not affect a summary of a text. In contrast, a macrostructure change would alter the summary of a text (Faigley & Witte, 1981).

Classifying changes is helpful for researchers to study students' revisions from four different perspectives: how students read and use their teachers' feedback, what aspects of teacher written feedback students pay attention while revising their papers, which types of teacher written feedback students favor the most, and finally what kinds of problems students face while responding to their teachers' feedback.

Students' Strategies While Revising Their Papers

Students differ in their ways of revising their papers. While some students read their teachers' comments carefully, understand what is needed, re-read what they have written, and then make changes in light of their teachers' comments, most of students, as Sommers (1982) points out in her study, "follow every comment and fix their texts appropriately as requested" (p. 152). Similarly, Dohrer (1991) finds that while revising their papers, college students do not read their papers from the beginning to the end. Instead, they read only the parts with comments. Unfortunately, this act, according to Dohrer (1991), prevents students from establishing "clear, global concepts of their work" (p. 51). However, Cohen's (1987) study shows different results. Cohen finds that the participants use different strategies such as making mental notes of teachers' comments, writing points, and rewriting the papers. Moreover, 80% of the participants mention that they read over the paper when they are returned back with teachers' comments on them. According to Cohen, it is also found that a similar percentage of students "attended to their teachers' comments on their papers" (p. 66). However, Cohen concludes that those who don't read over their papers or attend to their teachers' corrections are those who rated themselves as poorer learners.

The Focus of Students' Revision

Studies which investigate the aspects that students pay attention to while revising their paper agree on the fact that students, especially ESL/ EFL students, usually pay more attention to formal errors than errors related to the content or organization. For example, in Morra & Asis' study (2009), when ESL students are asked about what aspects of teacher feedback are most beneficial for them, 88% of the responses are linked to feedback on form. Similar results are obtained by other scholars (see Cohen, 1987; Ferris, 1995; Silver & Lee, 2007; Treglia, 2009). One explanation offered by Zamel (1985) is related to teachers' practices when they provide feedback. From the sample she examined, she finds that most teachers' comments are on form and those which are related to content and organization are mostly vague and obscure. Ferris (1995) reaches the same conclusions when she finds that most of the students who responded to the questionnaire mentioned that "their teachers' questions about content confused them (too general or too specific)" (p. 44). Probably one negative consequence of such practices as Morra and Asis (2009) point out is that "learning to write [becomes

for students] synonymous with acquiring and rehearsing the use of lexical items, syntactic patterns, cohesive devices, and other language forms, a practice which focuses on accuracy and clear exposition before content” (p. 77).

Another explanation, as Shine (2008) mentions, is that in their attempt to respond to content feedback, some students might find difficulties in gathering and making "use of additional content in response to a question" by their teachers (p. 46). Therefore, to help students make use of feedback, researchers suggest that teachers need to provide clear text- specific comments and hold oral individual conferences in which teachers can provide students with strategies to help them to revise (Cohen, 1987; Conrad and Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 1997).

Students' Favorite Types of Teacher Feedback

What types of teacher feedback students favor most or find most useful while revising their papers has been an area of investigation for many researchers. In her study, Ferris (1997) reveals that requests for clarifications are among the main type of comments that lead to successful revisions. Similar results are obtained by Treglia (2009). She finds that most of the comments that lead to substantive change are single requests. An interesting study done by Silver & Lee (2007) on the types of feedback that led to successful revisions of grade four students’ composition reveals that students respond more successfully to feedback in the form of advice than when it is on the form of criticism or praise. According to Silver & Lee (2007), “advice effectively communicates to students the defining role of the teacher as a mentor or a facilitator rather than a critic or an evaluator” (p. 40). Straub’s (1997) study also finds that students in his study favor responses that offered help or direction.

Straub’s study also concludes that all students without exception like “praise - even if it was only presented barely in the single-word comment ‘good’” (p. 112). At the same time, Straub mentions that these students hate harsh criticism on their work. Criticism is also found to negatively affect students’ motivation to write in Silver & Lee’s (2007) study. Their results show that 88% of students dislike criticism because as many students mention it made them feel less confident, “bad and ashamed” (p. 40). Similarly, Ferris (1995) concludes from her study that students usually prefer to be praised and express “some bitterness” if they do not receive any praise (p. 49). Therefore, Ferris (1995) concludes that in order to help students respond to written feedback, teachers need “to combine constructive criticism with some comments of encouragements” (p. 49). Contrary to previous findings, Hyland and Hyland (2001) report that these positive comments are viewed by some students “as merely mitigation devices, which serve no function beyond the spoonful of sugar to help the bitter pill of criticism go down” (p. 208).

These contradictory findings suggest that there are no typical types that should be used by all the teachers in the world. Choosing the suitable type or form of feedback is determined by

different factors such as students' level of proficiency, students' needs, students' experience with the process of writing as a whole, the educational and the cultural background of the students and even the institutional context in which students exist (Shine, 2008).

Problems Associated with Students' Responding to Teachers Feedback

Research on students' attitudes towards teacher feedback asserts that students do evaluate and ask for their teachers' feedback. However, students' positive attitude does not mean that understanding teacher written feedback or acting on it is always a problem-free task for them. In her study where she asks students to mention some of the difficulties they encounter while reading their teachers' feedback, Ferris (1995) finds that a lack of clarity is reported as one of the most serious problems. Lack of clarity can be detected, according to this study, either in the symbols the teachers used to refer to grammar errors, teachers' handwriting, or in their way of wording their feedback. Furthermore, Ferris (1995) mentions that many of the students report going to "an outside source" to help them understand their teachers' comments (p. 43). Sommers (1982) also refers to similar problems in her study when she reports that most of the students interviewed admit to having great difficulty with understanding their teachers' "vague directives" which makes the process of revising, as Sommers (1982) comments, a "guessing game" (p. 153). Sometimes, teachers' use of generic comments, those that can be found in any text, can confuse students because they don't tell the students specifically what is needed from them while revising their papers. Some phrases such as 'not clear', 'needs transition' found to be uninformative for students according to Cohen (1987). Therefore, Cohen (1987) recommends the use of text-specific feedback that focuses "on areas students want feedback on" in order to help students act successfully on their teachers' feedback (p. 67). Dohrer (1991) also finds in his study that students seem to be confused with unclear comments such as "awkward," "reword," or "rewrite" (p. 52). Dohrer (1991) in his conclusion calls for teachers to clarify their comments for students in order to save students' effort in "unmasking the teacher's meaning" and so they could more productively focus on their ideas (p. 54).

Teachers' use of questions such as "how" and "why" is also found to be difficult for students to respond. This is so because these questions ask students to offer more explanation and information about the topic being addressed, a task which can be beyond students' ability. Thus, teachers can address such problems in the writing class or with individual students through scaffolding, modeling, or through the selection of appropriate writing assignments. In addition to these questions, Goldstein (2004) find that comments which require students to argue, explain, and analyze "are revised successfully only 10% of the time" compared to those related to other types of comments. Ferris (2001) also finds that feedback focusing on logic and argumentation often leads to unsuccessful revision.

Two things teachers can do to help students address problems associated with the process of revision are to prepare students for feedback and offer strategies for revision (Shine, 2008). Teachers are also asked to know more about their students' previous experiences in writing, and ask them about the difficulties they face while revising their papers.

To conclude, a great deal of literature emphasizes the significance of feedback not only on teaching and developing writing skills in L1 contexts, but also in L2 classrooms. Therefore, teachers, as indicated above, are invited to be aware of their own practices while providing students with written feedback because in many cases the strategies that they use conceptualize students' perception of feedback. And if teachers really want to help students really benefit from feedback, they should try to reduce their heavy emphasis on "editing skills" as Dohrer (1991) puts it and provide students with strategies that they can use to be creative writers (p. 53). Teachers should also have awareness of the issues and difficulties that they might encounter when giving feedback.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the nature and the focus of teachers' written feedback. Furthermore, it shed light on the nature of students' revisions in light of their teachers' written feedback. Thus, the study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- (1) What is the nature and the focus of teacher written feedback on students' writings?
- (2) What is it that students pay attention to while revising their drafts in light of their teachers' written feedback?
- (3) To what extent are teachers satisfied with their students' responses to their comments?

In order to answer the above questions, students' writing samples (i.e. first and second drafts) were collected and analyzed. Following the analysis, follow-up interviews with participating teachers (total of two) and a sample of participating students (total of twenty) were conducted.

The Participants

The participating population of this study was composed of two groups: government preparatory school students and English language teachers. What follows is a description of each group:

Students

A random sample of 60 students was selected out of 150 English female students studying at one public school in Dubai, participated in this study. The majority of these students were UAE nationals. Their ages ranged from 13 to 15 years old. All participating students had been studying English as a foreign language since grade one. They studied English on a daily basis, with each lesson lasting for 50 minutes. Based on the number of years students spent learning English, their

proficiency levels ranged between intermediate and upper intermediate. The 150 students were divided as follows: 75 students were from grade 9 drawn from the three sections found in the school, and 75 students from grade 8 drawn from the three sections found in the school. After collecting papers from all students of each section above, I randomly drew 10 students' writing samples from each. Thus, the actual sample for this study included 60 participants. The reason for including students from six different sections was because these six sections were taught by two different English teachers, and I had the chance to examine the feedback of two different teachers, and see how students respond to it accordingly. The reason for choosing grade 8 and 9 students was that they were usually required to write composition much more than other grades in the school.

Teachers

Two female English teachers participated in this study. These were the teachers of the students participating in the study. Both of them are non-native speakers of English. That is, they are Arabs from two different Arab countries: Syria, and Palestine. The Syrian teacher has a bachelor degree in English Literature. She has been teaching English for five years. In addition, this teacher had obtained a higher diploma from the British University in the UAE in methods of teaching English as a second language. The other teacher also has a bachelor degree in English Literature, but she has been teaching English for twenty years in UAE government schools.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected as follows:

Students' Writing Samples: (see Figure 1)

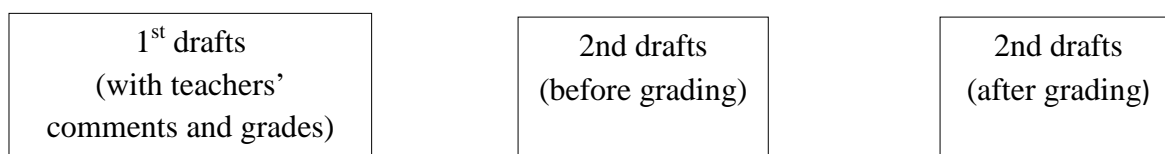


Figure 1: Students' Writing Samples

First Drafts

In order to answer the first question: What is the nature and the focus of teacher written feedback on students' writings?, the two teachers were asked to give me a copy of students' first draft of an essay discussing their opinion of television. Each draft included teacher feedback on what students had written and a grade assigned by that teacher. Students' first drafts were then analyzed in order to examine the nature and focus of teacher written feedback. The writing prompt was:

Some people think that watching T.V is something bad, others think it is something good, what do you think?

Samples of students' first drafts appear in Appendix C.

Second Draft (before grading)

Teachers were asked to give me the second draft of their students' composition on the same topic before correcting it (see Appendices C& D). The data were collected with the purpose of understanding the nature of students' revisions based on their teachers' feedback on their first drafts (i.e. research question two). I wanted to examine what aspects of teachers' written feedback students paid attention to while revising their papers. Furthermore, I wanted to see which types of teachers' written feedback were difficult for students. Had they understood all the comments that their teachers wrote and accordingly responded to them all? Or were there some vague comments which hadn't helped them to revise their papers successfully?

Second Draft (After grading)

Teachers were asked to give me the second draft of their students' composition on the same topic after correcting and assigning a grade to them. This draft was used to examine the extent to which the participating teachers were satisfied with their students' responses to their comments (i.e. the third research question). The degree of satisfaction was measured by comparing the assigned grades on the first and second drafts (see Appendices C& E). If the grade of one student's second draft was better, then this was an indication that the teacher was satisfied with the student's revised draft. If the grade on the second draft did not increase, at least this might indicate that the teacher was not satisfied with the student's revision

Interviews

Students' Interviews

A total of twenty students were interviewed by me. Students' parents were given a consent form (see Appendix F) to assign, and then they were asked to return it back to me. The interviews were conducted in Arabic to encourage students to speak freely. Use of Arabic also allowed students to speak fluently without exerting too much effort in finding the suitable vocabulary. Students' interviews were utilized in order to get better insight about the nature of students' revisions. These interviews were semi structured including general and specific questions. The aim of the general questions (see Appendix G) was to understand what students think of while responding to their teachers' feedback. As for the specific questions, these were constructed after examining students' responses to their teachers' comments.

Teachers' Interviews

The two participating teachers were interviewed by me. These interviews were used to gather information about the rationale behind the methods these teachers used to provide their students with written feedback. In addition, I wanted to ask these teachers on what basis they assigned grades to their students. Was it because they were really satisfied with their revisions, or because they wanted to encourage them and celebrate their efforts? Similar to the students' interviews, teachers' interviews were semi- structured including general and specific questions. A sample of general

questions (see Appendix H) was asked about the types of teacher written feedback these teachers used, and the reasons for using them. The specific questions, on the other hand, were based on the findings of the analysis of the nature and focus of teachers' feedback on students' papers. Finally, the two teachers were asked to assign a consent form (see Appendix I) and give it back to me.

Data Analysis

Data collected for this study was analyzed as shown in Figure 2 below

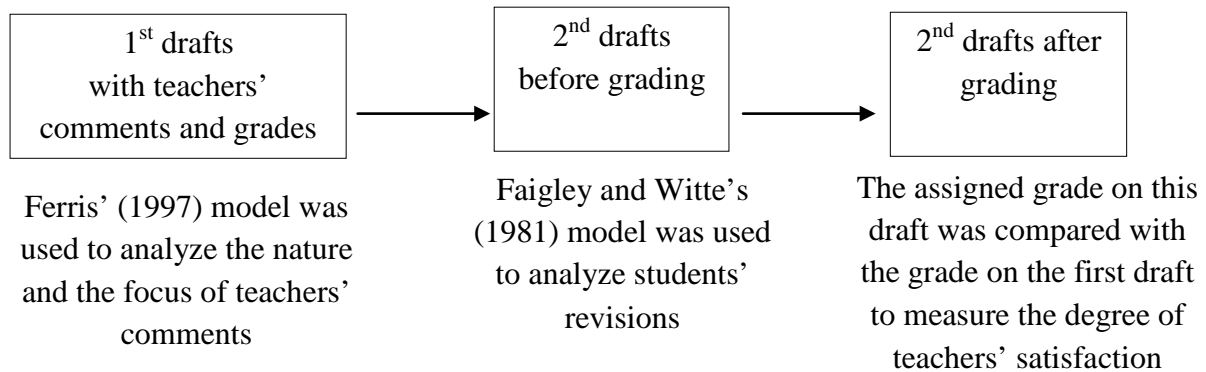


Figure 2: Process of Data Analysis

As Figure 2 shows, teachers' commentary was analyzed using Ferris' (1997) model (see Appendix A). This model has been used in similar research. Treglia (2009), for example, used this model to study what the predominant features of teacher written commentary were, and according to her it was found useful to capture specific details about the nature and the focus of teachers' written commentary without "overarching restrictions" (Treglia, 2009, p. 72). These specific details included important information about the length, the type, the form, and the focus of teachers' written comments. Moreover, this model allowed the researcher to examine, during the analysis, whether teachers' comments were generic or specific, or whether these comments were hedged or not.

For the second set of data (i.e. second drafts before being corrected) Faigley and Witte's (1981) model (see Appendix B) was used to analyze students' revision changes. First, this model was tested several times by its designers until they were satisfied that it could be "applied reliably, with two researchers independently reaching over 90% agreement on types of revisions" (Faigley & Witte, 1981, p. 405). Besides, this model had been used in other studies such as Dohrer (1991). Dohrer found it a useful tool to classify "textual changes" in students' revisions (p. 49). The system of Faigley and Witte's (1981) model distinguished between two types of textual changes: surface changes, those which do not alter meaning, and text-based changes, those which alter meaning of the text. Therefore, according to Dohrer (1991), it was found a useful tool to classify changes that were usually asked by the teacher and made by the students.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this chapter, a detailed description of the data analysis and the findings of the study will be presented. Data was collected by obtaining students' first and second drafts and conducting follow-up interviews with both students and teachers. Collected data from students' first drafts was analyzed using Ferris' (1997) model. The second drafts, on the other hand, were analyzed using Faigley and Witte's (1981) model. Data from interviews was analyzed qualitatively to gain more insight into the rationale behind teachers' practices when providing students with feedback, and students' reactions while responding to their teachers' feedback. The presentation of the findings is divided into three sections: the nature and focus of teachers' written feedback on students' written assignments, the nature of students' revisions in light of their teachers' written feedback on their written assignments, and teachers' satisfaction with students' revisions.

The Nature and Focus of Teachers' Written Feedback

The analysis of students' first and second drafts showed that written feedback was only provided by the two participating teachers on the first draft. Students' second drafts only included the final grade assigned by the teacher without any comments or endnotes. Therefore, the findings presented here are concerned with the nature and focus of teachers' written feedback on students' first drafts. Presentation of these findings will be divided into four main sections: Teachers' In-Text Written Comments, Coded Error Feedback, Uncoded Error Feedback, and Use of Endnotes.

Teachers' In-Text Written Comments:

Out of the two teachers who participated in this study, only one teacher (teacher one) provided in-text comments on students' papers. The other teacher (teacher two) did not use in-text comments at all. The following four tables show the frequencies, percentages, and examples of the most prominent features- length, type, form, and focus- of teacher one's written comments.

Table 1 showed that 78% of the written comments consisted of one word such as "grammar", "spelling", and "punctuation". The second frequent length was two word comments (n=16). Comments that consisted of more than two words were only six out of the 112 comments. According to teacher one, writing one word comments were frequently used because they save time and are easy to write.

Table 1

Frequency of Comment Length

Comment Length	N (%)	Examples
One word	88 (78.5%)	Today <u>i</u> capital asked my class friends a question
Two words	18 (16%)	T.v is a machine which is nice to have in our house, but do we really know what can this machine tells, Grammar + punctuation
Total	112	

With regard to comment type, it is clear from Table 2 that 89% of teacher one's commentary was 'clear clarifications'. Teacher one's clarifications were mostly generic. For example, when the teacher wanted to clarify a grammatical issue, she just wrote the word "grammar" and "spelling". Sometimes, she specified the grammatical problem by writing "subject-verb agreement", or "article" but still such comments were very few.

'Criticism' and 'vague clarification' came next with similar percentages (3.5%). Out of the 211 comments, there were only 3 requests. During the interview, teacher one said that writing requests took too much times while simple clear clarification seemed easier and faster for her. The least frequent type was praise. It was used once shown in Table 2. Use of praise, according to teacher one, was more frequent in the endnotes. She liked to start her endnote with praising the student before clarifying other points.

Table 2

Frequency of Comment Type

Comment Type	N (%)	Examples
Clear clarification	100 (89%)	So the TV is article good invention.
Criticism	4 (3.6%)	I think there is some Good programmes some useful programmes like cartons cooking programmes and I watch TV my free time and I love TV No balanced sentences.
Vague	4	So, we have to not watching TV at all the time just in our

clarification	(3.6%)	free time. But we should to find others things to do it like reading or swimming grammar or go out with friends.
Request	3 (2.6%)	it has an amazing and wonderful programmes such as news and that is interesting because people needs to know about their country and even the whole world, and start a new sentence there is some programmes that shows some traditions.
Praise	1 (0.9%)	The t.v is a nice invention. It not bad. But if we use it in a rong way it will be bad good introduction.
Total	112	

For the forms used to write these comments, the data showed (see Table 3) that most comments were written in ‘one word statements’ (77.7%). ‘Two- word statements’ consisted 16% of the comments followed by statements (3.6%). Finally, there were two imperatives and one question out of the 112 comments.

Table 3
Frequency of Comment Form

Comment Form	N (%)	Examples
One word statement	87 (77.7%)	Most people in our days <u>watchs</u> Grammar TV at free time.
Two word statement	18 (16%)	Some useful programmes like cartoons and <u>cooking</u> new idea <u>and</u> I watch TV my free time and I love TV
Statement	4 (3.6%)	The miusic sametime Good and TV channels names: Sama Dubai and Dubai sport. No logical sequence
Imperative	2 (2%)	it has an amazing and wonderful programmes such as news and that is interesting because people needs to know about their country and even the whole world, and start a new sentence there is some programmes that shows some traditions.
Question	1 (0.9%)	I think the T.V. for child is not bad and How? good
Total	112	

Finally, Table 4 presents the frequent focus of teacher one’s written comments. More than half of the comments focused on ‘mechanics’ (i.e. spelling, punctuation, and capital) (55.5%) followed by ‘grammar’ (verb tense and subject-verb agreement) (39%). Furthermore, only four

comments out of the 112 comments focused on ‘ideas’ followed by ‘text functions’ (one comment) and ‘writing process’ (one comment)

Table 4

Frequency of Comment Focus

Comment Focus	N (%)	Examples
Mechanics	62 (55.5%)	Don't <u>site</u> spelling in front of the tv.
Grammar	44 (39%)	The parents should teach <u>them</u> wrong pronoun <u>babys</u> <u>S</u> to <u>cee</u> good programs.
Ideas	4 (3.5%)	I watch the t.v in my free time... I watch t.v when I am boring or when I have free time repeated idea.
Text Functions	1 (0.9%)	The miusic sametime Good and TV channels names: Sama Dubai and Dubai sport. No logical sequence
Writing Process	1 (0.9%)	The t.v is a nice invention. It not bad. But if we use it in a rong way it will be bad good introduction.
Total	112	

Although teacher one's frequent focus on grammar and mechanics gave the impression that she was interested in teaching the formal aspects of the language, my interview with her proved the opposite. When I asked her about the major things that she usually pays attention to while providing feedback and assigning grades, she surprisingly said “ideas”. Yet, when I showed her the number of the comments that focused on grammar, she replied:

“I don't know how to comment or correct ideas, yet when I read a student's paper which has lots of ideas, I give that student good marks even if her paper is full with spelling or grammar errors. I only write in my endnotes generic words that I used to see my colleagues write such as ‘good ideas’ and ‘support your ideas with more examples’.”

Thus, teacher one's ignorance of the various methods of providing feedback on content issues made her restrict her written feedback to formal issues. When I asked her whether or not she tried to educate herself about the variant methods of providing feedback on ideas, for example, by reading books or articles related to this subject, she answered “I don't have enough time. The curriculum is very long, and I need to finish it”.

Coded Error Feedback

The data showed that codes were used by both teachers. However, their frequency differed from one teacher to another. Codes were used extensively by teacher two. In fact, she totally depended on using codes to locate and define errors. The other teacher, on the other hand, sometimes used codes as a way to categorize errors. Although the frequency of using codes was different

between the two teachers, their focus was almost the same. The codes used by the two teachers mainly focused on grammar and mechanics.

Teacher One's Use of Codes

Out of the 40 papers corrected by her, teacher one used codes 50 times (see Table 5). 46 of these codes focused on spelling. The focus of the remaining codes was distributed equally among grammar and punctuation.

Table 5

Frequency of Codes Used by Teacher One

Codes	(N%)	Examples
S (Spelling)	46 (92%)	Some <u>programs</u> S give people a <u>lote</u> S of <u>informain</u> S.
G (Grammar)	2 (1.7%)	TV programms <u>give</u> G you things it will help you in the future.
Prep. (Preposition)	2 (1.7%)	But <u>for</u> prep. my opinion
Total	50	

When I asked her about these codes and the differences in their frequencies, she admitted that she didn't pay attention to the way she used codes while correcting errors. Sometimes, she just wrote "S" because she was getting bored with writing the word "spelling". According to her, spelling mistakes were among the most frequent mistakes committed by students. Thus, instead of repeating the word 'spelling', she used the code "S".

Teacher Two's Use of Codes

Moving to teacher two, it was found that she used 508 codes to highlight errors on the 20 papers that were included in the sample and were corrected by her (see Table 6). The most common code used by teacher two was the "W.W" (i.e. wrong word) with a percentage of 41.5%. The data also revealed that teacher two was interested in identifying mechanical issues such as spelling (26%), punctuation (9%) and capitalization (6.7%).

Table 6

Frequencies of Codes Used by Teacher Two

The Code	N (%)	Examples
W.W. Wrong Word	211 (41.5%)	the people say is <u>the</u> W.W. good for the people and children.
SP Spelling	133 (26%)	I <u>alsa</u> SP. think that watching T.V. is bad.
P Punctuation	46 (9%)	Finally P i think T.V is good for the ressons SP i wrote.
C Capital	34 (6.7%)	<u>I</u> C enjoy what i watch

SVA Subject Verb Agreement	32 (6.3%)	T.V <u>teach</u> SVA bad things.
W.T. Wrong Tense	14 (3%)	My sister <u>didn't studies</u> W.T. because of TV.
M.W. Missing Word	17 (3.4%)	Some people think M. W. good.
M.S. Missing Subject	7 (1.4%)	also the children watching T.V and keep M.S. her books.
W.O. Wrong order	5 (1%)	I enjoy what i watch and I can learn <u>also</u> W.O. from it
M.V. Missing Verb	5 (1%)	The T.V. M.V good
VLS Very Long Sentence	2 (0.4%)	People see in T.V scientific programmes and comedy programmms People enjoy theme and people see in T.V funny films and people listen News V.L.S.
W.S. Wrong sentence	1 (0.2%)	<u>if you long</u> W.S. time watch T.V. don't study.
W.P. Wrong Preposition	1 (0.2%)	I don't have time <u>for</u> W.P. study.
Total	508	

With regard to grammatical aspects, the most common code used was “SVA” (i.e. subject verb agreement) (6.3%) followed by the code “M.W” (i.e. missing word) (3.4%), and the code “W.T” (i.e. wrong tense) (3%).

As mentioned, teacher two depended entirely on codes to highlight errors. During the interview, teacher two mentioned that students knew well what these codes meant and, students were introduced to these codes at the beginning of the year. When I asked her whether she found difficulties in introducing these codes, she told me that her students suffered a lot trying to differentiate between them, which required her to write the codes and their references on a paper and make a photocopy for each student to help them remember the codes. Later on she felt that students started to get used to them, yet there were still a few codes, such as the code (SVA), which students understand but have difficulties in responding to successfully. She didn't do anything specific to help them overcome these difficulties because, according to her, “experience and practice can teach them more”. In other words, teacher two thinks that even if students had problems at the beginning of the year with understanding or responding to the codes used, they would become used to deal with these codes just by time and practice their use.

Teacher two's use of codes, however, was not always clear and correct. There were several cases registered in which the code “SVA”, for example, was not used in a clear way, as shown in the sample below taken from a student's first draft.

Example (1- first draft):

"I think that watching TV is something bad, because (SP.) its give(SVA) as(W.W.) bad information and its make(SVA) as alot(W.W.) fat, becuse(SP.) its give(SVA) me bad information(?) its(C) have (SVA) bad show, and because(SP) it was(W.W.) our time. If I watch TV, don't have(W.T) a time for stady(SP) and dont(P) have a time to visit our ^^^"

In this sample of one student's first draft, the teacher underlined the structure (its + verb (give / have) and then used the code "SVA" to identify the type of error. However, using this code in this case didn't clearly show the type of error the student keeps making which is using these two forms "its + verb" together. Another example showing incorrect use of codes is the case where the teacher underlined the form "I don't have" (line 3) and wrote the code "W.T." The problem here is not with tense. In this sentence the verb "don't have" needs a subject.

Uncoded Error Feedback

Students' first drafts were full of underlines and circles which were used as a tool to highlight errors by both teachers. A difference between teacher one and two was that teacher one most often underlined or circled students' errors without identifying the kind of that error. Teacher two, on the other hand, when she underlined or circled the error, always used codes to identify the kind of error. As for symbols, they were only used by teacher two. She used three types of symbols as shown below.

1. ^^^ = which means that students need to continue this sentence or this idea in order to be complete.
2. ??? = which means that there is something ambiguous, or the sentence is not understood.
3. I = which means that the student needs to use a period and start a new sentence.

Below is a sample of a student's first draft showing teacher two's use of these symbols.

Example (2-first draft):

"I think that watching TV is good because it has many positive sides (P) (I) same(SP) (M.W) watching News and get information and get information ^^^ When (W.T) is boring(W.W) i watch funny films and education shows. I like to watch cartoons and funny films, and sports shows. But sometimes i(C) watch childrin cartoons(W.W)?^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^"

Analyzing error correction practices of the two teachers also revealed that there were several instances where the two teachers left some errors without highlighting them as shown in the sample below taken from a student first draft.

Example (3- first draft):

"every one have a free time. People play gams and some do exers but in my free time I like to seting relax watch TV, "

In this example, the teacher didn't highlight the incorrect forms "have", "gams" and didn't indicate for the student to capitalize the word "everyone".

Finally, there were very few instances where the two teachers offered to their students the correct forms. Both teachers located and identified only the types of errors leaving the responsibility of correcting them to their students. Their justification was that providing students with the right form inhibits students' self correction and consequently this will negatively affect their second language learning. Challenging students to find the right forms, according to them, helps students to remember the form and thus this will have a positive effect on their learning as a whole.

Use of Endnotes

Both teachers wrote endnotes on their students' first drafts. In fact, each first draft included an endnote which consisted of two to four comments. After analyzing the types of the teachers' endnotes, the data showed that although the endnotes of the two teachers focused on similar points, the forms used to write the comments included in each one's endnotes were different.

Here are the similarities between the endnotes of the two teachers:

- The average number of comments included in each endnote was three.
- A focus on content issues such as ideas, organization, and writing process was included in almost every endnote.
- A focus on grammar and mechanics was included in each endnote.
- The two most common comment types in both endnotes were requests and imperatives.

With regard to the differences, the analysis revealed that teacher one most often depended on positive softeners to write her endnotes. Twenty six out of the forty endnotes written on her students' first drafts began with praise followed either by a criticism, a request, a clarification or, an imperative. Furthermore, 23 out of the 26 endnotes started with praising the ideas. The remaining three endnotes out of the 26 ones started with praise for text functions. Below is one example of a positive softener.

Example (4- first draft):

“Good ideas but you need to correct your grammar and spelling mistakes”

For teacher one, starting with praise can “raise students’ spirits” to read the following notes. She also explained: “I am not always totally convinced with that praise yet I like to start with one”.

As for the other 14 endnotes, half of them started with requests, while the other half started with criticisms. Below are two examples illustrating these two types:

Example (5- Request):

"You need to write more to support your opinion"

Example (6- Criticism):

"Poor ideas. No sequence. Grammar and spelling mistakes"

Another significant characteristic of teacher one's endnotes is that all of them, except one, ended with a focus on grammar or mechanics either in the form of an imperative, request, or clarification. For more examples of types of teacher one's endnotes, see Appendix J.

For teacher two, the case was different. The imperative tone seemed to be prevalent. Nine out of her 20 endnotes started with a request followed by either another request or an imperative. In addition to these nine requests, there were two other endnotes which started with imperatives. Below are two examples:

Example (7- first draft):

"You have to check spelling of some words. Try to use correct words"

Example (8- first draft):

"Write more sentences to express your ideas with more examples".

Moreover, although the remaining endnotes started with exclamations, they were immediately followed either by an imperative, a request, or both of them. Here is one interesting example of an endnote that started with an exclamation but was followed by four imperatives.

Example (9- first draft):

"What you have written is a kind of paragraph, it is not an essay! Check spelling and subject verb agreement. Produce more sentences. Don't forget the conclusion. Try at least to write two paragraphs."

Upon asking about this point in the interview, the teacher explained that she did not like to praise students in general. Instead she liked to "challenge and order them". She went on to say,

"These students don't deserve to be praised at all. Look at their paragraphs! They are full of spelling and grammar mistakes. There is no organization. I was tired of teaching them how to write an essay. I got bored with correcting the same grammar and spelling mistakes, and you want me to praise them? For what?"

In fact, praise was used only twice in her endnotes, and later on I found that they were written for only two students who got high marks. More types and examples of teacher two's endnotes appear in Appendix K.

Nature of Students' Revision

The analysis of students' revisions revealed that while revising their papers in light of their teachers' feedback, the majority of students' revision changes were the surface level changes. Revision changes related to content issues were less frequent. Moreover, the revision analysis also revealed that there were several instances where students succeeded in correcting formal errors that were not highlighted by their teachers in the first drafts. However, it was noticed from the analysis that there were several instances where the vague nature of teacher written feedback resulted in unsuccessful revisions.

In this section the presentation of findings concerned with the nature and the types of students' revision changes will be divided into four main subsections: The General Characteristics of Students' Revision Changes, The Influence of Uncoded Feedback (i.e. use of underlines and circles only), Students' Self Correction, and Unsuccessful Revision Changes.

The General Characteristics of Students' Revision Changes

After analyzing the 60 second drafts of students' writings, the data showed that the total of students' surface changes (see Table 7) was 262; whereas, the total of students' text based changes (see Table 8) was 67. That is, while revising their papers, it was evident that students paid more attention to correcting their language errors.

Students' Surface Level Changes

With regard to students' surface level changes, the formal changes (the category under the surface changes) were more frequent than meaning-preserving changes. As Table 7 shows, the number of formal changes was 164; whereas, the number of meaning-preserving changes (the second subcategory under the surface changes) was 98. Out of the 164 formal changes, 71 were spelling changes, 56 were grammar changes, and 35 were changes related to punctuation and capitalization. The least frequent type was abbreviation changes which consisted of two out of the whole formal changes. These changes were concerned with the abbreviation (T.V.) since it was commonly used.

Table 7
Frequency of Students' Surface Changes

Formal Changes	T1 (n)	T2(n)	Total	(%)
Spelling	31	40	71	(43.3%)
Grammar	28	28	56	(34 %)
Abbreviation	0	2	2	(1.2%)
Punctuation/Capital	14	21	35	(21.4%)
Total	73	91	164	
No Change	50	80	130	
Meaning-Preserving Changes	T1 (n)	T2(n)	Total	(%)
Additions	6	19	25	(25.5%)
Deletions	12	18	30	(30 %)
Substitutions	10	19	29	(29.5%)
Permutations	2	5	7	(7 %)
Distributions	4	3	7	(7%)
Total	34	64	98	

Below is a sample taken from a student's first and second drafts showing examples of formal changes.

Example (10- first draft):

"Sometimes TV be (Grammar) bad when we set(spelling) all the times because it is heard (spelling) our eyes"

Example (10- second draft):

"Sometimes TV can be bad when we sit all the times or we spend our times watching TV because it is hurt our eyes."

As can be seen from this sample, the student managed to respond successfully to the three comments of her teacher. She added a verb "can" to the first sentence and corrected the two misspelled words.

The final category "no change" under the formal changes refers to the number of cases which were identified by the teachers but left by students without being corrected. Here is one example:

Example (11- first draft):

"there (C.) is (SVA.) so many people who loved (WT) watching talk shows".

Example (11-second draft):

"there is so many people who love watching talk shows".

In this example, three incorrect cases were identified by the teacher, yet the student corrected only one "loved".

More seriously, the analysis showed that there were cases where students corrected the incorrect forms if they were identified by the teacher, but if the same incorrect forms were repeated in other sentences, but were not identified by the teacher, the students left the incorrect forms as they were in the first draft. Below is one example illustrating this point:

Example (12-first draft):

" If you watch it too much it's will (Grammar) be bad because it's will make your eyes bad. and if you watch bad programmes it's will be bad for your traditions and it's will change it".

Example (12- second draft): If you watch it too much it will be bad because it will make you feel tired and not good. And if you watch bad programmes it's will be bad for your traditions and it will change it.

As can be seen, the teacher indicated and underlined the incorrect structure "it's will" three times leaving the third instance not highlighted. In her revision, the student only corrected the identified errors. When I asked her about this, she justified her choice by mentioning that "when I revise the paper, I only pay attention to errors that are recognized by the teacher". Talking to the teacher about this case, she commented, "although this student is one of my best students, she acts like most students. When they revise, they only change the incorrect forms that are located by the teacher. They don't read the text as a whole".

For meaning-preserving changes, as shown in Table 7, deletions were the most frequent type (30%) followed by substitutions (29.59 %) and additions (25.5%). Permutations and distributions

were less frequent. There were seven cases registered for each type. Below is one example of a permutation change made by one student.

Example (13-first draft):

"I think that the T.V. is good, besides of its disadvantages but(P.) it has many positive sides".

Example (13- second draft):

"I think that the T.V is good because its advantages is more than its disadvantages".

An example of a distribution is also shown below.

Example (14- first draft):

"watch t.v. don't have a time to visit our family and have a (grammar) bad shows."

Example (14- second draft):

"Watch t.v. don't have a time to visit our family. A T.v have many bad shows".

Students' Text Based Changes

With regard to text based changes, as Table 8 shows, the total number of microstructure changes was larger than the total of macrostructure changes. There were 56 cases registered for the former; whereas, only 11 cases were registered for the latter.

Table 8

Frequency of Students' Text- based Changes

Microstructure Changes	T1 (n)	T2(n)	Total	(%)
Additions	9	25	34	(60.7%)
Deletions	4	16	20	(35.7%)
Substitutions	0	2	2	(3.5%)
Total	13	43	56	
Macrostructure Changes	T1(n)	T2(n)	Total	%
Additions	2	3	5	(45. %)
Deletions	2	4	6	(54.5%)
Total	4	7	11	

As the can be seen, more than half of the 56 microstructure changes were additions (60.7%). Deletions came in second place consisting of 35.7% of the total of the microstructure changes. Substitutions were the least, only two cases were indicated.

Of the eleven macrostructure changes, six of them were deletions and five were additions. In the two samples below taken from a student's first and second drafts, the student wrote in the first draft two paragraphs talking about the disadvantages of watching TV. However, in the second draft, the student deleted the idea about watching news, and added another disadvantage which is the negative influence of TV on children.

Example (15-first draft):

"I think that watching T.V is not good for eyes (W.W), the way now (W.W.) world watch near it. It affects to the (W.W.) eyes mostly (W.O).2ndly: It is the (W.W) waste of time not learning your work just because to watch the TV.

Watching news on TV may not be true (W.W) (?) It makes the peoples (SP) fats while sitting at home.^fating foods like chips etc. watching is not the way to spend your time with it. You can go out with friends or families to spend times. Watching t.v may take you to the bad way.^^^^"

Example (15-second draft):

"I think that watching T.V is not good for the eyes, the way world watch it and watching it for many hours leaving your Homeworks, your duties etc. It is also the waste of time. Watching T.V make many peoples fats just sitting home for the T.V and fating popcorn, chips etc. watching T.V is not the way spend to your time with it. You can spend time with friends instead watching it. I don't agree with the programmes nowadays they bring on the T.V. If a child is innocent and he likes to watch the T.V, one day he will become naughty. And sometimes they apply the wrong news on the TV. Watching TV. can make your mind to think bad while watching something bad on it. "

Perhaps one reason for the high frequency of additions at the level of microstructure changes is that in the second draft, students added new examples and sentences to explain and support their ideas. Many of the students in the first draft, especially students of teacher two, only wrote one or two ideas about their opinion regarding television, and even these ideas were either incomplete or not supported by enough examples. Therefore, as found in the analysis of teachers' endnotes on students' first drafts, students were often requested to add new examples to support their opinion. Thus, it seems that there were some students who responded to their teachers' comments and tried to add more sentences to explain and support their ideas as shown in the two samples below taken from a student's first and second drafts. Note that the addition is in the first line in the second draft.

Example (16- first draft):

"Because the kids nowadays they don't go to play out side(S) like it was before, And most childerns don't set(S) and have a time with there family, so I think T.V is not always good".

Example (16-second draft):

"Because the kids nowadays don't go and play outside like it was before, Now they always watch TV and play videogames. Most children don't have a time with there family".

Students' Frequent Use of Deletions

One prominent feature that can be seen from Tables 7 and 8 is the high frequency of deletions either on the level of surface changes or on the level of text based changes. There were 30 deletions out of the 98 meaning preserving changes and there were 26 under the text based changes. Analysis of the second draft revealed that instead of correcting the incorrect forms, students most often deleted the form, the sentence or even the whole idea that contained these incorrect forms. Here is one example:

Example (17-first draft):

"There are a lot of different programms(S) like Documentaries(S) like NatGeo wild, serial programm like friends, and comedy programm ..."

"Example (17- second draft): There are a lot of different programs like comedy, cook, and history". So, she deleted the incorrect forms, and talked about other things such as cooking and history. When I asked the student about this in the interview, she told me that she didn't know how to correct her errors, so she preferred to delete the example. Here is another example:

Example (18-first draft):

"Because it will make us smart and aducated (Spelling) people"

Example (18-second draft):

"Because it will make us smart and ----- people".

Examine this third example:

Example (19-first draft):

"We can follow the news in the world like the war in Pletisne (SP) and the news in our country, we can know what happens in the world thru (SP) TV, T.V keeps us in touch with the world".

Example (19-second draft):

"We can follow the news in the world like the war in Pletine and the news in our country. Watching T.V keeps us in touch with the world".

In this example, the student deleted the sentence which included the incorrect form "thru". As in the previous cases, the student explained during the interview that when she didn't know the right form, she just deleted the sentence.

In other cases, instead of deleting the incorrect forms, students substitute them with forms that they know how to write. Below is one example:

Example (20-first draft):

"Some programmes aren't useful exemple (spelling) for: musics, videogames".

Example (20- second draft):

"Some programmes aren't useful like for musics, videogames".

In this example, the teacher underlined the incorrect form "exemple" and commented on it using the word spelling.

That students used deletions and substitutions when they felt that they were unable to correct their error was confirmed after conducting the students' interview. Fifteen out of the twenty interviewed students said that sometimes when they didn't know the right form or they didn't have time to figure it out, they just deleted it, or substituted it with a form they knew.

Furthermore, in some cases students deleted the whole idea. For example, when I asked one student about the reason for deleting her conclusion, she said, "There were incorrect forms in it, and I was in a hurry, and I don't know how to use the dictionary, so I thought it is better just to delete it." However, that doesn't mean that this is always the case. There were some students who mentioned that they deleted words, sentences, or ideas because they felt that they negatively affect the fluency

of the text. One student commented, for example, "Sometimes I feel a word was interrupting the idea I was explaining, or I just feel it did not suit that place, so I deleted it."

Differences in Frequency of Revision Changes

Upon reading the two tables (8&9) carefully, it can be noticed that the number of the changes in teacher two's sample, either the surface or the text based, was larger than the number of changes in teacher one's sample despite the fact that teacher one's sample consisted of 40 students while teacher two's sample consisted of 20 students. It is not that simple to draw conclusions about the reasons behind this finding. However, there were probably two reasons for this feature. First, most of the texts in the first drafts of the 20 students suffered more from unclear or incomplete and unsupported ideas. In contrast, in the first drafts of the 40 students of teacher one, when the students expressed a negative or a positive attitude, most of them provided examples to support their attitude. Therefore, I think that it was natural to find more additions in the 20 second drafts of students of teacher two.

The second explanation might be attributed to the nature of the endnotes of the two teachers. It is important to remember that imperatives and requests were more prevalent in teacher two's endnotes; whereas, praise was more prevalent in teacher one's sample. Students' interviews revealed that students found direct imperatives and requests more helpful for them to recognize what was missing in their essays. Ten out of the twenty students preferred imperatives and requests because as one student interestingly explained:

"They tell me exactly what I need to know, the incorrect sides of my text. While praise expressions are only fixed expressions which we used to read, such as 'Excellent, very good, fine' I feel they are like stamps!"

Therefore, it could be said that the imperatives that were prevalent in teacher two's sample were more effective in urging her students to add more ideas and examples.

Results of the teachers' interviews also confirmed to a large extent the two explanations offered (i.e. the nature of students' first drafts and the nature of the endnotes), and added to them another important one which is the writing conference that was held between teacher two and her students.

Teacher one admitted during her interview that her students' revisions didn't change that much. Yet, she confirmed, as mentioned above, that her students' first drafts were not that bad. In her opinion, although students' first drafts were full of spelling and grammar mistakes, they contained good ideas supported by examples. Thus, she didn't expect them to do much more, "It is difficult for them to correct their grammar and spelling mistakes." As for content issues, she told me something similar; "it is difficult for these students to write more than what they have already written." Finally,

this teacher admitted that concerning content issues students need to be shown how to develop their ideas instead of writing on their papers generic comments which might not be understood by them.

Teacher two, on the other hand, expressed her frustration with students' revisions in a very angry tone. She expected her students' revisions to be much better than they were. This is so because, according to her, after she noticed that her students' first drafts were very poor, she decided to have individual conferences with students to help them recognize their errors and explain to them how to solve these errors. It seems, as the teacher explained, "these individual conferences helped my students to improve their writing in the second drafts; however, I am still dissatisfied with the spelling and grammar errors that still exist."

Thus, it can be concluded, from what the two teachers said, that in addition to the differences existing in the nature of students' first drafts in the two samples and in the nature of teachers' endnotes, individual conferences might be a third reason accounting for this difference in the number of changes between the two samples.

The Influence of Uncoded Error Feedback

The analysis of students' second drafts showed that out of the 86 underlines and circles used to locate errors without identifying their types, 61 changes were successful. Below is one example:

Example (21-first draft):

"there is A lot of programmes that is good for us .and (Punctuation/ Capital) there is a funny program mes like the Funest American home videos"

Example (21- second draft):

"there is A lot of programmes that is good for us. And there are funny programs like the Funest American home videos"

Here, the teacher circled the two forms "a" and the plural "programmes" in the second sentence to indicate to the student that they can't go together. The student understood this and in the revision she corrected the identified ones.

The other 25 were either unsuccessful or left uncorrected. The two samples below taken from a student's first and second drafts show both the negative and positive effects of underlining:

Example (22-first draft):

" The bad things aficet the children and make heme emetad the interesting and action things this is bad thing so the parents should looke the children what they watch and advise them."

Example (22-second draft):

" The bad things affect the children and make him imitate the interesting and action things this is bad thing so the parents should look the children what they watch and advise them."

The teacher in this example only underlined the incorrect forms on one student's first draft. There were three successful changes, correcting the spelling of the "affect", the spelling of "look",

and the spelling of the word “imitate”. As for the incorrect form “heme”, the student thought the underlining was only to correct its spelling, therefore she corrected it.

In an attempt to investigate this feature while interviewing both teachers and students, students first told me that they were accustomed to the use of the underlines and circles from the time they were in grade one. Use of comments was more confusing because as one student explained, “each teacher has her own style in writing comments”. The teachers added that the use of comments has been introduced to public schools only recently. It has been introduced only at the beginning of the academic year of 2008 when committees from the ministry of education visited public schools at that time and recommended teachers to use written comments on students' papers. However, these committees didn't explain to the teachers or even train them on the different types or focuses of these written comments.

Students' Self Correction

The number of the cases in which students managed to highlight errors that were not previously highlighted by teachers was very few, 20 cases were registered. Most of these were related to capitalization.

Grammatical and spelling aspects were sometimes self corrected and sometimes not. Below are two contrasting examples taken from one student's first and second drafts:

Example (23-first draft):

"The T.V have (S-V agreement) bad things and good thing".

Example (23-second draft):

"The T.V has bad things and good things".

Example (24-first draft):

" the (C) person watchs TV for long time get fat and but on more Kilograms (SP.)".

Example (24-second draft): The person watchs TV for long time get fat and but on more Kilograms.

In example 23, the student was able to self correct the incorrect form “thing” that was not identified by the teacher and made it plural. However in the second example, the unidentified incorrect forms; “watchs” and “but” were not recognized by the student. Another student who was able to capitalize the pronoun “I” in the second draft, though it was not identified by her teacher in the first draft, justified the easiness of capitalization by explaining that “it is easy to notice the need to capitalize the pronoun “I” but it is difficult to pay attention to full stops and other punctuation marks, and to correct spelling mistakes. Grammar, it is the most difficult one”.

Unsuccessful Changes

This section discusses the cases where students failed to correct the things that their teachers asked them to correct. The analysis showed that students' failure can be attributed to different reasons.

The first reason accounting for students' failure to correct their errors was students' ignorance of the right forms. In the example below, the student didn't know the suitable word to use. Instead of writing "see", the student wrote the word "sea".

Example (25-first draft):

"People cea (spelling) T.V too much"

Example (25-second draft):

"People sea T.V too much"

The findings also revealed that there were a few cases where students failed to respond to their teachers' comments because they didn't understand them. For instance, there were nine cases where students, instead of responding to the comment of their teacher, just re-wrote the comment.

Here are three examples:

Example (26-first draft):

"T.V is good because is sometimes it wt the good (no balance) brogramies".

Example (26-second draft):

"The T.V is good because is some no balance".

So the student wrote her teacher's comment as it was written on her first draft. Below are more examples

Example (27- first draft):

"They show something about crimes (punctuation)"

Example (27-second draft):

"They show something about punctuation"

Example (28-first draft):

"My favourite brogram is drama because (subject) is very interesting".

Example (28- second draft):

"My favourite program is drama because swojekt is very interesting".

There was also one similar case with the use of the code (prep).

Example (29- first draft):

"But for (prep.) my opinion"

Example (29- second draft):

"But for prep. my opinion"

When I asked some of these students about the reason for re-writing the comment, some of them told me they didn't understand what the meaning of that comment was especially the "no balance" comment. Another reason mentioned is that with the cases of punctuation and subject or subject- verb agreement some students didn't know how to respond correctly, so they preferred just to re-write the comment. However, when I interviewed the teacher, she told me that seven out of these nine negative cases were committed by weak students whose average grade ranged from 50-60

out of 100. Therefore, it is likely due to their low level of proficiency, these students were not able either to understand the comment or to respond to it.

Finally, a third reason accounting for students' failure to revise successfully was related to the nature of teacher written feedback. Teacher one's use of the code (S) to highlight spelling errors, for example, was a source of confusion for many students. Out of the 46 cases in which teacher one used the code (S) to highlight spelling errors, there were 20 cases registered in which students confused the use of this code with the plural "s". In other words, students thought that this "S" requires them to pluralize the word. Below is one example illustrating this confusion:

Example (30-first draft):

"Some programes(S) give people a lote (S) of informain (S)".

Example (30- second draft):

"Some programmes give people a lotes of informains".

When I asked the students about the reasons for this confusion, they told me that they thought it is the plural "s" because as they explained, their teacher used to comment on spelling errors using the word (spelling) not this code. As a result, some of them thought that this (S) requires to pluralize the word. In fact, this was also confirmed after interviewing the teacher. She admitted that it had been a long time since the last time she used this code. However, sometimes because she was in hurry or she was bored with writing these comments, she just wrote "S".

Teachers' Satisfaction with Students' Revisions

Teachers' satisfaction with students' revision was measured in two ways. The first was by comparing the grades of the two drafts. If the grades on the second drafts increased, then this was considered an indication that the teacher was satisfied with students' revisions. A second step was implemented to ensure more accuracy of the findings and that involved conducting semi structured interviews with the participating teachers. The teachers were asked about their rationale for assigning grades, and whether these grades were true reflections of their satisfaction or not.

The comparison between the grades on the two drafts revealed, as Table 9 shows, that 85% of the grades increased. There was no reduction, and only nine students out of the 60 got the same results. These nine, as the Table shows, are divided as follows: one case was in teacher two's sample and the other eight cases were included in teacher one's sample.

Table 9

Comparison of Students' Grades on First and Second Draft

	Increased grades	Same grades	number of students
Teacher One	32 (80%)	8 (20%)	40
Teacher Two	19 (95%)	1 (5%)	20

In addition to counting the number of improving grades, I tried to examine the amount of that increase in the two samples. The reason for that is that the amount of increase could much better mirror how satisfied the two teachers were with their students' revisions. For example, it could be expected that the degree of teacher satisfaction is much more when the grade of the second draft was raised two or three marks instead of increasing it only half a mark. Thus, I added Table 10 in which I present the amount of increase in the samples of the two teachers.

Table 10

The Differences in the Amount of Increase in the Samples of the Two Teachers

	Half mark	One mark	One mark and half	Two or more	Total
Teacher One	4	25	3	0	32
Teacher Two	0	11	0	8	20

As can be seen from Table 10, raising the grade one mark was the only common practice between the two teachers; 25 cases in teacher one's sample versus 11 cases in teacher two's sample. There were eight students in teacher two's sample whose grades were raised two marks or more; seven were raised two marks, and one case was raised five marks.

Whether the amount of the increase was a true reflection of teachers' satisfaction with students' revisions or not, was verified after conducting interviews with the two teachers. According to teacher one, raising the grade only one half mark was used with weak students to encourage them to revise. Raising the grade one mark was because the teacher had found that the student had improved in one aspect but failed to improve other aspects. For example, in the case of teacher one, she noticed that the 25 students whose grades were raised one mark had corrected the spelling and grammatical errors but failed to improve content aspects such as organizing their essays and adding more ideas or at least supporting the existing ones. Probably, this was because students had received more feedback on formal issues. Finally, raising the grade one mark and a half was because the teacher was satisfied with the revision as a whole.

The situation was not that different with teacher two. Instead of raising the grade one half mark to encourage weak students, she added one full mark. In other instances, one mark could be added when the teacher felt that her students had worked on improving one aspect of their essays. Raising the grade two marks was an indication that she was satisfied with the revision as a whole.

However, what these two teachers differed in is their nature of their satisfaction. That is, what made the two teachers satisfied with their students' revisions was very different. For teacher one, she was really satisfied when students added more ideas or when they supported the existing ones with more examples; formal issues came in second place. Therefore, according to her, if a student only corrected all of her formal errors, then she was raised one grade. However, in the case where a

student added more ideas or more examples but only corrected some of her formal errors, then this student was raised one mark and a half. Thus, providing more ideas and examples was what makes teacher one more satisfied.

Teacher two, on the other hand, is interested in organizing the body of the essay more than other aspects. For example, if the student organized her essay by starting with an introduction followed by supporting paragraphs, and finally ending with a conclusion, then the teacher would be really satisfied with this, regardless of whether the student had written two supporting paragraphs or just one, or whether she corrected her spelling and grammar errors or not. In fact, this was sometimes evident in the way she assigned grades on the first draft. During my analysis of the first drafts, I noticed that there were some students who had not written that much and had many grammatical mistakes; yet, they got grades that equaled others who wrote more with less grammatical mistakes. When I asked her about this, she said, “these students had a conclusion but the others didn’t have. My students know that when they don’t write a conclusion or an introduction, they wouldn’t have high marks.” However, I noted that, according to my analysis, most of the students who had been raised one or two marks did not necessarily write conclusions or introductions. I noticed that most of them had only corrected their formal errors, which led me to ask the teacher about these cases. She frankly answered, “If I assign the grade on what really satisfies me, most of my students’ grades will be low, and the principal of the school would not like it. Thus, in these cases, I don’t put high grade on the first draft, but on the second draft if I find that the student has improved on any other aspects, then, I raise her grade.”

In fact, those words of teacher two mirror the conflict that teachers usually have to face. The conflict is between what satisfies them, as English teachers, and what satisfy the other components of the teaching context, such as the students, the institution, the ministry, etc. In the case of these two teachers, raising the grades of the second draft was not always because they were really satisfied with their students' revisions as much as it was to satisfy the administration and to encourage weak students to revise.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of the Findings

In this chapter, a summary of the findings that were discussed in the previous chapter will be presented. This study was meant to examine the nature and the focus of teachers' written feedback on students' written assignments in the L2 classrooms, the nature and the focus of students' revisions, and teachers' satisfaction with students' revisions. This chapter is divided into six main sections: summary and discussion of the teachers' written feedback analysis results, summary and discussion of students' revision analysis results, summary and discussion of teachers' satisfaction analysis results, implications of the study, limitations of the study, suggestions for further research, and final thoughts.

Summary of Teachers' Written Feedback Analysis Results

The main objective of this exploratory study was to examine the nature and the focus of teachers' written feedback on students' written assignments in the L2 classrooms. Teachers' written feedback was investigated in order to answer the first research question, "What is the nature and the focus of teacher written feedback on students' writings?" The analysis of students' first drafts revealed that the written feedback of the two participating teachers in this study had almost the same focus, but it differed in its nature. The main focus of the two participating teachers was on formal issues (i.e. correctness of grammatical structures and mechanics). As shown previously in Table 3, teacher two only identified the incorrect formal aspects of students' texts. Similarly, 94% of teacher one's in-text comments were about grammar and mechanics. Focus on content issues such as ideas, coherence, and organization was found more in the endnotes; yet, it was generic. It urged students, for example, to develop more ideas and support examples, but it didn't show them how they could do so in specific examples related to their texts. These results seem to corroborate the findings of many previous studies on teacher written feedback on L2 students' written assignments (see Cohen, 1987; Ferris, 1995, 1997; Lee, 2004, 2007; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Morra & Asis, 2009; Treglia, 2009; Zamel, 1985). Findings of these studies revealed, as Montgomery and Baker (2007) summarize, that "teachers generally gave little feedback on global issues, such as organization and ideas, and a large amount of feedback on local issues, such as grammar and mechanics, throughout the writing process" (p. 90). Moreover, even if teachers believed in the need for commenting on ideas, as teacher one mentioned during the interview, they still did not focus on this aspect when giving feedback, and most often they ended up underlining language errors (Zamel, 1985).

Focus on formal issues was translated differently by the two teachers. Teacher one mainly depended on writing comments to identify formal errors. Examples of these comments were "spelling", "grammar", "subject-verb agreement". Teacher two, on the other hand, used a system of codes that was taught to students at the beginning of the year. The focus of that system was on identifying students' formal errors. Codes that identified incorrect tense, missing verbs, and wrong order were among the most commonly used codes. Teacher two's reliance on using codes to identify

errors seems to be similar to the case of Hong Kong in Lee's study (2004) where he found that 87% of the teachers used error codes in marking student writing.

A further difference in the nature of the two teachers' written feedback existed in the types of comments used. The analysis of teacher one's written comments showed that most of them were clarifications. Requests were very few, which was not consistent with Ferris' 1997 study where the most common type of commentary among the marginal notes was asking for information (almost 31%). Praise, was only used once as an in-text comment. However, in the endnotes, praise was used extensively at the beginning of the endnotes. Teacher one's opinion was that praise encouraged students to read the rest of the endnotes. This opinion was in line with Hyland and Hyland (2001), who viewed praise's main function as "sugaring the pill" of criticism (p. 187).

Teacher two's written comments were only included in endnotes. There were no in-text comments, and most of them were imperatives and requests urging students to improve their essay and correct their grammar and spelling errors. Teacher two's frequent use of imperatives was different from what Ferris (1997) found in her study. Ferris mentioned that imperatives were rarely used by teacher. Yet, when they were used, she found that they led to positive changes.

Though the two teachers differed in the strategies they used to provide feedback, the analysis shows that both of them relied on indirect error feedback. That is, the two teachers provided feedback on student errors without giving students the correct forms or structures. Teacher interviews revealed that the opinion of the two teachers regarding this issue agreed with the prevailing opinion in the literature that indirect feedback "increased student engagement and attention to forms and problems" (Ferris, 2003, p. 52). Direct feedback, according to them, inhibited self correction.

Similar to what was found in previous studies (see Cohen, 1987; Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1985) there were cases in which teacher written feedback seemed to be vague for students, especially in cases where codes were used. One source for this lack of clarity was when the teacher used a code before introducing it to the students, which caused a lot of confusion for students. Teacher one's use of the code "S" to highlight spelling errors, for example, was vague for her students. She didn't introduce it to her students initially, and therefore her students confused it with the plural "s". Another problem was related to the incorrect or vague use of the codes. Several cases were registered in which one of the teachers identified some of students' errors using the incorrect code. These findings corroborated with Lee's (1997) findings who found that teachers in her study used a large number of error codes in error correction. However, not all students, according to him, understood them or coped with them. Finally, the excessive use of underlines and circles on students' first drafts without telling them the type of their errors was also vague for students, and as Sommers (1982) commented, it made the process of revising a "guessing game" (p. 153).

Discussion and Summary of Students' Revision Changes

Findings concerning the second research question, "What is that students pay attention to while revising their drafts in light of their teachers' written feedback?" showed that the majority of students were concerned with correcting the surface level errors. As the results showed, there were 262 surface level changes versus 67 for text based changes. The results of this study did not seem to be different from what previous ESL studies found (see Cohen, 1987; Dohrer, 1991; Ferris, 1995; Morra & Asis, 2009; Silver & Lee, 2007; Treglia, 2009, and Zamel, 1985). All of these studies found that the majority of students attended more to grammar errors.

Perhaps the high frequency of surface level changes in this study becomes less surprising when they are compared to the number of comments and codes used to identify these errors. There were 508 codes used by teacher two and 106 comments provided by teacher one to identify surface-level errors; whereas, there were only six generic in text comments provided by teacher one requesting students make text- based changes. The situation was more pronounced with teacher two, who didn't write in- text comments at all on content issues, and only wrote generic comments in her endnotes. Thus, it became natural to find out that the number of surface-level changes was much larger than the number of text based changes. Thus, the situation became as Dohrer (1991, p. 53) explained:

When 80 percent of the comments are on grammatical correctness, the writers will soon discover the genuine values of the commentator... [Thus they] usually ignored or minimized teachers' requests for macro structural changes, maybe deciding these requests were unimportant because of their small numbers or possibly deciding that the impact these changes might have on the papers was not worth the time, effort, and thought necessary to make them.

Though it was not the main objective of this study to probe the relative effects of the different types of teacher written feedback on students' revisions and conclude which type was more effective than the other, the analysis of the revisions as well as the results of student interviews raised to the surface the old but constant controversies of the relative effectiveness of error correction on students' ability to write accurately, the effectiveness of coded versus uncoded feedback, and the so called positive influence of praise versus the negative effects, criticism and imperatives on students' revision.

This small study could not prove for sure whether identifying students' errors on the first draft helped students to avoid these errors on their second drafts or not. One reason is that as the analysis and the interviews showed, students sometimes deleted the incorrect forms identified by the teacher and substituted them with forms they know. Furthermore, from the examples in the previous chapter, it was found that students deleted the whole sentence or even the whole idea if they failed to correct

the incorrect forms identified by the teacher. In these cases, deletion or substitution became an easy means for students to correct their errors. Thus, this didn't mean that students necessarily recognized how to correct these incorrect forms and structures.

Another serious problem accompanied by identification of errors in this study was the fact that students appeared to be reliant on teachers to locate and identify their errors. As the example in the previous chapter showed, if the errors were not identified, at least underlined by teachers, then they were not corrected by students. One student made this clear in the interview when she said that she only paid attention to what the teacher had identified. In other words, this student assumed that the structures that were free of teacher's comments or underlines were correct. Consequently students started to jump, as Dohrer (1991) described, "from one comment to the next or randomly from one to another, often skipping large segments of the text and making a statement like, 'This page must be all right; he didn't find any problems'" (p. 51).

Simultaneously, one could not ignore the large proportion of changes that were successfully made by students. This could not be achieved unless the teachers had located the errors and identified them. As Ferris (1999) explained in her attempt to dispute Truscott's claim to abandon error correction, it is difficult to stop correcting errors completely. Yet, as she noted, its efficacy depends on its quality.

Probably, Ferris' words regarding the quality of the correction poses serious questions about what the characteristics of good or effective error feedback are. As we have seen from this study, comprehensive error feedback (i.e. highlighting all types of errors) did not seem to be effective. It did not make students understand the nature of their errors. It also made students rush to correct all the identified incorrect forms without reviewing the whole paper carefully. One example, as mentioned before, was when we see students correct the identified incorrect forms only, but if these same forms were not identified, then students would not correct them. This tells us that either students didn't understand the nature of their errors or they were in a hurry as some of them expressed in the interviews. Thus, in all cases students' attention in this study seemed to focus on correcting all the errors without understanding their nature. This indicated a need for teachers to be more selective and focused while providing feedback because as Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, and Takashima (2008) explained, "learners are more likely to attend to corrections directed at a single (or a limited number of) error type(s) and more likely to develop a clearer understanding of the nature of the error and the correction needed" (p. 356).

Finally, the findings shed light on the role of praise. In the previous chapter, one student's description of praise words as "stamps" on her papers, really questioned the real function of praise, and supported Brophy's (1981) view, who mentioned that praise should be "infrequent but contingent, specific, and credible" in order to function well (p. 27). The function of imperatives was

also highlighted in this study. First, the analysis showed that imperatives could be one of the affecting factors in increasing the number of revision changes in teacher two's sample. Imperatives were also found to be the preference for half of the twenty interviewed students. It might be concluded from this study that imperatives played a positive role in improving students' revisions. The positive role of imperatives seemed to corroborate with the results of Sugita's (2006) study, which concluded that imperatives were found to "be more influential" on revisions. Similar results were obtained by Ferris (1997) who found that when imperatives were used, they led to positive changes.

Teachers' Satisfaction with Students' Revisions

A third objective of this study was to investigate to what extent teachers were satisfied with their students' responses to their comments. The data obtained from comparing students' grades on the first and second drafts and from teachers' interviews revealed that the degree of teachers' satisfaction could not be determined just by looking at the assigned grades on students' papers. In other words, what this study concluded is that grades were not necessarily a true reflection of teachers' satisfaction with students' revisions. Teachers assigned grades within a context. This context might include the factors identified in this study, such as student factors and institution factors. Student factors identified in this study were connected to encouraging weak students' motivation. Both teachers believed that they needed to raise weak students' grades even if their revisions hadn't improved that much. This, according to them, would encourage weak students to write more and never despair.

Institutional factors in this study included satisfying the institution's administration. Participating teachers made it clear that satisfying the administration was very important for them. Moreover, giving students high marks prevented teachers from many troubles such as questioning from the administration. As teacher one frankly said, "low marks will not be viewed as a reflection of students' proficiency levels as much as they will be seen by my principal as a reflection of my poor performance." Thus, to avoid questioning on their performance, raising grades was the safest means. The influence of these contextual factors on teachers' practices was not surprising. As Goldstein (2004) explained, teachers "do not teach in a vacuum" and the context in which teachers teach will always influence their practices (p. 66).

Moreover, this study revealed that teachers might also find themselves not in "complete harmony" with the contextual factors (Goldstein, 2004, p. 66). Teacher two, for instance, found herself in a conflict between what satisfied her and what satisfied the students and the administration. She sincerely wanted to see students write fully organized essays. Yet, when she noticed that insisting on what she wanted would make students' grades low, she raised students' grades if

students corrected their spelling and grammar errors. She did that because she knew that low grades would not satisfy either her students or her administration.

Implications of the Study

The implications of this study cover three areas: pedagogical implications for English preparatory teachers, implications for the Ministry of Education, and finally implications for preparatory students. Each of these areas will be addressed in order to reveal attainable modifications.

Pedagogical Implications for Teachers

Since responding to students' writing is thought of as an essential part of learning how to write successfully in the L2 context, it is important for English teachers in the UAE preparatory schools to become conscious of the significance of feedback and its impact on students' writing. Thus, the first step teachers need to do is to familiarize themselves with the various methods of providing feedback. This will help them to use the most suitable method in each case. Of not being familiar with feedback methods can be seen in teacher one's ignorance of how to comment on content issues such as ideas, essay organization, and coherence. Her ignorance made her feedback focused only on surface issues, though she wished she could tell her students how to improve their essays as a whole. Thus, teachers need to educate themselves with the various methods of commenting on content issues in order to help their students to be more effective writers instead of being editors, correcting grammar and spelling errors.

Educating oneself doesn't necessarily need to take as much time as many teachers think. One means could simply be through teachers' discussions during free time. When teachers share their responding strategies together, consider feedback issues that cause problems, and explore different means to relate their feedback carefully with error treatment in L2 writing, surely this will give the teachers the chance to widen their knowledge about the different methods of providing feedback.

After familiarizing themselves with the various methods, teachers need to pay attention to the quantity and the quality of their feedback on students' papers. For instance, this study has suggested the need for teachers to consider the quantity and the quality of their praise. Students start to suspect the credibility of the fixed formulaic expressions such as "excellent", "very good ideas"....etc. Students might need to see through examples how they are excellent. One example is when teachers write, "I like your introduction. It hooks the attention of the readers and clearly introduces the topic of your essay." In another example, a teacher can write one specific marginal note telling the student "this is a good example for supporting your opinion".

In cases where teachers need to use codes, first they need to familiarize their students with these codes before writing them on students' papers. Otherwise, using codes can be confusing and annoying for students. Another thing they can do is to reduce the number of these codes, and draw

students' attention to the most frequent ones that reflect certain types of errors. Consequently, error correction codes would be less challenging for students.

Moreover, teachers should try to utilize a wider range of responding techniques such as encouraging self and peer editing strategies and giving oral feedback through conferencing with students on an individual or group basis in order to support their written feedback. As has been found in this study, conferencing with students can help them to understand the weak points of their essays, and suggest ways to deal with them. Self-editing should also be encouraged by presenting to the students types of feedback that are most useful and suitable for their age and proficiency level. For example, teachers can think of writing clarification notes in which they clarify for their students some of the frequent mistakes that they keep committing, and then let the students themselves try to find out these mistakes and correct them.

Utilizing such methods enable students to be involved in the process of providing feedback and feel its significance on their learning. Furthermore, teaching students to depend on their own abilities cultivates in them the sense of responsibility towards their learning.

Finally, in order to ensure the effectiveness and success of teacher written feedback, it is a good idea for teachers to keep questioning their own practices and have the courage to identify their own faults, and work on overcoming them. Teachers might also think of following up with students after students receive their teachers' feedback and helping them learn to revise.

Implications for the Ministry of Education

One suggestion for the Ministry of Education is to take further steps in developing teachers' abilities and knowledge by organizing a training program which could raise teachers' awareness of the different types of written feedback. During these programs, teachers can be enrolled in workshops in which actual samples of students' writing are presented. Teachers in this case can discuss with the instructors the different ways to comment and correct these samples. This would give teachers the opportunity to share ideas, benefit from each other, and benefit from the instructors themselves.

It also seems to be very consistent with much of the research conducted on teachers' attitudes in the UAE towards the length of the curriculum and the teaching load (see Abou Eissa, 2010) that UAE Ministry of Education is invited to reduce the teaching load for teachers. Providing feedback on students' papers requires too much time and effort on behalf of the teachers. Therefore, within their heavy load, teachers find it difficult to provide good feedback for their students, or to hold conferences to follow up.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Further Research

The findings of this study were beneficial in obtaining better insight into the nature and focus of teacher written feedback and at the same time they were useful revealing how teachers' feedback

can positively or negatively affect students' revisions. Nonetheless, one must note some of the limitations of the study. First, the sample of participating teachers consists of only two teachers, which does not allow for making generalizations. Therefore, more participants, including teachers of different qualifications and students from different educational zones, in addition to English supervisors should be involved in future research in order to gain more insightful awareness about responding to students' writing in UAE government schools.

Another limitation of the study was that the data was collected for this study was during the last two months of the semester. Normally, during this time both teachers and students are exhausted with the burdens of the whole year. Moreover, teachers were busy with ensuring the completion of their syllabus rather than concentrating on the quality of their teaching. Another thing is that the data collected included students' writing on one topic. Therefore, a longitudinal study in which researchers collect students' writing on different topics during the whole year would be useful.

This research paper also recommends conducting a study which examines the relationship between students' proficiency level and students' ability to understand the different types of feedback provided by teachers.

Final Thoughts

In spite of the constant debates about whether teacher written feedback on students' papers is harmful or useful to students, one true and clear fact is that teacher written feedback is an influential and indispensable component in the process of teaching writing. This is so because whatever teachers write on students' papers, can capture their attention and direct it towards a specific track whether this direction is to their benefit or not. Therefore, the best thing teachers can do to ensure the efficacy of their feedback is to keep questioning their own practices. Teachers need to evaluate their own practices in relation to the context in which they exist, and see how they can accommodate their feedback according to the needs of that context. This will help them recognize those practices that do not work as well, and work on improving them.

Finally, I invite teachers to emancipate themselves, from the bureaucratic education system that is imposed on them by thinking of ways to improve its efficacy. As Hopkins (2008) suggests, they should start by educating themselves with knowledge that helps them to be creative and effective teachers. Then, they need to cooperate with the other components of their education system, their colleagues, administration, supervisors, and the officials in the Ministry of Education in order to help our students get the best from their education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ferris' (1997) Model

A. Comment Length (Number of Words)

1- Short (1-5 words)

2- Average (6-15 words)

3- Long (16-25 words)

4- Very long (26 or more words)

B. Comment Types

1- Ask for information/question

Example: Did you work out this problem with your roommates?

2- Make a request/question

Example: Can you provide a thesis statement here-What did you learn from this?

3- Make a request/statement

Example: This paragraph might be better earlier in the essay.

4 - Make a request/imperative

Example: Mention what Zinsser says about parental pressure.

5- Give information/question

Example: Most states do allow a waiting period before an adoption is final-Do you feel that all such laws are wrong?

6- Give information/statement

Example: Iowa law favors parental rights. Michigan and California consider the best interests of the child.

7- Make a positive comment/statement or exclamation

Example: A very nice start to your essay! You've done an impressive job of finding facts and quotes to support your arguments.

8- Make a grammar/mechanics comment/question, statement, or imperative

Examples:

Past or present tense?

Your verb tenses are confusing me in this paragraph.

Don't forget to spell-check!

C. Use of Hedges

0 No hedge included

1 Hedge included

Lexical hedges (e.g., maybe, please, might)

Syntactic hedges (e.g., Can you add an example here?)

Positive softeners (e.g., You've raised some good points, but....)

D. Text-Specific Comment

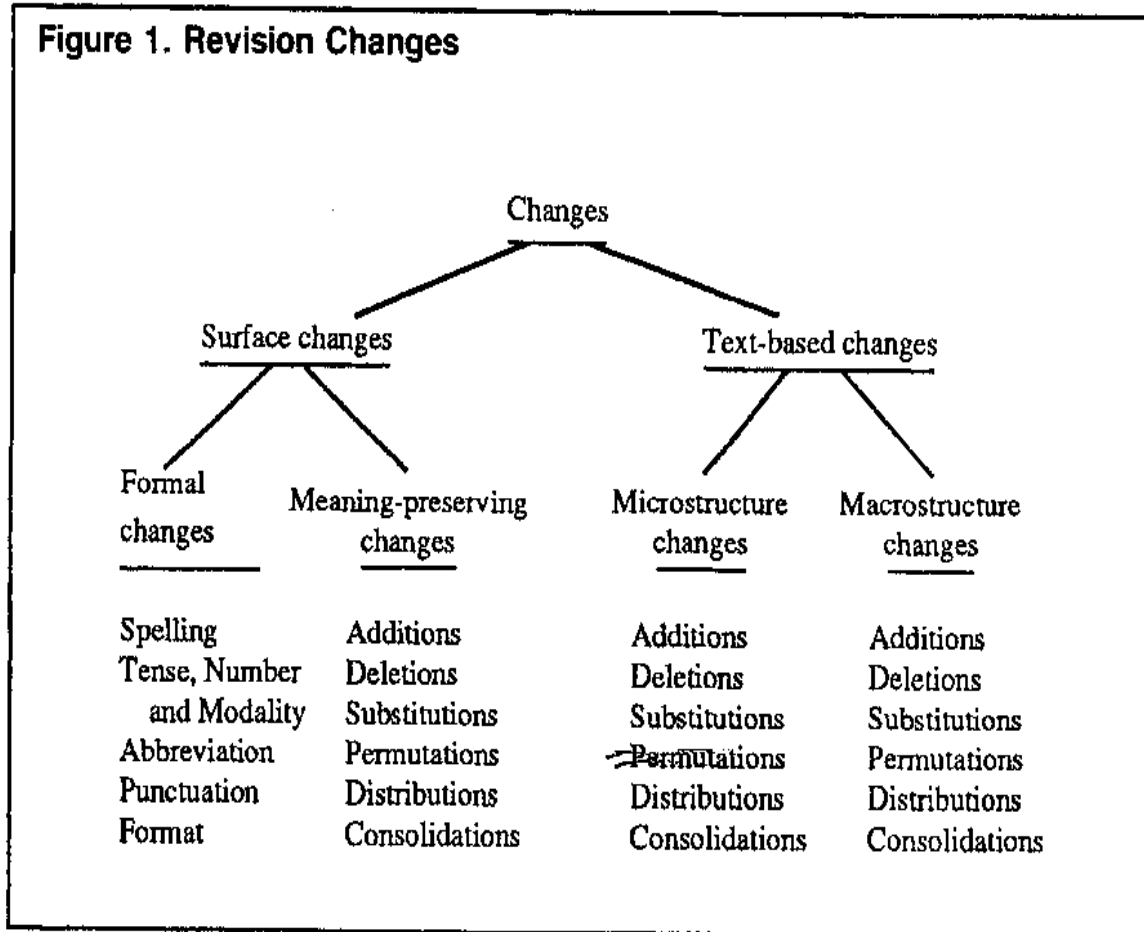
0 Generic comment (could have been written on any paper)

Example: Nice intro

1 Text-specific comment

Example: Why is the American system better for children, in your opinion?

Figure 1. Revision Changes



Appendix C: Samples of Students' First Drafts

Student #1

Some people think that watching ^{T.V.} is something bad, others think that it is something good, What do you think?
I think that watching T.V. is something bad, because some people think it is bad and I agree with them and that because watch T.V. if you long time watch T.V. don't study and some children watch T.V. and attitude following and programs

- * you have written a small paragraph not an essay!
- * you have to write at least 2 paragraphs that sum up with a conclusion.

Student

#2

I think watching ^{T.V.} is something bad. Some people think good I don't agree with them because it waste out time and give us a bad information. If you seat along watching T.V. it will make you more fat and give you information in you head and it make you not good person. If you watch T.V. you don't have a time for study and don't have a time to visit our family and have a bad shows and gets bad words and information bad disadvan tage if she get the give and bad programs and the people ???

- ~ you didn't write a properiate essay what you have written is only one paragraph!
- ~ you have to write at least 2 paragraphs and give more example check the spelling and punctuation
- finally to sum up with a conclusion,

20

Student #3

4/3

4
—
10

Before the t.v. People read the news paper
to know the news of the world. Nowadays
News ^{small} come to their home. T.V. ~~It~~ is very good
because it is a wonderful source of
Information. Some Programs Give People a
lot of information because ~~the~~ The T.V. ~~is~~
good because it is commentator but T.V.
~~is~~ bad because it is some time may be
dangerous and some time information may
not be true for children and people.

- Not enough ideas.
- No sequence.

You repeat the words with many spelling
and grammar mistakes.

Student #4

Some people say the T.V. is bad
and some people say The T.V. is
good. But I say the T.V. sometimes
good and sometimes bad. I watch
T.V. in my free time when don't have
intersting and funny. The bad
programmes like music because the
children's and teenagers emeta
same what they see in T.V.
should the people destance inth
thun T.V.

- Poor ideas.
- No sequence.
- many spelling and
Grammar mistakes.

4
—
10

Student #5

I think ^{P.} it's ¹¹¹ good because it ^{C.} exciting ^{SP.} some ^{C.} things ^{W.O.} I ^F enjoy what ^{C.} I watch and ^{C.} I can learn ^{W.O.} also from ^F it. I can also improve my English and you can watch the news ^{SP.} because ^{SVA.} some ^{M.V.} other people lives here in L.A.E and ^{SP.} there ^{P.} from another country so like to watch news to know whats ^{SP.} happening in there ^{SP.} ¹¹¹ some town. ¹¹¹

Sometimes ^{C.} I ^{watching} think ^{W.W.} T.V is bad because ^{SVA.} it can ^{W.W.} affect ^{P.} small children and it ^{P.} can ^{P.} waste our time and it makes people fat ^{W.W.} and also some other people just ^{P.} wasting ^{P.} there ^{P.} time and they ^{P.} can't play with other children. ^{P.} ¹¹¹ ¹¹¹¹ ¹¹¹¹ ^{P.} it also can ^{SP.} lose ^{P.} my good ^{P.} grades in school. ¹¹¹¹ ¹¹¹¹

or You have to check the spelling of some words ⁹

T.V. is it good or bad? It is a difficult question but we should answer it.

Student #6

There are ⁽⁵⁾ lot of postive Sides in the T.V. life It helps us know more about the world and it helps small children ¹ learn about the Alphabets in English or Arabic.

There ⁽⁸⁾ is also ^{spelling} negative Sides because Sometimes when children watch T.V. It Shows bad things like (kill... or murder)

After all ⁽⁸⁾ I think that It depends on the person who Use ^{the} T.V. if he or she were good or bad. If he or she were good it will help them in their lives but if he or she were bad it will not help them in there life.

* v. good ideas but needs more support +

* spelling errors. Late clarifications (mech) +

* Grammar mistakes.

7
10

Appendix D: Revisions of Students' First Drafts (Before being corrected)

Student #1

watching T.V

Some people think that watching T.V is something bad, others think that it is something good, what do you think?

I think that watching T.V is something good because some free time watching T.V and collect family watching T.V, prah children.

I'm see that watching T.V very say but free time watching cartoon and drama and film but people watching programmes good, and watching film good.

It thing watch T.V good vs bad but people thing bad, but watching collect family sit places one watching T.V and happy and eat and see comedy. and give me information watch T.V programmes good.

at the end advice people watch T.V because information good to watch T.V.

Student #2

I think watching T.V is something bad. Some people think that T.V good I don't agree with them because I waste our time. The T.V is bad it give a bad information If you set long time watching T.V you will get fat and it give you bad information in you eat, it make you bad person. don't watch T.V alot because smake you waste you time for study, don't have a time to vist ur family. A T.V have a many bad shows and bad words and bad person in the T.V. ~~watching news on T.V not~~ set rwe Its give us falls information same news and it smet good way...

don't spend you time watching T.V and don't belve any think about information...

Student #3

Before the T.V. People read the news Paper to know the news of the world. Nowdays news come to their home. It's very good because it is a wonderful source of information. Some Programmes give People a lot of informations. The T.V. is good because it is commentators. but T.V. is bad because it is some time may be dangerous and sometime information may not be true for children and people.

Some people say the T.V. is bad and some people say the T.V. is good. But I say the T.V. sometime's good. But I say the T.V. sometime's good and sometime's bad. I watch T.V. in my free time when don't have something to do. my favorite program is dram because swajid is very interesting. sometime's is comedy or action. The T.V. is good because some ho same what they see in T.V. thus should the people distances with thus T.V. very interesting and funny. the end programme's like music become the children's and teenager's emetads.

Student #4

Student #5

I think it's good because "T.V." has our favorite movies and cartoons and that we love to watch and sometimes it's exciting i enjoy what I watch, and I can learn what ^{can} see from the TV like cooking and the weather and i can improve my English and you can watch the news because some other people live here in U.A.E and

There is a lot of good things in T.V. Like T.V. helps us to know more about the world and it helps ^{small} children to

learn about the Alphabets in English or Arabic.

There are also bad things because Sometimes when children

watch T.V. It Shows ~~bad~~ (kill or murder) and sometimes

T.V. Shows Scary movies. But I think that It depends on

the person who watches T.V. If she is good T.V. will help her

in her life But if she was bad it will not help her in ~~her~~ her life

After all a T.V. is a good ~~invention~~ invention.

Student #6

Appendix E: Students' Revisions after being corrected

Student #1

I think that watching T.V is something good becous
Some free time watching T.V and colect family
watching T.V, prah children -
I'm see that watchig T.V very day but free
time watching cartoon and drama and film
but people ewatching programes good, and
watching film good.
I thing watch T.V good vs bad but people
thing bad, but watching colect family sief
places one watching T.V and happy and
eat and see comidy. and give me information
watch T.V programes good.
at the end advice people watch T.V
becous information good to watch T.V.

$\frac{5}{20}$

Student #2

I think watching T.V is something bad. Some people think that T.V good I dont agree with them because It wast our time. The T.V is bad it give a shad information If you set long time watching T.V you will get fat and it give you bad information in you eat, it smake you bad person. dont watch T.V alot because smake you waste you time for study, dont have a time to vist ur family. A T.V have a many bad shows and bad words and bad person how in the T.V. ^{watching news on T.V not} set rwe Its give us falls information same news and it smact foodway...

dont spend you time watching T.V and dont belve any think about information...

6
20

Student #3

Subject Amna Saeed 9/3 موضوع الدرس
 Date: / / الموافق التاريخ 5/10

Before the T.V People read the news Paper to know the news of the world. Nowdays news come to their home. Its very good because it is a wonderful source of information. Some Programmes give people a lot of informations. The T.V is good because its commentators but T.V is bad because it is some time may be dangerous and sometime

Student

some people say the T.V is bad and some people say The T.V is good. But I say the T.V sometime's good. But I say the T.V sometime's good and sometime's bad. I watch T.V in my free time when dont have something to do. my favorite program is dram a because swejet is very interesting sometime is comedy or action. The T.V is good because some ho balance exeples News word and the cartoon's like Tom and Jerry becoase is very intersting and funny The bad programme's like music becoase the children's and teenager's emetads

#4

same what they see in T.V
things should be people distances
in the things T.V.

Student #5

I think it's good because T.V. has our
There is a lot of good things in T.V. Like T.V. helps us to
know more about the world and it helps ^{small} children to
learn about the Alphabets in English or Arabic.
There are also bad things because sometimes when children
watch T.V. It shows ~~bad~~ (kill or murder) and sometimes
T.V. shows scary movies. But I think that it depends on
the person who watches T.V. If she is good T.V. will help her
in her life but if she was bad it will not help her in her life
After all a T.V. is a good ~~invention~~ invention.

8/10

Student #6

Appendix F: Parents' Informed Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' written feedback on students' papers and accordingly examine how students respond to their teachers' feedback. Therefore, we intend to collect samples of your daughter's writing to examine these issues. Later on, we might need to interview your daughter to ask her some questions regarding the process of responding to her teacher feedback. Your daughter's participation in this study is voluntary, and there is no risk associated with her participation in this study. You are free to decide not to let her participate in this study or to withdraw at anytime without adversely affecting the relationship with the researcher or the school. If you choose to let your daughter participate, all information gathered will be held in strict confidence and will be used solely for the purpose of this research. Participation in this study will prove to be an informative experience for your daughter as it will make her more aware of her written paper revision practices. If you agree to let your daughter participate, please sign the consent form below and return it back to me.

I have read and understand the information on this consent form. I consent to let my daughter participate in this study. I understand that any information given is completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw her at anytime.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Contact Person:

Primary investigator: Dr. Ahmad Al-Issa
American University of Sharjah
Department of English
Sharjah, UAE, P.O.Box 26666
Tel: 06-5152723
aissa@aus.edu

Appendix G: Students' Interview General Questions:

1. Do you find your teachers' comments on a draft of your composition useful? Why/ Why not?
2. What do you look for when you read a draft on which your teacher has commented?
3. Do you respond to all comments? Why/ Why not?
4. Which types of comments do you find most difficult to understand? Why? Why not?
5. Which types of comments do you find most difficult to act on? Why? Why not?

Appendix H: Teachers' Interview Questions

1. Do you feel that teacher written feedback could be a useful tool to improve students' writing?
Why/ Why not?
2. When you respond to students' writing, which aspects do you focus on?
3. What is your main rationale behind the focus of your written feedback?
4. What types of written feedback (i.e. advice, criticism, praise) do you use while responding to your students' writing? Why/ Why not?
5. What do you expect students to do after receiving your feedback?
6. Is the grade you assigned to student' writing a true reflection of your satisfaction of her improvement?

7. How do you assign grades to your students' writing?

Appendix I: Teachers' Informed Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' written feedback on students' papers. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at anytime without adversely affecting your relationship with the researcher or your school. If you choose to participate, all information gathered will be held in strict confidence and will be used solely for the purpose of this research. There will be no risk associated with your participation in this study. Participation in this study will benefit you personally and professionally. At the personal level, you will become more aware of your own teaching practices, especially in how you provide your students with written feedback. At the professional level, discussions will generate

ideas concerning best practices of providing students with written feedback. If you agree to participate, please sign the consent form below and return it back to me.

I have read and understand the information on this consent form. I consent to participate in this study. I understand that any information I give is completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at anytime.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Contact Person:

Primary investigator: Dr. Ahmad Al-Issa
American University of Sharjah
Department of English
Sharjah, UAE, P.O.Box 26666
Tel: 06-5152723

Appendix J: Types and Examples of Teacher one's Endnotes

Type 1: Examples of Positive Softeners

Ex. 1 Good ideas but no logical sequence

Spelling and grammar errors

Ex. 2 Good ideas but no balanced sentences

Spelling and grammar errors

Ex. 3 Good ideas but so short display

Spelling and grammar errors

Ex. 4 Good ideas but you need to correct your grammar and spelling mistakes
week sentences.

Ex. 5 Interesting way in writing and Good ideas

Spelling and grammar errors.

Type 2 Examples of Direct Criticism

Ex. 6 poor ideas + No balanced sentences + Spelling/ Grammar errors

Ex. 7 Poor ideas + No sequence + grammar and spelling mistakes

Ex. 8 No enough ideas + Spelling and grammar errors + Organize your paragraph

Type 3 Examples of Requests

Ex. 12 You need to write more to support your opinion + Grammar and Spelling mistakes

Ex. 13 You must support your opinion with more ideas + Grammar and Spelling mistakes

Appendix K: Types And Examples of Teacher two's Endnotes

Type 1: Examples of Using Requests in the Teacher's End Notes

Ex. 1 You have to check spelling of some words. Try to use correct words.

Try to improve your sentences to deliver the full meaning of your ideas.

Don't forget to sum up with a conclusion.

Ex. 2 You have to check the spelling. Check the punctuation. You have to introduce small sentences connected with conjunctions.

Ex. 3 You have to check spelling and subject verb agreement. You should develop your conclusions to support your ideas.

Type 2 Examples of Imperatives in the Teacher's End Notes

Ex. 4 Check the spelling and the punctuation.

Write more sentences to express your ideas with more examples.

Type 3: Examples of Exclamations in the Teacher's End Notes

Ex. 5 What have you written is not an essay, it is only a small paragraph!

You have to write at least two paragraphs that sum up with a conclusion.

You have to check the spelling, punctuation, subject verb agreement.

Choose more correct words and write full sentences.

Ex. 6 What have you written is a kind of paragraph, it is not an essay! Check spelling and subject verb agreement. Produce more sentences. Don't forget the conclusion. Try at least to write two paragraphs.

VITA

Banan Qasim Al Kafri was born in Dubai, UAE, on April 14, 1981. She was educated in government schools in Dubai City, UAE, where she received her high school diploma from Al Itihad Secondary School in 1997. She graduated from Damascus University in 2003 with a Bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature.

Mrs. Banan AL Kafri has been teaching English for three years. She has two year teaching experience in Damascus University and one year in a government, and three year experience as an English teacher in the preparatory schools in the UAE. Mrs. Banan AL Kafri attended the 13th CTELT (Current Trends in English Language Testing) conferences in addition to various workshops

and training sessions. Her fields of interest include pragmatics, curriculum design, and language assessment.