An investigation of teachers' written feedback practices at different proficiency levels: An Egyptian perspective

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An Investigation of Teachers' Written Feedback Practices at Different Proficiency Levels: An Egyptian Perspective

A Thesis Submitted to
The Department of Applied Linguistics
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Program

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
The degree of Masters of Arts

By

Noura Nabil Soliman Ahmed

Under the supervision of Dr. Atta Gebril

May 2016
The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

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The degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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Abstract

There have been ongoing investigations on whether providing written corrective feedback on students' errors in L2 writing is effective in improving their writing skills. Research has focused mainly on the effectiveness of different feedback techniques, students' preferences and perception, and teachers' beliefs and practices regarding written corrective feedback. However, limited research has investigated teacher feedback practices at different levels of students' proficiency. This study investigated teacher feedback practices at two different proficiency levels in an English-medium university in Cairo, Egypt. The study adopted a mixed-methods data collection approach, where data were gathered by interviewing five English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors and collecting 95 written feedback samples from them, which demonstrated their written feedback practices at the different levels. Written feedback samples were analyzed in terms of the feedback strategies used by teachers at high and low proficiency levels as well as the focus of written corrective feedback employed at both levels. Follow up interviews with five instructors were conducted to better understand whether teachers adapt their written feedback according to the proficiency level of their students and to see if there were other factors that affect their feedback practices at the different levels. The results indicated that there were differences between the written feedback provided at high and low proficiency levels. Analyzing the written feedback samples revealed that teachers tended to use more direct feedback at the lower proficiency level by indicating the errors and correcting them for students, with the feedback focusing more on language-related issues. In contrast, indirect coded feedback was more frequently used at the higher proficiency level, as teachers tended to categorize the error without correcting it, focusing more on content, idea development, and integration of sources. Moreover, the interview data showed that three teachers stated that they prefer direct
feedback with the lower levels because it may take a long time for students to understand coded feedback, especially at the beginning of a semester. However, two teachers reported that they prefer using indirect feedback with both high and low-proficiency students in order to encourage them to become more autonomous and independent. In terms of the factors that affect teachers' feedback practices, the findings showed that the outcomes and requirements of the program taught as well as whether written feedback is handwritten or provided online have a great effect on teacher feedback practices at the different levels. The study concluded that different feedback strategies could be employed at low proficiency levels in order to help students become more independent, and that teachers could determine their feedback practices based on what is best for students' L2 improvement.
Dedication

To my wonderful husband

Ahmed Gamal Amin

who gave me all the support I need across the Master's journey and without whom I would have never been able to achieve any of that!

To my little prince, Hamody

and

To my parents

who believed in me and stood by me in all my hard times
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I would like to extend my thanks to the teachers who willingly participated in this study and from whom the writing samples were collected. I really appreciate their time and effort whether in sending me the feedback samples or opening their offices for me to conduct the interviews.

Last but never least, I owe my deepest love and gratitude to my beloved husband, Ahmed Gamal, who believed in me and supported me unconditionally. I really thank him for his endless support and understanding, for his patience, for taking care of our son, and for always encouraging me to be my best. I love you my dear husband. Without your support and understanding, the completion of this journey would have never been possible. I would also like to apologize for my four-year old son, Mohamed, for being away from him for days. Love you, Hamody! Special thanks go to my wonderful parents, my lovely brother, Tamer Nabil, and my sister, Nervana Nabil, for their endless support. Finally, I would really like to thank my mother-in-law for taking care of my son while I was at my mom's home working on my MA assignments and thesis. Thank you so much for everything.

To God, I owe it all.
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List of Abbreviations

CEFR  Common European Framework of Reference
CF    Corrective Feedback
EFL   English as a Foreign Language
ESL   English as a Second Language
L1    First Language
L2    Second Language
WCF   Written Corrective Feedback
Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Background

Written corrective feedback (WCF), otherwise known as error correction or grammar correction (Truscott, 1996, 2007), has been a controversial topic in second language (L2) teaching for several years, especially among practitioners who work with learners in writing classes. WCF is considered an essential element for the development of students' writing skills in L2 since it gives them the opportunity to learn from their errors, and therefore try to avoid them in future writings. Teachers use written feedback as a way to support students' learning and to help them identify the strengths and weaknesses of their work. Considerable research has been devoted to examine the effect of CF on improving the accuracy of L2 writing since the 1980s (Lalande, 1982; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986; Semke, 1984) and has continued in the early 1990s (Chapin & Terdal, 1990; Kepner, 1991; MacDonald, 1991; Saito, 1994). Some findings of these studies supported the positive effect of written corrective feedback on students' improvement in L2 writing while other findings did not support claims to its effectiveness. Consequently, whether corrective feedback has a considerable effect on students' writing has been debatable and inconclusive.

Later in the 1990s, Truscott (1996) argued against corrective feedback by claiming that it is not only ineffective, but also harmful and should be abandoned even if it was requested and desired by L2 writers. He based his argument on the idea that the time teachers spend correcting their students' grammatical errors in writing could be allocated more effectively to practicing and producing new pieces of writing. Ferris (1999) responded to him and published a rebuttal to his stance against corrective feedback and argued that his work was biased and premature because he focused only on the findings that supported his
view and neglected to consider other views that contradicted him (e.g., Lalande, 1982). Moreover, Ferris explained that short-term investigations involving text revision reveal improvement in accuracy as a result of written corrective feedback. Students in these studies also self-reported improvement in their writing ability; therefore, students' strong desires for feedback should not be easily dismissed or ignored. Truscott's (1999) response to Ferris's rebuttal reiterated his previous conclusions regarding the ineffectiveness of corrective feedback. However, both Ferris and Truscott agreed that research evidence was insufficient and that further research was needed to examine the usefulness of corrective feedback and its effect on improving L2 writers' accuracy.

This controversial issue about the value and effectiveness of written feedback has resulted in a growing number of published studies on this area. Some of these studies supported the positive effect of corrective feedback on students' writing (e.g., Ashwell, 2000; Bitchener, 2008; Chandler, 2003, 2004; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Kamimura, 2006; Paulus, 1999), while others found CF to be ineffective or of little value (e.g., Bruton, 2009).

One strand in feedback research has focused on students' and teachers' perceptions of written feedback (Amara, 2014; Brown, 2007; Glover & Brown, 2006; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Rowe & Wood, 2008; Weaver, 2007). The main focus of this line of research is to investigate students' reactions and responses to feedback and also to understand teachers' rationale in selecting a specific technique. Brown (2007) conducted interviews with 20 students from Napier University, Scotland, who were at different academic levels, i.e., first and fourth year and post-graduates. The results of the study showed that students' demand for feedback grew depending on their scores on a writing piece. Some students' demand for feedback increased when an unexpectedly lower score was obtained while other students demanded more feedback if they unexpectedly received a higher score. Some students also
indicated that the level of study tends to dictate the preferred feedback type. For instance, "students at post-graduate level increasingly sought more feedback since academic writing is substantially important to their graduate studies" (Brown, 2007, p. 43).

In another study conducted by Glover and Brown (2006), teachers reported students' tendency to ignore feedback and to mainly pay attention to the assignment grade. On the other hand, when students were asked about ignoring teachers' written comments, they argued that "there was a feedback, but not feedforward" (p. 3), which means that the assignments were topic-focused with little relevance to future assignments. In addition, some students found the teachers' comments unclear and hard to understand. These results are similar to what Amara (2014) found in his study that showed teachers sometimes underestimate the efforts the students exert in learning L2, and consequently students end up by ignoring the teachers' written comments. When teachers do not meet students' expectations in terms of feedback focus, either on content and organization or on grammar and surface errors, students usually tend to either ignore teacher feedback or not taking it seriously in writing their assignments. The author suggested using feedback strategies that are suitable for students' educational background in order to "avoid conflicts in the classroom writing process" (Amara, 2004, p. 71).

Another area that has received considerable attention in the literature is the written feedback strategies used by teachers: indirect or direct. Beuningan, Jong, and Kuiken, (2008) explain that indirect corrective feedback involves highlighting the error or providing codes while direct feedback clearly identifies the error by providing the correct form. Several studies indicated that providing students with indirect written corrective feedback is more beneficial since it helps students self-edit their work and, consequently, increases learner autonomy and independence (Chandler, 2003; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hyland, 2000;
Kepner, 1991; Lalande, 1982; Saito, 1994). These studies concluded that L2 writers who receive direct corrections from teachers tend to make the same errors in written tasks more than those who receive indirect feedback such as coding and underlining (Chapin and Terdal, 1990). Indirect feedback usually helps students identify the "location and nature of mistakes", improve faster, and make less mistakes (Lalande, 1982, p. 147). Those results primarily hinge on the amount of effort students exert in revising and rewriting their drafts, which leads eventually to improving their writing skills.

With regard to the degree of feedback explicitness needed to help students improve their L2 writing skills, it appears that less explicit feedback seems to help students improve their texts more than direct feedback. In addition, teachers should encourage students to be more responsible for their own writing improvement by allowing them to identify and revise their writing problems independently (Hyland, 2000).

1.2 Statement of research problem

Understanding teacher feedback practices has been extensively studied in recent years; however, the research has tended to give greater attention to the effect of different teacher practices on the improvement of students’ L2 writing as well as how students perceive and react to written corrective feedback (WCF). Comparing teachers' self-reported data to their actual practices in L2 writing classes has also been given considerable attention in the literature (e.g., Ferris, 2006; Hyland, 2003; Lee, 2004, 2008). That has come at the expense of investigating how teachers adapt their feedback practices in different contexts as well as exploring the factors that may affect feedback provision. Hyland and Hyland (2006) stated that teacher feedback can be affected by different contextual and institutional factors, such as class size and institutional policies regarding feedback and grading. Other factors such as teachers' attitudes towards feedback (Goldstein, 2004), students' personal preferences and beliefs they bring to the L2 classroom (Radecki & Swales, 1988; Hyland & Hyland, 2006),
their educational background in L1 (Amara, 2004), and level of proficiency in L2 (Farrokhi 
& Sattarpour, 2012), can also have an impact on teachers' feedback techniques and students' 
responses. Wen (2013) highlighted that students' proficiency level in L2 plays an essential 
role in shaping teachers' CF practices and should thus be carefully noted if we want to better 
understand teachers' specific CF strategies and techniques.

In Egypt, few studies have explored teacher feedback practices in EFL classes. 
Ibrahim (2014) conducted a study to investigate teachers' beliefs regarding corrective 
feedback and how these beliefs match the feedback techniques they actually practice with 
their students. The main focus of her study was to see if there were differences between 
teachers' self-reported feedback practices and their actual ones and did not consider if they 
adapt their practices based on students' proficiency. Moreover, Al-Saaed (2010) conducted 
an experimental study investigating the effect of different types of CF (coded and un-coded) 
on developing the grammatical accuracy of students' writing. However, although the 
proficiency level of the students who participated in the study was found to be one of the 
extraneous factors that affected the performance of the controlled group, the effect of 
students' proficiency level on the CF utilized by teachers was not examined. Consequently, 
the present study seeks to investigate the extent to which students' proficiency level affects 
the feedback practices of EFL Egyptian teachers and to see if teachers adapt their feedback 
practices based on students' L2 proficiency or any other factors.

1.3 The purpose of the study

The aim of the present study is to investigate teacher feedback practices at different 
levels of proficiency in terms of the strategies they are using as well as the feedback focus. 
The study was conducted within two academic programs at a private English-medium 
university in Cairo, Egypt.
1.4 Research questions

The present study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of teacher written feedback at different proficiency levels?
   a) What areas in students' writing do teachers focus on in providing written feedback at different proficiency levels?
   b) What are the feedback strategies teachers apply at different levels of L2 learners' proficiency?

2. Do teachers change their feedback strategies according to the proficiency level of their students?

3. What are the factors that could be affecting teachers' feedback practices at different levels of proficiency?

1.5 Operational definitions

- **Corrective feedback:** MacDonald (1991) defines feedback as "the process of providing some commentary on student work in which a teacher reacts to the ideas in print, assesses a student’s strengths and weaknesses, and suggests directions for improvement" (p. 3). In the current study, corrective feedback refers to comments teachers write on students' pieces of writing.

- **Selective feedback:** Selecting certain areas in students' writing to focus on. It could be certain linguistic forms, such as articles or prepositions, or certain aspect of students' writing, such as organization and structure.

- **Comprehensive feedback:** Feedback on each and every error in students' writing.

- **Indirect corrective feedback:** Van Beuningen, De Jong, and Kuiken, (2008) define it as "indirect corrective feedback only consists of an indication of an error (i.e. by
underlining the error or providing an error code” (p.282). In the present study, indirect corrective feedback consists of codes and symbols that teachers use to indicate the different kinds of errors (i.e. Sp/Spelling, SVA/ Subject-Verb Agreement, VT/Verb Tense, WO/ Word Order).

- **Direct corrective feedback:** Van Beuningen, De Jong, and Kuiken, (2008) also state that "direct error correction identifies both the error and the target form" (p. 282). In this study, direct corrective feedback is mainly highlighting the error as well as providing the correct targeted form for the student.

- **Color-coded feedback:** In this study, color-coded feedback refers to highlighting students' errors via computer to give them a specific hint about a mistake they have made (e.g., *grasp the audience* mind 'in yellow', *Alaa Wakes up 'in blue').

- **Online feedback:** In this study, online feedback refers to teachers' use of computer programs/websites to provide written feedback (e.g., *Google Docs, Microsoft Word, Turnitin.com*).

- **Focused feedback:** Feedback that targets a specific area in students' writing such as specific linguistic forms.

- **Meaning-based feedback:** Feedback that targets the content and organization as well as the quality and development of ideas in a written text.

- **Form-based feedback:** Feedback that targets grammatical errors. It is either *selective*, where teachers select specific grammatical rules to comment on in students' writing, or *comprehensive*, where teachers comment on all grammatical errors in a written text.

- **Unfocused feedback:** Feedback that targets more than one area in students' writing. It could either be targeting both meaning and form, or more than one linguistic area in students' writing.
• **Proficiency levels:** In this study, students’ proficiency is measured by the cut-off scores on standardized English tests (IELTS, TOEFL) that allow them to be enrolled in different academic programs at different proficiency levels (see Table 3.1, Chapter 3).

### 1.6 Delimitations of the study

The aim of the present study is to investigate teacher feedback practices at different proficiency levels. It does not take into account students’ perceptions towards feedback. Moreover, the progress of students’ writing abilities as a result to the feedback provided is not examined in the current study. Finally, the number of teachers participating in the current study is only five teachers, which means that it does not represent other EFL Egyptian teachers.
Chapter 2
Literature Review

The effect of written corrective feedback on students’ writing skills in L2 has been extensively studied in recent years. The aim of this chapter is to shed light on the available literature that examines the usefulness of corrective feedback in writing. The first section provides a historical background about the controversial argument in the field of second language writing, represented mainly in the debate between Truscott and Ferris, which started in the mid-1990s. In the second section, studies that have examined the positive effect of corrective feedback in writing are described. In the next section, studies opposing the effectiveness of corrective feedback are reviewed. The review then provides a descriptive examination of the effect of different types of corrective feedback (direct and indirect) as well as focused and unfocused feedback. The following section is more specific as it reviews the studies that have attempted to bring into view the students’ perceptions and preferences on feedback in their writing classes. The last section focuses on the possible relation between students' L2 proficiency level and their responses to corrective feedback, leading finally to the conclusion where the purpose of the current study will be proposed.

2.1 Historical background

Considerable research has been devoted to examining the effect of written corrective feedback (CF), also known as error correction or grammar correction (Truscott, 1996), on improving the accuracy of L2 writing since the 1980s (Lalande, 1982; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986; Semke, 1984) and has continued in the early 1990s (Chapin & Terdal, 1990; Kepner, 1991; MacDonald, 1991; Saito, 1994). Some findings of these studies supported positive effects of written corrective feedback on students' improvement in L2 writing while other findings opposed its effectiveness. Consequently,
whether corrective feedback has a considerable effect on students' writing has been debatable and inconclusive.

In 1996, Truscott took a strong position against corrective feedback by claiming that it is not only ineffective, but also harmful and does not help L2 writers improve their skills. He based his argument on the idea that the time teachers spend correcting their students' grammatical errors in writing could be allocated more efficiently for practicing and producing new pieces of writing. He also claimed that as long as the process of providing feedback is dependent on teachers' attitudes and students' motivation and readiness, this debate is useless. In 1999, Ferris published a rebuttal to Truscott's stance against corrective feedback and argued that his work was biased and premature because he depended on the findings that supported his view and did not consider the other views that opposed him (e.g., Lalande, 1982). Moreover, she explained that short-term investigations involving text revision reveal improvement in accuracy as a result of CF. Students also self-reported that CF helps improve their writing (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009); therefore, students' strong desires for feedback could not be easily dismissed or ignored. Truscott (1999) responded to Ferris and stressed the ineffectiveness of CF. However, they both agreed that research is needed to examine the usefulness of CF and its effect on improving L2 writers' accuracy (Ferris, 2004).

This inconclusive issue about the value and effectiveness of written feedback has resulted in a growing number of published studies on this area. Some of these studies supported the positive effect of corrective feedback on students' writing (e.g., Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener, Young & Cameron 2005; Chandler, 2003, 2004; Ebadi, 2014; Ferris & Robert, 2001; Kamimura, 2006; Maleki & Eslami, 2013; Paulus, 1999; Sheen, 2007), while others found it to be ineffective or of little value (e.g., Bruton, 2009; Chapin &
Terdal, 1990; Kepner, 1991; Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986). In the next two sections, studies that explored these two views will be reviewed.

2.2 Studies on the ineffectiveness of corrective feedback

The ongoing debate about the effectiveness of teachers' CF in writing and whether it improves students' overall writing skills has generated wide interest in the literature. Some studies found that CF does not help students improve their writing skills or, in other words, its effect is not of any considerable value (Bruton, 2009; Chapin & Terdal, 1990; Kepner, 1991; Robb, Ross, & Shortreed, 1986; Semke, 1984; Truscott, 1996, 2007).

Truscott (1996; 2007) concluded that the provision of CF should be expected to harm L2 students' accuracy development, as it diverts teachers' time and energy away from more productive aspects of writing instruction such as producing new writing pieces. The reason for that, according to Truscott, is that writing teachers may not be consistent in feedback practices since they are more likely to have a large number of students whose needs and levels are different. He also argued that if we want to consider a positive effect for the provision of CF, this effect will be only at the level of text revision, and will not have a valuable effect on neither new writing pieces nor students' overall writing abilities.

Semke (1984) conducted an experimental study with 141 learners of German as a foreign language. The purpose of the study was two-folded. First, it aimed at obtaining evidence regarding the effects of different CF methods on students' writing competence. Second, it examined whether students are capable of correcting their own mistakes if they have the opportunity and are forced to do so. He divided the learners into four experimental groups, each one receiving a different CF method "(1) writing comments and questions rather than corrections, (2) marking all errors and supplying the correct forms, (3) combining positive comments and corrections, and (4) indicating errors by means of a code and
requiring students to find corrections and then rewrite the assignment” (p. 195). The results of
the study indicated that corrections did not significantly increase students' writing accuracy
and that their achievement was only enhanced by writing practice. This finding was used by
Truscott (1996) as evidence against CF. Semke also found that written comments had a
positive effect on students' attitudes towards the target language; however, there was no
significant difference between those who received corrections only and others who received
corrections with comments. On the contrary, he found that corrections alone were equal, if
not superior to, corrections with comments. In addition, the results of the study indicated that
requiring students to correct their own mistakes, assuming that they will be motivated and
more responsible for their own improvement was "least effective in terms of achievement and
attitudes” (p. 202).

Robb et al. (1986) proposed evidence against direct correction of error in written work
by examining the effect of four types of CF on Japanese learners' writing accuracy, fluency,
and complexity. The feedback methods used in the examination were (1) direct correction,
(2) indirect coded correction, (3) indirect un-coded correction, and (4) writing the number of
ersors per line in the margin. The findings of the study showed no significant difference
between the four types of feedback in terms of both accuracy and fluency. However, they
found that students produced better pieces of writing as the course progressed and wrote more
complex structure regardless of the feedback they received from teachers. They therefore
concluded that direct CF was ineffective in improving students' writing abilities and that the
time teachers spend giving direct feedback on students' errors might be more profitable if
spent addressing the main aspects of students' writing. Their conclusions were used by
Truscott (1996) as evidence to support his argument against CF.
Chapin and Terdal (1990) focused on studying how ESL students interact with teachers' written comments on their essays. They conducted their study with five ESL teachers and 15 low-intermediate ESL students. They employed a Think Aloud Protocol to record students' reactions, questionnaires and interviews with students, along with text analysis of students' revisions and teachers' comments. They reached three main conclusions. First, most of the changes students made were as a result of teachers' direct corrections; however, students did not always understand why changes were needed. They tended to make the changes suggested by their teachers even if these changes would affect or alter the meaning. It was suggested that teachers' written comments led students to edit or to expand their essays by adding details or explanation, rather than to revise by changing or developing meaning. Moreover, teachers' comments did not help students generate new content or improve the writing process. They concluded that requiring multiple drafts from students and providing strategies for developing meaning is more likely to help students revise than is focusing on grammatical errors and directly correcting students' writing.

Kepner (1991) conducted a study with 60 students enrolled in a Spanish course. He investigated the effect of two different types of written CF, direct error correction and message-related comments, on students' journal entries over a 12-week course period. The findings suggested that teachers' written error-corrections combined with explicit reminders for grammatical rules was ineffective for promoting the development of writing proficiency in the L2, which means that too explicit CF does not help L2 writers develop their writing skills. On the other hand, message-related comments were more effective for promoting the development of writing proficiency in the L2, which means that implicit CF was more effective in developing students' writing skills. Kepner concluded that corrective feedback which focuses mainly on grammar has little or no value.
Bruton (2009) also supported the idea that written CF that focuses on mainly on grammar does not have a subsequent effect on new writing tasks, which supports Truscott (1996; 2007) and Semke (1984). He investigated the effect of written CF by examining two groups of L2 English students, an experimental group and a control group. The two groups were asked to write a picture composition. The students in the experimental group had their texts back with the grammar errors underlined while the control group just received their compositions back. A week later, the groups were assigned to write a similar picture composition on a different topic. Analyzing students' new compositions, which were written after a week after receiving feedback on a similar task, showed that students in the experimental group committed new errors in the new writing practice that were irrelevant to the errors corrected in the first practice. Making new grammatical mistakes means that "error correction has had no effect on those aspects of subsequent writing that were not repeated" (p. 139). He concluded that it is not accurate to assume that error correction on revised texts is valuable and ignore its effect on new writing tasks performed later. He also suggested that teachers should think about how to make it effective on new writing tasks and not only on revised texts or second drafts.

The studies reviewed above indicate that CF has no significant effect on students' accuracy and fluency in L2 writing. In the researcher's point of view, these findings cannot be generalized since the provision of CF could be affected by several factors such as students' readiness and attitudes as well as the instructional context. In addition, as presented in the next section of this review, other studies found that written CF is effective in promoting students' writing abilities and enhancing the quality of their content.
2.3 Studies on effectiveness of corrective feedback

The inconclusive debate regarding the effectiveness of written CF in writing classes has led to a plethora of research studying its usefulness in promoting L2 writing competence. Some studies reviewed in this section focused on the effect of different types of CF and the difference between feedback and no feedback groups (Ashwell, 2000; Bitchener, Young & Cameron, 2005; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2009a, 2009b; Chandler, 2003; Ebadi, 2014; Farrokhi & Sattarpour, 2012; Ferris, 1997; Ferris & Robert, 2001; Lalande, 1982; Maleki & Eslami, 2013; Paulus, 1999; Sheen, 2007).

Ashwell (2000) conducted a study over a period of one year. He investigated the effect of providing content and form feedback on students’ first and second drafts. Students were divided into four groups, who received: (1) content feedback on the first draft and form feedback on the second draft, (2) form feedback on the first draft and content feedback on the second draft, (3) content and form feedback on both drafts, and (4) no feedback (control group). The study showed that students relied heavily on form feedback and that content feedback had a moderate effect on revisions. In general, there was no significant difference between the three feedback groups; however, the feedback groups outperformed the control group in terms of accuracy.

Bitchener et al. (2005) investigated the effect of different types of written CF on 53 upper-intermediate ESL students' new pieces of writing. They investigated three types of CF (1) direct oral, explicit written feedback combined with 5 minutes individual conferences, (2) direct oral, explicit written feedback only, and (3) no corrective feedback. Three types of errors were investigated, prepositions, past simple tense, definite article, over a 12 week period. Students completed four 250 words writing tasks over the 12 week period allocated for the study. The researchers decided on the targeted linguistic areas based on the frequency
of occurrences in the first writing task. Each of the four writing tasks lasted for 45 minutes and was of a similar type which was an informal letter which varied in content but which gave the students the chance to use the targeted linguistic forms. Students' texts were analyzed quantitatively where the researchers calculated the frequency of errors and the types of CF given. The study showed that direct oral feedback when combined with direct written CF had greater effects on students' writing than written CF alone on improving accuracy over time. Students were able to treat their grammatical errors when they received both written and oral feedback. Consequently, the authors suggested that direct CF might be effective in treating some but not all errors, and that teachers should be selective with regard to the errors they address in students’ writing (p. 202). These findings contradict with Truscott's stance in that it supports the effectiveness of CF on students' writing.

Applying almost the same design, Bitchener (2008) conducted a study to investigate the effect of written CF on 73 low-intermediate international ESL students' writing over a two-month period (pre-test, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test). In this study, two different linguistic areas of English were targeted in the feedback, referential indefinite ‘a’ and referential definite ‘the’. In the three writing tasks students had to write picture descriptions where they had to describe what people were doing in each picture, which allowed them to use the targeted grammatical forms. The students were divided into four groups, three experimental groups received a different type of CF, and one was a control group. The CF types provided to the experimental groups were (1) direct corrective feedback, written and oral meta-linguistic explanation (teacher provided oral and written explanation for the targeted grammatical rule), (2) direct corrective feedback and written meta-linguistic explanation, (3) direct corrective feedback only, and (4) the control group received no corrective feedback. The study found that the accuracy of students in the three experimental groups outperformed those in the control group in the immediate post-test, and
that those who received written CF combined with oral meta-linguistic explanation were able to retain the same level of performance 2 months later in the delayed post-test.

Similarly, Bitchener and Knoch (2009a; 2009b) investigated the effect of different types of written CF on the development of 52 ESL students’ writing over a 10-month period. They followed the same procedures of Bitchener (2008) in terms of the number of the students’ groups and the types of feedback provided to each of them. They also targeted the same two linguistic areas (referential indefinite ‘a’ and referential definite ‘the’). The difference here is the number of the writing tasks analyzed by the researchers. Unlike Bitchener (2008) who had one pre-test, one immediate post-test, and one delayed post-test, Bitchener and Knoch had three writing tasks in the delayed post-test. The results of the study showed that the three experimental groups that received CF outperformed the control group on all post-tests; however, they found that there was no significant difference in writing performance among the three types of CF. It also showed that written CF could have an enduring effect on accuracy over a period of time, not only on a text revision level, which is evidence that CF can be more valuable as a durable process. The findings of this study propose important evidence against Truscott’s claim that written CF is ineffective; however, it supports his idea that there are special cases where WCF has its positive impact in learning some linguistic forms accurately.

Chandler (2003) investigated the effect of different types of CF by also comparing the writing performance of treatment and control groups over a 10-week semester. In her study, 31 undergraduate Asian students majoring in music participated in the study and were divided into two groups, and experimental group and a control group. All the students were required to write five autobiographical pieces as homework assignments throughout the semester and at the end of the course they write a book review. Both groups were taught by
the same teacher and both received error feedback. The only difference was that the experimental group was required to revise each assignment, correcting all the errors underlined by the teacher before submitting the next assignment, whereas the control group did all the corrections of their underlined errors toward the end of the semester. The study demonstrated that the accuracy of student writing over 10 weeks improved significantly more when the students were required to correct their errors than if they were not. Similar to Bitchener (2008), Bitchener and Knoch (2009), and Bitchener et al. (2005), the control group, which did not correct errors between assignments, did not increase in accuracy while the experimental group showed a significant increase in writing accuracy. However, both the experimental and the control groups showed a significant increase in fluency over the semester. Chandler found that direct correction was superior to other types of indirect correction in producing more accurate writing as it helps ESL students utilize the correct form in a more productive way. In her response to Truscott in 2004, Chandler also concluded that writing practice alone could result in increasing students' fluency, but it will not significantly promote their writing accuracy. On the other hand, having students receive corrective feedback and correct their own errors resulted in "significantly more correct subsequent writing in just 10 weeks" (p. 346).

Ebadi (2014) examined the effect of focused meta-linguistic feedback on the writing ability of 47 Iranian students majoring in English translation. Twenty-two participants were chosen for the experimental group and 25 students for the control group. Unlike the studies reviewed above where the controlled groups received no feedback for their productions, the control group in this study received traditional feedback which was not focused on a certain aspect of their writing and did not have linguistic explanations for their errors. The researcher used the placement test of Interchange, a textbook for teaching general English, for pre and post tests. The study showed that the focused meta-linguistic feedback group has
outperformed the traditional-based writing group as there was a significant difference between the performance of the students in the experimental and control groups. Based on the result, it was inferred that the experimental group performed better than the control group due to employing focused meta-linguistic CF as treatment. Ebadi concluded that employing focused meta-linguistic feedback helped students become more independent and autonomous since they became more aware of their own errors and able to monitor themselves. This was not the first study examining the effect of different types of CF on students' writing in an Iranian context. Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2012) also examined the effect of different types of direct feedback on the writing abilities of 60 high proficient Iranian EFL learners. They divided the students into three groups, two experimental and one controlled. The experimental groups consisted of (1) a focused written CF group, and (2) an unfocused written CF group. Students were asked to write a narrative as a pre-test where students had to look at a picture and write a 150-200 words story in 15-20 minutes. During the time allocated for the study, which was three weeks, students were assigned to write narratives where they had to read a story and then rewrite it in their own words. The grammatical target for the focused group was the use of English definite and indefinite articles while the target of the unfocused group included five grammatical areas (English articles, copula ‘be’, past tense, third person's ‘s’, and prepositions). After three weeks of receiving feedback on the linguistic areas mentioned above, students in the three groups were given another picture narrative composition as a post-test in order to measure the differential effects of focused and unfocused CF in the two experimental groups on treating the targeted grammatical areas. Similar to Ebadi, the results indicated that the two types of CF had a great effect on using English articles accurately by the two groups; however, on the post-test, participants in focused CF group significantly outperformed those in the unfocused CF and control groups. The results of this study are in line with the study of Bitchener and Knoch (2009) who found
that advanced L2 writers were able to make further gains in accuracy as a result of targeted written CF. Therefore, it can be concluded that first of all, providing written corrective feedback is an effective way for responding to high-proficient learners’ written performance in general, and secondly that focused written CF has more positive effect on improving targeted structures than the unfocused written CF. In the study they conducted with 90 intermediate Iranian students, Maleki and Eslami (2013) also investigated the influence of direct and indirect feedback on students' performance in post-tests and found that the students in the treatment groups outperformed the control group, which is an evidence of the effectiveness of both types of feedback.

Ferris conducted several studies to examine the extent to which teachers' commentary affect L2 writers' accuracy and fluency. In her 1997 study, she explored how teachers' comments written in the margins or at the end of students' essays affect the quality of the second drafts in terms of both content and form. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the characteristics of teachers' commentary that significantly influence students' revisions. She classified teachers' comments into categories (comments in the form of questions, requests, imperatives, exclamations, or positive comments). For the purpose of the study, she analyzed 110 pairs of essays and their rewrites collected from 47 advanced university students in terms of teachers' comments on the first drafts and students' revisions in the second drafts. She found that longer comments and those which were text specific were more influential than shorter comments. Another finding was that marginal requests for information and grammar comment led students to write better drafts. Therefore, teacher written CF was found to be effective in helping students revise their writing production.

Ferris and Roberts (2001) explored the effect of three types of feedback (coded, uncoded, and no feedback) in order to investigate how explicit the feedback should be to help
L2 writers improve their writing skills. They divided 72 university ESL students into three groups, the first received coded feedback, the second received un-coded feedback, and the third received no feedback. The researchers then looked at students' revisions after receiving feedback and found that students who received feedback outperformed those who did not; however, the no-feedback control group was more successful in finding and correcting word choice errors than any other error category.

Paulus (1999) examined how students revise their written work in a multiple-draft process in response to peer and teacher feedback. She conducted the study with 11 undergraduate international students enrolled at a pre-freshman a writing course at a public university. Despite the fact that students in this program receive feedback on multiple-drafts, only the first three drafts of students' essays were analyzed for the study. The revision of these students were quantitatively analyzed by carefully studying the three drafts of the persuasive essay written by the students along with applying Think Aloud Protocol twice to record students' as they revised their essays based on peer feedback and teacher feedback. The study showed that students used both the peer and teacher feedback to influence their revisions and that the majority of students' revisions based on either peer or teacher feedback were meaning-based revisions The results of this study suggest the idea that teachers' written feedback can be used by students to make not only grammatical, but also meaning-level revisions to their work. What is noticeable here is that this study did not have a controlled group, meaning that it did not compare receiving feedback to not receiving it, but rather it compared two sources of providing it, peer and teacher feedback.

Based on the studies reviewed above, the researcher concludes that written CF could have a positive effect on improving students' accuracy and fluency. Indeed writing practices help students promote their writing fluency, but, based on the reported findings, it may yield
better results when combined with CF that guides students and gives them an idea about the expected performance.

2.4 Direct and indirect corrective feedback

A wide range of studies have investigated whether certain types of written CF are more effective than others. These studies have categorized CF as either direct (explicit) or indirect (implicit) (Farrokhi & Sattarpour, 2012). Direct CF, as defined by Beuningen et al. (2008), is identifying the errors in students' writing with the provision of the target form. It may include crossing out an unnecessary word or morpheme, the insertion of a missing word, or the provision of the correct form or structure (Farrokhi & Sattarpour, 2012). On the other hand, indirect CF refers to only indicating the errors whether by underlining or providing a code (Beuningen et al, 2008). Some studies were conducted to investigate the efficacy of the different types of CF (e.g., Chandler, 2003; Chapin & Terdal, 1990; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Kepner, 1991; Lalande, 2008; Maleki & Eslami, 2013). For instance, Chandler (2003) found that direct CF was superior to indirect CF in producing more accurate writing. Chandler concluded that teacher's direct correction helps ESL students utilize the correct form in a more productive way because "indirect feedback, though it demands greater cognitive processing, delays confirmation of students’ hypotheses" (Farrokhi & Sattarpour, 2012, p. 51).

Unlike Chandler, Lalande (1982) found that students who received indirect feedback made more progress over time. She explained that indirect CF is more effective in promoting long-term acquisition since it gives students the chance to be more engaged in learning and problem solving. Similarly, Kepner (1991) found that too explicit (direct) CF did not help L2 writers develop their writing skills while implicit (indirect) CF was more effective in developing students' writing skills. Kepner concluded that corrective feedback which focuses mainly on grammar has little value in improving L2 writers' performance. Chapin and Terdal
(1990) also concluded that indirect CF that focuses mainly on the meaning-level in students' writing is more likely to help them improve both the fluency and accuracy over time. They found that direct corrections have led to changes in students' writing, but they were not of a great value.

In the study they conducted to compare the efficacy of two different types of indirect CF (code and un-coded), Ferris and Roberts (2001) found that there was no significant difference between the two types of indirect CF; however, they were in favor of providing direct CF to students at lower proficiency levels since it would be hard for them to identify the errors themselves. Ferris' and Roberts's (2001) conclusion about the need for more direct CF at lower proficiency levels was supported by Maleki and Esami (2013). The finding of their study showed that the two treatment groups outperformed the controlled group, which is an evidence of the effectiveness of both types of feedback (direct and indirect); however, the indirect feedback group performed better in the post-tests, which means that indirect CF has more durable effect than direct CF. They also supported the idea that direct feedback is desirable for students at lower proficiency levels who are unable to self-correct and cannot provide the correct form. According to them, using indirect feedback "may be suggested for the later stages of learning probably intermediate and above" (p. 1256).

It would seem, therefore, that further investigations are needed in order to explore the effect of both CF types on the writing performance of students at low and high proficiency levels. The researcher supports the idea that direct feedback is more desirable by students at lower proficiency levels since it would be discouraging for them to receive CF on their writing texts without being capable of deciding on the correct forms required from them.
2.5 Focused and unfocused feedback

The effect of focused and unfocused WCF was also examined in several studies. For example, Sheen, Wright, and Moldawa (2009) investigated the differential effects of focused and unfocused WCF on the accurate use of grammar by adult ESL learners. Sheen et al. (2009) have built on Sheen’s (2007) study of the effects of CF on the acquisition of English articles by conducting this study to investigate whether direct focused CF, direct unfocused CF and writing practice alone produced differential effects on the accurate use of grammatical forms. They conducted the study with 80 intermediate level ESL students who were divided into two groups. "The grammatical target for the focused CF group was the use of English definite and indefinite articles whereas the target for the unfocused CF group included five grammatical features: articles, copula ‘be’, regular past tense, irregular past tense, and preposition” (p.560). They concluded that, generally, more unfocused CF is of limited pedagogical value when compared to focused CF, with the later being more valuable in terms of increasing the grammatical accuracy in L2 writing.

2.6 Characteristics of effective corrective feedback

A central issue in interpreting the process of feedback provision is understanding the characteristics of effective CF that make it more influential in terms of improving L2 students' writing abilities. Therefore, a considerable amount of research has been devoted to understanding the characteristics of effective CF (Brookhart, 2007; Bruno & Santos, 2010; Ferris, 1997, 2010; Glover & Brown, 2006; Goldstein, 2004; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Pan, 2010).

In an attempt to explore the features that contribute to the effectiveness of CF, Brookhart compared two ways of providing CF on a student's written paragraph. She concluded that CF should be specific enough in a way that informs the student what to do next, but not so specific that teachers do the work for their students. She claimed that
correcting errors for students may result in a perfect 2nd draft, but there will not be learning involved since students will merely recopy the work. Furthermore, the feedback provided to students should be applied in a specific order that matches the goals of the assignments, which means that students have to be praised for accomplishing a certain task and then provide feedback for language abilities. For her, "the main thing to keep in mind when using any feedback strategy is how students will hear, feel, and understand the feedback" (p.7).

Bruno and Santos (2010) reached several conclusions regarding the qualities of effective CF (1) the sooner teachers provide feedback, the more probably students will find it useful, (2) it is important for teachers to have clear handwriting when giving feedback in order in order to make it easier for students to understand the required changes, (3) regarding comments’ content, it is important to use familiar expressions and simple vocabulary, and (4) "the success of CF is dependent on teachers' knowledge of difficulties, skills, and personality of each student in a particular situation" (p. 119).

Glover and Brown (2006) agreed with Truscott in that teachers think they spend a lot of time working on giving feedback that is ignored and not appreciated by their students. The results of their study showed that teachers tend to provide more in-depth feedback to students who get higher grades as they are expected to work on their errors more than those who get low grades in assignments. They suggested that feedback is not effective unless it aids understanding and enables students to "close the performance gap" (p. 14).

Goldstein (2004) provided an example of a student-teacher interaction during the process of teacher's commentary and student's revision to demonstrate how teachers' and students' attitudes towards feedback may affect their reactions. One of the students revealed to the researcher that she usually received explicit feedback on her writing drafts, which required her to make a lot of changes to improve her drafts. However, due to other course
commitments and because some of the changes required were too time consuming or not clear enough to be understood, she tended to ignore the comments she received from her teacher. As a result, the teacher repeated the same comments from draft to draft, something she did not do with the other students. On the other hand, the teacher stated that she had negative attitudes towards this particular student as she thinks she does not put any effort into her work. In the end, because she believed the student to be lazy, the teacher never discussed with the student why she was ignoring the comments and whether or not she was having any difficulty understanding them. Goldstein recommended that teachers need to communicate with students and educate them about their commentary practices and the rationales behind them, which would foster students' ability to improve their work based on the comments received.

Hyland and Hyland (2006) addressed the questionable issue of what makes CF effective and found several factors that affect the effectiveness of written CF to students' writing. They stated that contextual factors related to institutional attitudes towards feedback, specific writing programs, available resources, and class sizes may affect the feedback types that teachers practice with their students. Similarly, teacher factors such as attitudes towards particular students or the content of their texts, and student factors like reactions to teacher feedback can have an impact on feedback and revision. They proposed that all these features need to be considered together in order to understand the longitudinal effects of teacher comments on student writing (p. 88).

In her study, Ferris (1997) found that comments that were in the form of questions or statements that provided information were less influential on students' improvement in the second drafts. She also found that teachers' positive comments on students' writing has led to almost no change in their second drafts. She suggested that teachers' comments, in case of
praising or providing positive comments, should be text-specific in order to be more encouraging and helpful for students.

Pan (2010) investigated the effect of teacher error feedback on students’ ability to write accurately. Three male first-year Physics graduate students at a university in Taiwan were asked to write a 100-word passage about the greatest invention in human history. After teacher provided grammatical feedback on their passages, the students were required to revise their work again based on the suggested revisions. Oral conferencing was also conducted in order to help the students better comprehend the grammar points. Four weeks after the oral conferencing, the students were asked, without prior notice, to revise their original passages again. The study revealed that the students made progress in the revised versions of their passages, but their later test versions did not have the same level of improvement. There was no positive relationship between teacher error feedback and students’ improvement in linguistic accuracy over time. The study suggested that teacher error feedback alone may not facilitate the learning of linguistic information. He concluded that teacher feedback should be accompanied with a sufficient exposure to English in reading and writing as well as giving the students different opportunities to practice the language.

It could be concluded that there is not a clear-cut guideline of effective feedback. Ultimately, the effectiveness of CF is dependent on how teachers communicate the purpose of feedback provision to students and, at the same time, how students perceive it and actively utilize it in order to improve their writing abilities. As Conrad and Goldstein (1999) suggested, in order to understand how students revise in response to written feedback, teachers must be careful about not only the nature of the comments themselves, but also the types of problems that students are required to work on in their writing. Moreover, the effect of external factors such grading policies, exam types, and programs’ philosophies towards CF
could be lessened by giving students' suggestions for improving that could be acted upon (Weaver, 2006).

### 2.7 Students' perceptions of written corrective feedback

The study of students' perceptions of written CF has become an important aspect of understanding how students revise their work based on comments received from their teachers (Amara, 2014; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Rowe & Wood, 2008; Saito, 1994; Seker & Dincer, 2014; Weaver, 2006). For example, Amara (2014) investigated how Arabic native speakers perceive written CF in writing classes. He applied Think Aloud Protocol three times over the time allocated for the study to investigate the thoughts and perceptions of 15 Arabic ESL students towards different types of CF (direct, indirect, meta-linguistic). For the purpose of the study, only one teacher was allowed to give CF to students in order to control the type of feedback given to each student in each round. Students were asked to think aloud while responding to each type of feedback and they were audio and video recorded. The study showed several findings: (1) teachers should be aware of students' expectations their L1 educational background may affect how they perceive CF, (2) some students liked CF that focused on form while others wanted it on content and ideas, (3) coding was confusing for some students who weren't familiar with it and it was sometimes hard to locate the error referred to in the comment, and (4) students appreciated praise comments. He concluded that teachers should be aware of how their comments are perceived in order to keep their students motivated in learning and developing L2 writing.

Students' preferences and views were also examined by Radecki and Swales (1988). They used questionnaires to investigate the perceptions of 59 ESL students on CF and then eight teachers were selected for an interview. Most of the students expressed their satisfaction with receiving their papers back marked by the teacher and that they really
appreciated substantive comments that allow them to rethink a piece of writing. Similarly, Rowe and Wood (2008) were concerned about understanding students' perceptions for feedback; therefore, they conducted two studies, quantitative and qualitative, to get in-depth insight about students' views for CF. The findings of the studies highlighted the importance of developing dialogues with students about issues related to individual meanings of receiving feedback. It was also found that learning approaches were possibly linked to students' feedback preferences and that "clearly-communicated feedback should work successfully across all students" (p. 83).

Seker and Dinser (2014) also attempted to bring into view the students' perception on feedback in their writing classes. They investigated the perceptions and preferences of 457 students at the preparatory level studying English at a university in Turkey. The results of the study showed that: (1) students preferred to receive feedback for content, form, and organizational aspects of writing, (2) students found comprehensive feedback to be beneficial for their foreign language improvement, and more importantly (3) there was a significant relation between students' emotional dispositions toward the feedback they received and the time they spent to take an action upon it, which means that when they felt positive and praised, their actions were immediate whereas negative feelings led them to delay their revisions.

2.8 Students' L2 proficiency and responding to feedback

Several studies have highlighted the relation between students' proficiency level and their responses to written CF in writing. For instance, Lee (2008) indicated that students’ differential preference for error feedback could be caused by individual differences such as proficiency level and motivation. The relationship between students' L2 proficiency and their readiness to respond to written feedback was examined by several studies. For instance,
Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1996) conducted a study with EFL writers to investigate the way they perceived feedback in writing. One of their recommendations was that students' response to feedback could be dependent on L2 writers' proficiency, not only on the type of feedback provided. The assumption that providing substantial feedback would be very helpful for students is not always correct since too explicit or direct feedback may "overwhelm and discourage L2 writers" (p. 299). In another study, Bitchener, Young, and Cameron (2005) aimed at examining the different types of written corrective feedback and its effectiveness on writing accuracy. The study found that students at the Upper-intermediate level were able to work on their grammatical errors when they received both written and oral feedback (p. 203). It also suggested that future research should examine if those findings apply to lower or higher proficiency levels. Chapin and Terdal (1990) pointed out that L2 students, especially those at the lower intermediate levels, may face a difficulty in finding most of their errors themselves. That requires teachers to provide comments that indicate the errors for them. This clarifies what Kamimura (2006) found in his study that students with low proficiency level tended to benefit from the feedback provided to them more than higher levels. Additionally, some studies concluded that students at lower proficiency levels prefer direct feedback (e.g., Ferris & Robert, 2001; Chapin & Terdal, 1990) while others found that they find it discouraging and frustrating to receive their work marked in red (e.g., Lee, 2008; Semke, 1984).

2.9 Teachers’ feedback practices

Several studies have investigated teachers' practices to better understand their attitudes towards WCF. Some studies depended merely on teachers' self-reported data (e.g., Evan, Hartshorn & Tuioti, 2010; Lee, 2003) while other studies compared teachers' self-reported data to their actual practices in providing WCF (e.g., Ferris, 2006; Hyland, 2003; Lee, 2004; 2008).
Evans et al. (2010) noted that the number of studies that have focused on asking teachers about their beliefs and practices regarding written error correction is very limited (Ferris, 2006; Ferris et al., 2011a; Ferris et al., 2011b; Hyland, 2003; Lee, 2004). Consequently, Evans et al. conducted a study to better understand teachers' perspectives on WCF by answering two main related questions: (a) to what extent do current L2 writing teachers provide WCF? and (b) what determines whether or not practitioners choose to provide WCF? They collected data regarding what L2 writing teachers are doing with WCF in their classes by using an online survey "that could be distributed globally to L2 writing teachers" (p. 53). The survey was filled out by 1,053 teachers and from 69 different countries, which provided Evan et al. with "a wide range of insights from their professional training and years of teaching experience" (p. 63). Evan et al. found that (1) the majority of teachers reported that providing WCF is really needed by students, (2) some teachers reported that they correct students' errors because corrections model the correct language use that could be reflected in other English skills, such as speaking, while others reported correcting errors because it is required by the program, or based on their beliefs that it is the teacher responsibility to correct errors, and (3) some teachers reported that they do not correct students' errors because they believe that content and developing ideas is more important than dealing with linguistic errors and that it is the students' responsibility to work on accuracy and linguistic errors. Evan et al. concluded that WCF is "used extensively in L2 writing by extremely experienced teachers" (p. 63) and that the most influential factors to teachers' WCF practices are "personal teaching experience, academic training, and research and conferences" (p.64).

Lee (2003) investigated teachers’ beliefs regarding WCF by using a questionnaire that administered to 206 secondary English teachers in Hong Kong and conducting follow-up interviews with 19 of them. The majority of teachers reported that they correct students’
errors comprehensively because comprehensive correction was required by the school/panel. In the interviews teachers reported that they tend to evaluate the overall performance of their students, especially if the compositions are not too long because students and parents prefer correcting all the errors, and students mainly rely on teachers to understand their errors.

Ferris (2006) investigated the strategies instructors use to give error feedback as well as the effect of different teacher CF strategies on student writing. She applied a longitudinal and triangulated method where she collected data throughout a whole semester from 92 undergraduate ESL students. Data were gathered from a survey, student texts, and interviews with three L2 writing teachers. She found that students successfully addressed the majority of teacher error feedback in their essay revisions. As for the different CF strategies teachers utilize with students, it was found that CF ranged from direct feedback, indirect coded feedback, and indirect un-coded feedback. However, there was no significance difference between the effect of direct and indirect CF on students revisions as students successfully utilized both strategies "even when the corrections had no code or an inaccurate code attached" (p. 98). She finally highlighted that it is essential to examine what teachers actually do when giving error feedback on students’ written work.

Hyland (2003) used a case study approach to investigate the feedback given by two academic writing teachers to six students over a complete course. She collected data by using teacher think-aloud protocols, conducting teacher and student interviews, and collecting students' texts. She found that, although teachers' claims about focusing on genre issues and the whole writing process while giving feedback, much of their feedback "focused on the formal aspects of the students' texts" (p. 222).

Lee (2004) investigated teachers’ and students’ perceptions and beliefs regarding WCF. Lee collected data using a student questionnaire and follow-up interviews, a teacher
questionnaire and follow-up interviews, and a teacher-error correction task. Lee compared teachers’ actual practices on the error correction task with their responses to the questionnaire. The study revealed that both teachers and students preferred comprehensive feedback and that "teachers used a limited range of error feedback strategies" (p. 285), as they mainly used direct error feedback or indirect coded feedback. One of Lee's conclusions is that teachers have to be aware of a wider range or CF strategies, as she suggested that "uncoded correction or error correction that prompts students about error location could be used with more proficient students, requiring them to locate and correct errors. Teachers could “reserve direct feedback for errors that are not amenable to self-correction and use this strategy with less proficient students" (p. 301).

Lee (2008) aimed at investigating the characteristics of teacher written feedback and the instructional contexts in which the feedback was given. She collected data from two groups of secondary students in Hong Kong: 36 high proficient and 22 low proficient students, and their two teachers. Data related to teacher CF practices were gathered from three different sources: (1) teacher written feedback samples, (2) classroom observations, and (3) teacher interviews. Moreover, data about students' reaction to CF provided were gathered from students using questionnaires, checklists, and think-aloud protocols. She found that both teachers provided comprehensive feedback, which was guided by the school policy that requires them to correct every single error made in students' writing. She suggested that "one alternative is for teachers to give feedback selectively, aiming at quality rather than quantity, focusing on really important areas like, and hence reducing the amount of feedback and the strain on teachers" (p. 159).
2.10 Conclusions

Research has tended to extensively focus on studying the effect of different WCF strategies on the improvement of L2 writers as well as understanding the perceptions and beliefs of both teachers and students towards WCF. Studies reviewed in this chapter reveal the difficulty of making generalizations about the effectiveness of written feedback and its long-term impact on students L2 writing abilities. Rather, studies confirm the importance of exploring teacher feedback in different contexts and "considering what students bring to the feedback situation" (Hyland, 2010, p. 179). Studies also demonstrated that there are different factors that affect teacher feedback practices and play a role in shaping them, and that it is essential to examine these factors in order to better understand teachers' attitude towards WCF. Despite the fact that there are several studies which have investigated teacher feedback practices and its impact on the improvement of L2 learners' writing skills, most of them focused on whether understanding students' preferences and reactions to different CF practices, or comparing teachers' self-reported data to their actual practices in L2 writing classes. Research on how teachers adapt their feedback practices according to students' proficiency level is extremely rare, especially in Egypt. According to Wen (2013), students' L2 proficiency should be noted when investigating teachers' specific techniques of CF. She provided how teachers can possibly adapt their CF practices according to students' proficiency level, as she suggested that "......the proficiency level of the learners should be noted. When the students are unable to identify their own errors, the teacher assists them—by marking the major errors with correcting symbols that help the learners identify their errors and fix them. Later, when the students have gained more competence as editors, the teachers indicate where the major errors have occurred by placing x’s in the margins of the students’ written papers" (p. 429). In the light of these findings, the purpose of the present study is to investigate teacher feedback practices at different proficiency levels in an Egyptian context in
order to know if teachers adapt their CF according to their students' L2 proficiency. It also aims at examining other factors that may impact teacher practices in Egyptian EFL classes.
Chapter 3
Methodology

3.1 Proposed design of study

This study examined the extent to which students' L2 proficiency level affects teachers' written feedback practices and explored other factors that may affect teachers' feedback at different proficiency levels. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology used, including the study design, participants, procedures for data collection, and data analysis.

3.1.1 Design

The study followed a mixed-methods approach with both quantitative and qualitative techniques in order to better address the research questions of the study, triangulate the findings, and increase the results' reliability (Perry, 2011). While the writing feedback samples provided insightful results about teachers' feedback practices at the proficiency levels examined, the semi-structured interviews provided additional invaluable data for an in-depth understanding of whether teachers adapt their written feedback based on students' proficiency level. Using the data collected from teachers' written feedback samples and interviews, the researcher investigated the feedback focus (language, mechanics, content, and organization) and feedback strategies (direct or indirect) that teachers apply with learners at different levels of L2 proficiency and the strategies that work best with each level.

3.1.2 Instructional context

The study was conducted in the Spring 2016 semester at a private university in Cairo, Egypt. Data were collected from two academic English programs. Both programs prepare undergraduate students to study in an English-medium academic context. Students in these programs develop their academic English and critical thinking skills through a content-based learning approach that fosters independent learning and commitment to academic integrity.
In addition, they acquire a range of language skills as they explore academic content through listening activities, readings, critical thinking, writing, and promoting excellence in research and rhetoric. For the sake of conciseness, the two programs will be called intermediate and advanced. Students with intermediate and upper-intermediate levels of English proficiency are enrolled in the first program (intermediate) based on their scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL IBT) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). On the other hand, students with a more advanced level of proficiency are enrolled in the second program (advanced) based on their scores on the same tests (as shown in Table 3.1). The intermediate level is a non-credit remedial program which focuses mainly on improving students' writing abilities in L2 by writing on different academic topics. On the other hand, the advanced level is a credit-earning course required of all undergraduate students. This program prepares students to write argumentative essays and support their claims with external sources such as journal articles and books, and to be able to write research papers with proper citations. These two programs thus were chosen to represent different levels of student proficiency in order to examine its effect on teachers' written feedback practices.

Table 3.1 TOEFL IBT/IELTS cut-off scores as required by both programs
(According to university official website)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>TOEFL score</th>
<th>TOEFL writing</th>
<th>IELTS score</th>
<th>IELTS writing</th>
<th>CEFR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>83 or above</td>
<td>22 or above</td>
<td>6.5 or above</td>
<td>7 or above</td>
<td>C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>48-75</td>
<td>14-19</td>
<td>5-5.5</td>
<td>5-5.5</td>
<td>B1/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.3 Participants

Participants in this study were five teachers, three Americans and two Egyptians, (see Table 3.2) who teach academic English at a private English-medium university in Cairo.
They were chosen for this study because each of them has had the experience of teaching writing to students at different levels of proficiency. Having instructors who have taught writing at different proficiency levels was important in order to investigate whether they have changed their feedback practices according to their students' levels. All participants have a Masters' degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and have been teaching ESL for several years. Four of the five instructors teach writing every semester while one teacher teaches writing and other academic English skills, such as academic listening strategies and presentation skills.

Table 3.2 Teachers' profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher code (n=5)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Years teaching ESL/EFL</th>
<th>Years teaching L2 writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T 1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>MA in TESOL</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>MA in TESOL</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>MA in TESOL</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>MA in TESOL</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>MA in TESOL</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.4 Instruments

To answer the research questions, the researcher collected data using interviews as well as writing samples that demonstrated teachers' feedback practices at different proficiency levels. Interviewing teachers and collecting samples of their feedback practices were done to look into the way they adapt their feedback practices according to their students' proficiency levels and to also investigate related factors that affect their practices. According to Bruno and Santos (2010), interviews help collect descriptive data with the participants' words, which will allow the researcher to understand the way that each participant provides corrective feedback to students at different levels of L2 proficiency.
The interviews were conducted with the five teachers, with the interview semi-structured and carried out on a one-on one basis on the university campus. The questions were all open-ended and mainly targeted corrective feedback differences between high and low proficiency levels in terms of the feedback strategies and feedback focus that teachers practice with their students. It also looked into other possible factors that could be affecting teachers' corrective feedback at different levels, such as the institutional context and program requirements. Each interview lasted about 20-25 minutes and all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Writing samples were collected from the five teachers to demonstrate the differences in feedback focus (language, mechanics, content, or organization) and feedback strategies (direct or indirect) in the two academic programs. All samples were sent online to the researcher since all teachers' written feedback was computer-based where teachers provided feedback using Google Docs or the grading feature in Turnitin.com. The researcher requested feedback samples from teachers and ended up having 50 samples from the intermediate level and 45 samples from the advanced level which were usable for analysis. Other samples were sent to the researcher but were discarded because they were only graded or did not have enough comments from teachers. The samples collected from teachers contained different types of computer-based comments that are commonly used with both programs (marginal comments, end comments, color-codes, and in-text corrections). All comments were analyzed in order to examine teachers' corrective feedback differences at both intermediate and advanced levels.

3.2 Data collection procedures

Data collection process started after the Institutional Review Board (IRB) permission was granted (Appendix D). Participants were contacted by the researcher via email to ask if they were willing to participate in the study. The five teachers who were approached showed
interest in participating in the study and agreed to sign the consent form (Appendix E) and set appointments for the interviews. They were asked to prepare samples of their feedback practices from the two programs in which they have taught writing. Due to lack of samples from the different levels they have taught, not all teachers were able to provide the researcher with samples that represent their corrective feedback techniques across the levels. Consequently, the researcher asked them to send her whatever samples were available (as shown in Table 3.3) and ended up having 45 samples from the feedback provided to the advanced level, with 15 samples provided by T1, 15 samples from T2, and 15 samples from T4. Each of these teachers chose five of their students who range in their academic abilities in the program and provided the researcher with three samples for each of them. On the other hand, samples from the intermediate level were collected from T3 who provided 20 samples, T5 who provided 5 samples, and T1 who provided 25 samples. Feedback samples were anonymized, which means that students’ names were removed by teachers before giving the samples to the researcher.

Table 3.3 Feedback samples collected from teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Samples from intermediate level (No.)</th>
<th>Samples from advanced level (No.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After collecting the data from the interviews and feedback samples, the researcher began analyzing teachers' commentary on students' samples in order to identify the differences in the feedback techniques used in both programs. Teachers' responses to the interview questions were also analyzed to supplement the data obtained from the feedback.
samples, especially with teachers who were not able to provide the researcher with samples that demonstrate their practices at the two proficiency levels (see Table 3.3 above).

3.3 Data analysis procedures

3.3.1 Teacher commentary

Teacher commentary obtained from the feedback samples were analyzed using an analysis scheme that is similar to the scheme which was developed by Ferris (1997) (see Appendix A). In her study, Ferris (1997) examined the effect of teacher commentary on students' revisions by collecting samples of students' first drafts which contained teacher comments. She then analyzed the written comments "both marginal notes and endnotes" (p. 320) by placing them in different categories, such as length (e.g., short, average, long), type (e.g., giving information, asking for information, giving a positive comment) and teachers' use of hedging (e.g., please, maybe). She then collected students' second drafts to "assess the impact of teachers' commentary on the students' revised drafts" (p. 320). For the purpose of the current study, the researcher adapted the categories developed by Ferris to match the different characteristics of the comments found in the feedback samples provided by the participants. In addition, she developed other categories that helped investigate the focus (e.g., language, content) and strategy (direct, indirect) of teachers' feedback provided at the different levels. The resulting analysis scheme, described and illustrated in Table 3.4 below, allowed the examination of the different features of teachers' comments at the two proficiency levels, including their type (marginal, end, color-codes, and in-text), their length (in number of words), their focus (language, mechanics, content and ideas, organization, and other), and the strategy used in providing the feedback (direct or indirect). Direct feedback is mainly demonstrated by identifying and correcting students' errors while indirect feedback is mainly demonstrated by coding students' errors whether by coding symbols (e.g., VT, SP, SVA, etc), or colors (e.g., blue, yellow, green, etc).
Table 3.4 Analysis scheme for teacher commentary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis scheme for teacher comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comment Type</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | **Codes** *(e.g., SP 'spelling', WC 'word choice', CS 'comma splice')*
| | **Color-codes** *(e.g., yellow for grammar, green for vocabulary, blue mechanics)* |
| | **In-text corrections** *(teacher makes changes to the text by fixing a word spelling, adding a word/phrase, or omitting a word/phrase)* |
| **Written Comment Length** | **Short** *(1-5 words)* |
| | **Average** *(6-15 words)* |
| | **Long** *(16-25 words)* |
| | **Very long** *(26 or more words)* |
| **Comment Focus** | **Language** *(grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure)* |
| | Example: *here you need passive voice! / use more academic language! / run-on!*
| | **Mechanics** *(spelling, punctuation, capitalization, italics)* |
| | Example: *this is a comma splice! / use quotation marks! / check CAPS rules!*
| | **Content and ideas** |
| | Example: *what do you mean here? / Explain more! / how do you know this?*
| | **Organization** |
| | Example: *where is your conclusion paragraph? / this is not the same idea in your thesis statement!*
| | **Other** *(citation-related comments)* |
| | Example: *you need the page numbers for each article you use! / work cited is missing here!* |
Feedback Strategy

**Direct**
- Highlight/underline the error and provide corrections.
- Highlight/underline, categorize the error and provide corrections.

**Indirect**
- Highlight/underline and categorize the error (coded)
- Color-coded

3.3.2 Interview data

Interview responses were audio-recorded and transcribed (see Appendix B for interview questions). The data were analyzed based on the themes which emerged from the research questions. The interview data were analyzed using the following themes (see Table 3.5). Excerpts from the interview data are cited in order to provide a rich description of the data.

Table 3.5 Interview themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher feedback changes according to students' proficiency level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Feedback strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Factors that affect teacher feedback practices at the different levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Learning outcomes/objectives of the course taught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handwritten vs. online feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4
Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' feedback practices at different levels of L2 writers' proficiency and to look into whether teachers adapt their feedback strategies according to students' proficiency levels. It also investigated other factors that may affect teachers' corrective feedback strategies. In this chapter, the researcher reports the results of the data gathered from writing samples as well as teachers' interviews. The findings of the study are reported in relation to the research questions.

4.1 Research Question (1): Characteristics of teachers' Feedback at Different proficiency levels

Each of the following sections reports the results related to the characteristics of the teacher commentary at different proficiency levels according to the feedback samples collected from teachers.

4.1.1 Types of teacher commentary

A total of 50 writing samples were collected from the intermediate level with a total of 739 instances of feedback made electronically using Google Docs or the grading feature in Turnitin.com (see Appendix C). Table 4.1 shows that 534 feedback instances at the intermediate level were in the form of marginal comments. Samples contained 18 comments written by teachers at the end of students' essays and 55 feedback instances were in the form of codes where teachers categorized the errors for their students. Color-coding was not substantially employed by teachers at the intermediate level as, in a total of 739 feedback instances, the samples contained only 27 color-codes where teachers highlighted different aspects of students' writing, especially language, mechanics, and sentence structure issues (e.g., A Good parent will insist on encouraging the child 'G highlighted in yellow'). In-text
corrections were only found in the samples collected from the intermediate level, with a total of 105 points that were made or added to the text by teachers (e.g., *it will be the brink of collapse of their identity / bad friends are the main element to make young people smoking*).

On the other hand, a total of 45 samples were collected from the advanced level, with a total of 1422 instances of feedback made electronically (see Table 4.1 below). A total of 919 comments were written on the margins while 24 comments located at the end of students' essays. Samples from the advanced level contained more codes than the intermediate level, with a total of 119 codes categorized by teachers. As for color-coding, it was greatly used at the advanced level with a total of 360 color-codes which highlighted grammar errors in yellow (e.g., *he feel comfortable*), vocabulary use in green (e.g., *it is of extreme importance to consult a nutritionist before define any diet*), and mechanics in blue (e.g., *In the past few years, The Egyptian regime was turned upside down*). Unlike the samples collected from the intermediate level, the samples from the advanced level did not contain any in-text corrections made or added by teachers.

Table 4.1 Types of teacher comments in numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment Type</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color-coded</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-text</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>739</strong></td>
<td><strong>1422</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in Table 4.1, feedback instances collected from the advanced level greatly outnumbered those collected from the intermediate level. One reason is that students' written texts at the advanced level are much longer than students' texts at the intermediate level and, consequently, have more instances of feedback. Another reason is that at the
advanced level teachers tended to provide feedback on how students integrated sources into their writing, and thus those texts have more citation-related comments that do not exist at the intermediate level.

4.1.2 Length of teacher written comments (marginal and end)

Table 4.2 shows the variety in teachers' marginal and end written comments length at the two proficiency levels. The vast majority of the marginal comments (85.5% at intermediate level and 81% at advanced level) were rated as short or average (1-15 words), whereas end comments were rated average (22%) or very long (39% and 100% 'more than 26 words per comment'). This difference in length between marginal and end comments "reflects both the more general, summative nature of end comments" (Ferris, 1997, p. 323). There was around 39% of short end comments at the intermediate level where teachers gave brief positive comments about students' overall performance without getting into details related specifically to their essays (e.g., Great essay!, Very well written!, Excellent, keep it up!)

Table 4.2 Length of written comments (marginal and end)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment length</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marginal (%)</td>
<td>End (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short</td>
<td>63.4 %</td>
<td>39 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>22.1 %</td>
<td>22 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long</td>
<td>11 %</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very long</td>
<td>3.5 %</td>
<td>39 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers at the advanced level tended to write end comments that were all rated very long. It is worth mentioning here that end comments at the advanced level played an important role in communicating different aspects of students' writing to students, including areas of improvement, areas that need to be worked on, and teachers' advice on how to improve these areas. Table 4.3 below shows the features of end comments at high and low
proficiency level, with half of the advanced level's comments (50%) providing general remarks about students' overall performances. On the other hand, 44.5% of the end comments of the intermediate level focused mainly on giving general positive comments while only 5.5% provided students with details about their writing performances (see Table 4.3 below).

Table 4.3 Characteristics of teachers' written end comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>End comments at intermediate level (n=18) (%)</th>
<th>End comments at advanced level (n=24) (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall positive comments, points of strengths, points of weaknesses, and advice for improvement.</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall positive comments, points of weaknesses and advice for improvement.</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall positive comments and points of strengths and weaknesses.</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall positive comments and points of strengths.</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points of strengths and weaknesses.</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points of weaknesses and advice for improvement.</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall positive comments only.</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.3 Feedback focus at high and low proficiency levels

The focus of teacher feedback tends to differ mainly because of contextual and teacher-related factors. Given the fact that the five participants have taught writing to students at different L2 proficiency levels, the feedback samples collected from them demonstrated differences in feedback focus. After deducting the number of end comments from the total feedback instances collected from the samples, there remained 1398 instances of feedback from the advanced level including marginal comments, codes, and color-codes. As for the intermediate level, a total of 721 feedback instances out of the 739 (see Table 4.1...
above) points collected were analyzed in terms of their focus including marginal comments, codes, color-codes, and in-text corrections.

4.1.3.1 Feedback focus at the intermediate level

The results showed that 523 out of the 721 instances of feedback collected from the intermediate level focused on language form while only 82 comments were on issues related to content (see Figure 4.1 below). A similar amount of comments were on writing mechanics, such as capitalization and punctuation issues, with a total of 83 comments. The smallest number of comments (33) was given on issues related to the overall organization of the students’ essays.

![Feedback Focus at intermediate level](image)

**Figure 4.1 Feedback focus at the intermediate level**  
*(marginal, codes, color-codes, and in-text)*

4.1.3.2 Feedback focus at the advanced level

Teacher feedback at the advanced level was less language-focused, as only 38% of the feedback instances was on language errors (see Figure 4.2 below). About 40% of teachers' feedback was on issues related to the development of ideas and organization.
Feedback on mechanics was relatively more at the advanced than the intermediate level, with a total of 19% out of the comments made by teachers. Moreover, part of teacher comments at the advanced level focused on how students cite and integrate sources correctly into their essays (4.7%) since one of the learning outcomes at that level is for students to use sources to support their arguments/refutations. Giving citation-related comments was not found in the feedback samples collected from the intermediate level (see Figure 4.1 above) basically because those students did not write on integrated tasks.

![Feedback Focus at advanced level](image)

**Figure 4.2 Feedback focus at the advanced level**

*(marginal, codes, and color-codes)*

### 4.1.4 Feedback strategies at high and low proficiency levels

The study showed that the feedback strategies (direct or indirect) which teachers utilized when giving feedback, particularly on language and mechanics errors, differed across the two proficiency levels. Based on the strategies found in the writing samples, the
researcher had two sub-techniques under each feedback strategy (see Table 3.4). It was found that direct feedback was given in two forms: (1) Highlight/underline the error and provide corrections; or (2) Highlight/underline, and categorize the error and provide corrections. As for indirect feedback, it was given in: (1) Highlight/underline and categorize the error (coded); or (2) Highlight errors using colors (color-coded). Frequencies of using each of the techniques were calculated in order to get the rates of using direct and indirect feedback at each proficiency level.

4.1.4.1 Feedback strategies at the intermediate level

Table 4.4 shows that the vast majority (80 %) of feedback given on language errors at the intermediate level was given directly, with teachers providing corrections for students' errors. About half of mechanics-related errors (51 %) were also corrected directly by teachers. It is worth mentioning here that in-text corrections were considered as one of the direct feedback techniques utilized, and thus were included in the frequencies of using direct feedback at the intermediate level. On the other hand, less than 15 % of the feedback given on language errors was given indirectly, with teachers merely coding the errors without directly correcting them (e.g., VT for verb tense), and only 3.8% of the errors were color-coded. Indirect feedback; however, was used more with mechanics-related errors (48 %).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback focus</th>
<th>Direct feedback (%)</th>
<th>Indirect feedback (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highlight/underline the error &amp; provide corrections</td>
<td>Highlight/underline, categorize &amp; provide corrections</td>
<td>Highlight/underline and categorize the error (coded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>74.8 %</td>
<td>6.8 %</td>
<td>14.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>37.5 %</td>
<td>14.4 %</td>
<td>39.7 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.4.2 Feedback strategies at the advanced level

The results showed that teacher feedback strategies used at the advanced level contrasted greatly with the strategies used at the intermediate level. The data showed that 89% of the feedback given on language errors was given indirectly, with teachers coding the errors or using different colors to highlight them (see Table 4.5 below). Corrections were provided to only 11% of the total feedback instances collected from the samples. As for teacher feedback on mechanics-related errors, it was found that teachers depended heavily on coding or color-coding the errors for students. No direct corrections were found except for only 5% where teachers categorized the errors first and then provided the corrections.

Table 4.5 Feedback strategies at the advanced level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback focus</th>
<th>Direct feedback (%)</th>
<th>Indirect feedback (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highlight/underline the error &amp; provide corrections</td>
<td>Highlight/underline, categorize &amp; provide corrections</td>
<td>Highlight/underline and categorize the error (coded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>9.5 %</td>
<td>1.5 %</td>
<td>48.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>39.5 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Figures 4.3 and 4.4 below, the researcher summarized the total percentages of using the feedback strategies (direct and indirect) at the two proficiency levels. Figure 4.3 below compares the strategies used in providing feedback on language errors at both intermediate and advanced levels. It shows that teachers provided direct feedback on language-related errors more frequently (80%) at the intermediate level while only 20% was given indirectly. In contrast, indirect feedback was utilized more at the advanced level (89%) when dealing with language-related errors.
Figure 4.3 Feedback strategies used with language-related errors at intermediate and advanced levels

Figure 4.4 below shows that the strategies used in giving feedback on mechanics-related errors at the intermediate level differed from the strategies used with language-related errors at the same level. Unlike language-related errors with which direct feedback was mainly employed by teachers, mechanics-related errors were addressed using almost both direct and indirect feedback equally (51% & 48%). As for the advanced level, similar to the strategy that was used more with language-related errors, indirect feedback (95%) was superior to direct feedback in dealing with mechanics-related errors.
4.2. Research Question (2): Do teachers change their feedback strategies according to the proficiency level of their students?

All instructors indicated that a major difference between high and low proficiency levels is the feedback focus. T1 pointed out that a great amount of the feedback he provides at the intermediate level focuses on language errors: "at the lower level the feedback focus is mainly on the language because they struggle a lot with it, but at the advanced level they have good language, but what happen is that....some of them are able to self-correct so after a while they can proof-read and find the errors themselves......so let's say that in the lower level, 60% of the feedback is on form while only 40% is on content." T2 also said that although she cares more about content and development of ideas than language, she thinks that considerable attention should be given to language aspects, especially at lower levels. She explained:

I tend towards focusing more on content in general with all of my students just because I feel like that's the most important thing, and too much focus on
grammar and language can make them forget the main purpose of writing that piece.......but then obviously with the lower levels, they need a lot more help with language, and so I'll spend more time on language use with the lower levels, and with the upper levels, the focus of the course is not really so much on the language use.......so I'll just maybe point out a few....you know....errors that they seem to be repeating several times, I'll just point out a few of them and say "you have this problem throughout your paper, go and find out about this particular topic.

T3 also said that feedback focus is one of the main differences of the feedback provided at both intermediate and advanced levels, concentrating more on formatting and language at lower levels than at higher ones. He said:

With a lower level writers, probably as much as the language use is a problem, I would assume that I going to be focusing on paragraph and essay structure a lot more with them, then with the higher level writers where it might not be the structure anymore, but it's the content and the ideas.....so I would with the higher level learner, you're definitely going to be focusing on the content, better examples, more detail examples, better analysis of those examples are in terms of how they relate to the topic sentence, where with the lower level again it might be this basic format; how you lay things out, and it might take half of the semester for some of those students to figure that out before you can concentrate more on the language use and the content.

T4 also stressed the idea that the intermediate program focuses more on improving students' language abilities before moving to the higher levels where the focus will be mainly on content and developing ideas. She noted that "a lot of students have these fossilized grammar mistakes and what you want to focus on is correcting as many language and sentence structure mistakes as you can because this is the last place where they are going to directly study grammar before moving to the advanced level." She provided a detailed description of the areas focused on the two programs and how they differ from each other by saying:

Low level students have lot of problems: they have problems with verb tenses, they have problems with subject-verb agreement, they have problems with adjective clauses, with noun clauses and word order that stay in their writing in the advanced program, but in the advanced program you don't focus on
language, language is only 10%. The focus is a lot on content, organization and integration of sources and citations...let's say it's 75% of the rubric whereas only 10% is for language....and even with language, it's a combination for writing voice and the effectiveness of it. You are not supposed to over deal with grammar.

She also added:

At the advanced level, I'm more focused on having them think critically about what they read and write about, and having them write deeper analysis and arguments. So they have to incorporate many sources in their writing, whereas at the intermediate level, we're just making sure they know how to write a five-paragraph essay and to write good thesis...we're trying to get more content-based...it is true...but we don't go as deep into analyzing things.

Additionally, when she was asked about the reasons for not having much language-focused feedback at the advanced level, she referred to what students are assumed to be capable of achieving at the point based on their proficiency in L2. She said that "based on the proficiency level that is expected by the time students get to the advanced level, you're expected not to have to teach the grammar......you are assuming they have a certain level of language."

T5 also had similar description about the difference between the two programs in terms of what areas she focuses on in students' writing as she said "at the intermediate level we tend to focus, of course we try to develop their abilities to write and to think critically, but at the end of the day, you evaluate how this comes across in terms of the language they're using. When they move to the advanced level, you worry too much about their ability to write a detailed lengthy piece of paper maintaining coherence and cohesion and the logical sequence."

As for the feedback strategies teachers use at the different proficiency levels, the interview data showed that direct feedback is commonly used at the intermediate level and that teachers tend most of the time to provide corrections for students' errors. T1 stated that
"at the intermediate level, I underline the errors and provide suggestions for the correct form or even provide the correction myself." T4 also had similar comments regarding the strategies she uses in providing feedback to intermediate levels and that she even sometimes reminds the students of a specific grammatical rule:

* **T4:** At sometimes I just circle or underline and say that this is a grammatical mistake; however, I don't tend to use the codes as just grammar, I specify what grammatical mistake so I say 'tense' or I say 'run-on'.

**Researcher:** But you don't provide the correction?

**T4:** Occasionally, I provide the correction; however, when the mistakes are too many, if you provide the correction, the paper will be too messy...so I avoid doing this, but if it is the past participle of the verb 'Go', for example, which is 'Gone'...I could add the 'ne'. you know...underline it..and I write again like "we need here the past participle" and I remind them of the rule and write the rule in the margin "remember x, y, z."

On the other hand, T2 and T4 stated that they prefer using indirect feedback even with lower levels since it helps students be more autonomous and independent. T2, for example, stated that she always likes students to try to fix their own problems and work on them independently. She thus tends to use codes in dealing with students errors. She explained "in general, I don't actually correct it on the page...like if it's supposed to be ('the' instead of 'a')...you know...I won't do...I'll probably just circle it and write like 'art' which means 'article', and then they know they have to go back and fix it....I use codes because I always want them to try to fix it." She also pointed out that "the lower level students tend to be....I guess we can say more 'needy' and need a lot of 'hand holding' basically. And so I spend a lot of time trying to push them towards trying to be more independent, taking a bit more ownership and responsibility of their own learning." T4 also claimed that she prefers using codes to deal with the students' errors as she said "I give them codes. If they have a verb tense error, I have
codes and I write 'VT' about the verb tense error and I underline it....At the beginning of the semester I give more feedback, toward the end of the semester I do less and try to let them be more independent."

4.3 Research Question (3): What are the factors that could be affecting teachers' feedback practices at different levels of proficiency?

The interview data showed that there are other factors that affect teacher feedback practices at the different proficiency levels. This section reports the factors that emerged during teacher interviews.

4.3.1 Learning outcomes/objectives of the course taught

Almost all participants reported that the desired outcomes of the program affect their feedback practices to a great extent. For example, teachers reported that a major part of the learning outcomes at the advanced level is for students to be able to use proper citations and integrate sources effectively in the papers they write. Teachers thus have to address these issues in students' writing and provide them with the feedback that would help them achieve these objectives by the end of the time allocated for the course. T4, for example, pointed out that feedback focus is greatly affected by what the students are expected to achieve, and this explains the substantial number of comments related to issues like citing sources properly and having organized and well-written lists of references. She explained:

So there's more focus on the kinds of appeals writers use, what kind of fallacies writers have....it's more focused on analyzing an argument and then being able to write one that's well developed, that's well sequenced, and that's got plenty of support through citations......we have a lot more than responsibility to teach them about citations and plagiarism and all of that, and finding sources and integrating them well into the papers. So larger part of the class is taken off teaching them about the rhetorical appeals, rhetorical situations, logical fallacies, and higher-order thinking skills.
4.3.2 Program requirements

T3 stated in the interview that she prefers selectivity when providing feedback by focusing on two or three areas for each assignment, as she said:

I think effective feedback needs not to be overwhelming. That is another reason for focusing maybe on one or two issues at a time and for requesting multiple drafts where, for example, the first draft we can look at content and things like that and then in the second draft we can look at language to make it more effective and specific.

She mentioned that sometimes the program requirements restrict or control the way teachers provide feedback. For instance, she said that students' pieces of writing are required to go through a structured drafting process at the advanced level. This drafting process requires teachers to follow a specific way of providing feedback as follows: (1) Students write the first draft and get feedback from their peers, not from the teacher, then (2) Students make changes based on the feedback they received from their peers and submit the second draft to the teacher, who provides feedback on it, and finally (3) Students make changes based on the teacher feedback and submit the third draft, on which they get the final grade. According to her, this process forces her to be more comprehensive in the feedback she gives on the second draft since she has to address all the problems the students have before submitting the final graded draft. She noted:

When they only get feedback from their peers on the first draft, they become better peer reviewers themselves before giving it to the instructor, which is a very good thing and it develops their skills. But, on the negative side, when they turn in the second draft, I need to address all of things so I can't focus only on the content; I have to focus on the content and on the organization and on the language and on any other things that I want to point out. It tends to be overwhelming to the students and it's too much to give for one draft. I don't think it's the most productive way, but this is how it has to be. I wish that it could be spread out...I think it would be better to even have more drafts like four or five drafts... I think this would be more productive.
4.3.3 Handwritten vs. online feedback

Teachers showed positive attitudes towards providing feedback by online tools (Google Docs, Turitin.com) at the advanced level. They think that it helps organize the comments provided to students and avoid the mess that handwritten feedback usually causes on students' writing. T5 stated that "the matter of online vs. handwritten feedback makes a major difference in the way you see it, in the way you write it, in the way you present it, and it saves time to the teacher. So this is one major difference that guides your feedback to be honest." According to her, online feedback gives space that allows her to highlight more points, write more detailed comments, and provide examples. She added:

With the more advanced, one major difference is that they submit everything online on Turnitin. So you have maybe more space to write a whole lot, but it will come again as fully organized. In the lower level, it's handwritten and I think the handwritten also guides the type of the comments you're going to make and how it can because handwritten is totally different from the computer. With the advanced levels it's computer based of course, so I write more. When it comes to content, I simply ask questions "what do you mean? how is that possible? how did this action lead to this second action?". If they try to refute an argument and provide another argument, I write "I don't really see the relevance between point one and point two? I don't really see how this refutes the argument because I can easily tell you so and so" and I argue as if it's another argument. So it's more like a kind of a chat maybe...so it's more like a chat.

4.4 Conclusion

Regarding the differences between the feedback provided at high and low proficiency levels, the feedback samples showed that the vast majority of the feedback provided at the intermediate level was direct while indirect feedback was utilized more with the advanced level. With respect to the different types of teacher comments, in-text corrections were only found in the samples collected from the intermediate level. To gain more insights into
teachers' feedback practices at both levels, the researcher conducted interviews with five teachers who have experienced teaching writing for intermediate and advanced students, and from whom the feedback samples were collected. Three teachers reported using direct feedback with the intermediate level, where they provide corrections for students' errors, while two teachers mentioned that they prefer indirect feedback with both levels to encourage students to become more autonomous and independent.

As for the feedback focus at both intermediate and advanced levels, all teachers reported that feedback at the lower levels focuses more on language and basic structure of paragraphs and essays than content. On the other hand, content and ideas and integration of sources are prioritized at higher proficiency levels. When asked about whether they change their feedback techniques according to students' levels, teachers reported that although students' level has a great impact on their feedback practices, there is a number of other factors that shape their feedback styles, such as the specific learning outcomes of the program taught, program requirements, and whether the feedback is handwritten or provided online.
Chapter 5
Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the key research findings of the feedback samples and interview data. The pedagogical implications and limitations of the study are then presented. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further research.

5.2 Summary of results

The results showed that the feedback strategy which was extensively used at the intermediate level is indicating and correcting students' errors (direct feedback), while coding the errors without correcting them was common at the advanced level (indirect coded feedback). Moreover, there were differences in the types of comments provided at the two proficiency levels, as the feedback samples showed that teachers sometimes make direct changes to students' texts by adding or omitting a word/phrase to complete a certain meaning or idea. As for the feedback focus at the two proficiency levels, the results showed that form-based feedback was greatly used at the intermediate level, while there were more content-based comments at the advanced one. Although a considerable amount of the feedback provided at the higher level was on language issues (38 %), it was still given indirectly, with teachers only categorizing the errors for students without correcting them.

When teachers were asked about whether they adapt their feedback techniques according to students' proficiency levels, most of them reported that they tend to use direct feedback more with the low-proficient students since it takes them a long time to figure out how to correct their errors independently, especially in the beginning of a semester. On the other hand, one of the teachers tended to favor indirect feedback even with lower levels in order to enhance students’ autonomy and help them become more responsible for their learning.
Furthermore, the study highlighted some other factors that play a role in determining teacher feedback techniques at different proficiency levels. Teachers pointed out that as much as students' proficiency level affects their feedback practices, the learning outcomes as well as the requirements of the course being taught, such as the number of drafts and grading policies, are also seen as important factors for selecting feedback techniques. This finding stresses Hyland and Hyland's (2006) idea that "contextual factors related to institution and writing program as well as program philosophies about feedback can have an impact on feedback" (p. 88).

In addition, teachers' preferences for providing computer-based feedback at the advanced level emerged as a key point during the interviews, with teachers finding it more organized and effective in dealing with problems students have in L2 writing. Hyland and Hyland (2006) highlighted the positive effect of computer-mediated feedback on both teachers' practices and students' revisions. They argued that "one major advantage of electronic conferencing feedback is that comments are automatically stored for later retrieval, allowing instructors to print out the transcripts for in-class discussion. Teachers can use this database of transcripts to increase students’ autonomy in correcting errors and in reflecting on their writing, and this can also have dramatic payoffs in self-feedback, and learner awareness of error" (p. 93, 94). Moreover, they noted that "this kind of analysis of student writing can help build meta-cognitive awareness of particular linguistic, interactional and rhetorical features (p. 94).

It is understandable why teachers tend to provide more direct feedback at the intermediate level. Research has demonstrated that students prefer direct feedback (Robb et al., 1986), especially at lower levels since it is difficult to identify the errors themselves (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Maleki & Eslami, 2013). According to Maleki and Eslami (2013), indirect feedback has more durable effect on students' writing as it raises their awareness of
how to self-correct and self-edit errors, and thus it is preferred at higher levels. Lalande (1982) and Kepner (1991) also support the idea that indirect feedback has a long-term value since it helps students be more engaged in learning.

The findings of the present study are also in line with Ibrahim (2014) whose study suggests that indirect un-coded feedback could be used with the higher proficiency levels, while direct corrections could be used more with low-proficient students.

Regarding the factors that affect teachers' feedback techniques, the study shows that the learning outcomes and program requirements play an essential role in determining the feedback technique used with the students and sometimes prevent the teachers from performing their desired practices. This goes in line with Lee (2003) who stated that some institution require teachers to mark students writing in a specific way, which implies that they have "less flexibility in trying out different feedback techniques" (Lee, 2003, p. 225). T2's comments regarding having to use comprehensive CF with students' second drafts in order to help them fix as much problems as they can before submitting the third draft confirm Lee's (2003) idea that "although some teachers do not prefer comprehensive marking, which takes up a large proportion of their time, they find it hard to practice selective marking for reasons like resistance of the school" (p. 229). However, it is worth mentioning here that T2 did not prefer comprehensive CF not because it is time consuming, but rather overwhelming for students. Therefore, the factors that appear to have an influence on teachers' feedback practices could be seen to be strongly related to one another, as it would be hard to single out one factor as the main source of influence on teachers' feedback practices. These factors include instructional context and student factors, such as student proficiency and expectations.
Overall, the written feedback samples and the interviews have provided useful information about teachers' practices and concerns regarding written corrective feedback at different proficiency levels. The study revealed that teachers are aware of their own feedback practices as well as their students' needs and abilities at different levels of L2 proficiency. Teachers appeared to be appreciating WCF and its importance in helping students improve their writing skills, and they do not seem to think that WCF is "an overwhelming solution to improving limited linguistic accuracy" (Evan et al., 2010, p. 64), even at low proficiency levels. Teachers also understand the potential of WCF and that it may become ineffective if it does not match what students are capable of accomplishing in L2 at the different levels of proficiency.

5.3 Implications of the study

The differences in the feedback strategies and feedback focus that teachers reported at intermediate and advanced levels show that they are aware of differentiated students' needs and abilities. It is always important for teachers to "engage in feedback practices that take into account the individual differences such as proficiency and motivation" (Lee, 2008, p.159). However, teachers should try utilizing less direct feedback with students at lower levels because "correcting every error does not leave the student anything to do" (Brookhart, 2007, p. 4). According to her, providing students with direct feedback where all their errors are corrected for them will lead to merely recopying the work with corrections, which could result in "a perfect paragraph with no learning involved" (p. 4). Therefore, the current study reinforce the idea that students at low proficiency levels should be encouraged to self-assess and self-correct their own texts, especially towards the end of a semester or course period, when they would be familiar with teachers' feedback strategies and assessing criteria.
Furthermore, the overall results of this study regarding teacher feedback comments suggest that teachers need to consider using computer-based feedback at both high and low proficiency levels, as they all expressed the positive impact of providing written feedback to students electronically and not written by hand on students' texts. This could help avoid the danger of finding teachers' comments unreadable or unclear.

5.4 Limitations of the study

There were a number of limitations when conducting the present study. First of all, the interviews were conducted with only five teachers who have had experience teaching writing at high and low proficiency levels, which is a small sample and not representative of the population of Egyptian university EFL instructors. Generalizations cannot be made about other university EFL teachers in Egypt. In addition, the researcher faced difficulty collecting feedback samples from these five teachers that represent their feedback practices at both levels. T1 was the only teacher who provided the researcher with feedback samples demonstrating his feedback in both. The other four teachers provided the researcher with samples that represent their feedback at one of the two levels (see Table 3). As a result, the study did not investigate the individual practices of each teacher across levels, but rather compared teacher techniques used per level.

Another limitation is that the study did not investigate the effect of the different feedback strategies used by teachers on students' progress nor did it examine how students responded to teacher commentary. It only focused on analyzing teacher comments provided at each of the proficiency levels.

5.5 Recommendation for further research

Almost all participants in the current study stressed the idea that providing students with computer-based feedback greatly affects the amount of feedback they give, the
explicitness of comments, and students' reactions towards it when compared to handwritten feedback. According to Hyland (2010), "many of the new generation of second language writers may be totally at ease with computer-mediated communication and may in fact prefer this form of feedback to the face-to-face mode, as it is a relaxed, flexible and routine means of communication between themselves and their peers" (p. 178). Further research can thus explore using computer-based feedback as an alternative to teacher handwritten feedback and how students respond to such feedback in similar contexts.

Further research could also examine how students at different levels of L2 proficiency respond and react to teacher written feedback in writing classes, and to see whether there are different preferences for the feedback they receive from their teachers, as according to Hyland and Hyland (2010), students have to be seen as "active agents, constructing the terms and conditions of their own learning and responding and adapting their writing and revision strategies over a period of time to the feedback they receive" (p. 174). Another recommendation is to involve a larger number of teachers to investigate the possible effect of students' proficiency levels on the feedback they get from their writing teachers.
References


Compulsory Education, 12*(1), 33-51.


### APPENDIX A

**Ferris (1997) Analysis Scheme for Teacher Commentary**

#### A. Comment Length (Number of Words)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Short (1–5 words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Average (6–15 words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Long (16–25 words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very long (26 or more words)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### B. Comment Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No hedge included</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 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?* |
APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

- How do you decide on the feedback strategy (direct or indirect) you use with your students?

- What areas do you focus on in your feedback? How does the focus differ from one level to another?

- How many times do you provide written corrective feedback for each writing piece? In other words, how many drafts are required from your students for each writing task? Why?

- Are there any factors that affect your feedback techniques at different proficiency levels?
APPENDIX C

Writing Samples

T1: Intermediate level (Google Docs)

Smoking becomes more common as students go through school. Most kids start smoking by the age of 14 and 15; they get influenced by grownups and from their parents that smoke. Teenagers start smoking because they have this curiosity in how something tastes, feels or looks so they just try it without thinking that this aspect could affect their health and could also kill them. Some of the things that can be done to discourage teenagers from smoking are raising the prices of cigarettes and also that grownups should set a better example.

The rate of people dying has increased due to smoking, so the public health department should stand and do something about this. As a start, they could raise the prices of cigarettes, this will be a great strategy to reduce the percentage of people who smoke. If cigarettes become more expensive, people won’t be able to afford as many cigarettes as they used to, so people will either smoke much less or if they are really addicted to cigarettes they will be forced to go to rehab facilities which will help them in quitting smoking or advise them to use the electronic cigarettes which are as harmful as the normal cigarettes. The electronic cigarette is a medical device which has a heating system that vaporizes a liquid and it produces smoke, this gives you the feeling that you are smoking a real cigarette. Raising the price of cigarettes has been tried in New York and has successfully reduced the rate of smokers; they also got the stores to stop selling cigarettes to minors.

Another way to discourage young teenagers is through grownups, especially through actors, models and athletes. Most teenagers have a role-model which is either an actor or an athlete or even their parents; so if they see their role-model on television smoking, that will set a bad influence on the teenager. This causes the teenagers to be more curious on how smoking feels.
What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of Liberal Arts? How useless it is? What are Liberal Arts? Nicholas Jones explains deeply what Liberal Arts are. Jones graduated with a philosophy degree, he has detailed explanations on why liberal arts are useless. In his article, he explains why Liberal Arts students usually chase into getting into a graduate school- and his reason for this is they want to get paid well in the future. This paper examines to what extent are Liberal Arts useless, who are the targeted people and the rhetorical appeals identified.

Nicholas Jones took a B.A from Saint Francis University in 2002 with a philosophy degree and continued in his Ph.D in Ohio State University. He was a course consultant for a year in the sailor foundation, since 2007. Jones is a Philosophy professor at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. “Liberal arts, and the advantages of being useless” (Jones, 2012). Jones explained the advantages of Liberal Arts. Jones article analyzes the main points he states about the majority of people who don’t get Liberal Arts. Many students aim for getting a degree just to make money afterwards.

To elaborate even more Jones used logos to support his idea, as many of the mind sets surrounding us usually think this way, they only think of how much will the degree they graduated with will benefit them financially. As most students either major in Science, Engineering or Business because they think that anyone who holds a degree in any of the mentioned majors will have a higher probability of getting a better job and a better salary than those who hold a degree in Liberal Arts. “What jobs are there in history, or English, or philosophy, or sociology” (Jones, 2012). Jones specified that anyone can find a job if they studied History, English, Philosophy or Sociology.

Teaching Jobs was Jones response: Teaching is one of the common jobs you’ll find.
Those with a Business degree often work as business teachers, those with a Science degree end up teaching science at schools and universities, even those with a Liberal Art degree work as teachers and get paid well as those who graduated with other majors. Jones supported what he said by sharing results from a study from Georgetown University, in terms of unemployment and earning rates. There isn’t a specific difference between recent graduates for liberal arts major and other majors.

“Liberal Arts majors tend to earn higher salaries by midcareer” (Jones, 2012). Jones supported what he said by stating that a 2008 report from pay scale presented that people with liberal arts degree get paid more than those who graduated with other majors. What Jones is trying to do is get people to start widening their thoughts and stop thinking standardly, meaning you still find people with other majors who work in the fields of Liberal Arts.

The Audience Jones is targeting are not those who graduated but those who are going to graduate schools. Using an informal tone, Jones relates to his personal experience with Liberal Arts and how he misunderstood it. He delivers his ideas in a way throughout the whole article that gives the sense that Jones is a friend not a writer, he makes it as if he is talking to his audience verbally. He used many Rhetorical appeals to do so, to engage the reader and to deliver the feeling of making the reader realize his existence.

“I even knew what I was going to do after each school day, sports practice, then eat, then watch some TV, then sleep” (Jones, 2012). He started his article by logos, as he knew what he was going to do and it made sense to him. When Jones wanted to prove that people who graduated with a liberal art major do work and get paid similarly to those who graduated with other majors he presented results from a study, which of
course is logos as he supported his saying by showing statistics and comparing between liberal arts and other majors.

Most of Jones’s article is about how he and others feel and see about liberal arts. “Lucky for me I got admitted to a graduate program” (Jones, 2012), this is what writers call a rhetorical appeal; Jones used pathos here meaning that he felt he was lucky. Pathos is all about emotions and feelings that are expressed. “Everyone knew I also had no desire to flip burgers or deliver pizza” (Jones, 2012), Jones used sarcasm here to clarify that he was certainly not going to stop where he is.

Ethos is the way the author develops trust with his readers, the title of the article suggests that the whole article will be about why liberal arts are useless. The way Jones wrote indicated that he is against liberal arts. “Of course I don’t mean to be biased toward philosophy, there are lots of useless college majors: History, English, Music, sociology. Pretty much the entire repertoire of Liberal Arts” (Jones, 2012), to a surprise as the article comes to an end, there’s a turnover point at the end of the article, that makes you lose your mind if you’re a liberal arts major, “you have a quick and ready answer I’m going to be a more reflective and engaged individual, and an active, responsible contributor to my community capable of succeeding in leadership positions” (Jones, 2012), this wouldn’t be called unethical, but it makes the reader think how can be true what he has written is true, after all he start off by saying why liberal arts are useless and then he started proving why it’s not useless. So a big question mark appears in each reader’s mind and they start losing trust.

In conclusion, Liberal arts aren’t useless as people think, what I didn’t like about Jones article is that I trusted him with what he was saying later on I started getting confused, is he with or against liberal arts? So as I finished reading I came to a conclusion and asked myself why should I trust what he said throughout the whole
article. Taking into consideration, jones used the word “useless” to deliver what he wanted to say. Liberal Arts shouldn’t be addressed in a common way, people should think of it as something creative, something that brings out what is inside of you. I personally think that anyone can express what they feel through Liberal Arts, starting from English Literature all the way to history and sociology, you can always find yourself and discover new things about yourself. One thing Liberal Arts taught me is to see the Art in everything.
Bibliography

C/S
Comma splice:
A sentence must have both a subject and a main verb in order to be complete, but it cannot have more than one subject or main verb. A comma splice is a variety of run-on sentence that occurs when two complete sentences, each with its own subject and verb, are joined mistakenly by a comma. There are generally three methods of correcting this problem: 1) Replace the comma with a stronger mark of punctuation such as a period or semicolon, 2) use a coordinating conjunction ("and," "but," "or," "nor") to join the two constructions, or 3) make one of the two sentences a dependent construction by linking it to the other with a subordinating conjunction ("if," "when," "so that," "although," "because") or relative pronoun ("that," "which," "who," "whom," "whose").

WC
Word choice error:
Sometimes choosing the correct word to express exactly what you have to say is very difficult to do. Word choice errors can be the result of not paying attention to the word or trying too hard to come up with a fancier word when a simple one is appropriate. A thesaurus can be a handy tool when you're trying to find a word that's similar to, but more accurate than, the one you're looking up. However, it can often introduce more problems if you use a word thinking it has exactly the same meaning.

Comment 1
possessive

Pun
Punctuation needs revision.

Pun
Punctuation needs revision.
Comment 2
What's your purpose here?

C/S
Comma splice:
A sentence must have both a subject and a main verb in order to be complete, but it cannot have more than one subject or main verb. A comma splice is a variety of run-on sentence that occurs when two complete sentences, each with its own subject and verb, are joined mistakenly by a comma. There are generally three methods of correcting this problem: 1) Replace the comma with a stronger mark of punctuation such as a period or semicolon, 2) use a coordinating conjunction ("and," "but," "or," "nor") to join the two constructions, or 3) make one of the two sentences a dependent construction by linking it to the other with a subordinating conjunction ("if," "when," "so that," "although," "because") or relative pronoun ("that," "which," "who," "whom," "whose").

Comment 3
Inappropriate topic sentence position!

Comment 4
Very limited logos analysis.

Comment 5
possessive

Comment 6
Limited analysis and support.

Comment 7
informal

Sp.
Spelling error

Pron
Revise pronoun

Comment 8
possessive

QM
Improper Citation
Improper citation:
Improperly cited material. Please use the link below to find links to information regarding specific citation styles: http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_citation_styles.html
T2: Advanced level (Turnitin.com)

Essay Draft

Noted for his heroic roles in movies, Robert Downey Jr. once said, “We can all be heroes, but a hero is not a noun, it’s a verb.” Heroes were referred to as Gods or mythical creatures with super qualities, but what defines a hero? A hero is someone who sacrifices his or herself for something bigger than themselves. Mbaye Diagne, a Senegalese UN peacekeeper, was an exceptional hero that the whole world noticed. In the multi modal “A good man in Rwanda,” Mark Doyle, a BBC correspondent, well known for his credible articles, encountered Mbaye Diagne personally, which is an upper hand. Doyle’s message to everyone is to convey his vantage point, but how? Through rhetorical appeals, Doyle tries to convince the readers that captain Diagne is one of our time’s most significant heroes.

One of the effective rhetorical appeals that Doyle used to convince the readers of his point is logos. Doyle grants the readers the opportunity to think with logic and reason of how Diagne is a man of courage. One of the best examples in the multi modal is that the Senegalese Diagne drove himself and the people around him out of problems, using his sense of humor and smile. In this example the readers notice how Diagne used a different method, yet saved countless lives with only his charisma and his smile, and those broke the enemies tension. An individual who saves lives is worthy of being called a hero. Another example is when Diagne went to the lady who was attacked earlier, and just kept crying beside her and he said “They almost killed you, you know, they really wanted to do it.” (Doyle). This example shows how
Diagne was concerned for the people and wanted to save them with all his might. This also showed one of the characteristics of a hero, which is "impact on humanity before impact on oneself". As logic is a very powerful weapon to convince people, Doyle uses these evidence to support his claim that Diagne is one great hero proven by his acts.

There is no doubt that logic is an important aspect of convincing someone. But Doyle emphasized almost on emotional appeals, to move the readers to accept Diagne's heroism. Pathos is one the main ways to prove a point because it reaches for the readers' hearts and fills it with sensation, for them to change their point of view. An immense example is when Diagne stood in front of the bus filled with horrified Tutsis, and fearlessly shouted, "You cannot kill these people, they are my responsibility. I will not allow you to harm them -- you'll have to kill me first". These words just makes the readers feel grateful and enchanted by Diagne's fearlessness.

Another example is the lady crying in the video. This example fills the audiences' hearts with happiness as they see the lady who was saved just in time that she met Diagne's tears that exploded were just priceless. Comprehensively, the use of pathos in this multi modal helped ignite the emotions inside the readers, and Doyle accomplished his goal to prove Diagne's valor through emotions.

As credibility is the key of convincing, Doyle floods his article with examples and proofs, which are dependable enough to prove his point. Although Doyle is not that well known, his applying of ethos in the multi modal is gigantic because he attended most of these events and attended most of those actions personally. Two of the most observable examples are the video of the women describing Diagne's acts and the lady who was attacked by the priest. Those two examples are trustful as they
come from the mouths of the only two people on the planet who witnessed these events. These are some of the numerous situations in the article that the audience actually believes the author as they see the people for real. By bringing live examples the readers feel safe and more willing to acknowledge Doyle’s claim as it became more credible with the magic of ethos.

Using rhetorical questions, Doyle strive to persuade the audience that chief Diagne is one of our time’s noteworthy saints. His main purpose is for us to think, feel, and believe that Diagne is a hero. As Doyle stated in the Ghosts of Rwanda, Diagne saved various lives from the prime minister’s family to poor helpless people. He defined what a hero is and connected it to Diagne through his multi-modal. So lets all just think, lets all feel, and lets all believe in Doyle words that Mbuye Diagne is one of our time’s most special heroes.
Works Cited


Comment 1
More specific title needed

Comment 2
were once?

Comment 3
citation? and include in works cited

Comment 4
in the real world, or in today's world? This would make the contrast in the sentence clear.

Comment 5
grammar

Comment 6
did they? If so, then why did Doyle feel the need to write about him?

Comment 7
punctuation needed

Comment 8
I don't think most. Just a few, since he actually saved hundreds. Surely Doyle was not there for most of these savings.

Comment 9
word choice

Comment 10
what do you mean by this? why is this a good thing?

Comment 11
informal.
Comment 12
informal.

Comment 13
does he succeed? How effectively? State this here.

Comment 14
you need to specify these into three original main points that you will use to support your claim in your thesis.

Comment 15
which point? restate it in your topic sentence.

Comment 16
to conclude that

Comment 17
multi modal what?

Comment 18
grammar. You have a number of grammar issues. I have highlighted a few of them only. I suggest you get help from the writing center.

Comment 19
grammar

Comment 20
a nice sentence, but how does it relate to your previous sentence? Make your analysis more specific and relate it clearly to the topic sentence/essay purpose

Comment 21
capitalization rules.

Comment 22
A good analysis here, but again you need to link sentences together more cohesively/logically.

Comment 23
citation?

Comment 24
this is too generic. We know it can be used powerfully. The question is, does Doyle do so? And how?

Comment 25
not necessary.

Comment 26
grammar

Comment 27
definition of each appeal is not necessary.

Comment 28
word choice

Comment 29
why? explain how this moves the reader -- is it because he puts himself in harm's way?

Comment 30
word choice

Comment 31
informal

Comment 32
run on and grammar

Comment 33
why priceless? You need to support this claim with explanation.

Comment 34
remove

Comment 35
Good concluding sentence idea.

Comment 36
??

Comment 37
informal

Comment 38
word choice

Comment 39
But was Doyle there for these?

Comment 40
Comment 41
why does this make them trustworthy?

Comment 42
grammar

Comment 43
informal

Comment 44
?

Comment 45
which is?

Comment 46
word choice

Comment 47
word choice

Comment 48
word form

Comment 49
third person

Comment 50
punctuation

Comment 51
This is a wonderful sentence!

Comment 52
informal. And please use third person in academic writing.

Comment 53
I can see you have put in a lot of effort in writing this essay. You have some really good examples and some good analysis in a few parts. However, you need to work on developing your analysis and relating it more explicitly to the essay prompt. Try asking yourself the questions "so what?" and "how does this achieve Doyle's purpose?" You also have a number of language use issues. Please visit the writing center to get help.
Comment 54
How are there two parts in quotation marks? Something is wrong with this. Please check MLA rules carefully to fix it.

Comment 55
Good.
No one can deny his desire to make money. And no one also doesn't hope to work in what he like. In the work field and business you have many choices. Two of them are about choosing among working in what you like, or what makes money but, you don't like. In the second two paragraphs we will see the difference between two choices.

We all know that if you do what you like you will be satisfied, happy, and enjoy your life. But what you don't know, is that you will make money too. Jon Jordan is a small farmer lives in the country of northeastern Thailand. He wasn't too different and he wants to make money too like anyone, so he moved to the capital to work and study in university. After a period of time he felt that that wasn't what he want as he felt that he lost his freedom, happiness, and easy life. He decided to come back again and work in agriculture. After number of years he made money and built a new house. And after many years he built about 10 houses from agriculture only. He achieve both, being happy and make money.

Another choice is look for what makes money. That help you to make money, have a nice home, and a good car. But let's look to another side; you will spend the rest of your life in something you don't like that makes you unsatisfied person, so you can't achieve alot in this field. Some people think about work what makes money for a short time, or 3 years then they can move to another job that they like. But that's wrong because after spending 5 years in one job it's not to start from the beginning a new job and have low salary while you need money because you have responsibilities.

To sum up, you are always free to choose what you want. And in life, most of the times you can choose between two choices. But my advice to you, it is do what makes you happy because money can't always make happiness, that you are the one that makes money and happiness too.
Comment 1
"doesn't hope"

Comment 2
This may be a compound sentence if you replaced the full-stop with a comma.

Sp.
Spelling error

Prompt Wording
Use your prompt to more directly word this thesis statement, topic sentence, or conclusion sentence.

Comment 3
Final sentence is unnecessary. Write your thesis and move onto the first body paragraph.

Prompt Wording
Use your prompt to more directly word this thesis statement, topic sentence, or conclusion sentence.

Comment 4
Comma unnecessary here. Instead, say, "He wasn't too different in that..."

Comment 5
"wanted"

C/S
Comma splice:
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coordinating conjunction ("and," "but," "or," "nor") to join the two constructions, or 3) make one of the two sentences a dependent construction by linking it to the other with a subordinating conjunction ("if," "when," "so that," "although," "because") or relative pronoun ("that," "which," "who," "whom," "whose").

Comment 6
What do you mean by agriculture? Do you mean by the money he made from agriculture? If so, saying "money from" or "income from" here will make this clearer?

Comment 7
OK, this explains the example, but now I need to see an independent conclusion sentence for the paragraph.

S/V Agreement
Subject-verb agreement:
Subjects and verbs should match in number and person. Singular subjects require singular verbs; plural subjects require plural verbs.

Prompt Wording
Use your prompt to more directly word this thesis statement, topic sentence, or conclusion sentence.

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Comma splice:
A sentence must have both a subject and a main verb in order to be complete, but it cannot have more than one subject or main verb. A comma splice is a variety of run-on sentence that occurs when two complete sentences, each with its own subject and verb, are joined mistakenly by a comma. There are generally three methods of correcting this problem: 1) Replace the comma with a stronger mark of punctuation such as a period or semicolon, 2) use a coordinating conjunction ("and," "but," "or," "nor") to join the two constructions, or 3) make one of the two sentences a dependent construction by linking it to the other with a subordinating conjunction ("if," "when," "so that," "although," "because") or relative pronoun ("that," "which," "who," "whom," "whose").

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Comment 8
So if making money is the topic, "defend" making money. Again, you are trying to defend the
topic from the first paragraph again in this paragraph. Instead, develop this new idea of "making money" instead.

Comment 9
"for a short time, like 4 to 5 years, and then they move..."

Awk.

Additional Comment: Reem--I understand what you are trying to say here, but the wording is unclear.

Comment 10
What are the two choices again?

Comment 11
OK, here you have a complex sentence because of the clause starting with "because".

Comment 12
This "that" clause is not used correctly. Review the use of that clauses in the slides I created on the Google Drive.
T4: Advanced level (Google Docs)

Utopia

Do students in AUC ever considered going to war because they are feeling too bored? Ever heard the cliché, I am too bored that I want to die already? What do other students think of a human who say this kind of words? Some people say that only rich talk like that while the poor do not have enough time to say that. Ahmed Towfik, who is the author of a best seller book Utopia, grasp the audience mind in a fictional story where he presents a world in the near future in Egypt where the rich are even richer and the poor are poorer. You ask about the middle class, well, it is gone. In this world, there are two peoples which are named Utopia and the Others. The first is a gated community where no one can enter or leave without permission and only the rich are in the city limits. The latter are those who are poor and live day by day and treated as an animal. From the utopian, I recommend this story for the students for two main reasons, first because it shows significant themes which deal with huge problems in the Egyptian society, Second, the similarities between the book and Egypt are remarkable and can be crucial in creating a better Egypt in the future.

The book focuses on the youth and representing it through Alaa from Utopia and Gaber from the Others. Alaa wakes up, do nothing useful at all his day then go back to sleep again. The only thing that gives him a little respect is that he reads anything he get his hands on it. He take Phlogostine, which is a drug, to escape his current life, his boredom and go to this land where he imagine dragons and other things that break up his everyday routine. You wonder why Alaa is like that. Towfik mentions in the story that Alaa calls his mother and father by their names and that his father is always away and rarely when they sit together. Parenting is a monumental issue.
that Towfik put it in Utopia to represent that the youth who are corrupted are mainly due to their parents and environmental schooling. Put in mind that Alaa’s friends are a mirror to himself and he feel comfortable around them. His parents are to blame here because they had the chance to mold him when he was merely a kid but they didn’t which makes them a problem that destroy the youth. “I might go to war to break up life’s routine” (6) Alaa states these words as his life is meaningless and have no goals or anything to live for. He go with his friend to the territory of the others to kidnap anyone to feel the rush of being alive and to change the routine that he is so eager to change. On the other hand, there is Gaber who as mention in the story, a man who has a sister and he describes himself as a cloak to her that takes all the damage and not her knight. At the man that found himself in a horrible world with dead mother, dead father and sister that depends on him in everything. Life was his school, he get into many fights and survive. “That’s life. Life is still possible. You are still capable of finding food, shelter, and some treatment. So let tomorrow come” (47) Gaber lived his life day by day, he had tough life that he only demands for some food and shelter even if it is only for today and worry about tomorrow another time. There are some students that have everything and others that have very little to live on. The richer students need to feel those who are like them who wants to learn, who want to be something when they grow up, who wants to make their parents proud. Alaa goes to the Others and lives there for only two days and he could not bear the idea of living there anymore, so imagine Gaber’s life. In fact, spoiled students can only feel others like Gaber only of they tried to live their lives even for two days to know that they need to count their blessing and start to give those who are in need more.

Students might think the future Egypt in Utopia is very similar to Egypt now, even if they live disgusting, this is the real life to some after all. Women rights are in bad shape in the fictional
story where in Utopia, their husbands cheat on them and they cannot bring up their children. The
Other women are treated as sex slaves and have no rights at all, some look like jens. They are
skinny, ugly and filthy. Women in Utopia are like models, perfect smile, body and laugh. The
gated communities in Egypt are perfect. On the TV and in the magazines, they show to the
people that gated communities have perfect men and women, safe environment for your children
to grow up in and clean air (Gharnatt). Rich people are isolated from the country and they tend
to have foreign names like Ayla’s friend Germinal. Some places in Egypt only have rich in it and
other only have poor in it. The gap between both peoples are huge and in need to connect more in
order to find stability within the country limit. Another similarity is the morals and values. Ayla
has bad morals and selfish and have no respect to anyone, not his mother or father and not even
his friend Germinal who didn’t care that much whether she lives or not between the muders. While
Gaber helped Ayla more than once and expecting nothing in return, he hates blood and killing.
Gaber put principles and values to himself in order to live in this forsakes land for the upcoming
two or three days. Gaber is thinking of something beyond sex which is love or love in a life that
is peaceful and quiet. Ayla is a student that will crush his friends to reach his goals. Gaber is not
stupid, on the contrary, he is very smart, however, his emotional side overwhelming his smart
side and that is what a lot of poor people in Egypt do and the rich keeps being like Ayla, they

I looked and looked, and this I came to see:
That what I thought was you and you
Was really me and me (K6n, Wilbe) (85)
In conclusion, feeling others who are less than you is very important to create a country that can prosper in a good environment where the middle class is still exist which it is the bridge between the two worlds. I sincerely recommend this book to every student in the AUC so that they can truly feel the others and no one can mock them as rich spoiled kids with no morals of what so over. I recommend it for the book shows themes that impact on Egypt heavily and similarities between the book and the true world which in the future this may be true and possible and what the author fears the most. We need to be united at all time at all cost. Two peoples, two peoples and one world.
Works Cited


Raising teenaged children, nowadays, is not an easy task to do. It requires patience and awareness of the world around them. This is what can happen when we move ourselves, as parents, a bit out of their lives and get closer to their age not to control them. Children are overwhelmed by what we call "helicopter parents" or overprotected parents. Parents believe that by keeping their eyes on children 24 hours a day, they are protecting them from danger. Parental involvement has a long history of being studied as many studies found that a good parent is one who is involved but respects his child's privacy. Over parenting has been widely debated in our community recently. Therefore, we can find different arguments supporting and against this issue. In my opinion, I believe that parents should leave their teenaged children to make their own decisions without full supervision to raise their self-confidence and to gain life experience and independence.

To start with, parents should encourage their children to make their own decisions to raise their self-confidence. In other words, praising children's abilities and talents without being involved seems to increase their self-confidence and encourage them to be independent individuals. So, if children are able to learn from their daily life in schools or colleges, it will raise their ability to take decisions even if their decisions are completely wrong. This conclusion comes from a good parental wisdom by giving children the stick to go ahead and take experiences. For example, if we have a teenaged child who doesn't know how to do his homework. A Good parent will insist on encouraging the child to do his homework alone with minor assistance if necessary. This is because the parent wants his kid to learn and to believe himself instead of encouraging him to be a perfect student. Consequently, this will raise his sense of self to finish his work without parental
assistance to do the job for him. Thus, helping children to make their own decisions provides self confidence.

In addition to self confidence, parents should leave their teenage children to make their own decisions to help them to gain life experience and independency. To clarify, when parents leave their children the free will to do whatever in their life, it helps them to be independent enough to gain life experiences in general. Also, hanging back and allowing children to make mistakes is one of the greatest challenges of parenting as it helps in the development of their personality to be independent individuals. Hence, if our children are capable of doing something alone with their own decision, we have to congratulate ourselves on a well done job no to be mad about not listening to our decisions. For example, when I was 15 years old, I was the first student in my school to think about making a booth serving needy students. At the beginning, I made a lot of mistakes, like choosing the suitable place in the school to create the booth and not accurately calculating the actual cost of the whole booth, but because my parents didn't interfere and let me to make my own decisions, I learnt from my mistakes and was able to overcome them. Although I made so many mistakes at the beginning, I remade the same business when I was 18 and it was a huge success. Hence, it is clear from the previous example that parental encouragement leads to create independent generation full of happiness and self experiences. Thus, leaving children to take their own decisions is a necessity.
To conclude, it is important to leave our children to make their own decisions to raise their self confidence and the sense of self. Parents should raise their children’s self confidence by leaving them to learn from their own mistakes and learn to finish things by themselves. Also, they should make children to take decisions to make them independent and rely on their own. It is recommended that media-aware parents through parental programs of how to deal with teenaged children as parents, nowadays, see their kids as their extensions and mistakes are not allowed.
APPENDIX D

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval Letter

To: Nour Soliman
Cc: Sasa Tarek
From: Atta Gebril, Chair of the IRB
Date: Feb 11, 2016
Re: Approval of study

This is to inform you that I reviewed your revised research proposal entitled “The effect of L2 writers’ proficiency on their responses to written corrective feedback and teachers’ feedback strategies: An Egyptian perspective” and determined that it required consultation with the IRB under the “expedited” heading. As you are aware, the members of the IRB suggested certain revisions to the original proposal, but your new version addresses these concerns successfully. The revised proposal used appropriate procedures to minimize risks to human subjects and that adequate provision was made for confidentiality and data anonymity of participants in any published record. I believe you will also make adequate provision for obtaining informed consent of the participants.

This approval letter was issued under the assumption that you have not started data collection for your research project. Any data collected before receiving this letter could not be used since this is a violation of the IRB policy.

Please note that IRB approval does not automatically ensure approval by CAPMAS, an Egyptian government agency responsible for approving some types of off-campus research. CAPMAS issues are handled at AUC by the office of the University Counsellor, Dr. Amr Salama. The IRB is not in a position to offer any opinion on CAPMAS issues, and takes no responsibility for obtaining CAPMAS approval.

This approval is valid for only one year. In case you have not finished data collection within a year, you need to apply for an extension.

Thank you and good luck.

Dr. Atta Gebril
IRB chair, The American University in Cairo
2046 HUSS Building
T: 02-26151919
Email: agebril@aucegypt.edu
APPENDIX E
Consent Form

Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study

Project Title: The effect of L2 writers' proficiency on their responses to written corrective feedback and teachers' feedback strategies: An Egyptian perspective

Principal Investigator: Noura Nabil Soliman

*You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the research is to investigate how students at different levels of proficiency respond to written corrective feedback. The findings may be presented in conference-related presentations. The expected duration of your participation in the interview is 30 minutes.

The procedures of the research will be as follows:

- Teachers will be contacted via email to set appointments for the interviews.
- The expected duration for an interview is 30 minutes. All interviews will be audio recorded.
- During the interviews, teachers will answer some questions regarding the feedback strategies they use with their students at different levels of proficiency.
- Teachers will be kindly asked to provide the researcher with writing samples representing their written feedback comments and students' work (first and second drafts). The samples collected will be de-identified to ensure study confidentiality.
- The number of the writing samples will be decided upon in the interview.

*There will not be any risks or discomforts associated with this research.

*The teachers who will participate in this study will have a chance to think and reflect about the feedback strategies they are using with their students. Moreover, it will help them decide more efficiently on the feedback technique that suits each level of proficiency.

*The information you provide for purposes of this research is confidential, which means that the researcher will promise not to share your name while reporting the information or findings of this study.
"Questions about the research, or research-related issues should be directed to Noura Nabil at 2615-1912

*Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature

________________________________________

Printed Name

________________________________________

Date

________________________________________