

A comparison of the effectiveness of teacher versus peer feedback on Addis

Ababa University students' writing revisions

by

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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

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Ababa University Students' Writing Revisions**

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Abstract

The general objective of this research was to compare the effectiveness of different feedback methods on students' writing revisions. The specific objectives were to: (a) discover what feedback methods are in fact used in responding to students' writing at present (b) find out what students feel about the different feedback methods used in writing (c) compare the effectiveness of the teacher versus peer feedback on students' writing revisions, and (d) suggest the feedback method/s that could promote students' writing skills.

To achieve these objectives, two questionnaires and four essays for students and questionnaires for writing teachers were used both in the pilot and the main studies. The results of the pilot and the main studies were analyzed and discussed in chapters five and six, respectively.

The results of the questionnaires for students largely revealed that 'error identification', 'writing comments', 'conferencing' and 'reformulation' were the most common forms of feedback used in responding to students' writing. The students reported that their writing teachers mostly used 'error identification', 'writing comments' and 'conferencing' in descending order. The results of questionnaire for teachers also revealed that writing teachers usually used 'error identification', 'writing comments' and 'conferencing' in descending order. This practice, however, seems to be at variance with what students would like to have. The results of the questionnaires for students revealed that students would like to have 'writing comments', 'conferencing' and 'error identification' in descending order.

On the other hand, the results of the essays revealed that there was no significant difference *between* the mean scores of the two groups (teacher versus peer) for the impromptu essay and

the first and final drafts of the other three essays they wrote during this research. However, the mean scores of the first and final drafts were found to be significantly different *within* the group for all the three essays. The essay results showed that irrespective of the feedback method (teacher versus peer) used in responding to students' writing, there was no significant difference between the writing performance of the two groups. The results may suggest that teacher and peer feedback are equally effective in responding to students' writing. Moreover, the fact that students' writing improved significantly when they rewrote the originals suggests that rewriting improves students' writing significantly.

Chapter One

General Background

1.1. Background note on Ethiopia

Ethiopia is an ancient country located in Northeast Africa. It was ruled by monarchy until 1974 when the military took power by deposing the then Emperor of the country. This was followed by one of the longest and bloodiest civil wars in Africa. In this civil war the military government was defeated by the opposition forces of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) leading to the formation of the then transitional government.

According to the Royal Mail... (1994/5), Ethiopia is bordered by the Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Eritrea and Djibouti. The central area is a vast highland region of volcanic rock forming a watered, temperate zone surrounded by hot, arid, inhospitable desert. The Great Rift Valley, which starts in Palestine runs down the Red Sea and diagonally through Ethiopia, Kenya and Malawi. The escarpments on either side of the country are steepest in the north where the terrain is very rugged. To the south, the landscape is generally flatter and more suited to agriculture.

Amharic is the official language, although about 80 other native tongues are spoken in various regions in the east and south of Ethiopia. English is the second official language. Christianity (Ethiopian Orthodox) is mainly practised in the north and Islam in the east and south of the country (Royal Mail International Business Travel Guide, 1994/5:124). The present population of Ethiopia is over 58 million (1996 census estimate).

1.2. English in Ethiopia and Ethiopian Education

English plays a very important role in Ethiopia as the second official language of the country, the official language of international organizations, and the medium of instruction from junior secondary schools all the way up to tertiary levels (Dejenie 1990). As Dejenie further explains, the history of English in Ethiopia is directly linked with the introduction of modern education into the country and English has played a significant role in the educational system of the country ever since. English is taught as a subject from the first grade onwards and is used as a medium of instruction from grade seven all the way up to tertiary level education. Further, it also serves as the official language not only for the international organizations located in Ethiopia (such as the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Organization of African Unity (OAU)), but also for some national organizations such as the Ethiopian Air Lines, the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, and the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation. These organizations, as Dejenie further argues, use English as their working language because the nature of the jobs demands international contacts and/or transactions for which English is found to be the main tool.

Similarly, Gebremedhin (1993) also argues that the role of English is so important in Ethiopian education in general and institutions of higher learning in particular. To this effect, he explains that almost all course books and reference materials that are available in the University are written in English. Under normal circumstances, as he further pinpoints, university students are expected to have a satisfactory command of the English language in order to undertake learning tasks that involve the use of both the language and the knowledge the students get from their reading sources.

Hailom (1993) also shows the significant role English has in Ethiopia in general and Ethiopian education in particular. He underlines that English has been playing an important role in the country's efforts, particularly in the education sector. Haile Michael (1993) also explains that the full-fledged introduction of the English language into Ethiopia dates back to the beginning of the 20th century, when the first government school was opened in Addis Ababa in 1908. English was then taught as a subject while French was used as a medium of instruction. The Ethiopian government's prime interest in the teaching of European languages was "based on the need for some Ethiopians to learn European languages in order to maintain contact with European colonial powers, and to access modern western knowledge" (McNab 1989:78 as quoted by Haile Michael 1993:17).

Starting from the first quarter of the century, therefore, English has played an important role in Ethiopia not only within the education system in the country, but also in business, government, and international relations (Haile Michael 1993:17). Teshome (1995) also points out that the English language has assumed a significant role as a foreign language in Ethiopia for at least half a century. English is used as a medium of instruction from grade seven onwards, and thus the position of English language use in Ethiopia is on a cline between EFL on the one hand and English 'Mother Tongue' on the other. This could be why Bender et al. (1976) consider English as one of the major languages of Ethiopia. Thus, Bender et al. (1976) write:

English has a negligible number of native speakers in Ethiopia, but at present time it has a crucial position in education, commerce, government, and international communication, and from this point of view it can be regarded as a major Ethiopian language (Bender et al. 1976:12).

As pointed out by the aforementioned and many other researchers, English has a significant role in Ethiopia in general and Ethiopian education in particular. However, there is a lot of talk about the decline in the quality of Ethiopian education. Critics of the Ethiopian education system tend to attribute using English as a medium of instruction as one of the major causes for growing decline in the quality of Ethiopian education (Dejenie 1990, Gebremedhin 1993, Hailom 1993, Haile Michael 1993). As these researchers argue, although it is evident there is a decline in the quality of education in the country as a whole, the mere argument that using English as a medium of instruction is exclusively responsible for the decline in the quality of education sounds biased and politically motivated (Hailom 1993). There could be a number of factors for the decline in the quality of education in the country. Some of these factors, as Gebremedhin (1993) writes, quoting Rogers (1969) and Last (1983), include the fact that, the educational system is not in harmony with the fundamental needs of the country. Moreover, it seems that the country cannot afford to provide the appropriate funding and running of the country's schools for the ever-increasing number of children. Besides, as Gebremedhin notes, quoting Kehoe (1964), the major reasons for students' poor competence in the English language is caused by poor teacher qualifications, lack of appropriate teaching materials, and outdated teaching methodology in high schools.

This view is also shared by Dejenie (1990). He points out that a number of factors affect the teaching that goes on in the classroom. He underscores that one of these problems is the large class size---an average of 70 students per class---which has a considerable impact on the amount of class practice and exercises done as well as the amount of individual attention each student is given whenever and wherever required. The other problem noted by the same researcher is the

“shift system”, a method which is believed to solve the problem of the shortage of school space and other facilities by dividing the student population into two or three groups and making the groups take turn in using the same school facilities. The result is that the amount of time each group spends in class is minimised, eventually leading to a lesser period allotment for each subject. The other problem is that most teachers are not qualified for the teaching job and the in-service opportunities are rare and the teachers' morale is very low. In addition to these problems, as Dejenie argues, there is an acute shortage of teaching materials. Textbooks are in short supply and supplementary notes and handouts are non-existent (Dejenie 1990:15-16).

Haile Michael (1993) also airs similar views for the decline in the quality of education in Ethiopia. He says that there are many factors which are responsible for the decline in addition to the linguistic factors. He argues that lack of adequate reform in the education system, which has been largely academic; and the rapid growth in student enrolment both at school, colleges and university without a commensurate increase in financial and other resources are some of the major factors for the decline in the quality of education in Ethiopia (Haile Michael 1993:1-2).

The current political changes in the country, as Hailom (1993:7) argues, seem to strengthen the position of English in Ethiopian education. The Ministry of Education has made the teaching of English compulsory as of grade one for all schools throughout the country. This further suggests that English will continue to remain a very important language in Ethiopia in general and Ethiopian education in particular. Thus, the main question is what should be done to improve the teaching of English so that it could facilitate the teaching-learning process in Ethiopian education.

To this effect, it is worthwhile to briefly look at the efforts being made by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature to overcome the acute problem of teaching and learning English in Ethiopia in general and the Ministry of Education in particular.

1.3. The Department of Foreign Languages and Literature

The Department of Foreign Languages and Literature is one of the four departments in the Institute of Language Studies (ILS) of the Addis Ababa University (AAU). The other departments are the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature, the Department of Linguistics, and the Department of Theatre Arts. The ILS, as Haile Michael (1993) writes, was set up in 1978 after the restructuring of the then Faculty of Arts, under which the departments then concerned with language studies, namely, English and Amharic Departments were administered. The ILS was to act as both a teaching and research unit in matters pertaining to language studies (Haile Michael 1993:37).

The main responsibility of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature is to train prospective teachers of the English language for senior secondary schools. The Department offers a number of courses to its trainees for three consecutive years. When the trainees reach fourth year (final year), they will be required to write senior essays on topics pertaining to English language teaching and learning. After they have completed both the course work and senior essays, they will be awarded a B.A degree in English, which will qualify them to become English teachers in senior secondary schools. In addition, the Department trains those students who would become journalists and public relations officers in various governmental and private organizations throughout the country. One other major task of the Department is to teach service

courses in English to all first and second year students of the Addis Ababa University. The main objective of teaching these courses is to help first and second year students to improve their proficiency in English so that they might be able to function effectively in their academic studies (Haile Michael 1993:49). The Department further oversees the activities of other foreign language units (for example, French unit, Italian unit) of the Department.

The chairperson (head) of the Department is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day activities (both administrative and academic) of the Department. The academic staff ranging from graduate assistant to professor are responsible for teaching in the regular and extension programmes, and conducting research in areas pertinent to the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. Moreover, the academic staff members serve in various committees formed to promote the academic excellence of the Institute in general and the Department in particular.

Further, the Department organizes workshops and seminars for its regular teaching staff and part-time instructors to upgrade their teaching abilities and familiarize them with the current issues in English language teaching and in teaching methods.

The Department of Foreign Languages and Literature has established strong academic links with the Institute of Education, University of London, and Lancaster University in The United Kingdom. The British Council finances the scholarships offered to the Department. The links seem to have produced good results. A number of academic staff members of the Department have completed their doctoral degrees in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and stylistics and some other members are in the pipe line. The writer of this thesis is one of the beneficiaries of these links.

Chapter Two

Introduction

2.1. Statement of the problem

Writing is a skill through which, in most cases, the student has to prove to the teacher or examiner how well he/she learnt the subject. Students' success largely depends on their mastery over writing in academic setting (Mulamba 1993:1). However, as Rivers (1981) remarks, many college and university students with four, five, even six years of study of another language behind them, are unable to express themselves in a clear, correct and comprehensible manner in writing (Rivers 1981:291). This problem is obvious in the writing of our freshman and sophomore students at the Addis Ababa University. In most cases, their essays may have to be read again and again to make out meaning or the teacher/reader has to put (??) on the students' essays and paragraphs to indicate to the student writer that what he/she has written makes no sense or not clear (to the teacher/reader). This is the case in most student essays and paragraphs. In other words, the problem is serious and multifaceted. The content of their writing is not satisfactory. Their grammar is usually faulty. Cohesion is, in most cases, non-existent. Words are usually either misused or misspelt. Students seem to have little or no idea about mechanics. Students by and large seem not to have any idea about how to outline, how to organize ideas, how to summarize ideas, how to paraphrase ideas, how to make notes, etc. My sophomore English students told me that they had no idea as to how to write letters (personal or business) in English. It seems that they do not write in English outside of the classroom. In short, our students seem to have a great difficulty in writing intelligibly and effectively.

Who is to blame? Content area teachers tend to blame language teachers. Language teachers tend to blame students. Students attribute their problems to poor academic background and schools. Schools complain about lack of good teachers and teaching materials. The vicious circle goes on. However, one thing is certain. The courses have failed to live up to the rationale for teaching them. The rationale behind the teaching of English courses is that the courses would help the students to improve their English proficiency so that they might be able to function effectively in their academic studies (Haile Michael 1993). Further, there seems to be a general tendency amongst language teachers (in Ethiopia) to relegate writing to homework or avoid it altogether. The reason is as Byrne (1988:25) remarks because "it is treated as a compendium to the lesson rather than as a worthwhile learning activity in itself ". Moreover, writing entails a lot of time and effort. In schools where there are 70 students in a class (Dejenie 1990) marking students' writing and providing feedback to individual student is very demanding and sounds impossible. Thus, language teachers either give very few written assignments or fail to correct and return them. As a whole, the problems our students have in writing seem to be the sum total of many factors.

Byrne (1988) explains that on pedagogical ground alone it would seem that writing is a skill worth developing in the foreign language. Our problem, as Byrne further notes, is how to do this in such a way that they make measurable progress through the performance of realistic and relevant tasks (Byrne 1988:7). To this end, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature has been making strenuous efforts to improve the English proficiency of English majors in general and their writing skills in particular. Evidently, writing courses such as Sophomore English, Intermediate English and Advanced Composition are offered to English majors during their three years of training in the Department. However, students' English proficiency in general

and writing in particular does not seem to show encouraging progress. Many teachers of writing complain that these English majors have a serious problem in the central issues of composition: overall organization, signposting, information packaging and clarity of meaning (Allwright 1988). These limitations are quite obvious from students' writing (which the researcher has collected samples of). Moreover, the researcher is well aware of the magnitude of the problem from his years of teaching writing courses and advising students with their senior (4th year) essays. What makes the situation more serious is that these English majors are going to become teachers of English in the secondary schools. This implies that they should have a reasonably high level of English proficiency in general and writing in particular to be able to help their students develop writing skills.

Over the last several years writing has begun to receive more emphasis in the ESL/EFL curriculum, and teachers of ESL/ EFL are focusing on writing more often in their courses and programmes. At the same time, those responsible for evaluating the proficiency of students for whom English is a foreign/ second language have felt a need for more efficient, valid and reliable ways of assessing communicative ability in writing (Jacobs et al. 1981). To this end, it is worth noting the role of feedback in improving students' writing skills. Different theories of learning have their own ways of looking at feedback. For example, the behaviourist learning theory tends to equate feedback with positive or negative reinforcement. These two aspects of feedback, as consequences of a student behaviour (response), bring about a strengthening or weakening of the response, respectively. In a cognitive view of learning, the function of feedback is not only to provide reinforcement, but to provide information which learners can use actively in modifying their behaviours (Chaudron 1988:133-34). In spite of their differences in approach, they all agree

that feedback is central in the teaching and learning of language in general and writing in particular. Feedback provides the writer with information for revision in his/her work. As Cotterall (1995) emphasises, in order to assume greater control of their learning, learners need ways of assessing the quality of their language performance. Without feedback on their performance, learners can think they have mastered something when they have not, can fossilise in errors, become discouraged or resent the effort they have put in (Cotterall 1995:224). Similarly, Sommers (1982) underlines that without comments from their teachers or from their peers, student writers will revise in a consistently narrow and predictable way. Without comments from readers, students assume that their writing has communicated their meaning and perceive no need for revising the substance of their text (Sommers 1982:149).

Generally, as Chaudron (1988) reports, from the teachers' point of view, the provision of feedback, or "knowledge of results" (Annett 1969), is a major means by which to inform learners of the accuracy of both their formal target language production and their other classroom behaviour and knowledge. From the learners' point of view, the use of feedback in repairing their interlocutors' utterances, may constitute the most potent source of improvement in both target language development and other subject matter knowledge (Chaudron 1988:133). This therefore calls for investigating the different feedback methods used in writing in general and students' writing in particular.

To this effect, this research attempts to explore two feedback methods (used in writing)---teacher versus peer feedback and their effectiveness in improving students' writing revisions.

2.2. Objectives of the research

Dheram (1995) notes that feedback seems to be as central to the process of teaching and learning as revision is to the process of writing. It is therefore important to develop an awareness of the nature and function of feedback so that teachers and learners perform their roles effectively (Dheram 1995:160). The underlying idea in feedback is that the response students receive from their writing teachers and peers becomes a dialogue in which teacher and student negotiate meaning (Murray 1985). Reid (1994) also states that responding to students' texts is central to successful composition teaching and learning. Similarly, Chaudron (1984) underlines that only by means of feedback, receiving information about the effect of their writing on readers, can learners develop their skills in effective writing.

However, according to Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990), recent survey work has suggested that there may be a misfit between feedback teachers provide on compositions and learners' interests---that is what the teacher gives and what the students would like to get. Part of the problem lies in the nature of the teacher's feedback, which is unclear, inaccurate, and unbalanced---because it focuses only on certain elements in written output (e.g., grammar and mechanics) and because it overemphasises negative points. Furthermore, comments are not structured enough to help writers develop their ideas (Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990:155). This implies that teacher feedback has certain drawbacks. One alternative approach to minimise these drawbacks could be to ask students to correct one another's papers.

Therefore, the main objective of this research is to compare the effectiveness of different feedback methods on students' writing revisions. The specific objectives are to:

- (1) discover what feedback methods are in fact used in writing at present,
- (2) find out what learners say/feel about different feedback methods in writing,
- (3) compare the effectiveness of teacher versus peer feedback on students' writing revisions, and
- (4) suggest the feedback method/s that could promote students' writing skills.

2.3. Importance of the research

Writing teachers (in Ethiopia) at large tend to avoid giving written assignments to their students for fear of the amount of work and time involved in correcting students' writing because of the large number of students in a class. This avoidance of written assignments has a considerable impact on the teaching and learning process in general and developing writing skills in particular.

As this research attempts to find out what feedback methods are in fact used at present in writing, explore what learners say/feel about different feedback methods, and compare different feedback methods used in writing, the results of this research could have the following pedagogical values:

- (1) as writing is an important medium in the teaching and learning process at all levels in Ethiopian education, writing teachers could choose/use the feedback method/s, which could be effective in promoting students' writing skills, and
- (2) the results could also provide a useful framework for future research.

2.4. Scope of the research

The focal point in this study was to compare teacher feedback versus peer feedback on students' writing revisions. Given the administrative and technical problems that would be involved in collecting a large sample of essays from all groups that took Sophomore English during the two semesters of data collection for this study, the researcher has concentrated on the essay samples of two groups both in the pilot and the main studies. As a result, 10 students were randomly selected from two groups of 30 students for the pilot study and 18 students were selected in the same way from two groups of 26 students for the main study. All in all, the students wrote 70 essays (first draft and final draft) for the pilot study and 126 essays (first draft and final draft) for the main study on four different topics. Thus, the data for this research was based on these 196 essay drafts (first and final) of the pilot and the main studies in addition to the questionnaires for students and questionnaires for writing teachers conducted during the pilot and the main studies.

2.5. Definitions of terms and abbreviations

This part attempts to define the terms and the abbreviations used in the pilot and the main studies of this research.

S = student

G = group

D = draft

N = number (of students)

X = value awarded by rater 1 (see correlation coefficient tables in *Appendices M and N*)

Y = value awarded by rater 2 (see correlation coefficient tables in *Appendices M and N*)

x_1 = value of D_1 for G_1

x_2 = value of D_2 for G_1

y_1 = value of D_1 for G_2

y_2 = value of D_2 for G_2

cont. = content

org. = organization

lang. = language

voc. = vocabulary

mech. = mechanics

par. = paragraph

pars. = paragraphs

contd. = continued

TWE = test of written English (Jacobs et al. 1981)

ESL = English as a second language

TEFL = teaching English as a foreign language

L1 = language one

L2 = language two

kebelie = the smallest administrative unit of a town or city

kiremt = rainy season

S.D = standard deviation

t_o = t-observed

t_c = t-critical

2.6. Organisation of the thesis

The thesis comprises seven chapters and bibliography followed by a list of tables and appendices which include questionnaires, a list of teacher/peer comments, sample essays and other relevant data and information. Chapter one attempts to provide some basic information on Ethiopia. This is followed by chapter two which outlines the problem, objectives of the research, importance of the research, scope of the research, definitions of terms and abbreviations used in the thesis and organization of the thesis. Chapter three deals with review of related literature and chapter four outlines the various research methods employed in this study. Chapter five shows the analysis and discussion of the pilot study and chapter six is on the analysis and discussion of the main study of this research. The last chapter, chapter seven, contains the conclusion and recommendations of the thesis.

Chapter Three

Review of related literature

This chapter has three parts. The first part attempts to review what literature has to say about writing skills. The second part deals with error correction and the last part attempts to address some important and relevant issues in feedback.

3.1 Writing skills

3.1.1 Introduction

Language proficiency is worth developing for language teachers in general and writing teachers in particular. This is important because a teacher who is proficient in the language he/she teaches has confidence in his/her profession. As Murdoch (1994:254) points out, "For non-native English teachers, language proficiency will always represent the bedrock of their professional confidence." This idea is also shared by Lange (1990) who rates language competence as the most essential characteristic of a good language teacher.

In line with this, writing, which is an integral part of language teaching and learning process, is worth developing at any level of language learning programme. Writing and the process of struggling with language to get ideas down on paper is a valuable aid to the learning process (Hedge 1988). Rivers (1981:308) also points out that writing is a skill which must be taught and practised. This is true at any level of learning, especially in colleges and universities where students are required to provide writing tasks in various disciplines.

In the light of this, the main focus of this part would be to show what the literature has to say about writing in general and developing writing skills in particular. In order to achieve this purpose, the following topics will be explored in this part: the nature and purpose of writing, writing in L1 compared with writing in L2, the main approaches in ESL writing instruction, integration of skills, and some general guidelines for developing writing skills.

3.1.2 The nature and purpose of writing

3.1.2.1 Introduction

It is through language that we express our likes and dislikes, love and hate, joy and grief, hopes and aims, etc. Writing, which is an integral part of language, plays a major role to this end. As White and Arndt (1991:1) indicate, "Through writing we are able to share ideas, arouse feelings, persuade and convince other people. We are able to discover and articulate ideas in ways that only writing makes possible."

Writing is an important means of communication. Writing is not only used as a means of communication but also as a permanent record. Yet despite the power of writing as a permanent record, as a form of expression, and as a means of communication---it has tended to be a much neglected part of the language programme, both in first and foreign or second language teaching (White and Arndt 1991). However, Raimes (1987) underlines that writing should not be seen as simply one of the skills and the one taught last and emphasized least. According to Raimes (1987) and Rivers (1981), writing can be used for learning other language skills. But writing is by no means easy. Some applied linguists and theorists say that writing is such a complex and recursive skill. To this end, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1983:20) remark, "Writing a long essay

is probably the most complex constructive act that most human beings are ever expected to perform." Hence, the following part attempts to explore the nature of writing at length.

3.1.2.2 The nature of writing: why is writing difficult?

To begin with, White and Arndt (1991:12) indicate, "We believe that there is no point in pretending that writing is easy. Indeed, certain cognitive psychologists have described it as the most complex and demanding of all cognitive activities undertaken by human beings," The idea that writing is complex and demanding is also shared by Byrne (1988) and Hughey et al. (1983) who explain that certain psychological, linguistic, and cognitive factors make writing a complex and difficult discourse medium for most people, in both native and second language. Furthermore, Widdowson (1983) points out that two tasks are involved in learning to write. On the one hand, the student-writer has to learn how to conduct a non-reciprocal interaction by adopting a dual participant role, anticipating the reactions of a presumed interlocutor. On the other hand, he/she must be aware of the function of language as a device for negotiating the transfer of information and reference to shared knowledge.

It is not only that one has got to learn to write but also, as Bell and Burnaby (1984), cited in Nunan (1989:36), state:

Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation and letter formation. Beyond the sentence the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts.

It can be argued from what has been said above that writing is such a complex and demanding activity. On the one hand, the psychological, linguistic and cognitive factors involved in writing make writing demanding. On the other hand, the writer is expected to control a number of variables at the same time in writing. In the light of this, it would seem reasonable to further examine why writing is difficult for students in general and ESL/ EFL students in particular.

It seems that the difficulty in writing emerges largely from the nature of writing outlined above. To this end, Hedge (1988) remarks that the difficulty in writing might be for the same reasons that large number of adult native speakers never achieve a high level of expressiveness in writing their first language and this is partly to do with the nature of writing. Writing is challenging for ESL/ EFL learners because, as White (1987) explains, it involves discovering ideas, discovering how to organize them, and discovering what it is that one wants to put over to the reader. Moreover, as White further states, it is a thinking process. Writing cannot be separated from thinking when students compose.

The difficulty of writing in English is further compounded by the fact that effective writing requires a number of things from the learners: a high degree of organization in the development of information; a high degree of accuracy so that there is no ambiguity of meaning; the use of complex grammatical devices for focus and emphasis; and a careful choice of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and sentence structures to create a style which is appropriate to the subject matter and the eventual readers (Rosen 1981), as cited in Hedge (1988:5).

This seems to be true of all kinds of writing because all writing, no matter how humble, is consciously created, and results from cognitive processes involving translation of non-linear thought into linear written language (White and Arndt 1991). The difficulty students encounter when they write in English is well illustrated in White and Arndt (1991) by comparing it with flying a craft :

It is said that the two most critical and exacting manoeuvres in flying are taking off and landing, and the same is true of writing. A good beginning will attract the reader's attention; a good ending will send the reader away satisfied and stimulated. Less exciting, though no less important, than taking off and landing is the business of staying airborne. As a pilot has to keep the craft and its passengers safely in the air, so a writer has to keep the text flowing and sustain the reader's interest (White and Arndt 1991:102).

It seems that the difficulty in writing for students largely emerges from the nature of writing. The other reasons include the fact that writing involves discovery, thinking, and requires a number of things from the learners. As Richards (1990: 100) argues, "Learning to write well is a difficult and lengthy process, one that induces anxiety and frustration in many learners." It might be for these reasons that, in most cases, most people tend to avoid writing. "...writing is usually an irksome activity and an ordeal to be avoided wherever possible"(Widdowson 1983:34). This seems to be true in the teaching and learning process where teachers tend to teach writing at last or avoid or relegate it to homework.

3.1.2.3 The purpose of writing

As most researchers and teachers of writing would agree, the following questions are worth raising when we discuss the purpose of writing: *Who is my reader? What do I need to say? How can I make it clear to my reader?* To this end, Hedge (1988) explains that it is a clear sense of

audience which enables a writer to select appropriate content and express it in an appropriate form and style. Similarly, Hughey et al. (1983) point out that writers must have intent or purpose before meaningful communication can occur. The primary objective of writing is communication and there is no writing without a purpose and without a reader in mind.

The idea of purpose is well illustrated by Widdowson (1983) who says that the writer should know who he/she is writing to, what he/she is writing about and why he/she is writing. He further remarks that these are, after all, normal conditions for writing, and without them there can be no basis for interaction. The writer cannot negotiate anything unless, as Widdowson argues, he/she knows who he/she is negotiating with and for what purpose and unless he/she knows the conventions of the particular kind of negotiation he/she is engaged on. If these necessary conditions are not provided, then the business of putting words on a page becomes not a social activity but a language exercise: a manifestation of linguistic rules for display and not a realization of linguistic rules for communication. If the student does not recognize writing as a fundamentally interactive enterprise, then he/she will be forced to produce text which has no derivation from discourse: a piece of language existing in isolation for its own sake. Production of text for its own sake is not writing as a communicative activity but simply an exercise in linguistic composition (Widdowson 1983: 44). However humble the writing might be, there is always a reader and a purpose at the back of the writer's mind. That is why Pincas (1982), Raimes (1983), and Widdowson (1978) pronounce that there is no writing without a reader and a purpose. Moreover, the process of writing is a valuable learning tool for students in first as well as second or foreign language. A number of researchers pronounce that writing is a medium worth teaching and practising.

3.1.2.3.1. General purposes

Different researchers and theorists suggest that writing could be used for a number of reasons. For example, Imscher (1972) gives the following reasons for writing: (a) Writing is an important means of communication. (b) Writing frequently reveals to us that what we know and feel or what we may think we know but cannot verbalize. (c) Writing is also a means of organizing what we think. (d) Writing also helps us to weigh thought. (e) Writing inescapably mirrors the self. These reasons are rather general although they point out that writing has a number of reasons. More specifically, writing could be used as a valuable teaching and learning tool. In other words, writing can be used for pedagogical purposes.

3.1.2.3.2. Pedagogical purposes

Byrne (1988) points out the following as pedagogical purposes of writing: (a) to provide for different learning styles and needs (b) to provide the learners and parents with some tangible evidence that they are making progress in the language (c) exposure to the foreign language through more than one medium, especially if skills are properly integrated, appears to be more effective than relying on a single medium alone and (d) writing provides variety in classroom activities, serving as a break from oral work. At the same time, it increases the amount of language contact through work that can be set out of class and (e) writing is often needed for formal and informal testing. Similarly, Raimes (1987) indicates that teachers ask their students to write for the purposes of reinforcement, training, imitation, communication, fluency and learning. Moreover, Hedge (1988) notes that writing can be used to assess and diagnose the problem areas students have in language learning.

In addition, it is important to realize that language proficiency would be incomplete and ineffective without developing the ability to write proficiently. As Hughey et al. (1983) explain, students should be encouraged to believe that they will never attain full literacy in their L2 until they have achieved competence in writing. Rivers (1981) also remarks that writing gives the student practice in manipulating structural variants and in selecting and combining lexical elements, adding the reinforcement of the kinaesthetic image to the auditory and visual.

In sum, understanding the purpose of writing helps to realize the role of writing in our everyday communication in general and teaching and learning process in particular. To this effect, different researchers and theorists have pointed out that writing has a good number of reasons and writing presupposes a reader and a purpose and underlined that language proficiency is incomplete and ineffective without the ability to write proficiently. Thus, it is worthwhile for writing teachers to realize the nature and purpose of writing and help their students accordingly.

3.1.3. Writing in L1 versus writing in L2

3.1.3.1 Introduction

It seems plausible that the ability to write in one's native language could lead to the ability to write proficiently in the second or foreign language. But the actual reality appears different. In line with this, Byrne (1988) says:

We should not assume, however, that they (L2 learners) are proficient at writing in their mother tongue, or that they already possess the necessary organizational skills for writing effectively. Nor should we assume that the ability to write in the mother tongue can be transferred to the foreign language, although some global transfer, as with reading ability, often seems to take place (Byrne 1988:5-6).

White and Arndt (1991:3) also remark, "People in their native language though they may have a more extensive stock of language resources to call upon, frequently confront exactly the same kinds of writing problems as people writing in a foreign or second language." It seems reasonable that a comparison of writing in L1 with writing in L2 (as presented by different researchers and theorists) would make the argument more tangible.

3.1.3.2 Research findings

Krapels (1990: 37-56) in Kroll (ed.) (1990) has tried to summarize the influences of writing in L1 on writing in L2 (as found out by different researchers and theorists). To begin with, Zamel (1976) and Raimes (1979) recommended treating L2 writing as a process in the L2 classroom--- thereby decreasing the focus on surface-level errors and achieving correctness. They encouraged their colleagues to learn from first language theory, practice, and research and to apply effective L1 techniques to L2 writing instruction. Since that time, second language writing teachers have begun to conduct their own investigations of L2 writing processes and of the use of process-oriented pedagogy with second language learners. Chelala (1981) and Jones (1982) in their second language writing process studies distinguished between effectiveness and ineffectiveness in writing. Jacobs (1982) studied six native and five non-native graduate students and found that linguistic competence does not affect composing competence among language learners. Her study revealed no significant differences between L1 and L2 subjects. Zamel (1982) also found that competence in the composing process was more important than linguistic competence in the ability to write proficiently in English. She found that the writing processes of her L2 subjects were like those of the subjects described in L1 studies. Zamel concluded that L1 process-oriented writing instruction might also be effective for teaching L2 writing.

Zamel's (1983) study of six advanced (university) L2 students provided more support to a theme that was developing among L2 writing studies---that L2 writers compose like L1 writers. She had two types of subjects---skilled and unskilled. The skilled L2 writers in her study revised more and spent more time on their essay than the unskilled writers. In general, they concerned themselves with ideas first, revised at the discourse level, exhibited recursiveness in their writing process, and saved editing until the end of the process---all writing strategies similar to those of skilled L1 writers, as described in L1 writing process studies (e.g. Pianko 1979, Sommers 1980). Zamel's (1983) unskilled L2 writers revised less and spent less time writing than the skilled writers. They focused on small bits of the essay and edited from the beginning to the end of the process, very like the unskilled writers in Sommers' (1980) report of her L1 writing process study. Zamel maintained that the skilled writers in her study "clearly understand what writing entails," whereas the unskilled writers did not.

Raimes (1985b) has also offered more information on unskilled L2 writers. Her "unskilled" subjects composing competence did not correspond with their linguistic competence, "a recurrent finding in L2 writing research" (Kroll(ed.) 1990:44). Moreover, Raimes noted that the subjects paid less attention to revising and editing and they seemed to reread their work to let the idea germinate. Furthermore, whereas Zamel (1982, 1983) pointed out similarities in the writing behaviour of L1 and L2 writers, Raimes (1985b, 1987) found differences when she compared her subjects to the L1 subjects of Pianko (1979) and Perl (1978). Raimes (1985b) reported that her subjects wrote more, exhibited more commitment to the writing task, produced more content, and paid less attention to errors than Perl's subjects. Raimes (1987) concluded that L2 writers were

different from L1 writers in that L2 writers, "did not appear inhibited by attempts to edit and correct their work".

Before Raimes, L2 researchers had underscored the likeness between L1 and L2 writers, both skilled and unskilled. Raimes agreed that likeness certainly existed, but differences between L1 and L2 writers as well, and for this reason, Raimes suggested "the adaptation rather than the wholesale adoption of L1 writing instruction" (Kroll (ed.) 1990:45).

Raimes' (1985b, 1987) findings indicate that the act of writing in a second language is somehow different from that of writing in a first language and that there may be a relationship between the two processes. These differences have not yet been fully examined in second language writing process research, but some studies have begun to explore differences between L1 and L2 writers, have included consideration of the role of first language in second language writing, have compared L1 and L2 writing processes, and have investigated the influence of L1 writing processes on L2 writing processes.

Edelsky's (1982:227) study indicated that when writing in second language, writers call on what they know about writing in their first language. She found that knowledge of writing "forms the basis of new hypothesis rather than interferes with writing in another language," and she implied that fundamental L1 composing processes were applied to L2 composing. In addition, Lay (1982:406) who analyzed the compositions of four adult Chinese-speaking L2 students, pointed out two things: (1) when there were more native language switches (compared to the same essay

without native language switches), the essays turned out to be of much better quality in terms of ideas, organization and details and (2) certain topics induced more native language switches.

Martin-Betancourt (1986) also analyzed the protocols of Puerto Rican college students and concluded that L2 writing process was similar to the L1 process, with the exception of two composing behaviours---using more than one language and translating. She further pointed that her subjects had inadequate vocabulary in L2 writing. Raimes (1985a) also mentioned the problem of inadequate vocabulary among her L2 subjects and commented that this was also a problem for L1 writers.

Cumming (1987) reported that his subjects tended to use their first language for generating content for the writing tasks they were given. He observed that the unskilled writers consistently used L1 to generate ideas, the skilled writers used L1 for both generating content and checking style, particularly with regard to diction. Moreover, Campbell (1990), in Kroll (ed.) (1990), explored both the products and the composing processes of L1 and L2 students to compare the way in which they incorporated information from reading into their academic writing. He found that the L2 writers planned less and depended more on reading than the L1 writers.

As a whole, the findings indicate that there are similarities between writing in L1 and writing in L2 although differences have been noted in some instances. The point worth noting here is that although a background in first language writing may help to inform the explorations of second language writing teachers and researchers, it should not be presumed that the act of writing in one's first language is the same as the act of writing in one's second language because the two

contexts are different. However, it is not enough to be content with the present findings. It seems that more research works and explorations should be conducted to establish more dependable and valid guiding theories and principles.

3.1.4 Different approaches to ESL writing instruction

3.1.4.1 Introduction

Different applied linguists and theorists have come up with different writing approaches at different times for teaching writing both to L1 and L2 learners. The past efforts to establish the best method were, as Zamel (1987) notes, based on the faulty assumptions that there was a best method. The objective situation is, however, different. As Raimes (1983:5) remarks, "There is no one answer to the question of how to teach writing in ESL classes. There are as many answers as there are teachers and teaching styles, or learners and learning styles." This clearly shows that there are quite a large number of approaches used in teaching writing in ESL/EFL classes. It would be difficult to discuss all of them here. Thus, the focus of this section will be to highlight the major approaches used in ESL writing.

3.1.4.2 The controlled composition

This approach is sometimes referred to as the guided composition and its origin traces back to the oral approach to language teaching. According to this approach, language is speech and learning is habit formation. The approach was highly influenced by the ideas of structural linguistics and behaviourist psychology. Hence, for this approach, language is primarily speech and writing should serve the role of reinforcing oral patterns of language (Silva 1990:12-13). The main concern of this approach is, as Silva (1990) explains, formal accuracy and correctness and

as much as possible to avoid errors that are caused by the interference of first language. It claims that mistakes can be avoided, as Silva further notes, by positively reinforcing appropriate second language behaviour. The instructional methodology focuses on the learning of vocabulary and sentence patterns involving practice exercises like fill-ins, substitutions, transformations and completion. The learner is expected to manipulate the linguistic features he/she has learnt. The teacher's role is to see to it that the learner produces correct structures. The topics for writing are assigned by the teacher.

This approach pays little or no attention to the complexity involved in writing. The important features like content, purpose and audience are also down played.

3.1.4.3 Current-traditional rhetoric approach

Around the mid-sixties the controlled composition approach was felt inadequate on the grounds that ESL students needed to produce extended discourse in writing (Silva 1990:13). This meant that writing involved much more than the ability to manipulate linguistic structures and it was felt necessary to bridge the gap between controlled and free writing. The current-traditional rhetoric was thus meant to serve this purpose.

The focus of this approach is on paragraph and essay development. At the paragraph level, the focus is on topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentences and the use of linking devices. Paragraph development employs techniques like illustration, exemplification, comparison, contrast, classification, definition, and cause and effect relationship. The other

important focus was essay development. As Silva (1990:13) notes, essay development is "actually an extrapolation of paragraph principles to larger stretches of discourse." Essay writing also uses the same techniques used in paragraph development. The essay is structured into introduction, body and conclusion. The major forms of discourse are narration, exposition, description and argumentation. This approach has been dominant in American English rhetoric (Silva 1990, Bander 1978).

According to this approach, learning to write is acquiring the ability to arrange sentences and paragraphs into prescribed patterns to create connected discourse. Learning to write involves becoming skilled in identifying, internalizing, and executing of these patterns. The context of writing is academic and the teacher is the reader and evaluator. The current-traditional approach is still widely used in ESL/EFL writing materials and classrooms (Silva 1990:15).

3.1.4.4 Communicative approach

This approach seems to have emerged from "a view of language as communication, a view in which the meaning and uses to which language is put play a central part " (Brumfit and Johnson 1979). This approach differs from the other approaches to language teaching in the sense that it lays greater emphasis on the teaching of "communicative competence" (Richards and Rodgers 1986). They say that the goal of language teaching is to develop what Hymes (1972) referred to as "communicative competence". In Hymes' view, as cited in Richards and Rodgers (1986:70),"a person who acquires communicative competence acquires both knowledge and ability for language use... ." Thus, it is worth noting the following features which, according to

communicative approach, could enhance communicative competence in language teaching and learning process.

3.1.4.4.1 Learning

The knowledge about the language and the ability to use the language (communicative competence) are the aims which classroom teachers wish their students to develop in the teaching and learning process. However, these goals cannot be achieved only by the efforts the teacher makes in the classroom. The learners must take the responsibility for their learning if meaningful learning is to take place in the teaching and learning process. The following idea might make the argument more explicit:

It is now widely accepted that education must be ultimately concerned not just with teaching but with learning. One consequence of this is that what happens in the classroom must involve the learner and must be judged in terms of its effects on him. Another equally important consequence is that learning becomes to a large extent the learner's responsibility. The teacher can help, advise and teach; but only the learner can learn (Morrow 1981:63).

The best way to learn any skill would be to practise it. To become a good driver the best way is to drive. Similarly, to become a proficient writer the best way is again to write a lot. To this end, Hedge (1988:11) says, "My own experience tells me that in order to become a good writer a student needs to write a lot." This seems to be one of the features of communicative approach to language teaching---you learn to do by doing. "Only by practising communicative activities can we learn to communicate" (Morrow 1981:64).

3.1.4.4.2 Purpose and audience

Another aspect that communicative approach stresses in the teaching and learning process is the purpose of writing and audience for it. According to Raimes (1983c:8), student writers are encouraged to behave like real writers in real life and to ask themselves two crucial questions about purpose and audience:

Why am I writing this?

Who will read it?

This can be put into use in the classroom. As Byrne (1988) explains, the teacher can devise situations which allow students to write purposefully: for example, they can write to one another in the classroom or use writing in role-play situations. Thus, they can practise the language and at the same time learn from each other.

3.1.4.4.3 Level of operation

Another feature worth mentioning about communicative approach is that it "emphasizes operation at levels above the sentence" (Johnson 1981). This is particularly important because students, in most cases, are expected to write paragraphs and essays both in writing practices and essay examinations. Moreover, it is at paragraph level that the teacher can see whether the students can correctly use the skills of cohesion and coherence in their writing.

The relevance could be more clear if we consider this in relation to the situation in Addis Ababa University. Our students are required to write a number of paragraphs, essays and term papers during their stay in the University. For example, our degree students who do Sophomore English course in the second year are required to produce quite a number of paragraphs and essays in

different forms of discourse (narration, description, exposition and argumentation) during the semester. Moreover, almost all history, geography, biology, chemistry, sociology and literature courses entail writing intelligible texts for lab. reports, term papers, different examinations and 4th year senior essays. Thus, this calls for emphasis on producing intelligible and effective paragraphs and essays in writing at all levels.

In sum, the main focus in communicative approach is meaning and content. To this end, the communicative approach encourages language learners to develop their language skills through practice---to "learn to do by doing".

3.1.4.5 Product approach versus process approach

This part attempts to show what different researchers and theorists say about the product and process approaches.

3.1.4.5.1 The product approach

The product approach to writing, according to Nunan (1989), focuses on the end result of the act of composition, that is the letter, essay, story and so on. The writing teacher who subscribes to the product approach will be concerned to see that the end product is readable, grammatically correct and obeys discourse conventions relating to main points, supporting details and so on. The focus in class will be on copying and imitation, carrying out sentence expansions from cue words and developing sentences and paragraphs from models of various sorts. Moreover, Nunan (1991) explains that a product-oriented approach focuses on the end result of the learning process---what it is that the learner is expected to be able to do as a fluent and competent user

of the language.

3.1.4.5.2 The process approach

Those who advocate a process approach to writing, on the other hand, see the act of composition from a very different perspective, focusing as much on the means whereby the completed text was created as on the end product itself (Nunan 1989). Similarly, Zamel (1982) states that the act of composing evolves through several stages as writers discover, through the process, what it is that they are trying to say. In other words, one does not sit down and simply record, in a linear fashion, what it is that one wants to say. White and McGovern (1994) write that the process approach is based on a number of principles: (a) Writing is best seen as a recursive process. (b) The writing process is more satisfying when it is shared and discussed with others at each stage. (c) Your academic writing will rapidly improve when you try to look at your own writing as a reader. These principles imply that on the one hand, writing is an activity in which the writer darts to and fro among various processes to create a sensible, readable and meaningful product. On the other hand, it is an activity in which the writer plays the role of a reader and acts not only as a writer but also as a critic of his own work.

Raimes (1983) also remarks that in the process approach, the students explore a topic through writing, showing the teacher and each other their drafts, and using what they write to read over, think about and move them on to new ideas. Writing is an activity which goes through a number of stages before it becomes a linear product. To this effect, White and Arndt (1991:6) point out that writing passes through the stages of generating, focusing, structuring, drafting, evaluating

and reviewing though they insist that there is no fixed order. The first three are the stage of pre-writing and the fourth one is the stage of writing and the last two refer to the stage of revision.

3.1.4.5.3 Criticisms

Whatever the advocates of these approaches have to say about the advantages of one approach over the other, the two approaches could not escape criticism. Regarding the product approach, White and McGovern (1994) have this to say:

The limitation of a product-oriented approach is that it often focuses on what (the product) at the expense of how (the process). It is rather like showing an apprentice potter a finished piece of pottery without demonstrating the throwing of the pot on the wheel and the various processes of decorating, glazing and firing which result in the final product (White and McGovern 1994:1).

It seems that the product-oriented approach tends to play down the mental effort involved in producing a piece of written work, which is often a painful process. Another criticism comes from Zamel (1987). She says that when ESL students do get to write, teachers tend to view the resulting texts as final products to evaluate, which conveys to students the message that the function of writing is to produce texts for teachers to evaluate, not to communicate meaningfully with another person. But the purpose of writing transcends producing a product or text for teacher evaluation.

Similarly, the process approach has been criticized by different researchers and theorists. As Nunan (1991:87) writes, "While the process writing added a valuable new dimension to language classrooms, it has also attracted criticism." Thus, Nunan (1991) outlines some of the shortcomings of the process approach as follows:

(a) The process approach confines children largely to narrative forms and that this represents a serious limitation on their ability to master text types such as reports, expositions and arguments which are essential for academic success at school and beyond. (b) In his critique of the process writing, Rodrigues (1985), cited in Nunan (1991:87), states:

The unfettered writing process approach has been just as the traditional high school research paper. Writing without structure accomplishes as little as writing a mock structure...[students] need structure, they need models to practice, they need to improve even mechanical skills, and they still need time to think through their ideas, to revise them, and to write for real audiences and real purposes (Rodrigues 1985:26-7).

(c) Horowitz (1986a), cited in Nunan (1991:88), looking at the writing demands made on second language learners at university, has similar criticisms. He points out that process writing fails to prepare students to write examination essays. Moreover, he says that process writing gives a false impression of how university writing will be evaluated, and that choice of topic, an important process-writing principle, is irrelevant in most university contexts. Similarly, Hillocks (1986), as reported in Dyer (1996), published his comprehensive survey and analysis of experimental studies in L1 composition instruction, which made a persuasive criticism of pure process writing instruction. Hillocks concluded that a task-based, process/product combination (the 'environmental mode') was the most effective mode of L1 composition instruction. This conclusion has been mirrored in the research of Horowitz (1986a, 1986b), Long (1985, 1992), and others involved in second language task-based instruction (Dyer 1996:312).

To sum up, the two approaches might have their own strengths and weaknesses, but the main concern ought to be how to use them effectively in helping our students to develop their writing skills. It might be useful to realize that the two approaches can complement each other in a classroom situation and be used to help students to improve their writing skills. In writing class,

students need to be taught both how to use the process to their advantage as language learners and writers, and also how to produce an acceptable product upon demand.

3.1.4.6 English for academic purposes (EAP)

From the English for academic purposes perspective, language teaching is viewed "as socialization into the academic community---not as humanistic therapy" (Horowitz 1986c). The focus is on the expectations and demands of the academic discourse community---an audience which is outside the language classroom (Raimes 1991). This approach to language teaching claims that the syllabus design and classroom instruction should take into account not only the initial level of the learners' writing skills but also the target needs of the learners in order to help them meet the academic demands of the situations in which they are required to operate.

As a whole, all approaches might have their own merits and demerits. It is worth noting that there is no one 'best' method of teaching language in general and writing in particular. As Raimes (1983c:5) writes, "There is no one way to teach writing, but many ways." Most teachers have a strong desire to help their students to improve their language proficiency in general and writing skills in particular. Thus, teachers in general and writing teachers in particular would like to use teaching methods which cater for the difficulties students encounter in writing. Recent research does not, however, suggest one method as the 'best' for teaching writing. The plausible panacea to the problem would, as Zamel (1987) suggests, be that teachers should become researchers themselves and investigate the relationship between teaching and writing development in their own classrooms.

3.1.5 Integration of skills

3.1.5.1 Introduction

Traditionally, language has four major skills---speaking, listening, reading and writing. If language is the sum of these skills, then, it is not difficult to imagine that these language components complement each other. For example, when we talk about speaking that presupposes that there are listeners. Similarly, when we write we have readers in mind. Thus, the idea of integration of skills seems to be quite natural in our everyday communication and interaction.

If we see language skills in the context of teaching and learning, the situation is similar to what has been said above. There is hardly any situation where one skill is used without the support and presupposition of another. As Hughey et al. (1983) and Rivers (1981) remark, it is not possible or even advisable to teach one skill in isolation from the others. When a teacher lectures (speaking), the students listen (listening) and take notes (writing), ask questions (speaking) and read (reading) further to develop and understand the lecture notes better. This might show how the four language skills are integrated in a classroom situation. In other words, in the teaching and learning situation, one language skill can be used to reinforce another skill. To this effect, Byrne (1981) argues that integration usually means reinforcement. Language introduced and practised in one skill area (often speaking) is reinforced through practice in another (often writing). Similarly, White and McGovern (1994) explain that the reading units students do prepare students to recognize and analyze the various rhetorical functions and patterns of organization found in academic writing.

In the light of this, the next section of this part will attempt to show how speech and writing, listening and writing, and reading and writing could be integrated in the teaching and learning process.

3.1.5.2 Speech and writing

The teacher can use prewriting techniques that give students the opportunity to use all their linguistic skills to help them explore and get started with their ideas on a given topic or to allow the topic for a piece of writing to emerge out of communicative classroom activities. Thus, the following techniques can be used to integrate the teaching and learning of speech and writing.

3.1.5.2.1 Brainstorming

Brainstorming lets students work together in the classroom in small groups to say as much as they can about a topic. The teacher might not have to monitor grammar or pronunciation, except when the speaker cannot be understood, though the teacher will obviously be the source person whom students turn to as they search for the right structure to express their ideas. Whatever the writing assignment is based on---a reading, textbook topic, personal experience, or an examination essay question---it can be preceded by student talk, specifically by a brainstorming activity, with students producing relevant vocabulary, making comments, asking questions, and making associations as freely as they can in a short time. Students can, later, use the ideas of discussion for producing written texts (Raimes 1983c: 68).

3.1.5.2.2 Interviews

The interview is a useful technique to try with a new class so that students and teachers can know each other. When the students write the record of an interview, they convey to others genuine information transmitted to them by other students (ibid.: 73).

3.1.5.3 Listening and writing

3.1.5.3.1 Dicto-comp

The dictation technique is familiar to most ESL teachers. There are, however, alternatives to this procedure. A useful variation is the dicto-comp. The teacher reads a passage all the way through, not broken into segments. Students listen to the passage two or three times. Then they pick up their pens and write down as close a version as possible. This makes them pay attention to the meaning of the passage more than to the form of individual words or the structure of the individual sentences. At the end of the passage, the students gather in small groups to compare what they have written down. After they have assembled everything they can remember, they listen to the passage again, make revisions and then check their grammar, spelling and punctuation. They exchange papers with each other and remind each other of omitted points. Then the teacher either dictates again in segments, or writes up the complete version on the blackboard (ibid.: 76-77).

3.1.5.3.2 Note-taking

In real life, when we need to listen and write, it is not always possible to write down every word we hear. People just do not talk at dictation speed. On the telephone, in the classroom, in everyday conversation, we write down a summary of what the speaker says, picking out the

important information. The radio or the tape recorder is valuable here for providing additional material for students: dialogue to listen to, arguments to overhear, and speeches to react to. Advanced students can listen to long passages and make notes as they listen (ibid.: 78).

3.1.5.4 Reading and writing

There is a widely held belief that in order to be a good writer a student needs to read a lot (Hedge 1988). It is true that reading provides students with information which they might need to use in their writing, especially if the problem of the students is lack of ideas. From our own experience of second language learning we might say that the more familiar we are with the new language (through reading, for example) the more confident we tend to feel when it comes to writing. Hughey et al. (1983) explain that for second language students writing becomes a means to improve other language skills. As learners seek to present and explain their ideas in writing, they search for precise word choices and suitable structures in which to frame their ideas. Writing enables them to expand these ideas as they work to develop fluency in the language. As they search for evidence to support a point of view or position on an issue, then reading skills are enhanced. Through reading, their writing skills are reinforced.

The idea of integration of skills in general and writing and reading in particular is widely discussed by Widdowson (1978). Accordingly, he points out that the teaching of language as communication calls for an approach which brings linguistic skills and communicative abilities into close association with each other. Even though a particular exercise may focus on a particular skill or ability, its effectiveness will often require the learner to make reference to other aspects of his communicative competence. The learner's goal is essentially to acquire a

communicative competence in the language or an ability to interpret discourse, whether the emphasis is on productive or receptive behaviour. From this, it seems to follow that any approach directed at achieving the desired goal should avoid treating the different skills and abilities that constitute competence in isolation from each other as ends in themselves. What the learner needs to know how to do is to compose in the act of writing, comprehend in the act of reading, and to learn techniques of reading by writing and techniques of writing by reading. If the aim of language learning is to develop the underlying interpreting ability, then it would seem reasonable to adopt an integrated approach to achieve it (Widdowson 1978: 144).

White (1981) and Johnson (1981) also emphasize the relationship between the reading and writing skills. Moreover, Smith (1982), cited in Hughey et al. (1983:41) writes, "Writing is learned by writing, by reading---and by perceiving oneself as a writer... ." This suggests that reading can enhance the development of writing skills. This is particularly important in a classroom situation where students need to develop their language proficiency in general and writing skills in particular. The following ideas found by Stotsky (1983), cited in Kroll (ed.) (1990:88), further suggest that reading and writing skills are interdependent:

- (a) Better writers tend to be better readers
- (b) Better writers read more than poor writers
- (c) Better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poor writers.

Although the statements pronounced by Stotsky (above) seem plausible, more and more classroom-based research should be conducted at various levels to confirm or refute these findings.

In sum, in this section, the attempt has been to see how language skills support and reinforce each other in our everyday interaction and more obviously in the teaching and learning process. Thus, it has been pointed out that even our everyday communication largely depends on how we use these skills effectively in various combinations depending on the nature of the interaction. In writing class, too, by giving students opportunities to talk, read, write and evaluate together, teachers can create settings in which active communication can occur and develop.

3.1.6 Developing writing skills: some guidelines

3.1.6.1 Introduction

It was reported earlier that writing is such a complex and challenging skill to perform. However difficult writing might be, it is immensely important in language teaching and learning process. Thus, the relevant question would be---How can language learners in general and second or foreign language learners in particular develop their writing skills?

To this effect, this part attempts to suggest some ways in which students in general and ESL/EFL students in particular may improve their writing skills. For the sake of convenience the part is divided into two sections. The first section attempts to indicate the differences between skilled and unskilled writers and their pedagogical implications and the second section suggests some general guidelines that could enhance the improvement of writing skills.

3.1.6.2 Skilled versus unskilled writers

This section tries to indicate how studying the differences between skilled and unskilled writers provides information which could be transformed into pedagogy.

One of the main concerns of language teachers in general and writing teachers in particular is how to help those students who are 'unsuccessful' in learning the new language. One possible approach to help the 'unsuccessful' learners is to examine how good learners succeed in learning the new language. Stern (1975) and Rubin (1975) suggest that language learning strategies and techniques, as developed by successful language learners, should be identified so that this knowledge could then be applied to the unsuccessful learner in helping him/her 'how to learn'.

In the light of this, Zamel (1982) cites studies which show that less skilled writers tend to focus on the mechanics of writing and are inhibited by their concern for formal correctness. They are also less able to anticipate the likely problems of the reader. She further states that in the process terms, skilled writers are much more aware of writing as a recursive activity involving revisions of successive drafts of one's texts, during which one's ideas might change, necessitating the rewriting of whole chunks of text. Unskilled writers, on the other hand, tend to limit themselves to teacher-generated rules and modifications of lexis.

Similar findings are reported by Lapp (1984), cited in Richards' (1990:46). At the pre-stage, skilled writers spend time planning the task, while unskilled writers spend little time planning and, in consequence, are confused when they begin. At the drafting stage, skilled writers write quickly and fluently, spend time reviewing what they write, and do most of their reviewing at the sentence and paragraph level. Unskilled writers spend little time reviewing what they have written, review only short segments of text, and are concerned principally with vocabulary and sentence formation. Finally, at the revision stage, skilled writers revise at all levels of lexis, sentence and discourse, review and revise throughout the composing process, and use revisions

to clarify meaning, while unskilled writers do not make major revisions in the direction or focus of the text, make most revisions only during the first draft and focus primarily on the mechanics of grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary.

From what has been said above, it might be possible to infer that the more we know how good writers write, the better could we help the opposite type of students, those for whom writing is "fraught with a multitude of seemingly insurmountable problems and difficulties" (Frohlich and Paribakht 1976).

3.1.6.3 Some guidelines for developing writing skills

In this section, some general guidelines which could foster writing skills are suggested.

3.1.6.3.1 Interests

Zamel (1987) emphasizes that the writing class should take into account the learners' purposes for writing which transcend that of producing texts for teacher evaluation. Writing skills can develop rapidly when the students' concerns and interests are acknowledged, when they are given numerous opportunities to write, and when they are encouraged to become participants in a community of writers.

3.1.6.3.2 Role

Another feature worth mentioning when we talk about developing writing skills is that students should know the role of writing in language learning from the very beginning. This is important because once they have understood the place of writing in language learning, the students can

work persistently to achieve their goals irrespective of the challenges involved. To this effect, Hughey et al. (1983) point out that writing is closely tied to daily communication in the "real world", and students need to be encouraged to believe that they will never attain full literacy in their second language until they have achieved competence in writing. Writing competence reflects overall achievement in language, and learners who have developed the ability to communicate effectively in the written medium of a language have indeed made the language their own (Hughey 1983:37).

3.1.6.3.3 Challenges

Knowing the role of writing alone is not enough. Students should also know the challenges involved in writing. The writing path leads to the end product. However, along the way there are many diversions, side lanes, and circular walks writers must take before they arrive at their destinations (Hughey et al. 1983:40). Further, Hughey et al. (1983:33) say, "Writing, like life itself, is a voyage of discovery." Students generally tend to forget this aspect of writing and attempt to write linearly, which in most cases could result in failure.

3.1.6.3.4 Time

Another important point worth mentioning is time. As White and Arndt (1991:3) remark, "Time is needed to incubate, sift and shape ideas." The practice of cutting back and relegating writing to homework is a common way of treating writing in the teaching and learning process. But of all the skills, writing is the one which most needs and benefits from time. Hence, writing teachers should devote classroom time to writing.

3.1.6.3.5 Content and meaning

It seems that most writing teachers tend to focus on form in writing. But students' writing could improve if as much attention is given to meaning as form is. As White and Arndt (1991:3) point out, "...it is through attention to meaning, not just form, that language---and writing---can improve." Students might have a good mastery of the grammar of the new language, however, as long as this knowledge of the language is not complemented by the ability to compose meaningfully, it is unlikely for students to write effectively.

In sum, the main focus of this part was to suggest some practical ways in which ESL/EFL students could improve their writing skills. Accordingly, it has outlined some notable differences between skilled and unskilled writers and their pedagogical implications, and also indicated some general guidelines, which could enhance the development of writing skills. It is worth realizing that students' writing skills would improve if these guidelines are persistently applied in the teaching of writing skills.

3.1.7 Conclusion

The main objective of this part was to show what the literature has to say about writing in general and developing writing skills in particular.

In line with this, this part has examined *the nature and purpose of writing*, and indicated that writing is such a complex and demanding activity that it is challenging both for first and second or foreign language learners; and there are a number of reasons for writing and writing presupposes a reader and a purpose. Next, *comparing writing in L1 with Writing in L2*, this part

has indicated that there are similarities between writing in L1 and writing in L2 although differences have been observed in some instances. Then, *different approaches to writing* have been reviewed and it has been found out that all writing approaches have their merits and demerits. However, they could be integrated and used to develop the writing skills of students. Moreover, more classroom-based research should be conducted to investigate the relationship between teaching and writing skills development.

As to *integration of skills*, it has been shown that language skills can be integrated to support and reinforce each other both in our everyday interaction and in a teaching and learning situation. In *developing writing skills* part, it has pointed out the differences between skilled and unskilled writers and their pedagogical implications, and some general guidelines which could help students to improve their writing skills.

As a whole, this part has attempted to outline some important issues in writing and more specifically issues pertinent to the development of writing skills in an ESL/EFL context.

3.2. Error correction

3.2.1 Introduction

There seem to be two different attitudes towards the mistakes or errors learners make in the course of their learning a new language. Norrish (1983) explains that "probably most teachers regard mistakes as undesirable, a sign of failure either on the students' part to pay attention to or to 'listen properly', or else on the teacher's part to make his meaning clear or to give the students sufficient time to 'practise' what they have been taught." The second attitude, as Norrish (1983:1)

further notes, is that "making mistakes can indeed be regarded as an essential part of learning." Similarly, Corder (1974) points out that in the field of methodology there have been two schools of thought in respect of learners' errors. Firstly the school which maintains that if we were to achieve a perfect teaching method the errors would never be committed in the first place, and therefore the occurrence of errors is merely a sign of the present inadequacy of our teaching techniques. The philosophy of the second school is that we live in an imperfect world and consequently errors will always occur in spite of our efforts. Our ingenuity should be concentrated on the techniques for dealing with errors after they have occurred (Corder 1974:90-91). Dulay et al. (1982), who go for tolerance towards errors, also say that "...making errors is an inevitable part of language learning. People cannot learn language without first systematically committing errors" (Dulay et al. 1982:138).

These opposing views could be associated with the behaviourist theory of learning, which tends to equate feedback with positive or negative reinforcement, and the cognitive theory of learning, which suggests that the function of feedback is not only to provide reinforcement, but to provide information which learners can use actively in modifying their behaviours (Chaudron 1988: 133-34).

As language teachers, the view we advocate could influence the teaching and learning process. To this effect, Bartram and Walton (1991) remarked that how we react to mistake is part of our whole vision of what a language is, what learning is, and what a teacher is (Bartram and Walton 1991:5). If we regard errors as undesirable, we tend to look for perfection and accuracy and lump errors together irrespective of their gravity. This could be reflected in our evaluation of students'

writing. This approach, which tends to treat "serious" and "less serious" errors similarly, might lead to hesitancy among learners to say or write anything in a foreign language for fear of appearing foolish (Norrish 1983:1). A number of L2 researchers, as Chaudron (1988:135) reports, have pointed out that many teachers' attempts to "correct" learners' errors are in fact ambiguous, misleading, and potentially inconsistent. However, if we support the second view, tolerance towards errors, we are likely to make a distinction between errors that hinder communication and those that do not and treat them accordingly.

To this end, this part will attempt to highlight the types of errors, error gravity and the various approaches to error correction in the teaching and learning of writing.

3.2.2 Types of errors

Error refers to any deviation from a selected norm of language performance, no matter what the characteristics of the deviation might be (Dulay et al. 1982, Norrish 1983, James 1998). Researchers distinguish between errors caused by factors such as fatigue and inattention ("performance" factors, Chomsky 1965), and errors resulting from lack of the rules of the language ("competence" factors, Chomsky 1965). In some of the second language literature, as Corder (1967) reports, performance errors have been called "mistakes" while the term "errors" was reserved for the systematic deviations due to the learner's still-developing knowledge of the second language rule system. James (1998) also makes a distinction between mistakes and error as follows: James (1998:238) explains that mistakes are self-correctable with the benefit of feedback: knowers have to tell the learners that they are wrong, but no more. They do not have to specify in what respect. However, as James further notes, if self-correction is still impossible

despite provision of simple factual feedback without specification of the nature of the deviance, then we have a case of error proper. The deviance springs from ignorance. The learners are not told simply that there is ill-formedness, but also the nature of this ill-formedness (James 1998:239).

On the other hand, Norrish (1983) makes a distinction between "mistakes" and "lapses". He explains that a mistake is a failure on the part of the learner to use the correct form consistently. For example, a learner might say: 'I must go to school' (correct) sometimes and 'I must to go to school' (incorrect) some other time. This inconsistent deviation is what Norrish calls a mistake. On the other hand, he argues that lapses are neither errors nor mistakes, but they are wrong usage which can occur due to lack of concentration, short of memory, fatigue etc. He remarks that native-speakers suffer lapses/slips in the same way as learners of the language (Norrish 1983: 8).

The distinction between error and mistake is further elaborated by Johnson (1988) as follows: we might begin by asking why is that students get things wrong. There are at least two reasons, as Johnson suggests. One is that the student either does not have the appropriate knowledge, or has some false knowledge. He or she may say that the student's interlanguage knowledge is faulty. The result is what Corder (1981), as cited in Johnson (1988), calls an error. There is, however, a second reason for a student getting something wrong. It may be a lack of processing ability. That is to say it is not his or her 'knowledge' that is at fault here; it is his or her ability to 'perform his or her competence' in difficult operating conditions. The result is what Corder (1981), as cited in Johnson (1988), calls a mistake (Johnson 1988:90).

On the other hand, errors can be classified into 'local' and 'global' depending on how seriously they impede communication. Global errors, as reported in Burt and Kiparsky (1974) and Dulay et al.(1982), are errors that affect overall sentence organization significantly and hinder communication. Because of the wide syntactic scope of such errors, Burt and Kiparsky (1974) labelled this category "global". The most systematic global errors, as reported in Dulay et al. (1982) include:

- *wrong order of major constituents*

e.g. English language use many people.

- *missing, wrong, or misplaced sentence connectors*

e.g. He will be rich until he marry.

- *missing cues to signal obligatory exceptions to pervasive syntactic rules*

e.g. The students' proposal looked into the principal.

- *regularization of pervasive syntactic rules to exceptions*

e.g. We amused that movie very much.

Local errors are errors that affect single elements (constituents) in a sentence. Local errors do not usually hinder communication significantly. These include errors in noun and verb inflections, articles, auxiliaries and the formation of quantifies. Since these errors are limited to single part of the sentence, Burt and Kiparsky (1974) labelled them local. The global and local distinction, as Burt and Kiparsky (1974:73) argue, is a relative notion; something that is global in one sentence may become local when that sentence is embedded in a bigger sentence. Moreover, the distinction can be extended to the classification of errors in terms of those that sound more "un-English" to a listener or reader than others. For example, let us compare:

Why like we each other? and Why we like each other?

Both of these can be understood without too much trouble, Burt and Kiparsky's judges found that the first more "un-English" than the second. The most compelling explanation for this difference seems to be that the first version violates the typical *Subject-Verb-Object* order in English, while the second does not (Dulay et al. 1982:191-2).

3.2.3 Error gravity

It is important to consider two basic ideas regarding error gravity: serious versus less serious errors and native versus non-native views on error gravity. A number of researchers and theorists use these dichotomies in their research. To this effect, James (1977), in his study of error gravities, collected some one hundred errors committed by foreign learners of English, learners from many parts of the world. He selected 50 items, which fell into ten categories (transformations, tense, concord, lexis (noun), lexis (adjective), lexis (preposition), lexis (verbs), negation, articles and order). The fifty items were presented in randomized order in questionnaire form to two groups of EFL teachers, 20 native and non-native to: (a) underline the mistake (b) write a correction and (c) show how serious he/she considers the mistake by writing a number---0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5---'5' means that the mistake is very serious, '1' indicates that the mistake could be easily excused, and '4', '3', '2' show intermediate degrees of seriousness. The findings of this study suggest that non-native judges tend to mark more severely than native speakers do. Moreover, the study has found out that the error categories most stigmatized by the non-native are those of case and lexis, whereas the natives most resent errors in tense and concord. This confirms Richards's (1971), as cited in James (1977: 122), belief that native speakers are fussy about verb morphology, and suggest that native speakers tolerate lexical errors more readily than

non-natives do. Another finding reported in this study is that the error-types considered most serious were, in descending order: transformations, tense, concord, case, negation, articles, order. The last three positions, the least serious errors, are filled by the lexical errors.

Further, a similar research was conducted by Hughes and Lascaratou (1982). They found in their study of the seriousness of 32 errors made by Greek-speaking students of English in their penultimate year of high school. This study revealed that the three groups, comprising thirty judges (ten native-speaker teachers of English, ten Greek teachers of English, ten educated English native-speakers who were not teachers), differed in their assessment of the relative seriousness both of individual errors and categories of errors. In judging the seriousness of errors, the Greek teachers made reference to the basicness of the rules infringed, while the non-teachers depended almost exclusively on the criterion of intelligibility. Reflecting the fact that they were both native-speakers and trained teachers, the English teachers based their judgements on both criteria, but showed some preference for that of intelligibility (Hughes and Lascaratou 1982: 180).

The assessment of students' language production, as Hughes and Lascaratou (1982) point out, written or spoken, should be consonant with teaching objectives. If a primary objective is the development in students of communicative competence, then the assessment of work must be carried out with reference to its effectiveness in communication, i.e. to its intelligibility. This is not to undervalue accuracy. It is still recognized that for some purposes (such as the work of a translator or a language teacher) near perfect accuracy may be necessary. What is clear, however,

is that for successful communication, accuracy is more important in some linguistic elements than in others, and that marking should reflect this (Hughes and Lascaratou 1982:180).

Davies (1983) also, as reported in James (1998:233), made a direct comparison between the error gravity of 43 Moroccan EL3 teachers and 43 non-native speakers of English. It was found out that the latter were much more tolerant of errors. A similar research work was conducted by Santos (1988). The researcher, as reported in James (1998:229-230), compared the ratings given by English native speakers and Japanese nonnative speaker professors of two students' essays, one with L1 Japanese, the other Korean. Two new variables that Santos introduced are the raters' academic discipline (science versus humanities) and the professors' age (older versus younger). The results show that the nonnative speaker professors were more severe in their judgement than the native speaker professors; older professors were less irritated than younger ones; and that professors of social science and humanities were more lenient than those of physical science.

James (1998:206-226) points out that error gravity involves a number of criteria, among which are: irritation, frequency, intelligibility and noticeability. The first two criteria are briefly discussed below. James (1998) notes that the first to use the term 'irritation' to refer to one aspect of linguistic nonconformity (error) was Johansson (1975), observing that error can 'affect the relationship between the speaker and the listener (e.g. make the listener tired or irritated or draw away his attention from the contents of the message' (1975:25). Another possible effect is to give the impression of the speaker as apathetic or even surly. His observation, as James (1998) further notes, led Johansson to carry out research to identify which types of error are the most irritating.

His results suggested that word-order errors are the least irritating, complementation errors the most irritating, with concord errors occupying the middle ground:

e.g. Word order: Not a single mistake *they have made* (wrong)/*have they made* (correct).

Concord: Your new boss *want* you to resign (wrong)/ *wants* you to resign (correct).

Complementation: They prevented him *to receive* the award (wrong)/*from receiving* (correct)

(James 1998:222).

The claim to be able to establish an irritation scale has, however, been challenged notably by Albrechtsen, Henriksen and Faerch (1980), as reported in Vann et al. (1984: 428) and James (1998:222), who assert 'All errors are equally irritating...one should not expect to be able to establish a hierarchy of errors with respect to irritation' (1980:395). This view seems to be implausible in the sense that errors which hinder communication between the producer and receiver of the message could be irritating.

Moreover, James (1998:209-211) has the following to say about frequency in relation to error gravity. James notes that frequency is a quantitative measure and its use presupposes that we know what and how to count relevant incidences of error. When we say that frequency is a valid index of the gravity of an error, we can mean several things. We might have in mind the correlation identified by Olsson (1977:31), cited in James (1998), between number and seriousness of errors they commit are equally cavalier towards the enormity of some of these errors.

James (1998) explores three areas in relation to frequency: production frequency, frequency of use and error density. Production frequency is the number of times that a particular learner commits the error in question. For example, let us consider the case of three learners who all need to use the target language construction *I want you to drive* six times. Learner A gets it wrong six times, each time saying or writing **I want that you drive*. Learner B produces **I want that you drive* and ** I want you drive* three time each. Learner C produces three times ** I want that you drive* and three times **I want you to drive*. The difference between the three lies in their consistency. Some judges might say that A is 'at least' consistent and give his error a low error gravity rating; that B is not only always wrong but shows versatility in his wrong-doing, which is very serious; and that C really knows the target language but makes mistakes 50 per cent of the time.

Frequency of use, on the other hand, refers to how frequently a certain word or sentence is used by the native speaker in that particular language. For example, the sentence *We want more money* may be more frequent than *What we want is more money*, or the verb *drive* may be less frequent than *go*. The argument here is that having communicative competence in a language depends in part on 'knowing' the relative frequencies of use of its forms. It may be further argued that the validity of weighting the error gravities on the grounds that the learner has had more exposure to the frequent forms, and therefore more opportunity to notice and acquire them.

The third area is error density. It is calculated by counting how many different errors occur per unit of text, while production frequency is a measure of how many times the same error is repeated over say one hundred words of text. High error density presents the listener-reader with

a greater problem than production frequency, since when a particular error has been encountered once or twice, one has learnt to accommodate it, and to make adjustments in one's readings. After a fourth or fifth encounter with the error, one no longer notices it. Not so with text having a high error density, since each new error, coming in quick succession one after the previous one, presents a new problem, to which one cannot apply the same solution as the previous problem. One has to make a succession of different calculations. Though each particular error may *per se* be a straightforward one, the problem is the variety of errors. The overall effect or cumulative effect is dire.

3.2.4 Correcting errors

The term "correction", according to James (1998), is used in three senses: (a) feedback (b) correction and (c) remediation. Feedback refers to informing the learners that there is an error, and leaving them to discover it and repair it themselves. In the broadest sense, it is telling the learners whether their utterance or understanding is right or wrong. When we do correction, as James further explains, we do more than say it is wrong. We also indicate in what ways, describing the nature of the wrongness. And when we do remediation, we do indeed carry out the contrastive and error analyses that explain why the error was committed in the first place (James 1998:236-237).

The idea of correcting errors in the teaching and learning of a second/foreign language seems to be indisputable in the sense that teachers feel that it is their duty to do so and students expect feedback from their teachers. The underlying question in correcting errors is: *Which errors should be corrected?* Different researchers and theorists have different views as to which errors

should be corrected. One school of thought claims that all errors should be corrected--- comprehensive correction of errors. The second school claims that only errors that impede communication should be corrected. Each school has its own plausible arguments to put forward. To this effect, this part attempts to explore these opposing views in detail, as reported by Lalande (1981:45-47), as follows:

According to Lalande (1981), in recent years the foreign language teaching profession has directed considerable attention to communicative competence. An important adjunct to discussions of communicative competence is the distinction between errors that render an attempted communication incomprehensible and those that do not. Teachers of foreign languages found that they could make their task easier by correcting only the errors that hinder communication. Teachers who have emphasized communicative competence have also favoured selective correction of errors. After all, they felt, it was impossible to embrace the former without the latter. Those who advocate selective correction of errors emphatically say that total correction of errors does not produce effective results. To this effect, Hendrickson (1978) underlines that the most serious errors which inhibit communication, appear frequently, or stigmatize the learner should be corrected. He further notes that correcting every error is counter-productive to learning a foreign language. Therefore, teachers need to create a supportive classroom environment in which their students can feel comfortable about expressing their ideas and feelings freely without suffering the threat or embarrassment of having each one of their oral and written errors corrected (Hendrickson 1978:396). Rivers (1964) takes a similar stance: "If uninhibited speech or writing is our final goal, then much practice in speaking or writing without the inhibiting censorious figure of the teacher looming larger is essential." George (1972) also

suggests that the correction of all local errors is excessive, likely to arouse antagonism from students and waste time. Similarly, Chastain (1976) writes, "The constant correction of errors can only have negative results." Moreover, Lantolf (1977) and Rivers (1976) emphasize that if the language programmes are to emphasize communication, teachers will have to develop a greater tolerance to error than they displayed to the present and if the teacher tends to be too critical of every small error, the group or individual may perceive the task as an impossible one.

However, Lalande (1981) has strongly argued against what he calls the "traditional" method of selective error correction. He points out the problems associated with this method as follows:

(1) It implies that the methods and techniques successful in developing oral skills can be transferred to writing skills: thus, it fails to take into account the fundamental linguistic and pedagogic differences underlying the two language systems: (2) It suggests that the correction of written errors involves public embarrassment. That is simply not so. Correction of written errors is generally a private, confidential transaction between the instructor and the student. (3) Neutral or positive responses to student efforts do not necessarily destroy motivation for learning the foreign language. Vigil and Oller (1976) also have argued that as long as the affective quality of the feedback students receive is predominantly positive, any negative content is not likely to do any harm. Lalande reiterates that students do not become demoralized even if messages conveyed to them are not predominantly positive or neutral.

Rivers and Grittner, as cited in Lalande (1981), have argued, in favour of selective correction of errors, that one of the primary reasons for developing foreign language writing skills is to reinforce what has been learnt. Lalande argues that the same logic can be used to argue that

leaving written errors uncorrected reinforces incorrect grammatical structures. Furthermore, unless students receive comprehensive feedback on the quality of their writing in a foreign language, their attainment of linguistic competence may be inhibited. After all, Lalande questions, if teachers are not to make students aware of local errors in either spoken or written statements, then when is the necessary feedback to be provided?

Foreign language teachers have an obligation to provide honest, comprehensive assessment of their students' linguistic competence and they can best fulfill that obligation by providing total feedback on written errors. As Ludwig (1979) has observed, "Freedom to express oneself does not imply that error is tolerated, or worse, ignored. Feedback is essential if students are to refine their concept of the target language."

There is another noteworthy if less cogent reason for correcting all errors in the students' writing: if communication is more than a mere exchange of information, then comprehensibility may not be the only criterion for correction of errors. Grammatical and orthographic errors may seriously impede the efforts of writers who wish to gain the respect of their readers as well as to communicate a particular need or desire. Although the same arguments have been applied to speaking, they become even more cogent when the communicator cannot resort to nonverbal devices such as an engaging manner to offset the deleterious effects of incorrect grammar and spelling. In sum, writing errors may seriously jeopardize the social, personal, or professional relationships the individual wishes to establish. Lalande (1981) emphatically argues that the traditional strategies and correction policies applied in foreign language teaching ignore the distinction between spoken and written language. Written exercises in the foreign language

classroom, like writing in general, ought to demand excellence of grammatical and orthographic expression. The standards for written assignments should challenge students to meet higher standards of clarity, precision, and correctness than do those of spoken language. Judging competence in writing involves determining not only whether a message has been communicated but also how well.

The notion of selective error correction lacks, according to Lalande (1981), adequate theoretical justification for its opposition to total error correction of written errors. Moreover, it has failed to address the issue of fossilization: if teachers subscribe to a policy of selective correction of written errors, they may be allowing those errors to become permanent, thereby hindering their students' progress towards linguistic competence. Total correction of written errors, on the other hand, helps retard the fossilization process, as Lalande underlines.

As Lalande further remarks, the fear on the part of proponents of the "traditional" view of selective error correction that total correction of errors demoralizes students is based on speculation. He declares that research has witnessed that comprehensive correction of written errors does not result in student demoralization to any significant degree. On the contrary he warns that the evasion of comprehensive error correction could be committing a pedagogical error of a global sort.

Different researchers and theorists suggest what they reckon to be a breakthrough to mitigate this contentious argument about error correction. For example, Brumfit (1980) argues that it is both unnecessary and educationally undesirable for correction to be a routine in which the teacher

checks and assesses students' work. He suggests that all written work should be corrected: (a) as soon as possible after the written exercise has been completed, and (b) by the students themselves, working usually in groups of varying size, with the teacher overseeing the process by moving from group to group, and keeping a general check by glancing (but no more) through students' books in private at regular intervals (Brumfit 1980:9-10). The assessment of students' language production, as Hughes and Lascaratou (1982) also point out, written or spoken should be consonant with teaching objectives. If a primary objective is the development in students of communicative competence, then the assessment of work must be carried out with reference to its effectiveness in communication, i.e. to its intelligibility. This is not to undervalue accuracy. It is still recognized that for some purposes (such as the work of a translator or a language teacher) near perfect accuracy may be necessary (Hughes and Lascaratou 1982: 180).

3.2.5 Conclusion

This part has attempted to show types of errors, error gravity and the different views and approaches to error correction in writing. For some educators---those who advocate comprehensive error correction---all errors are equally serious. They tend to lump errors together irrespective of their gravity. For others---those who advocate selective correction of errors---some errors are more serious than others and they should be dealt with accordingly. They believe that only errors that impede communication significantly should be corrected. Both schools seem to have their own plausible grounds for their arguments. The researcher would support selective correction of errors. As reported earlier, our main target in error correction should be errors that impede communication. Errors that hinder communication significantly should be corrected first and the less serious ones should/could be corrected in the students' successive drafts. It is

imperative to note that correcting every error could discourage the learner and moreover it could be tiring and boring for the marker/reader. Thus, teachers should focus on errors that hinder communication and later correct errors that are less serious in the subsequent drafts of students' writing. However, it is important to note that our views and approaches to errors in second/foreign language in general and writing in particular should be consistent with the underlying objectives of teaching and learning a language.

3.3. Important issues in feedback

3.3.1 Introduction

As Jacobs et al. (1981) explain, there is a growing awareness that learners need to develop proficiency not only in the more frequently emphasized skills of speaking, listening and reading, but in the writing English as well. Thus over the last several years writing has begun to receive more emphasis in the ESL curriculum, and teachers of ESL are focusing on writing more often in their courses and programmes. At the same time, those responsible for evaluating the proficiency of students for whom English is a foreign or second language have felt a need for more efficient, valid and reliable ways of assessing communicative ability in writing. To this effect, it is worth noting the importance of feedback. Feedback provides the writer with information for revision in his/her work. As Cotterall (1995) points out, in order to assume greater control of their learning, learners need ways of assessing the quality of their language performance. Without feedback on their performance, learners can think they have mastered something when they have not, can fossilize in errors, become discouraged or resent the effort they have put in (Cotterall 1995: 224).

Moreover, Dheram (1995) remarks that feedback seems to be as central to the process of teaching and learning as revision is to the process of writing. It is therefore important to develop an awareness of the nature and function of feedback so that teachers and learners perform their roles effectively. The central idea in feedback is that the response students receive from their writing teachers becomes a dialogue in which teacher and student negotiate meaning (Murray 1985). Reid (1994) also emphasizes that responding to students' texts is central to successful composition teaching and learning. In addition, Chaudron (1984) underlines that only by means of feedback, receiving information about the effects of their writing on readers, can learners develop their skills in effective writing. However, according to Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990), recent survey work has suggested that there may be a misfit between feedback teachers provide on compositions and learners' interests---that is , between what the teacher gives and what the students would like to get. Part of the problem lies in the nature of the teacher's feedback, which is unclear, inaccurate, and unbalanced---because it focuses only on certain elements in written output (e.g., grammar and mechanics) and because it overemphasizes negative points. Furthermore, comments are not structured enough to help writers develop their ideas (Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990: 155).

Thus, this part of the literature will attempt to explore feedback in general and its effects on students' writing in an EFL/ESL context in particular. Moreover, it will introduce the *ESL composition profile*, a scoring guide developed by Jacobs et al.(1981) and used by some ESL/EFL writing researchers.

3.3.2 Feedback

3.3.2.1 Introduction

According to Keh (1990), feedback is a fundamental element of a process approach to writing. It is input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision. In other words, it is the comments, questions, and suggestions a reader gives a writer to produce 'reader-based prose' as opposed to 'writer-based prose' (Keh 1990: 294).

Chaudron (1988) reports that from the language teacher's point of view, the provision of feedback, or "knowledge of results" (Annett 1969:26), is a major means by which to inform learners of the accuracy of both their formal target language production and their other classroom behaviour and knowledge. From the learners' point of view, the use of feedback in repairing their utterances, and involvement in repairing their interlocutors' utterances, may constitute the most potent source of improvement in both target language and other subject matter knowledge. Yet the degree to which this information in fact aids learners' progress in both target language development (or in subject matter content) is still unknown (Chaudron 1988: 133).

However, we realize that feedback is quite useful and relevant in the teaching and learning process. As Ferris (1995:34) explains, whatever a particular teacher's orientation(s) toward responding to student writing, it is clear that teacher's response is important to both instructor and students. Hence, the important issues and relevant questions worth raising when we provide feedback are: Who should give feedback? When should feedback be given? Where should be the focus in feedback? Which forms of feedback should be used in responding to students' writing? Should we use praise or criticism in feedback? and What do the learners say/ feel about

teacher feedback? Each of these issues and questions will be discussed below. It is important to note that some ideas discussed under error correction (above) could reappear in feedback (below). This overlapping seems to be unavoidable because feedback and error correction are closely related and as Horner (1988:217) notes, error correction is a widely used means of providing feedback in language classrooms.

3.3.2.2 Who should give feedback?

Research that contrasts the effectiveness of peer and teacher feedback has been conducted at all levels. Several of the studies with native speakers show that there are no significant differences in writing ability when the teacher feedback is compared with peer feedback (Berger 1990). Of these, as Chaudron (1984) and Berger (1990) report, Pierson (1967), working with ninth graders, Putz (1970) and Pfeiffer (1981), studying college freshmen, found no significant differences between students receiving various peer evaluation feedback and equivalent groups receiving teacher feedback.

On the other hand, other L1, as Chaudron (1984) and Berger (1990) note, studies have found that groups experiencing peer evaluation improved more than control groups with teacher evaluation, especially Ford (1973) and Karengianes, Pascarella, and Pflaum (1980), who worked with college freshmen and low-achieving tenth graders, respectively. However, Berger (1990) remarks that because different methods of peer feedback and teacher evaluation were used in each study, and other techniques such as individualized instruction and teacher conferencing were employed concurrently, it is difficult to generalize from this evidence. The first study of this nature with L2 learners was by Partridge (1981), as Chaudron (1984) reports. Over a semester in one class,

Partridge either had students [N = 17] exchange papers for peer feedback, or she provided teacher feedback, with the treatment varying over time so that all learners experienced both treatments. T-test comparisons between a sampling of originals and rewrites on six different essay topics showed that the teacher feedback contributed to greater improvement. Partridge also reports the results of her questionnaire on students' attitudes towards peer feedback, to show that the students were more positive about giving feedback than receiving it, that is, they recognized the benefits of the practice for them to improve in revision skills and to recognize other means of expression, but they "doubted the quality and accuracy of their peers' corrections and comments" (Partridge 1981: 60), as reported in Chaudron (1984: 4).

In another L2 study, Chaudron (1984), using the *ESL composition profile*, investigated the effects of teacher and peer feedback on ESL learners' revision in their work. According to this study, the two methods of feedback are equally effective in improving students' writing. Building on Chaudron's study, as Berger (1990) reports, Zhang and Halpern (1988) and Zhang (1985) added proficiency level and type of writing improvement as variables, as well as self-feedback. The results of both studies indicated no effect of any of the variables on discourse quality. In the Zhang and Halpern study, grammatical/mechanical accuracy was better with teacher feedback at both the intermediate and advanced levels. However, teacher feedback was not significantly more effective than peer feedback in correcting grammatical problems in the second study, although it was more effective than self-feedback (Berger 1990). The results of three of these four L2 studies thus favoured teacher over peer or self-feedback. But as more studies were completed, it became evident that other factors such as proficiency level and area of writing being analyzed probably had an effect on the results (Berger 1990: 23).

In another L2 study, Wongsathorn (1994), using the ESL composition profile and TOEFL TWE scores for marking, conducted research in institutes of higher education, in Bangkok, Thailand, and found teacher feedback to be suitable and effective. Another recent L2 study which has examined the effects of peer versus self-feedback was conducted by Berger (1990). The subjects of this study were 54 multilingual ESL students at Groomont College, San Diego. Data for the research were collected from drafts of two student essays, writing questionnaires, and feedback evaluation forms. The results suggest that peer feedback is more effective than self-feedback in number and types of revisions students make and that more students prefer peer feedback (Berger 1990: 21).

3.3.2.3 When to give feedback?

There may be disagreement as to when feedback should be given. In a large-scale survey of feedback in L1 writing, teachers were seen to favour giving feedback during the writing process, whereas the students preferred their teacher to respond to the final version (Freedman 1987). A review of L1 writing research found that teacher feedback was most effective if it was both focused and followed by subsequent student revision (Hillocks 1986). A review of the research literature on the process of revision would suggest that currently, teacher feedback is not seen to have much effect on subsequent student writing (Fitzgerald 1987).

In trying to address the issue of feedback, many L1 researchers determined that until they knew what students actually did as they wrote, in other words, what their writing process was, it would be useless to try and design an optimal feedback model (Emig 1967, Murray 1968). Thus much of L1 writing research began to examine the writing process of students. At the same time,

researchers wanted to learn how good writers differed from poor writers. Studies revealed that good writers revised content more than form (Perl 1979, Sommers 1980, Faigley and Witte 1981). In a study that examined the effect of between-draft comments, Beach (1979) found that comments on a single dimension of content were effective and such comments may be more helpful than ones that are verbose or scattered throughout the paper. These findings led to the suggestion that teachers should focus on content more than form and provide content feedback between initial and final drafts of papers.

Although research results lead to some questions about the usefulness of feedback on writing, teachers report that students want feedback. Consequently, teachers feel obliged to provide it. Because students want feedback and teachers feel obliged to give it, the question remains when during the writing process it should be provided. Ziv's (1984) article on the effect of her categorized responses to the work of four of her freshmen allows us to see at least the direction these students would take based on her notations. Her research shows that when the teacher intervenes as the student is writing and revising, the final product shows improvement over the intermediate drafts. Similarly, Frankenberg-Garcia (1999:100) argues that the best moment for responding to student writing is before any draft is completed and Freedman's (1987) findings also reveal that intervening during the writing process helps student writers to improve.

3.3.2.4 Where to focus in feedback?

Much of the conflict over teacher response to written work has been whether teacher feedback should focus on form (e.g., grammar, mechanics) or content (e.g., organization, amount of detail)

(Fathman and Whalley 1990). Griffin (1982) notes that the major question confronting any theory of responding to student writing is where we should focus our attention.

While the debate continues over where the focus of feedback should be (Horowitz 1986, Silva 1988, Zamel 1985), nearly all researchers agree that attention must be paid to both content and form (Taylor 1981, Krashen 1984). Raimes (1983a) suggests that teachers should look at as well as errors in structure and focus on linguistic features after ideas have been fully developed. Researchers like Lalande (1982) and Robb et al. (1986), on the other hand, found that writing accuracy does increase with teacher feedback that gives the location of grammar errors. Further, grammar feedback by the teacher in Fathman and Whalley's (1990) study had more effect on the correction of grammatical errors than content feedback did on the improvement of the content of student rewrites. This might be due to the fact that the content feedback was not text specific and was more general than the grammar feedback that identified specific grammar errors.

3.3.2.5 Which feedback forms should be used...?

This refers to the different feedback forms (mediums) a teacher or a reader uses to communicate his comments to the student writer. These forms mainly include error identification, writing comments, conferencing, taped commentary, and reformulation. Each of these has its own advantages and disadvantages. For example, if we take *error identification*, since the reader uses a shorthand of 'correcting codes' written in the margins or above the error, it could be time-saving and easy to use. The problem with error identification is that the 'correcting codes' could be ambiguous and confusing because different advocates of this form tend to suggest different codes for the same language features. For example, Byrne (1988: 125) suggests *S* for spelling; whereas

Norrish (1983:75) suggests *Sp* for spelling. The other problem with this form of feedback might, as Allwright (1988) argues, be that it focuses on the surface errors in spelling, lexis, syntax and punctuation and overlooks the central issues of composition: cohesion, content, signposting and clarity of meaning. However, Brumfit (1980) remarks that if errors are identified and left to the students for correcting, the students can benefit from group discussion that arises while correcting errors and this could help the learners to develop oral fluency amongst other advantages of error identification.

Another form of feedback is *writing comments*. Writing comments seems to be the most common form used by classroom teachers when they respond to students' writing. The obvious disadvantage of writing comments is that it is time-consuming and taxing. Moreover, it is quite doubtful that students read these comments and use them in their revisions. Teachers might think that they have done their job properly by writing all kinds of errors they come across in student papers. But Keh (1990) suggests that teachers should distinguish between 'high order' and 'low order' concerns when giving written comments and keep in mind that students cannot pay attention to everything at once. This form of feedback could be effective, as we can tell from our own experience both as students and teachers, if the comments are clear, genuine, relevant and specific to the work of the students and if the teacher/reader suggests some helpful strategies (Zamel 1985) the student writer could use to revise his/ her work. *Conferencing*, another form of feedback, as Keh (1990) notes, seems to have a number of advantages: first, it enables the teacher and the student to come face to face with each other. The teacher is a 'live' audience, and he/she is able to ask for clarification, check the comprehensibility of oral comments made, help the writer to sort through problems, and assist the student in decision-making. Thus, the teacher's

role can be perceived as a participant in the writing process rather than as a grade-giver. Next, compared to writing comments, conferencing also allows more feedback and more accurate feedback to be given in a relatively shorter period of time. The problem with this form might be that it is demanding and time-consuming. Besides, some students might be reluctant to confer with their teachers due to their low English proficiency and/or shyness although the problem could be overcome by encouraging students and explaining to them the benefits of conferencing.

As regards *taped commentary*, it can be used with advanced students by giving remarks on a tape recorder (Hyland 1990). It may help the students to improve their listening skills, especially if the teacher is a native speaker or has a near-native proficiency in English. It allows more detailed, natural, and informative remarks while increasing teacher-student rapport (Hyland 1990). The problem with this form is that some institutions would be hesitant to use it because it incurs money and students may not have tape recorders of their own. The other form of feedback used in providing feedback to student writers is *reformulation*. Reformulation is, as Allwright (1988) defines, an attempt by a native writer to understand what a non-native writer is trying to say and then rewrite it in a form more natural to the native writer. The rewriting may necessitate making changes of many kinds and at all levels, as Allwright (1988) further explains. It sounds interesting but its feasibility is questionable, especially in an EFL context where writing is, in most cases, exclusively taught by non-natives and the students' English proficiency is incredibly low and there are no native speakers of English in the class. Further, its effectiveness could be undermined, as Zamel (1985) writes, by the fact that writing teachers tend to misread student texts, are inconsistent in their comments and write contradictory comments.

3.3.2.6 Praise or criticism?

Most teachers would like to see their students' writing improve and students find teacher feedback useful in helping them to improve their writing (Ferris 1995: 33). Teacher feedback can be effective, as Zamel (1985) underlines, if teachers respond to students' writing as genuine and interested readers rather than as judges and evaluators. This might help student writers to appreciate receiving comments and use them in their revisions. From our own experience, both as students and teachers, we can tell that students would like to be encouraged for their success and achievements and are also, in most cases, prepared to accept constructive criticism. Ferris (1995:49) suggests that teachers should not abandon constructive criticism but should place it side-by-side with comments of encouragement.

In a nutshell, praise and criticism can be effective in feedback if students are praised and encouraged for their success and are duly criticized for the weaknesses in their writing. This is crucial because research has shown that a balance between criticism and praise may be the best means of encouraging quality writing (Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990: 174).

3.3.2.7 Students' reactions to teacher feedback

The idea of dealing with what students think about teacher feedback is central in the teaching and learning process as a whole and writing in particular because the efforts teachers make could bear fruit when the learners are interested, motivated and appreciate them. Thus, this part aims at exploring students' reactions to teachers' responses as presented in Ferris (1995):

Several different studies have surveyed and/or interviewed EFL/ ESL writing students to obtain their feedback on feedback (Hedgcock and Lefkowitz 1994). These studies have pursued two general, related lines of inquiry: (1) studies of student preferences regarding teacher feedback (Hedgcock and Lefkowitz 1994, Leki 1991, Radecki and Swales 1988) and (2) studies of student response to feedback they have already received (Cohen 1987, Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990, McCurdy 1992). In the first group of studies, students have been asked about the type(s) of feedback they prefer to receive (both form and substance). Although the earlier two studies (Leki 1991, Radecki and Swales 1988) found that the students generally preferred extensive comments on grammar rather than content, the more recent study (Hedgcock and Lefkowitz 1994) reported a more complex finding: foreign language students paid more attention to form, whereas ESL students were as interested in teacher feedback on content as they were in sentence-level comments and corrections. The authors suggest that this result may be due to the fact that whereas foreign language students use L2 writing as a form of language practice, ESL students must use their writing skills for all their academic endeavours (i.e., beyond the language classroom).

In the second group of studies, students were asked about their perceptions of what their teachers actually focused on in responding to student essays and to discuss their own subsequent actions: Did they reread their papers when returned? Did they pay attention to their teachers' comments? What strategies did they use to apply their teachers' feedback to subsequent assignments? Did they have trouble understanding any teacher commentary, and if so, what did they do to resolve these problems? The earliest of these studies (Cohen 1987) reported rather discouraging findings: Although most of the students claimed to reread their papers and attended to their teachers'

comments, a full 20% did not. Further, the students in general reported "a limited repertoire of strategies for processing teacher feedback." Most students claimed that they merely "made a mental note" of their teachers' feedback. Cohen (1987) concludes that his results "suggest that the activity of teacher feedback as currently constituted and realized may have a more limited impact on the learners than the teachers would desire".

Two studies following Cohen's (1987) research (Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990, McCurdy 1992) reported more positive results: The students in general were happy with the feedback they received, claimed that they paid attention to it, and found it helpful. Although McCurdy's study found that the students reported a variety of problems in understanding their teacher's feedback, they also utilized a great variety of strategies (e.g., asking the teacher for help, looking up corrections in a grammar book) to resolve difficulties and respond to the teacher feedback.

Of all the previous studies of L2 student reactions to teacher feedback, only one (Hedgcock and Lefkowitz 1994) was carried out in contexts in which revision and multiple drafting were consistently required. It makes sense that student attention to and preferences regarding teacher feedback would differ in a pedagogical setting in which multiple drafting is required: Because students must rethink and revise previously written essay drafts, they are more likely to pay close attention to their teachers' advice on how to do so than in a situation in which they are merely receiving a graded paper with comments and corrections to apply to a completely new essay assignment. Along these lines, Leki (1991), who found that students had very strong preferences for extensive error correction on their papers, suggested that "a follow-up questionnaire at the end of a semester of writing using a process, a multiple-draft approach might have been useful in

order to see if students' attitudes toward error are changed by an approach which does not emphasize error."

Ferris (1995) reported that ESL writing students in general take their teachers' feedback quite seriously and pay a lot of attention to it. Students pay more attention to the feedback on earlier drafts. The results, therefore, can be argued to support the suggestions of L1 and L2 researchers (e.g., Hillocks 1986, Leki 1990, 1991) that teacher feedback on preliminary drafts of student work may be more effective than responses to final drafts. However, these findings should not be interpreted as indicating that students find teacher commentary on final drafts unnecessary because a convincing majority of them also said that they reread all or most of their teachers' comments on their final draft.

3.3.2.8 Related local research works

It seems that not much work has been done locally (in Ethiopia) on feedback both at M.A and Ph.D levels. However, the following M.A works appear to be relevant to the present study. Thus, Mammo (1981) in his study of *error correction*, identified and classified the errors in the composition of 89 3rd and 4th year students of Advanced composition II. The errors were based on 157 essays written for the course. A total of 3204 errors were identified and categorized into grammar, style, spelling, punctuation, handwriting and unclassifiable errors. Another relevant work was done by Teshome (1985). In this research on *error gravity*, he attempted to show the contrasts in reactions of four groups of judges: native and non-native speaker teachers of English, non-teaching native speakers of English and Ethiopians teaching subjects other than English. These four groups judged the seriousness of sixty errors, mostly made by 3rd year students in the

Institute of Languages Studies at the Addis Ababa University (AAU). The results of this study show that the three groups of teachers were more tolerant of errors than the non-teaching native speakers of English. The native speaker teachers of English were more lenient than the two non-native teachers (of English and other subjects), while the non-teaching native speakers were the most lenient. The two groups of native speakers (teaching and non-teaching) of English reacted to the errors more uniformly than the other two non-native speaker teachers (of English and other subjects), as reported in the study.

As regards feedback, two research papers seem to be worth mentioning. The first paper is Wondwosen's (1992) M.A thesis. This work aims at finding out how much of the classtime is spent on the provision of feedback, what type of feedback Grade 11 teachers use and to see if there existed a regular pattern in the reactions of teachers. The study has shown that teachers on average spend 29.2 % of the classtime on the provision of feedback. The research has also identified 539 occurrences of positive feedback and 336 of negative feedback. The most frequently used types of positive feedback were simple praise, confirmation and positive repetition. Among the various types of negative feedback, as the researcher further reports, teachers most frequently used interruption and simple reproof. However, teachers showed much agreement between themselves in the use of positive explanation and several answers solicitation without clues. In the negative feedback also they (teachers) showed much agreement in the use of repetition with no change, as indicated in the study.

Another research on feedback is Getnet's (1994) M.A thesis. This study attempted to investigate, describe and analyze the responding behaviour of Sophomore English teachers of Addis Ababa

University (AAU) to student writing. An investigation was made on what features of writing the instructors focus on while providing feedback; at what stage they intervene to give feedback, how their students react to the feedback given to them, as pointed out in this research paper. Analysis of the data from these sources revealed that, as it is further shown in this work, while providing feedback, Sophomore English teachers concentrate on low order concerns and rarely or never attend to high order concerns. It was also pointed out that instructors respond after students complete their writing tasks, and not before they begin to write or as they write. It was also observed, as the paper further notes, that the instructors often use a narrow range of feedback technique such as direct correction of errors and students also employ very few strategies in handling feedback.

Another piece of research work worth mentioning is Yonas' (1996) M.A thesis on teaching writing as a process. This thesis aimed at finding out the ways the writing skills are taught in the first year classes at the Addis Ababa University and the effectiveness of the writing tasks in the College English in reshaping the students' perception about their writing skills. The researcher reported that the students' perceptions about writing abilities changed significantly. However, as the researcher further pointed out, the students did not show prominent changes in specific writing skills such as planning and reviewing.

3.3.3 The ESL composition profile

This part attempts to introduce the *ESL composition profile*, a holistic scoring guide developed by Jacobs et al. (1981) and used in ESL composition evaluations, including the present study.

3.3.3.1 Approaches to composition evaluation

There are two basic approaches to composition evaluation, holistic and frequency-count marking (Cooper 1977). In holistic evaluations, readers base their judgements on their impression of the whole composition; in frequency-count marking, readers ("scorers" in this case) tally or enumerate certain elements in the composition, such as: the number or type of words, clauses, T-units, cohesive devices, misspelled words, misplaced commas, or sentence errors. The latter method is highly objective (little judgement is involved, only counting or listing of certain occurrences) and therefore also highly reliable; not so certain is its validity, however, because a composition evaluated by a frequency-count method has been judged not for its communicative effect, but for its number or kinds of elements. A number of researchers have provided empirical evidence that such counting methods do not predict very accurately teachers' intuitive judgements of the quality of student writing (Mellon 1969, Jurgens and Griffin 1970, Nold and Freedman 1977, Evola et al. 1980).

Holistic evaluation, on the other hand, is far more subjective, depending as it does on the impressions formed by the readers. Such subjectivity in reading was long thought undesirable, but in fact this characteristic of holistic evaluation has to be considered a strength, rather than a weakness of the approach, for reasons which have been noted by Oller (1979b):

It has long been supposed that subjective ratings were less accurate than more objective scoring methods. However, as we have seen repeatedly, subjective judgements are indispensable in decisions concerning whether a writer has expressed well his intended meaning and, of course, in determining what that intended meaning is. There is no escape from subjective judgement in the interpretation of normal expression in a natural language (Oller 1979b: 393).

In spite of (or perhaps because of) this subjectivity, holistic evaluations have been shown capable of producing highly reliable assessments. Intuitively it would seem that composition scores based on holistic responses from readers who attend to the writer's message must be more valid than those based on frequency-count methods, which at best pay only lip service to writer's meaning and ideas. As Cooper (1977) puts it, "Holistic evaluation by a human respondent gets us closer to what is essential in communication than frequency counts do" (Cooper 1977:3).

3.3.3.2 What is the ESL composition profile?

Profile = (Latin) *pro* = forward + *filare* = to draw a line and meaning literally "a side view," was chosen deliberately in order to convey the main purpose of the profile as an evaluation guide: to provide a side view, an outline, of an ESL writer's success at composing or "putting together" the main elements of written discourse into a connected, coherent piece of writing that communicates effectively.

The profile grew out of a serious need for an efficient and reliable means of evaluating the large number of compositions written as part of the English proficiency test (the Michigan Test battery) required of all new international students admitted to Texas A&M University or its English Language Institute. The test compositions had been evaluated by assigning scores in four areas: content (50%), structure (25%), vocabulary (20%), and mechanics (5%). The profile started with this basic scheme, but developed into an evaluation system which could be used easily and reliably, with a minimum of training, by a large number of relatively inexperienced readers, some lay readers from the community but mostly instructors or graduate teaching assistants in the English Department or the English Language Institute. Since Follman and

Anderson (1967) had earlier concluded that the unreliability in composition evaluations results primarily from differences in the academic and experiential backgrounds of the readers, the profile needed to ensure that the readers, coming from such different orientations to teaching and evaluating English, would focus primarily on the communicative, rather than mechanical aspects of the compositions and would apply the same qualitative standards to each paper. For this reason the system of weighted components, mastery levels and criteria descriptors was devised to focus readers' attention on important aspects of the compositions and to define the standards for each mastery level.

The profile contains five component scales, each focusing on an important aspect of composition and weighted according to its approximate importance for written communication: content (30 points), organization (20 points), vocabulary (20 points), language use (25 points), and mechanics (5 points). The total weight for each component is further broken down into numerical ranges that correspond to four mastery levels: excellent to very good, good to average, fair to poor, and very poor. The profile's mastery levels and the associated shorthand criteria thus provide a well-defined standard and an interpretive framework for all readers as they read a composition and judge its communicative effectiveness (*for details see the ESL profile form in Appendix Q*).

3.3.3.3 How does the profile work for holistic evaluation of composition?

Unlike some holistic evaluations in which readers base their judgements on a single first impression of the quality of a composition, readers using the profile in effect do five holistic evaluations of the same composition, each from a slightly different perspective on the whole. This is an important difference since readers sometimes tend to value only one aspect of a

composition when using a purely impressionistic approach, yet it is only through a writer's successful production, integration and synchronization of all these component parts of a composition that an effective whole is created. The profile asks readers to peer at the composition through as many windows as possible in arriving at their judgements of quality.

During an evaluation, readers will generally read each composition twice, once to form an overall first impression of whether the writer has delivered a clear, complete message and again to focus on aspects of the composition that may have influenced that first impression either positively or negatively, or that might cause the reader to form a different impression of the writer's communicative effectiveness. In the first reading, readers attend only to the message: Are the writer's ideas readily apparent, appropriately sequenced to move the reader along, and adequately developed to convey a complete picture to the reader? Based on the initial response to the paper, readers then identify descriptors in the content and organization components which most appropriately describe the writer's overall effect on the reader and assign a score from the associated mastery level of these two components. During the second reading, readers try to verify their first impression by asking: Is the communicative effort more or less effective than originally thought? Does the writer use the syntactical, lexical and mechanical elements of the language to deliver the message clearly and unambiguously, or is mastery of these elements such that expectations are not fulfilled and the reader must halt, stumble, backtrack or ponder in a search for the writer's meaning? Based on this second reading, readers then identify the most appropriate descriptors in vocabulary, language use and mechanics and assign a score for each component.

The five component scales thus intended to be regarded as five different windows or viewpoints from which to judge the writer's overall communicative effect. Very often what a reader sees from each window will be the same and the score awarded to each component will indicate approximately the same mastery level in all aspects of the composition, suggesting that each cog in the machinery of discourse is interacting approximately with other elements and contributing its fair share to the smooth, efficient operation of the communication process. In other cases, the view from some windows on the whole may be slightly different and the points at which communication breaks down or speeds up will be highlighted, suggesting that some elements in the discourse process are carrying more or less than their necessary load in the communicative effort. In any case, the components should be evaluated only for their contribution to the total communicative effect: how successful is the writer in pulling together all of the elements of written discourse into a connected, coherent piece of writing that communicates effectively?

The profile total score thus provides a highly reliable estimate of a writer's proficiency and can be used with confidence---in combination, of course, with scores from any other compositions or other language tests the student has taken---by the test administrator who must consider whether a student's writing ability is sufficient for a particular communicative purpose. This total score can range from 100 (maximum) to 34 (minimum), a range chosen so that the raw (unequated) composition test score could easily be used in conjunction with the Michigan Test battery, which produces equated scores over approximately the same range (*Jacobs et al. 1981: 29-33*).

3.3.3.4 Conclusion

The main focus of this part was to highlight what the literature has to say about feedback in general and the effects of feedback on students' writing in an ESL/EFL context in particular. To this end, this part has raised and discussed a number of important issues and questions pertinent to feedback. Moreover, it has introduced the *ESL composition profile*(see Appendix Q), a holistic scoring guide developed by Jacobs et al. (1981) and used by some ESL/EFL writing researchers, including this study.

Chapter Four

Research methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to discuss the research methods used to collect data for the pilot and the main studies of this research. Before discussing the various research methods used to collect data both for the pilot and the main studies, it would be worth noting the objectives of this research. Thus, the general objective of this research was to compare the effectiveness of different feedback methods on students' writing revisions. The specific objectives were to: (a) discover what feedback methods are in fact used in responding to students' writing at present (b) find out what students feel about the different feedback methods used in writing (c) compare the effectiveness of teacher versus peer feedback on students' writing revisions, and (d) suggest the feedback method/s that could promote students' writing skills.

4.2 Research methods

To achieve the general as well as the specific objectives mentioned above, the following research methods were used both in the pilot and the main studies of this research.

4.2.1 Orientation

At the beginning of the study (pilot/main), the students were oriented on the objectives of the research and details of the procedures to be followed during the study and they were provided with all the relevant information they might need to know during this study.

Thus, they were informed that this research was geared towards finding out the effectiveness of teacher and peer feedback in Sophomore English classes. They were also informed that the research would be conducted for the whole semester (16 weeks) and during this time they would complete two questionnaires and write four essays (with one first and one final drafts) on different topics. The subjects were also encouraged that they should relax and work cooperatively both with their teacher and fellow students for the success of the research. Further, they were informed that they would be split into two equivalent groups for the sake of convenience to conduct the research and this division would be done randomly and it would not affect their overall performance and grades at the end of the semester. The researcher also attempted to give answers to any fears and doubts the students raised during the orientation.

4.2.2 Impromptu essay

At the beginning of the study, the students in both groups (Group 1 and Group 2) wrote an impromptu essay of about 200-300 words in 30 minutes on the same topic designed for this purpose. The main aim of the impromptu essay was to find out students' ability to communicate in writing. All in all, thirty students in the pilot and twenty-six students in the main studies wrote the impromptu essay. The results of the impromptu essay were analyzed and discussed in chapter five for the pilot study and chapter six for the main study.

4.2.3 First questionnaire for students

The students in both groups completed the first questionnaire for students. The main objective of this questionnaire was to find out students' opinions about their own writing practices and preferences for types of feedback. The students in both groups completed this questionnaire in

class. All the students completed and returned the questionnaire. The results of the first questionnaire were analyzed and discussed in chapter five for the pilot study and chapter six for the main study.

4.2.4 Questionnaire for writing teachers

A questionnaire was designed and distributed to writing teachers to find out their opinions about their students' writing and the forms of feedback they (teachers) usually used in responding to their students' writing. All the teachers completed and returned the questionnaire both in the pilot and the main studies. The results of the questionnaire for teachers were analyzed and discussed in chapter five for the pilot study and chapter six for the main study.

4.2.5 Student essays

In addition to the impromptu essay discussed above (4.2.2), the students wrote essays on three other different topics with one first draft and one final draft both in the pilot and the main studies. For details see 4.2.5.1 and 4.2.5.2 below.

4.2.5.1 Comments on first drafts

The students wrote three essays in each group (one first draft and one final draft for each of the essays) in all, as part of their Sophomore English (FLEn 201) writing course, for one semester (16 weeks). The first drafts of the essays were read and commented on by the teacher for Group 1 and by peers (in pairs) for Group 2 until both the teacher and peers read and commented on three different first drafts of essays each in the two groups during the study. The students were

expected to write an essay of about 350 words, in about 1^{1/2} hours (seventy-five minutes), each time during the study.

The students were also required to write final drafts for each essay topic after they had received written comments on their first drafts from the teacher or peers. The teacher and peers wrote comments on the first drafts of Group 1 and Group 2, respectively, and returned the papers to the writers. Both the teacher and peers used 'General criteria for evaluating writing' (see *Appendix O*) suggested by Lefevre and Dickerson (1981), and 'Peer evaluation criteria' (see *Appendix P*) which they received before reading their peers' essays. According to the 'General criteria for evaluating writing', the teacher/peers would give feedback on content and organization before focusing on language use, so that the task does not become overwhelming for the students. It is usually believed to be useful to avoid correcting all grammatical and spelling errors, since the idea is to give a clear message to students that they should concentrate on content and express their thoughts clearly. In some cases, the grammar may be so convoluted that what the student has written is not comprehensible. In such case, the comments which the teacher/peers makes/make should be oriented towards the meaning rather than the faulty grammar (Chenoweth 1987:27). Both the teacher and peers need to remember that the comments we put on early drafts should encourage the student writers further, to 'help them clarify their purposes and reasons in writing their specific text' (Sommers 1982).

4.2.5.2 Evaluating drafts

After the peers had written their comments, the teacher (researcher) read the comments written by the peers to make sure that, as much as possible, no ambiguities and inaccuracies in comments

given by the peers before the first drafts along with the comments were returned to the student writers. All the comments were given on separate sheets of paper, which were provided during the peer evaluations. The comments were written on separate sheets of paper to reduce the possible bias on the part of the readers/ raters (evaluators of both first and final drafts), who could be influenced by the comments of the teacher and peers. The student writers, presumably, incorporated the comments provided by the teacher and peers and rewrote their essays. After the students had rewritten their essays, both the first and the final drafts were collected and shuffled before the essays were handed to two raters/readers, who read and evaluated all the papers out of 100 points according to Jacobs et al. (1981) *ESL composition profile holistic scoring guide*: content = 30 points, organization = 20 points, language use = 25 points, vocabulary = 20 points, and mechanics = 5 points. The two readers selected for this purpose were experienced writing teachers of similar academic qualifications. The first and final drafts were given different codes before they were given to the readers for marking. The results of both drafts were recorded separately on progress sheets prepared for this purpose for each student writer. Besides, the results for each writing component (content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics) for each student writer were also recorded separately to see the progress, if any, each student made in each of the components in addition to the overall composition writing skills during the study. Then, *t-tests* were conducted to determine any significant differences between teacher and peer feedback and a *matched t-test* research procedure was used to find out if there was any significant difference between the first draft and the final draft of the same essay for the same group. Moreover, the students' writing revisions (first draft versus final draft) were analysed for each of the essays to find out which comments and/or whether the students had incorporated (into their essays) the comments suggested to them by the teacher/peers. Further, the teacher/peer

comments were counted and categorized and the correlation coefficient (r) was used to find out if the values awarded to the students by the two raters for the same essays would correlate or not.

4.2.6 Training

The students (in Group 2) had practised evaluating essays written by other Sophomore English students before they actually embarked on evaluating their peers' essays written for this study. Thus, the students practised evaluating (in pairs) three different essays written by the previous Sophomore English students in the first two weeks of the study. They were provided with a checklist that would help them to know what specific points to look for when they read the essays (see *Appendices O* and *P*). This was done to help them to acquire some confidence and experience in responding to their peers' writing in the study.

4.2.7 Second questionnaire for students

A second questionnaire was administered to all the students in Group 1 and Group 2 near the end of the study to discover, if and in what ways, the different feedback treatments used in this study might have influenced their attitudes towards writing practices in general and feedback in particular. All the students completed and returned the questionnaire. The results of the second questionnaire were analyzed and discussed in chapter five for the pilot study and chapter six for the main study.

4.3 The ESL composition profile

As pointed out earlier in chapter three, the *ESL composition profile* contains five component scales, each focusing on an important aspect of composition and weighted according to its

approximate importance for written communication: content (30 points), organization (20 points), vocabulary (20 points), language use (25 points), and mechanics (5 points). The total weight for each component is further broken down into numerical ranges that correspond to four mastery levels: excellent to very good, good to average, fair to poor, and very poor. The profile's mastery levels and the associated shorthand criteria thus provide a well-defined standard and an interpretive framework for all readers as they read a composition and judge its communicative effectiveness (for details see *the ESL composition profile* form in *Appendix Q*).

Unlike some holistic evaluations in which readers base their judgements on a single first impression of the quality of a composition, readers using the profile in effect do five holistic evaluations of the same composition, each from a slightly different perspective on the whole. This is an important difference since readers sometimes tend to value only one aspect of a composition when using a purely impressionistic approach, yet it is only through a writer's successful production, integration and synchronization of all these component parts of a composition that an effective whole is created. The profile asks readers to peer at the composition through as many windows as possible in arriving at their judgements of quality. During an evaluation, readers will generally read each composition twice, once to form an overall first impression of whether the writer has delivered a clear, complete message and again to focus on aspects of the composition that may have influenced that first impression either positively or negatively, or that might cause the reader to form a different impression of the writer's communicative effectiveness. In the first reading, readers attend only to the message: Are the writer's ideas readily apparent, appropriately sequenced to move the reader along, and adequately developed to convey a complete picture to the reader? Based on the initial response to the paper,

readers then identify descriptors in the content and organization components which most appropriately describe the writer's overall effect on the reader and assign a score from the associated mastery level of these two components. During the second reading, readers try to verify their first impression by asking: Is the communicative effort more or less effective than originally thought? Does the writer use the syntactical, lexical and mechanical elements of the language to deliver the message clearly and unambiguously, or is mastery of these elements such that expectations are not fulfilled and the reader must halt, stumble, backtrack or ponder in search for the writer's meaning? Based on this second reading, readers then identify the most appropriate descriptors in vocabulary, language use and mechanics and assign a score for each component.

The five component scales thus intended to be regarded as five different windows or viewpoints from which to judge the writer's overall communicative effect. Very often what a reader sees from each window will be the same and the score awarded to each component will indicate approximately the same mastery level in all aspects of the composition, suggesting that each cog in the machinery of discourse is interacting approximately with other elements and contributing its fair share to the smooth, efficient operation of the communication process (Jacobs et al. 1981: 29-33).

Chapter Five

The pilot study

5.1 Introduction

The pilot study had two main objectives: (a) to try out the various research tools selected to collect data for this research and (b) to use the results of the pilot study as a springboard for conducting the main study of this research. To this effect, two questionnaires and four essays for students and a questionnaire for writing teachers were designed and administered during the pilot study. Then, the results of the questionnaires and essays for students and the questionnaire for writing teachers were analyzed and discussed to see, based on the results of the pilot study, what the direction of the main study would likely be. It should be admitted that in some cases the discussions of the pilot and the main studies may look similar. This in fact happened because some results of the pilot study which were largely similar to the results of the main study were analyzed and discussed in this chapter because it was felt that doing so would reinforce and enrich the results of the main study. However, the results of the pilot study were largely provided in the appendices.

5.2 First questionnaire for students

5.2.1 Introduction

A twenty-item questionnaire was designed and administered to twenty 2nd year students at the start of the semester in the pilot study. All the students completed and returned the questionnaire. The main objective of this questionnaire was to find out students' opinions about their writing practices and preferences for forms of feedback. The students reacted positively to all the

questions except that some students failed to adequately respond to *Question 8*. This question was on whether there were teacher comments the students did not understand. It was found out that 50% of the students did not respond to this question. Hence, *Question 8* was dropped in the main study of this research. Further, *Question 19* was on ranking the language skills according to their level of importance. In fact the students responded positively to this question, but some writing teachers said that it would be difficult to talk about one language skill being more important than another language skill. The teachers' comment was accepted and *Question 19* was dropped in the main study of this research. The questions and results of the first questionnaire for students are given in *Appendix A*. However, some results which were believed to reinforce the results of the main study were analyzed and discussed as follows:

5.2.2 Results of the first questionnaire for students

The questions and results of the first questionnaire for students are given in *Appendix A*.

5.2.3 Analysis and discussion of the results

This part attempts to analyze and discuss some of the results of the first questionnaire for students in the pilot study.

5.2.3.1 Teacher feedback

This part summarizes the results of three questions (in the first questionnaire for students) which focused on the role of teacher feedback in improving students' writing. *Question 1* was on how much of the essay students read when they got back it back from their writing teacher. *Question 2* was on how many of the teacher corrections the students gave thoughtful attention to and

Question 17 was on how much the students benefited from the teacher comments (see Questions 1, 2, and 17 in *Appendix A*). The results show that the majority (65%) of the students reported that they read all or most of the essay when they got it back from their teachers. Further, most of the students (70%) reported that they gave a lot of thoughtful attention to the teacher corrections. The majority of students (85%) also said that they benefited immensely from the teacher comments they received before they wrote the final drafts. The students reported the following reasons (paraphrased) as to why the teacher comments were useful:

- I did not make similar mistakes in my subsequent essays.
- The comments helped me to improve my essay.
- The comments helped me to know my problem areas.

The results of these three questions suggest that students paid due attention to the teacher comments and used the comments to improve their writing. The results further indicated that teacher feedback is relevant and plays a useful role in language teaching and learning in general and writing in particular. Thus, it may be argued that writing teachers should be prepared to respond to their students' writing not only because it their duty to do so but also students expect comments from their teachers to reappraise their work and improve their successive drafts and essays. One likely reason on the part of the writing teacher for not giving feedback to his/her students is that the students may not use the comments and improve their writing. This attitude seems to undermine the basic role of feedback in the sense that the teacher tends to predict the outcome of his/her comments before the comments are given to the student writers. It was noted that as far as the comments are clear, objective and relevant to the object of the comments, students seem to be prepared to use the teacher comments and improve their writing. In sum,

teacher feedback can play its role, i.e. promoting students' writing skills provided that the writing teacher realizes that feedback is useful and relevant in writing classes and provides feedback that is straightforward, objective and pertinent to students' writing.

5.2.3.2 Peer feedback

This part (see Question 10 in *Appendix A*) focuses on how much students liked the peer feedback used in their writing classes. The result of this question shows that the majority of students (73%) reported that they liked peer feedback "very much".

The result would help the writing teacher to realize that students like peer feedback and peer feedback can be used along with the teacher feedback in responding to students' writing. It was found out that writing teachers do not commonly use peer feedback in writing classes. The majority of writing teachers who filled in the questionnaire for writing teachers for this study reported that they used peer feedback "sometimes". They may have their own plausible reasons to limit peer feedback to 'sometimes'. But, peer feedback can be used more often provided that writing teachers realize that it can play a useful role in writing classes and are prepared to support and encourage their students. Students may be hesitant and less cooperative until they realize that peer feedback is useful and can play an important role in writing classes. However, through time students may realize that peer feedback has a lot to contribute in enhancing their ability to read and comment on their peers' writing and their communicative skills, especially if the students work in pairs or groups.

5.2.3.3 Preliminary drafts

This part (see Question 11 in *Appendix A*) focuses on finding out whether the students produced preliminary drafts before they wrote final drafts. Thus, (see the following table), the majority students (70%) reported that they produced preliminary drafts before they wrote final drafts.

Yes	No
14	6

Writing preliminary drafts seems to be useful because it may give the students the opportunity to be critics of their own writing when they revise their writing and they can also incorporate the teacher comments suggested to them during the preliminary drafts and improve their final drafts.

5.2.3.4 Practices versus preferences

This part focuses on the major forms of feedback usually used by writing teachers in responding to their students' writing (see Question 13 in *Appendix A*) versus what forms of feedback students would like to have (see Question 14 in *Appendix A*). The results show that the majority of writing teachers used 'error identification', 'writing comments' and 'conferencing' in descending order. However, most of the students said they would prefer 'writing comments', 'conferencing', 'reformulation', and 'error identification' in descending order. The students reported the following reasons (see Question 14 in *Appendix A*) for choosing these forms of feedback:

- helps me to know my errors (*writing comments*).
- helps me to identify my errors (*error identification*).
- helps me to improve my writing (*writing comments*).
- face to face discussion with my teacher helps me to know my errors (*conferencing*).

- can discuss my problem areas with the teacher (*conferencing*).

Thus, there seems to be a mismatch between what the teachers do and what the students would like to have. Writing teachers usually tend to use a form of feedback they reckon to be useful in responding to their students' writing. It is evident that teachers know from experience which form of feedback is more effective in responding to students' writing. This does not mean, however, that writing teachers should ignore the preferences of their students. Students could be interested in a certain form of feedback without realizing its effectiveness. It may be important that the writing teacher intervene and explain whether the form of feedback the students claim to be interested in is effective or practical in their writing classes. For example, students may say that they would like to have 'reformulation' in their writing classes. It may sound pompous and interesting, but the main question is: Is it effective? Or is it practical? Students could opt for a form of feedback without realizing that it is effective or practical. Thus, teachers should help their students to see which forms of feedback are effective and helpful and why, i.e. the writing teacher should explain to their students the pros and cons of each form of feedback before attending to what forms of feedback his/her students would like to have. After the teacher's explanation, students may agree with the teacher's choices or insist on their preferences.

5.2.3.5 Strategies

This part (see Question 7 in *Appendix A*) focuses on what strategies the students used when they received teacher feedback in their writing classes. Thus, it was reported that 50% made a mental note of the teacher comments, 25% wrote down points to consider for revision or for future use,

10% rewrote the essay incorporating the teacher comments, 10% referred to other papers and rewrote the essay and 5% did nothing.

It may be argued that the majority of students used teacher feedback in one way or another to improve their writing. These results may suggest that teacher feedback is useful because it seems to help students to reappraise their work and improve on it.

5.2.3.6 Self-rating

This part (see Question 20 in *Appendix A*) focuses on finding out how the students rated their writing abilities. The results of this question show (see the table below) that the majority of students (80%) rated their writing skills as "good" or "fair", 10% as "excellent" and 10% as "poor".

excellent	good	fair	poor
2	9	7	2

However, this self-rating seems to be improbable because if we examine the raw scores they received for their first and final drafts vis-a vis the *ESL composition profile* (a holistic scoring guide used to evaluate students' essays in this research) scores would put the majority of the students in the category of "fair to poor" writers, not in the categories of "excellent" or "good" writers. To illustrate this argument further, it would be worth comparing the students' raw scores with the *ESL composition profile* scores suggested for different categories of writers (excellent-very good, good-average, fair-poor and very poor). Thus, the *ESL composition profile holistic scoring guide* suggests that 100-90 points (excellent to very good), 85-72 points (good to

average), 67-51 points (fair to poor) and 50 points and below (very poor) out of 100 points. In this study, out of the 70 essay drafts, 16 essay drafts (23%) received 73-68, 54 essay drafts (77%) received 67-55 out of 100 points. The results suggest that the majority of students are in the category of "fair to poor" and a few of them are in the category of "good to average". Moreover, it was noted that the majority of students had difficulties in writing clear and coherent paragraphs and essays during this study. Hence, it can be argued that the students' self-rating and their actual writing performance seem to disagree. This implies that by and large some students overestimated their writing abilities.

All in all, the results of the first questionnaire for students revealed the actual practices in writing classes in general and what students feel about teacher feedback and their own writing practices in particular. The results also helped the researcher to improve the questions and use them in the main study.

5.3 Questionnaire for writing teachers

5.3.1 Introduction

A seventeen-item questionnaire was designed and distributed to six writing teachers in the pilot study. The main objective of this questionnaire was to find out writing teachers' comments about the various questions used in this questionnaire and then based on the writing teachers' comments to reshape and use them in the main study of this research. The teachers, on the whole, reacted positively to the questionnaire except that two of the respondents expressed their reservation about *Question 4*, "Rank the four language skills according to their degree of importance for English learners in Ethiopia." These two respondents remarked that all language skills are equally

important for English learners in Ethiopia and it would be very difficult to talk about one language skill being more important than another language skill. Their comment was accepted and *Question 4* was dropped in the main study. The questions and results of questionnaire for writing teachers are given in *Appendix C*. However, some results of this questionnaire which were felt to strengthen the results of the main study were analyzed and discussed below.

5.3.2 Results of questionnaire for teachers

The questions and results of questionnaire for teachers are given in *Appendix C*.

5.3.3 Analysis and discussion of the results

This part attempts to analyze and discuss some of the results of the questionnaire for writing teachers in the pilot study.

5.3.3.1 Area of focus

This part (see *Question 4* in *Appendix C*) attempts to show the area of focus in teacher feedback. Thus, the majority of teachers (four out of six) reported (see the table below) that they focused on all writing components when they read their students' first drafts because all the components are equally important and two teachers (out of six) reported that they focused on content and organization alone.

content	organization	lang. use	vocabulary	mechanics
2+4	2+4	4	4	4

It may be argued that all writing components are useful to write effectively. However, writing components like content and organization may have to be given a priority in writing the first drafts and the other components like grammar, lexis and mechanics may be handled in the later stages of writing. This is important because for one thing students will have the opportunity to concentrate on meaning alone in the first draft and this may make the burden of composing less severe and further the fact that they treat the writing components systematically could enable them to write more purposively and effectively.

5.3.3.2 Practices

This part (see Questions 5 in *Appendix C*) shows the forms of feedback usually used by the writing teachers and why they used them. Thus, the majority of teacher respondents reported that (see the following table) they usually used 'error identification' and 'writing comments' when they responded to their students' writing and some respondents reported that at times they used

error identification	writing comments	conferencing
6	6	2

'conferencing'. The following reasons (see Question 6 in *Appendix C*) were given by teachers for using the above forms of feedback:

- The comments help the students to identify their errors (*error identification*).
- The comments help the students to improve their writing (*writing comments*).
- The students can see their problem areas (*writing comments*).
- The students can discuss their problems with the teacher (*conferencing*).

5.3.3.3 Peer feedback

This part (see Questions 14-16 in *Appendix C*) tries to find out if the teachers used peer feedback and how much their students liked the peer feedback used in their writing classes. The majority of teachers reported that they used peer feedback in their writing classes. Most of them said that they used it 'sometimes' and some others reported 'often'. Further, they said that most of their students liked peer feedback "very much".

These results agree with the responses of students to the same questions in the first questionnaire for students. These results may suggest that peer feedback seems to be popular amongst student writers and can be used more 'often' in responding to students' writing along with the more common teacher feedback.

5.3.3.4 Preliminary drafts

This part (see Questions 12 and 13 in *Appendix C*) attempts to find out if the students produced preliminary drafts before they wrote the final drafts and when the teachers intervened to give comments in their writing classes. The majority of teachers said that their students produced preliminary drafts before they wrote the final drafts. Moreover, the teachers said that they intervened during the first drafts and provided comments. It may be argued that writing preliminary drafts would help student writers to be critics of their own writing and writing teachers can also intervene during the preliminary drafts and provide their students with comments that can help them to improve their writing.

5.3.3.5 Students' writing performance

This part (see Question 17 in *Appendix C*) attempts to find whether the teachers would think their students' writing was satisfactory for their level or otherwise. Most of the teachers said (see the following table) that their students' writing performance was 'satisfactory' for their level although a few teachers said it was not. The results largely seem to agree with students' self-rating in writing skills. As reported earlier, most of the students said that their writing skills were "good" or "fair".

Yes	No
5	1

However, if we compare the raw scores they received for the various essay drafts they wrote for this study with the scores suggested by the *ESL composition profile* (excellent to very good, good to average, average to fair, fair to poor and very poor), it can argued that most of the students would be in the category of "fair to poor", not "good to average" as they tend to claim (see 5.2.3.6 above). The possible explanation for the discrepancy between students' self-rating and their actual writing performance could be that some students overestimated their writing abilities.

On the whole, the results of this questionnaire for teachers clued the actual writing practices in general and what forms of feedback are in fact used in writing classes and what teachers would think about the writing practices of their students in particular. Further, the results enabled the researcher to reshape and use the questionnaire in the main study.

5.4 Student essays

5.4.1 Introduction

This part attempts to analyze and discuss the results of the impromptu essay and three other major essays used to generate data for the pilot study in addition to the questionnaires. The students wrote one impromptu essay and three other essays with one first and one final drafts during the pilot study. The main purpose of the impromptu essay was to find out the students' ability to communicate in writing. The other three essays were aimed at finding out if responding to students' first drafts using teacher feedback or peer feedback would make any difference in improving students' writing revisions.

The topics selected for the pilot study were believed to be topics which were familiar to students and topics which they could easily understand and write about. The topic selected for the impromptu essay (*Two most common student hobbies at the Addis Ababa University*) are connected with their experiences in the University. The other three topics (*The most memorable person in my life*, *Family life in my kebelie*, and *How I would like to spend my summer (kiremt) vacation*) seem to be connected with their personal experiences and practices in the community. As Sommers (1992:30) remarks, writing on topics they are familiar with will give students the opportunity to bring their life and their writing together. Further, the topics would call for using different forms of discourse in writing essays. For example, the first topic (*The most memorable person in my life*) would be more a narration although elements of description could come in as necessary. The second topic (*Family life in my kebelie*) calls predominantly for exposition and other forms like description and argument can be used depending on how the topic is approached. The third topic (*How I would like to spend my summer (kiremt) vacation*) entails argument and

exposition. The writer can show his/her readers what his/her plans are and then argue why he/she has chosen those plans for the vacation. In all, the topics seem to entail all the discourses and their combinations. The students also remarked near the end of the pilot study that the topics were straightforward, relevant and fairly easy to understand and write essays on (classroom discussions).

All in all, the students produced 210 essays during the pilot study. Of these 210 essays, 70 essays (of 10 students) were randomly selected and analyzed in the pilot study. The mean score of each essay was computed for each group and compared using a *t-test* research procedure to find out if there was any significant difference between the mean scores of the two independent groups (Group 1 and Group 2) at different levels of significance (0.05 and 0.01) for each of the essays. Further, the mean scores of the first and final drafts were also compared using a *matched t-test* research procedure to find out if the mean scores of the first drafts were significantly different from the mean scores of the final drafts within the groups at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance. Moreover, the comments provided by the teacher to Group 1 and by peers to Group 2 were counted and classified into different categories (category of comments) and students' responses/reactions to the teacher/peer comments were also analyzed and classified into different categories (types of responses). Further, the correlation coefficient (r) of the values awarded to the student writers by the two raters was computed for three of the essay drafts (as a sample) produced during the pilot study. Thus, the results of the essays between the groups and within the groups and the different writing components, the categories of comments, students' responses to the teacher/peer comments and the correlation coefficient (r) were analyzed and discussed as follows:

5.4.2 Analysis and discussion of the essay results

This part attempts to analyze and discuss the results of the essay drafts between the two groups and within the groups in the pilot study (see *Appendix J*).

5.4.2.1 Between the groups (first drafts)

The mean score for the impromptu essay was (65%) for Group 1 and (66%) for Group 2. These two mean scores were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance using a *t-test* research procedure to find out if they were significantly different. The result shows that the mean scores of the two groups are not significantly different. Furthermore, the mean scores of the first draft of essay one (62%) for Group 1 and (61%) for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance to find out if the two means were significantly different. The result shows that the two mean scores are not significantly different. Then, the mean scores of the first drafts of essay two (62%) for Group 1 and (61%) for two group were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance to find out if they were significantly different. The result shows that the two mean scores are not significantly different. Further, the mean scores of the first drafts of essay three (62%) for Group 1 and (62%) for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance to find out if the two mean scores were significantly different. The result shows that the mean scores of the two groups are not significantly different.

5.4.2.2 Between the groups (final drafts)

Furthermore, in addition to comparing the mean scores of the impromptu essay and the first drafts of the three essays, the final drafts of the three essays of the two groups were also compared to find out if the mean scores of the final drafts of the three essays of the two groups

were significantly different. Thus, the mean scores of the final drafts of essay one (65%) for Group 1 and (65%) for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores of the two groups are not significantly different. Next, the mean scores of the final drafts of essay two (64%) for Group 1 (64%) for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores are not significantly different. Then, the mean scores of the final drafts of essay three (65%) for Group 1 and (65%) for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the mean score of the final drafts of the two groups are not significantly different.

5.4.2.3 Within the groups (first drafts versus final drafts)

In addition to comparing the mean scores between the two independent groups, i.e. Group 1 and Group 2 the mean scores of the essays (first drafts versus final drafts) were compared within each group (using a *matched t-test* research procedure) to find out if the mean score of the first draft was significantly different from the mean score of the final draft of the same essay for the same group for each of the three essays. To this effect, the mean score of essay one for the first draft (62%) and the mean score of essay one for the final draft (65%) for Group 1 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the mean scores of the first draft and the final draft of essay one for Group 1 are significantly different. Similarly, the mean scores of the first draft (61%) and final draft for essay one (65%) for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two means are significantly different.

Further, the first (62%) and final (64%) drafts of essay two for Group 1 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores are significantly different. The mean scores of essay two for the first draft (61%) and the final draft (64%) for Group 2 were also compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores are significantly different. Likewise, the mean scores for the first draft (62%) and the final draft (65%) for essay three for Group 1 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores are significantly different. Finally, the mean scores for the first draft (62%) and the final draft (65%) for essay three for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores are significantly different.

The following table summarizes the results of the essay mean scores between and within the two groups discussed above.

Table 5.1: Summary of mean scores (between and within the groups)

Group	Essay	first draft (%)	final draft (%)
1	Impromptu	65	-
2	Impromptu	66	-
1	1	62	65
2	1	61	65
1	2	62	64
2	2	61	64
1	3	62	65
2	3	62	65

5.4.3 Writing components (see *Appendix J*: Essay results of the pilot study)

Each essay draft (first and final) was evaluated by marking five writing components according to the *ESL composition profile* scoring guide: content, organization, vocabulary, language use (grammar) and mechanics. The main objective of this part was to compare the mean scores of the individual components of the first and final drafts of the same essay to find out if the students, besides the whole essay, improved the individual components as they rewrote their essays. Thus, the mean scores of the first and final drafts for each of the writing components were computed and the results show that the mean scores of the final drafts for each of the writing components were by and large higher than the mean scores of the first drafts of the writing components.

5.4.4 Teacher/peer comments

After the students wrote the first drafts of their essays, they were provided with comments which they were expected to use and rewrite their essays in this pilot study. Thus, this part deals with two sections: the first section (categories of comments) attempts to identify and categorize the teacher/peer comments, the second section (types of responses) attempts to find out what the students (in both groups) did with the teacher/peer comments (e.g. used the comments as suggested to them, used the comments but not as suggested to them, ignored the comments, etc.) they received during the pilot study. A complete list of the teacher/peer comments the students in both groups received during the pilot study is given in *Appendix G*.

5.4.4.1 Categories of comments

This section attempts to identify and categorize the teacher/peer comments the students in both Group 1 and Group 2 received during the pilot study. The table (Table 5.6) which shows the

categories of teacher/peer comments is given in *Appendix K*. However, the results of the teacher/peer comments were analyzed and discussed as follows:

5.4.4.2 Analysis and discussion of the teacher/peer comments

In the pilot study, Group 1 (teacher feedback) received 54 comments for the three different essays they produced and Group 2 received 50 comments for the same number of essays. The comments the students received were identified and classified into five categories (content, organization, language use, vocabulary and mechanics). The comments by and large focused on meaning (content and organization) rather than mechanical and grammatical errors. About 65/104 (62.5%) of the comments were on the first two categories of content and organization, which were concerned with meaning on a more global level than the sentence level. The emphasis seemed to be similar in both the teacher and peer comments. The other categories of comments (language use, vocabulary and mechanics) received about 39/104 (37.5%) of the comments. These latter categories (language use, vocabulary and mechanics) are generally believed to affect communication less severely in writing although they are quite useful for producing effective writing. However, comments were provided on these categories too when it was felt that grammatical and/or mechanical errors would affect the meaning of the sentence or paragraph.

In Group 1, about 34/54 (63%) comments dealt with meaning and organization and 20/54 (37%) dealt with grammatical, lexical and mechanical errors. Similarly, 31/50 (62%) dealt with meaning and organization and 19/50 (38%) dealt with the grammatical, lexical and mechanical errors in Group 2. What each category (content, organization, language use, vocabulary, mechanics) would refer to is provided in *Appendix P*.

5.4.4.3 Conclusion

The fact that most of the comments were on content and organization may imply two things: First, content and organization are perceived as being the most important components in writing. Second, these two areas were the most challenging components for our students. This could be verified from the responses of the students to the questionnaires during the pilot study. Most students reported that organization was the most difficult writing component. Further, if we look at the comments (see *Appendix G*) students received for their essays, the most common comments (paraphrased) could be summarized as follows:

- Your essay lacks a clear main idea.
- Your essay lacks a clear direction.
- Your sentences are not clear to the reader.
- Your pars. are not coherent.
- Your par. is incomplete.
- Your par. is not well developed.
- Your par. is not well organized, etc.

These comments may show how problematic and challenging organization and content are for student writers. This is not to suggest, however, that the other components are easy or not useful for the students. It is only to indicate that organization and content seem to be relatively more problematic and challenging to student writers and they seem to require more attention and efforts than the other writing components in writing classes. Moreover, the students gave their assessments about the teacher/peer comments (in classroom discussions) they received during the pilot study. The students largely agreed that the comments were useful and helped them to

see their problem areas. However, some students commented that at times the teacher/peer comments were repetitive. The other comment was that some teacher/peer comments were not clear enough and this caused difficulty to understand what the comment was about. Further, some students complained about negative teacher/peer comments. They said that some comments lacked 'fairness'. Some students also said that the comments failed to suggest strategies for revising the final drafts. The remarks put forward by the students were by and large useful and efforts were made to consider them in the main study of this research.

5.4.4.4 Types of responses

This section presents the responses/reactions of the students (in Group 1 and Group 2) to the teacher/peer comments (whether the students used the comments as suggested to them, used but not as suggested to them, or ignored the comments, etc.) they received during the pilot study. This section contains the responses of students to teacher comments in Group 1 and the responses of students in Group 2 to peer comments. The tables (Tables 5.7 and 5.8) which show the various responses of the students to the teacher/peer comments are given in *Appendix K*.

5.4.4.4.1 Type of responses (G1)

This part analyzes and discusses the responses/reactions of the students in Group 1 (teacher feedback) to the teacher comments they received on the first drafts of their essays during the pilot study (see Table 5.7 in *Appendix K*).

Besides putting the teacher/peer comments into various categories, the type of responses (reactions) of the students to the teacher/peer comments was also analyzed in the pilot study. The

results show that the students reacted in different ways to the comments they received from their teacher/peers during the pilot study. In Group 1 (teacher feedback), some comments (52%) were used by students as suggested by the teacher, and other comments (15%) were also used but not as suggested by the teacher. In some cases, part of the text that was object of the comment was removed (11%), and some comments (11%) were 'ignored' and other comments (11%) were 'praise'. The overall result shows that the students utilized (78%) of the comments and ignored (11%). This suggests that students by and large used the comments suggested to them by their writing teacher and improved their writing. The results suggest to the writing teacher that students would utilize the comments they receive from their writing teachers and thus writing teachers should provide comments to their students in writing classes.

5.4.4.4.2 Type of responses (G2)

This part analyzes and discusses the responses/reactions of the students in Group 2 (peer feedback) to the peer comments they received on the first drafts of their essays during the pilot study (see Table 5.8 in *Appendix K*).

In Group 2 (peer feedback), some comments (44%) were used as suggested by peers, and some other comments (16%) were also used but not as suggested by peers. In some cases, some students removed part of the text that was the object of comment (12%), and some comments (16%) were ignored and (12%) were 'praise'. On the whole, the students utilized 72% of the comments and ignored 16% of the comments in Group 2.

5.4.4.4.3 Summary of the students' responses (G1 and G2)

The situation seems to be similar in both groups except that the peers (Group 2) gave more 'praise' to their peers than the teacher (in Group 1). This could be for the fact that they evaluated their peers' essays in comparison with their own writing performance and they were more content with the first drafts than the teacher. Moreover, the students ignored comments suggested to them by their peers more in peer feedback (Group 2) than in teacher feedback (Group 1). The possible explanation for this could be that some students argued when they received the peer comments that their work was correct/perfect as it was and hesitated to accept and incorporate the comments suggested to them by their peers. Further, some students seem to have overestimated their writing abilities and they were not prepared to acknowledge that their actual writing performance was in disagreement with their perception about their writing abilities. As in the teacher feedback, students used most of the comments (72%) and ignored (16%) of the comments suggested to them by their peers in the pilot study. This may suggest that peer feedback can be used along with the more common and traditional teacher feedback in responding to students' writing.

5.4.4.4.4 Conclusion

All in all, in spite of differences in training, experience and confidence between the teacher and student readers, teacher feedback and peer feedback seem to be equally effective in responding to students' writing. However, it may be argued that peer feedback can be helpful and effective in responding to students' writing if student writers are trained and encouraged by their writing teacher. The researcher could notice that our students' main problem was not that they couldn't read and provide comments. Their main problem was largely lack of experience and confidence. It could be observed that as the research went on the students gained more experience and

confidence in responding to their peers' writing. Thus, near the end of the pilot study most students were more comfortable and confident in providing comments to their fellow students.

5.4.5 Correlation coefficient (r)

As reported earlier, during this study two raters of similar qualifications marked the students' essays out of 100 points according to the *ESL composition profile* scoring guide procedures. This part, therefore, attempts to find out the results of the correlation coefficient (r) of the three essay drafts selected as a sample of the seven essay drafts (first and final) the students produced during the pilot study, i.e. to find out if the values awarded to student writers in Group 1 and Group 2 by the two raters for the same essay drafts would correlate or not. To this end, three essay drafts: Impromptu essay, Essay 2 (D1) and Essay 3 (D2) were randomly selected from amongst the seven drafts (first and final) produced by the students in both groups during the pilot study. The correlation coefficient (r) of these three essay drafts were computed and the results show that $r = 0.88$ for Impromptu essay, $r = 0.90$ for Essay 2 (D1) and $r = 0.93$ for Essay 3 (D2). Thus, it can be argued from the results of the correlation coefficient (r) of the three essay drafts that the values given by the two raters to the student writers for the three different essay drafts correlated positively and the results signify that the rating was reliable (see *Appendix M* for details).

5.5. Second questionnaire for students

5.5.1 Introduction

An eighteen-item questionnaire was designed and distributed to twenty 2nd year students just before the end of the semester during the pilot study. All the students completed and returned the questionnaire. The main objective of the second questionnaire for students was to find out,

if and in what ways, the different feedback treatments used in the pilot study might have influenced students' attitudes towards writing practices in general and feedback in particular. Two questions (*Questions 8 and 17*) which were used in the pilot study were dropped in the main study. *Question 8* was on whether the students understood the teacher comments or not and *Question 17* was on ranking the various language skills according to their degree of importance. *Question 8* was dropped because 50% of the students failed to respond to it and *Question 17* was dropped because some writing teachers remarked that it would be difficult to talk about one language skill being more important than another language skill. The questions and results of the second questionnaire for students are given in *Appendix E*. But, some of the results of this questionnaire which were believed to reinforce and consolidate the results of the main study of this research were analyzed and discussed below.

5.5.2 Results of the second questionnaire

The questions and results of the second questionnaire for students are given in *Appendix E*.

5.5.3 Analysis and discussion of the results (Group 1 versus Group 2)

The main results of Group 1 (teacher feedback) and Group 2 (peer feedback) were analyzed and discussed as follows:

5.5.3.1 Teacher/peer feedback

This part (see Questions 1, 2, 9, 10 and 15 in *Appendix E*) focuses on the questions which were related to the role of teacher/peer feedback in improving students' writing. The responses of students to each of these questions were analyzed and discussed as follows: To begin with,

Question 1 was on how much of the essay students read when they got it back from their teacher. The results show that 85% of the students in Group 1 (teacher) reported that they read all or most of the essay when they got it back from their teacher and 75% of the students in Group 2 (peer) reported that they read all or most of the essay when they got it back from their peers. *Question 2* was on how many teacher/peer corrections the students attended to. The results show that 80% of the students in Group 1 said that they attended to all teacher corrections and 70% of the students in Group 2 reported attending to all peer corrections. *Question 9* was on how much the students liked the teacher/peer feedback they received during the pilot study. The results show that 75% in Group 1 said they liked teacher feedback "very much" and 65% in Group 2 also said they liked peer feedback "very much". *Question 10* was on whether the students benefited from the preliminary drafts they produced before they wrote the final drafts. The results show that all the students in Group 1 said that they benefited from the preliminary drafts and 80% of the students in Group 2 said that they benefited from the preliminary drafts they produced before writing the final drafts. *Question 15* was on whether the teacher/peer comments helped the students to improve their essays. The results show that all the students in Group 1 reported that the teacher comments helped them to improve their essays and 80% of the students in Group 2 said the peer comments helped them to improve their essays.

It may be argued that the results by and large show that teacher/peer feedback is a useful activity in writing classes. The results further verify that students want feedback to reappraise their work and improve on their writing. The fact that the majority of students reported they liked the teacher/peer comments "very much" would suggest that peer feedback and teacher feedback can be used side by side in writing classes.

5.5.3.2 Strategies

This part (see Question 7 in *Appendix E*) focuses on the strategies students used when they received teacher/peer feedback during the pilot study. The results show that 20% (20% in Group 1 and 20% in Group 2) made a mental note of the teacher/peer comments, 5% (5% in Group 1 and 5% in Group 2) wrote down points to consider for revision or for future use, 70% (80% in Group 1 and 60% in Group 2) rewrote the essay incorporating the teacher/peer comments and 5% (5% in Group 1 and 5% in Group 2) referred to other papers and rewrote the essay.

The results may suggest that the students tend to use the teacher/peer comments in one way or another to reshape their writing. These results may further strengthen the argument that feedback is useful in writing classes. The results would encourage writing teachers to provide feedback in their writing classes and to use peer feedback along with the more common teacher feedback in their writing classes.

5.5.3.3 Preferences

This part (see Question 12 in *Appendix E*) focuses on the preferences of students for forms of feedback. The results show (see the following table) that 80% of the students in Group 1 said they would prefer 'writing comments', 10 % said 'error identification' and 10% said 'conferencing'. In Group 2, 60% said 'writing comments', 20% said 'error identification', 10% said 'conferencing' and 10% said 'reformulation'.

error identification	writing comments	conferencing	reformulation
3	14	2	1

These results show the students in both groups largely tend to prefer the same forms of feedback. It can be argued that writing teachers should try to find out what forms of feedback their students would like to have and why their students would like to have them and then attend to the students' choices accordingly. This is because some students could hesitate to use teacher/peer comments imposed on them against their preferences. The effect of imposition could undermine the role feedback could play in fostering improvement in writing classes. As pointed out in the discussion of the results of the first questionnaire for students, teachers and students should discuss and find out which forms of feedback could be more effective and helpful in their writing classes. It is useful to evaluate all forms of feedback on their merits and demerits before choosing and using them. Writing teachers have the responsibility and moral duty to explain to their students the feedback forms that they reckon to be relevant and effective in their writing classes so that their students might realize that what is more important regarding feedback is which forms of feedback are more effective in helping students to improve their writing skills. If the students could negotiate the forms of feedback that are effective in their writing classes, the dispute between the actual practices and the preferences of the students could be overcome. To this end, Ferris (1995) writes that teachers should take time early in the term (semester) to explain their overall philosophy of responding as well as specific strategies they will use to students. They (teachers) can reinforce this by discussing general trends in their responses with the class and by allowing class time for students to ask questions and react to teacher feedback each time a marked draft is returned to the students (Ferris 1995: 49).

5.5.3.4 Self-rating

This part (see Question 18 in *Appendix E*) focuses on how the students rated their writing abilities. The results show (see the following table) that 80% of the students in Group 1 rated their writing skills as "good" and 20% as "fair". In Group 2, 70% rated their writing skills as "good" and 20% as "fair" and 10% did not respond.

excellent	good	fair	poor	no response
0	15	4	0	1

Although the majority of students felt that their skills in writing compositions were "good", their actual writing performance and their self-rating seem to vary. It was found out from the results of their essays that most of the students were either 'fair' or 'poor' writers, not 'good' writers as they tend to claim. The discrepancy between their writing performance and their self-rating could occur probably because some students overestimated their writing abilities (see 5.2.3.6. above).

5.6 Summary of the pilot study

5.6.1 Introduction

The pilot study had two objectives: (a) to try out the research tools (by method of triangulation) and (b) to use the results of the pilot study as a stepping stone for conducting the main study of this research. To this end, two questionnaires and four essays on different topics for students, a questionnaire for writing teachers were used for one semester (16 weeks) in two groups selected for the pilot study. Some questions which the students failed to respond to adequately and other questions which some writing teachers remarked to be controversial were dropped in the main study. Regarding the essay topics the students remarked that the topics were fairly easy and

relevant to their lives. Their remarks were accepted and the same essay topics were used in the main study of this research. However, some students raised the difficulties they had with the teacher/peer comments during the pilot study. This issue was discussed in class near the end of the pilot study and the student comments were found to be useful (see 5.4.4.3 above). The data collected by using these different methods were analyzed and some results which were felt to reinforce and enrich the main study were briefly discussed in the pilot study. It was also believed that the results of the pilot study would help to indicate the direction of the main study. Thus, the following summary would focus on the main results of the first questionnaire for students, questionnaire for writing teachers, student essays and second questionnaire for students.

5.6.2 First questionnaire for students

The main objective of the first questionnaire for students was to find out students' opinions about their writing practices and preferences for types of feedback. The results of the first questionnaire for students revealed that the students would largely consider their writing abilities "good" or "fair". However, the students' self-rating seem to be improbable when their actual writing performance and their self-rating are compared according to the *ESL composition profile* scoring guide (see 5.2.3.6 above). The possible reason for the discrepancy between students' self-rating and writing performance could be that some students overestimated their writing abilities. As regards their preferences for forms of feedback, it was found out that the majority of students would prefer 'writing comments' 'conferencing' and 'reformulation' in descending order in contrary to 'error identification', which is reported to be commonly used by writing teachers. On the other hand, it was reported that writing teachers used 'error identification', 'writing comments' and at times 'conferencing' in descending order in responding to students' writing. Thus, the

results suggest that there is a mismatch between what the teachers do and what the students would like to have.

5.6.3 Questionnaire for writing teachers

The main objective of this questionnaire was to find out the forms of feedback teachers usually use in responding to their students' writing and what teachers think about their students' writing practices. The results of questionnaire for teachers revealed that writing teachers mostly used 'error identification', 'writing comments' and at times 'conferencing' in their writing classes. This practice, however, seems to disagree with what students would like to have. Students, as reported earlier, would prefer 'writing comments', 'conferencing', 'error identification' and 'reformulation' in descending order. Regarding teachers' perception about their students' writing, it was found out that most writing teachers would think that their students' writing was 'satisfactory' for their level and some teachers said not satisfactory. The result by and large seems to agree with what students said about their writing abilities---"good" or "fair".

5.6.4 Student essays

In addition to the questionnaires, an impromptu essay and three other major essays were used in the pilot study to generate data for the pilot study. The main objective of the impromptu essay was to find out students' ability to communicate in writing. The other three major essays were used to find out if responding to students' first drafts by using teacher or peer feedback would make any difference in improving students' writing revisions. The essay results show that irrespective of the type of feedback (teacher versus peer) used in responding to students' writing, the mean scores of the essays of the two groups were not significantly different. However,

students' writing improved significantly as they rewrote the originals. Thus, it may be argued that the essay results suggest that teacher feedback and peer feedback are equally effective in responding to students' writing and students tend to improve their originals significantly when they rewrite their essays. Hence, teacher and peer feedback can be used side by side in writing classes.

5.6.5 Second questionnaire for students

On the other hand, a second questionnaire for students was administered near the end of the pilot study. The main objective of the second questionnaire for students was to find out, if and in what ways, the different feedback treatments used in the pilot study might have influenced students' attitudes towards writing practices in general and feedback in particular. The results of the second questionnaire for students revealed that the teacher/peer feedback the students received and the writing they did during the pilot study seem to have influenced their perceptions about writing in general and feedback in particular. For example, 50% of the students made a mental note of the comments in the first questionnaire for students, but 20% made a mental note of the comments in the second questionnaire for students. Moreover, only 10% reported that they rewrote their essays using the teacher comments suggested to them in the first questionnaire for students. However, 70% said that they rewrote their essays incorporating the comments suggested to them by the teacher/peers in the second questionnaire for students. Further, 55% of the respondents ranked speaking as the most difficult language skill and 35% ranked writing as the most difficult language skill in the first questionnaire for students at the start of the pilot study. Nevertheless, the same students (65%) ranked writing as the most difficult language skill and only 30% ranked speaking as the most difficult language skill in the second questionnaire for

students. The reason for the change in perceptions could be that the students had experienced how painstaking and recursive writing was during the pilot study and reacted accordingly.

The other change noted in the pilot study was students' preferences for forms of feedback. In the first questionnaire for students, 15% preferred error identification, 35% preferred writing comments, 23% preferred conferencing and 19% preferred reformulation and 8% did not respond. This picture seem to have changed in the second questionnaire for students. Thus, 15% preferred error identification, 70% preferred writing comments, 10% preferred conferencing and 5% preferred reformulation. It may argued the students' preferences for these forms of feedback changed after they received some orientation on what each form of feedback was and the advantages and disadvantages of each of these forms of feedback.

5.6.6 Conclusion

It may be inferred from the results of the preceding research tools (questionnaires and essays) that the results of the two groups (Group 1 and Group 2) are largely similar. However, it was observed that students seemed to be more comfortable with teacher feedback more than peer feedback. One possible reason for this could be that some students (in Group 2) did not seem to have confidence in their peers' ability to read and respond to their writing in the beginning of the study. This doubt basically seems to emerge from the belief that the teacher 'knows best' and he/she is the exclusive source of knowledge and everybody else in the class is there to learn from the teacher. The other reason for their doubt could probably emerge from their perception about the inability of some of their peers to read and provide useful and relevant comments. Whichever

the reason might be, it could have a negative effect on the role peer feedback could play in responding to students' writing.

However, the situation seems to have considerably changed as the study went on. Some students who were dubious about the effectiveness of peer feedback in the beginning of the pilot study seem to have gained more confidence in their peers' comments. They could see for themselves that their peers could read (in pairs) and provide relevant and useful comments. This experience suggests that writing teachers should do their level best to change their students' biased views and attitudes towards their fellow students and establish in students' mind that the teacher is not the sole source of feedback and learning in the classroom. It may even be argued that the teacher's main responsibility should be to monitor and guide the learner towards a conducive environment in which the learner can learn on his/her own and in collaboration with other fellow students. As Morrow (1981:63) writes, "The teacher can help, advise and teach; but only the learner can learn." Or as Reid (1994:285) remarks, the teacher is "... a facilitator and a member of the classroom community." This is not, however, to undermine the role the teacher can play in the teaching and learning process. The argument is that students can learn from each other and can help each other so long as the teaching-learning environment is favourable to do so.

5.6.6.1 The first objective: trying out the research tools

As reported at the beginning of this chapter, the first objective of the pilot study was to try out the various research methods selected to conduct the main study of this research. To this effect, the various methods (questionnaires and essays) designed for this research were tried out and some questions which were found to be unsuitable for one reason or another in the pilot study

were either excluded or dropped during the main study of this research. For example, twenty questions were designed and administered in the first questionnaire for students in the pilot study. However, two questions (8 and 19) were dropped in the main study. *Question 8* (see *Appendix A*) which was on whether the students understood their teachers' comments or not was dropped from the first questionnaire for students because a large percentage of the students failed to respond to it and *Question 19* (see *Appendix A*) which was on ranking the language skills according to their degree of importance was dropped from the first questionnaire for students because some writing teachers remarked that it was difficult to talk about one language skill being more important than another. Similarly, *Question 4* (see *Appendix C*) which was on ranking the language skills according to their level of importance was dropped from the questionnaire for teachers because some teachers who completed the questionnaire for teachers in the pilot study said that it was difficult to talk about one language skill being more important than another and all language skills are equally important in the teaching and learning of English in Ethiopia. As regards the essay topics (see *Appendix D*), the same topics that were used in the pilot study were also used in the main study because at the end of the pilot study those students who participated in the pilot study remarked (in class discussions) that the essay topics were fairly easy and relevant. So, it was felt that there was no need to change the essay topics in the main study. However, some students said that they had some difficulties with some of the teacher/peer comments during the pilot study. The students' complaints and comments were accepted and considered in the main study of this research. All in all, the results of the pilot study enabled the researcher to assess the effectiveness of the various research tools used in the pilot study and reshape and use them in the main study of the research.

5.6.6.2 The second objective: using the results of the pilot study as a...

The second objective of the pilot study was to use the results of the pilot study as a stepping stone for conducting the main study of this research. To this effect, the results of the pilot study indicated that irrespective of the method of feedback used in treating the two groups (Group 1 and Group 2) selected for this study, there was no significant difference between the writing performance of the two groups (teacher feedback versus peer feedback). However, the results were interesting because it was largely unexpected that the writing performance of the two groups would be similar. The unexpected results of the pilot study motivated the researcher to conduct the main study and see what the results would be in the main study. In short, the results of the pilot study could motivate the researcher to conduct the main study and reinforce the results of the main study.

Chapter Six

The main study

6.1 Introduction

The main objective of this chapter was to address the general as well as the specific objectives of this research. The general objective of this research was to compare the effectiveness of different feedback methods on students' writing revisions. The specific objectives were to: (a) discover what feedback methods are in fact used in responding to students' writing at present (b) find out what students feel about the different feedback methods used in writing (c) compare the effectiveness of teacher versus peer feedback on students' writing revisions, and (d) suggest the feedback method/s that could promote students' writing skills. To achieve these objectives, based on the results of the pilot study, two questionnaires and four essays for students and a questionnaire for writing teachers were designed and administered to collect data for the main study. Then, the results of the questionnaires and essays for students and the questionnaire for writing teachers were analyzed and discussed as follows:

6.2 First questionnaire for students

6.2.1 Introduction

Based on the results of the first questionnaire for students used in the pilot study, an eighteen-item questionnaire was designed and distributed to twenty-six 2nd year students in the main study of this research. All the students completed and returned the questionnaire. The main objective of this questionnaire was to find out students' opinions about their writing practices and

preferences for types of feedback. The results of the first questionnaire for students were analyzed and discussed as follows:

6.2.2 Results of the first questionnaire for students

The questions and the results of the first questionnaire for students are given in *Appendix B*.

6.2.3 Analysis and discussion of the results of the first questionnaire

The results of the first questionnaire for students were analyzed and discussed as follows:

6.2.3.1 Teacher feedback

This part deals with the results of questions that focused on the role of teacher feedback in improving students' writing. Thus, *Question 1* was on how much of the essay the students read when they got it back from their teachers. The results show (see Question 1 in *Appendix B*) that the majority of the students (65%) reported that they read all or most of the essay when they got it back from their teacher and 31% read some of it. *Question 2* was on whether the students gave thoughtful attention to teacher corrections. The majority of students (65%) said that they gave thoughtful attention to all or most of the teacher corrections and others (35%) reported that they attended to some or few teacher corrections (see Question 2 in *Appendix B*). *Question 16* was on whether the teacher comments helped students to improve their writing. Most students (85%) reported that the teacher comments they received before writing the final drafts helped them to improve their writing skills (see Question 16 in *Appendix B*).

These results suggest that students largely used the teacher comments to improve their writing. The results may further verify the argument that teacher feedback is useful and relevant in writing classes. Different researchers have reported that teacher comments that students receive while producing their preliminary drafts help students to improve their writing. To this end, Fathman and Whalley (1990:186) argue that students make more improvement when feedback is given than when it is not. Moreover, Jordan (1997:172) reports that there is some evidence that students find teachers' feedback useful in helping them to improve their writing.

6.2.3.2 Area of focus

This part focuses on the areas that teacher comments focused on when they were responding to students' writing and the areas that students gave a lot of attention to when they received teacher comments. Thus, *Question 3* was on the writing components that the teacher comments focused on when responding to their students' writing. The results show that (see *Question 3* in *Appendix B*) most of the teacher comments dealt a lot with language use, organization, content, mechanics and vocabulary in descending order. *Question 4* was on how much attention the students gave to the teacher comments involving the various writing components when they received teacher comments. The results show that (see *Question 4* in *Appendix B*) the students gave a lot of attention to comments that dealt with language use, organization, content, vocabulary and mechanics in descending order.

The results revealed that the teachers largely focused on language use in their feedback and students also focused on language use when they were using the teacher comments. The results are similar to what students reported about the same question in the pilot study, i.e. both the

teacher and students focused on language use (grammar) more than the other writing components. This could happen probably because some writing teachers and students might have the impression that language learning largely means learning its grammar. However, this does not seem to be the case. The primary function of language is communication. Communication largely focuses on meaning and content. For meaning we need well organized ideas. This is not, however, to undermine the role grammar plays to write effectively. As Zamel (1987:183) remarks, students should learn from their teachers and fellow students that the issues of content and meaning must be addressed first and that language is of concern only when the ideas to be communicated have been delineated. Similarly, Chenoweth (1987) suggests that students' focus should be directed first to content and later to structural errors. Thus, the area of priority should be meaning and content in writing the first drafts and the question of grammar, lexis and mechanics should be dealt with in the later stages of writing.

6.2.3.3 Level of difficulty

This part tries to show the writing components and language skills that were reported to be challenging for students in this questionnaire. Thus, *Question 6* was on ranking the various writing components according to their level of difficulty (see Question 6 in *Appendix B*). The results show that the students ranked the writing components according to their level of difficulty as organization, mechanics, content, vocabulary and language use in descending order. On the other hand, *Question 17* was on ranking the language skills according to their level of difficulty. The results show (see Question 17 in *Appendix B*) that the students ranked the language skills according to their level of difficulty as speaking, writing, listening and reading in descending order.

These results agree with the writing teachers' and students' ranking of the writing components and language skills according to their level of difficulty in the pilot study. It may be argued that ranking the writing components and language skills according to their levels of difficulty could help the language teachers in general writing teachers in particular to give due attention and time to areas which students find to be more challenging so that students may master these areas of difficulty and use them effectively in their writing.

It is usually argued that writing is a complex and recursive activity. As Richards (1990: 100) remarks, "Learning to write well is difficult ..., one that induces anxiety and frustration in many learners." Similarly, the difficulty involved in writing is expressed by Widdowson (1983). He notes, "In my experience writing is usually an irksome activity and an ordeal to be avoided whenever possible" (Widdowson 1983:34). The results clue to the writing teachers that writing is such a challenging skill and they (teachers) need to pay due attention to writing components and language skills that their students find to be challenging so that, as noted above, students might master and use them effectively.

6.2.3.4 Strategies

This part focuses on the strategies students used after they had received teacher comments. The results show that (see Question 7 in *Appendix B*) :

- 50% made a mental note of the teacher comments
- 23% wrote down the points to consider for revision or for future use
- 11% rewrote the essay incorporating the comments
- 11% referred to other papers and rewrote the essay

- 4% did nothing.

These results indicate that students by and large used the teacher comments suggested to them in one way or another. It may be argued that the underlying concern of writing teachers should be to provide comments that would foster improvement. However, as Sommers (1982:156) writes, it is a challenge for the writing teacher to develop comments which will provide an inherent reason for students to revise. Teacher feedback can be effective if it encourages students to think about what they have done and lead them to improve on it (Hyland 1990:285). Thus, writing teachers should strive to provide comments which encourage students to think about their purpose and goals in writing a specific text (Sommers 1982:154).

6.2.3.5 Peer feedback

This part attempts to find out whether peer feedback was used in writing classes and if so how much students liked it. Thus, *Question 8* was on whether peer feedback was used in writing classes. The results show that (see *Question 8* in *Appendix B*) the majority of students (73%) reported that their teacher used peer feedback and 27% said their teacher did not use peer feedback in their writing classes. Moreover, *Question 9* was on how much students liked the peer feedback used in their writing classes. The results show that (see *Question 9* in *Appendix B*) most of the students (74%) reported that they liked the peer feedback used in their writing classes "very much".

These results could help the writing teacher to know what student writers feel about peer feedback and encourage him or her (the teacher) to use peer feedback along with the more

common teacher feedback in writing classes. As Dheram (1995:165) suggests, peer feedback reduces dependency on the teacher, encourages students to accept someone other than the teacher as their reader, helps them to become aware of the need for producing reader-based texts. Furthermore, Edge (1989:53) notes that peer correction may have two advantages if students work in pairs or groups: First, when two students work together on correcting each other's work, the discussion helps each one to learn from his or her own errors. Second, cooperation with their peers helps students to develop an ability to see their own mistakes.

6.2.3.6 Preliminary drafts

This part (see Question 10 in *Appendix B*) attempts to find out if students wrote preliminary drafts before they wrote the final product. The results show that (see the following table) the majority of students (58%) reported that they produced preliminary drafts before they wrote the final drafts and the rest 42% said they did not.

Yes	No
15	11

It can be argued that writing preliminary drafts has two main uses: on the one hand, it helps students to reread and correct their own errors and on the other hand, it would enable the students to incorporate the teacher comments suggested to them during the preliminary drafts and improve their final drafts. A number of researchers (Chenoweth 1987, Leki 1990, Ferris 1995) agree that comments on preliminary drafts of student work may be more effective than responses to final drafts.

6.2.3.7 Practices versus preferences

This part shows the forms of feedback usually used by writing teachers and the forms of feedback student writers would like to have. Thus, *Question 12* was on the forms of feedback writing teachers usually used in their writing classes. The results show that (see *Question 12* in *Appendix B*) the majority of writing teachers used 'error identification', 'writing comments' and 'conferencing' in descending order. *Question 13* was on what forms of feedback student writers would like to have. The results show that (see *Question 13* in *Appendix B*) most students reported that they would prefer 'writing comments', 'conferencing' and 'error identification' in descending order.

It may be argued that there is a mismatch between what the teachers do and what the students want to get. Teachers usually tend to use a form of feedback they reckon to be useful in responding to their students' writing. However, they tend to overlook that students have their own preferences. But students have their own choices. This entails that writing teachers should try to find out their students' preferences before they embark on using a feedback form of their own choice. Imposing forms of feedback on student writers could have a negative effect on the role feedback might play in improving students' writing because some students could be reluctant to use the teacher comments imposed on them against their choices. However, it is worth noting that students may prefer to have a certain form of feedback without realizing its effectiveness and feasibility. Thus, the writing teacher should find out the forms of feedback his/her students would like to have and why they prefer them and then discuss the merits and demerits of each form of feedback and negotiate with the students the forms of feedback that can be effective, feasible and relevant in their writing classes. Negotiating the forms of feedback with student writers is

important because at the end of the day it is the students who should accept responsibility for their writing. To this effect, Reid (1994:289) writes, "Students must be taught to authentically engage in choice making and problem solving, and to accept responsibility for their own writing."

6.2.3.8 Praise or criticism?

This part attempts to find out if the teacher comments students received in their writing classes were largely positive or negative. Thus, the majority of students (77%) reported (see Question 14 in *Appendix B*) that most teacher comments were positive. The following positive comments were given as examples:

- Good ideas!
- Clear ideas!
- Good handwriting!
- Your pars. are well organized/developed!
- Your conclusion is good!

On the other hand, 23% of the students (see Question 15 in *Appendix B*) said that their teachers provided negative comments in their writing classes. The following negative comments were given as examples:

- The main idea of your essay is not clear!
- Your handwriting is not legible!
- Your pars. lack coherence!
- Some of your ideas are not related to the topic!

It seems natural students would like to be admired for their successes and the positive comments given for their achievements would encourage them to work more diligently. On the other hand, objective and relevant negative comments could help student writers to realize their problem areas and revise their writing. Thus, it can be argued that both positive and negative comments seem to have their own merits in helping students to improve their writing skills.

6.2.3.9 Self-rating

This part (see Question 18 in *Appendix B*) aims at finding out how student writers rated their writing abilities. The results show that (see the following table) the majority of students (96%) rated their skills in writing as "good" or "fair" and 4% as "poor".

excellent	good	fair	poor
0	17	8	1

This self-rating seems to suggest that the students are confident and proficient writers. However, their claim seems to be at variance with their actual writing performance because if we consider the raw scores they got in their first and final drafts, the majority of students would be in the category of "fair to poor" writers. To make this argument more clear, let us compare the students' raw scores with the *ESL composition profile* scores suggested for different categories of writers (excellent to very good, good to average, fair to poor and very poor). *The ESL composition profile* suggests that 100-90 points (excellent-very good), 85-72 points (good-average), 67-51 points (fair-poor) and 50 points and below (very poor) out of 100 points. In this study, out of the 126 essays, 28 essays (22%) received 79-68 points, 94 essays (75%) received 67-51 points and 4 essays (3%) received 50 points and below. The results would suggest that the majority of

students are in the category of "fair to poor" and a few of them are in the category of "good to average". Hence, it can be argued that students' self-rating and their actual writing performance seem to disagree. The results may imply that some students overestimated their writing abilities.

The information students provide about their skills in writing could be influenced by their conception about writing. For example, students may have the misconception that writers know the form before they know the content or they may have the impression that writers know exactly what they are going to say before they say it (Zamel 1982: 205). But this is not usually the case. Thus, it is imperative to impart to our students research findings which may show them what writing entails and what students ought to do to become skilled writers. Research findings suggest that we must allow students to experience the process of discovering what they want to say through writing. "We must provide them with ample time to write and to rewrite, to learn that several drafts may be needed before intention and expression become one " (ibid.).

6.2.4 What are the implications of the first questionnaire...?

This part attempts to show the implications of the results of the first questionnaire for students for language teaching in general and developing students' writing skills in particular.

6.2.4.1 Importance of feedback

The results of the first questionnaire for students revealed that the majority of students read all or most of the essay when they got it back from their teacher and attended to the teacher corrections. The results show that students by and large want to know the problem areas in their writing and to improve their writing. This can be verified by comparing the first and final drafts

of each essay of each student writer. If we compare the first and the final drafts of the same essay by the same student we can see which comments the student writer has utilized and which ones he/she has not. Moreover, the students reported that they either 'made a mental note of the feedback' or 'wrote down points to consider for revision or for future use' or 'rewrote the essay incorporating the comments' or 'referred to other papers and rewrote the essay'. Thus, from this report it can be argued that students used, in one way or another, the teacher comments they received during their essay writing. The idea of producing preliminary drafts before the final product also seems to be worthwhile because the majority of the students reported that they used the teacher comments they received during the first drafts to improve their essays. It was also reported that most students liked "very much" the peer feedback they received from their peers. This may hint that peer feedback can be used along with teacher feedback in responding to students' writing.

All in all, the students seem to have benefited from the teacher comments they received before they produced the final drafts of their essays. Thus, teacher feedback seems to be useful and relevant in improving students' writing skills.

6.2.4.2 Awareness

One other important and relevant point revealed in this questionnaire was that there is a mismatch between what the teachers do and what the students want. The results of this questionnaire showed that the teachers tend to use mostly 'error identification', 'writing comments' and 'conferencing' in descending order. However, the students preferred 'writing comments', 'conferencing' and 'error identification' in descending order. This mismatch between

what teachers do and what students want could have its own negative effect on the role teacher feedback might play in improving students' writing. The possible reason is some students may be reluctant to utilize the comments imposed on them against their preferences. The results of this questionnaire further revealed the areas which students found to be more difficult in their writing. Thus, it was reported that organization and writing (next to speaking) were reported as the most difficult writing component and language skill, respectively. These results would help the writing teacher to know the problem areas which would require more time and efforts in writing classes and help his/her students to master these challenging areas so that they might learn and use them effectively in their writing. Although most of the students rated themselves as "good" writers, this does not seem to agree with their actual writing performances because the results of their essays show that the majority of students would be in the category of "fair" or "poor" writers and only a few of them would be in the category of "good" or "average" writers. The results may imply that some students tend to overestimate their writing abilities (see 6.2.3.9. above).

As a whole, the results of the first questionnaire for students revealed the actual writing practices in general and students' opinions about their writing practices and their preferences for forms of feedback in particular.

6.3 Questionnaire for teachers

6.3.1 Introduction

Based on the results of the questionnaire for teachers in the pilot study, a sixteen-item questionnaire was designed and distributed to twelve (Sophomore English) writing teachers in

the main study. All the respondents completed and returned the questionnaire. The main objective of this questionnaire was to find out writing teachers' opinions about students' writing and the forms of feedback they usually used in responding to students' writing. This questionnaire had two parts: the first part dealt with some background information about the writing teachers and the second part was on feedback and students' writing. The results of the questionnaire for teachers were analyzed and discussed as follows:

6.3.2 Results of questionnaire for teachers

The questions and results of the questionnaire for teachers in the main study are given in *Appendix D*.

6.3.3 Analysis and discussion of the results

This part attempts to analyze and discuss the results of questionnaire for writing teachers.

6.3.3.1 Qualification and experience

This part focuses on the qualification and teaching experiences of the writing teachers (see Questions A: 1-3 in *Appendix D*). The results show that the majority of the teachers (92%) had M.A and 8% had a Ph.D in TEFL. About 17% of the respondents were assistant professors and 83% were lecturers in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at the Addis Ababa University. The majority of these teachers (67%) taught for over ten years and 25% taught between five and nine years and only 8% taught for less than five years.

6.3.3.2 Level of difficulty

This part focuses on the areas of difficulty in writing as reported by teachers in this questionnaire. Thus, *Question 3* focused on ranking language skills according to their level of difficulty. The results show that (see *Question 3* in *Appendix D*) the writing teachers ranked the language skills from the most difficult to the least difficult as speaking, writing, listening and reading. This ranking matches with the ranking of these skills according to their level of difficulty by students in the first questionnaire for students. Further, *Question 9* was on ranking writing components according to their level of difficulty. The results show that (see *Question 9* in *Appendix D*) the writing teachers ranked the writing components from the most difficult to the least difficult as organization, content, language use, vocabulary and mechanics. Organization was also ranked as the most difficult writing component by students in the first questionnaire for students.

It may be argued that the results could help the writing teacher to realize that some writing components and language skills seem to be more challenging than others and may need more attention and time. Students may need more support in these areas which they find to be more difficult. For example, students put writing as the most challenging skill next to speaking in the first questionnaire for students. In fact, this students' response seems to agree with what Zamel (1983) says about writing as a challenging skill. "Writing is difficult and requires a lot of concentration because there is something you want to say, but you may not know how to reach it" (Zamel 1983:176). Moreover, organization which both teachers and students ranked as the most difficult writing component seems to be crucial for effective writing. If students don't get organization right, their writing could fail to communicate effectively to the reader. As Allwright (1988:113) notes, students are urged to give priority initially to organizing, developing,

sequencing and linking ideas and are advised to attend to grammar, word choice, spelling, punctuation, layout and handwriting later.

6.3.3.3 Practices

This part shows the forms of feedback writing teachers usually used in their writing classes. Thus, *Question 4* (see *Appendix D*) was on the forms of feedback usually used by the writing teachers. The results show (see the following table) that the teachers used 'error identification', 'writing comments' and 'conferencing' in descending order in responding to their students' writing. These results agree with what students reported about the same question in the first questionnaire for students.

error identification	writing comments	conferencing	reformulation
12	10	4	0

The prominence of error identification in writing classes agrees with what Zamel (1985) says about error identification. "Error identification is in fact the most widely employed technique" (Zamel 1985:85). However, this practice seems to be at variance with the preferences of the students. As reported earlier in the results of the first questionnaire for students, the majority of students would prefer 'writing comments', 'conferencing', 'error identification' and 'reformulation' in descending order. It seems that there is a mismatch between what teachers do and what students would like to have. As Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990:155) report, "Recent survey work suggested that there may be a misfit between written feedback teachers provide on compositions and the learners' interests." This mismatch between what the teachers do and what the students want could have a negative effect on the role teacher feedback might play in writing classes, i.e.

some students may resist to act on teacher feedback (Radecki and Swales 1990) imposed on them against their interests. Thus, writing teachers need to find out what forms of feedback their students want to have and why they want them before they embark on using the feedback forms of their own choice in responding to their students' writing.

6.3.3.4 Area of focus

This part shows the area that the teachers focused on while responding to their students' writing. Thus, *Question 8* (see *Appendix D*) was on the components the teachers emphasized in their responses to students' writing. The results show that (see the following table) most teachers, i.e. seven out of twelve (58%) focused on all components and some teachers, i.e. five out of twelve (42%) focused on organization and content alone in the first drafts. These results agree with what Robb et al. (1986) reported about the areas of emphasis in teacher feedback in writing classes. Robb et al. (1986) reported that writing teachers focused more on low order concerns than high order concerns in their responses to students' writing.

content	organization	lang. use	vocabulary	mechanics
5+7	5+7	7	7	7

It may be argued that all writing components are useful to produce effective writing. However, some components may need more attention than others while producing the first drafts. For example, content and organization may need more attention in the first drafts than grammar and mechanics. This is because, on the one hand it could be very difficult for student writers to pay attention to everything at a time. On the other hand, once the question of meaning is settled in the first drafts, students can deal with the grammatical and mechanical problems in the later stage of writing. As Zamel (1982:205) remarks, students need to be taught that since writers do not

produce perfect essays in one sitting certain features of composing are focused upon before others. Content and organization are of primary importance and editing is the province of the last stage of composing. This systematic way of treating the components would enable the student writers to write more purposively and clearly.

6.3.3.5 Praise or criticism?

This part attempts to find out whether the teachers provided positive or negative comments in their response to students' writing. Thus, *Question 10* (see *Appendix D*) was on whether the teacher comments were positive and/or negative. The results show that (see the following table) the majority of teachers (67%) said that they used both praise and criticism in responding to their students' writing.

praise	criticism	both	no response
2	1	8	1

It would be worth noting that both praise and criticism have their own role to play in helping students to improve their writing. It is natural that students would like to be admired for their successes and they may be also ready to accept criticisms which are helpful, objective and relevant to their writing. Students may hesitate to accept and use comments and criticisms that lack objectivity and relevance to their writing. Thus, "... a balance between criticism and praise may be the best means of encouraging quality writing" (Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990: 174).

6.3.3.6 Preliminary drafts

This part shows when the teachers intervened to provide comments in their writing classes. Thus, *Question 12* was on when the teachers intervened to provide comments to their students. The results show (see *Question 12* in *Appendix D*) that most teachers (89%) intervened during the first drafts and 11% intervened during the final drafts. The results seem to be useful in the sense that the comments students receive during the preliminary drafts may help students to incorporate the comments and improve their writing. Further, writing preliminary drafts would help students to be critics of their own writing. To this effect, Leki (1990:64) writes, "When the teacher intervenes as the student is writing and revising, the final product shows improvement over the intermediate drafts."

6.3.3.7 Peer feedback

This part focuses on how frequently teachers used peer feedback in their writing classes. Thus, *Question 14* (see *Appendix D*) was on how frequently teachers used peer feedback in their writing classes. The results show that (see the following table) most of the teachers (80%) said that they used peer feedback 'sometimes' in their writing classes and others (20%) said "often".

often	sometimes	no response
2	8	-

The teachers may have their own plausible reasons for not using peer feedback so often, but peer feedback is believed to be useful in helping student writers to produce a reader-based text. As Zamel (1982: 206) says, "Peers who serve as a real and intermediate audience can help one another to write a reader-based prose rather than a writer-based one." However, what is practised

in the classroom and students' interest for peer feedback seem to be far apart. The majority of students reported that they liked peer feedback "very much", but teachers reported that they used peer feedback only 'sometimes'. The fact that students have a positive attitude towards peer feedback may signal to the writing teacher that peer feedback can play a significant role in writing classes and it can be used along with the more common teacher feedback.

6.3.3.8 Students' writing performance

This part attempts to find out what teachers said about the writing performance of their students. Thus, *Question 16* (see *Appendix D*) was on what teachers thought about the writing performance of their students. The results show that (see the following table) most of the teachers (67%) said that their students' writing performance was 'satisfactory' for their level and 25% said it was not satisfactory. The results seem to agree with students' self-rating about their writing skills. The majority of students, as reported earlier, rated their writing skills as "good" or "fair".

Yes	No	no response
8	3	1

It may argued that some students who wrote relatively 'good' essays during this study may be categorized as "good" or "fair" writers. However, the majority of students would be put in the category of "fair" or "poor" writers according to the *ESL composition profile* holistic scoring guide (see 6.2.3.9. above). The discrepancy between students' self-rating and their actual writing performance, as reported earlier, could surface because some students who were not actually proficient writers rated their writing skills as "good" or "fair" writers. The result may suggest that some students overestimated their writing abilities.

6.3.4 What are the implications of the results of the questionnaire?

This part attempts to show what implications the results of the questionnaire for writing teachers may have in language teaching and learning in general and developing writing skills in particular.

6.3.4.1 Practices versus preferences

The teacher respondents said they mostly used “error identification” in responding to students' writing. Although the teachers may have their own plausible reasons for using this form of feedback, this practice seems to be in disagreement with the preferences of the students. The students, as reported earlier in the results of the first questionnaire for students, would prefer “writing comments”, “conferencing” and “error identification” in descending order. It is important to attend to students' interests because if what students want and what teachers do do not match, the role feedback might play in promoting students' writing skills could be undermined. That is to say some students might, for example, hesitate to use the comments their writing teacher imposes on them against their preferences.

On the other hand, teachers may know from experience which feedback forms are feasible and effective in writing classes. Thus, writing teachers and students should discuss the merits and demerits of each form of feedback and then negotiate the forms of feedback that could be effective and feasible in their writing classes.

6.3.4.2 Areas that need reinforcing

The following areas need to be reinforced so that students may benefit from teacher comments and improve their writing:

6.3.4.2.1 Focus on meaning

Some writing teachers reported that they largely focused on content and organization in responding to students' first drafts and others reported that they focused on all components equally. It can be argued that all writing components are useful to write effectively. However, settling problems related to meaning and content should be given a priority. This is because once the student writers have settled the problem of meaning and content in the first drafts, the other problems of grammar, lexis and mechanics can be addressed in the successive drafts before the composition is submitted to the teacher/reader as a final draft. As Zamel (1982:205) suggests, "Focusing on more important areas first may keep students from experiencing a cognitive load, a situation which results when too many factors, concerns or problems are being attended to simultaneously."

6.3.4.2.2 Preliminary drafts

Writing preliminary drafts before writing the final drafts would be useful because it gives the students the opportunity to assess their own writing and make every change that may improve the final drafts by using the teacher comments and their own knowledge during the preliminary drafts. A number of researchers (Taylor 1981, Zamel 1985, Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990, Jordan 1997) agree that preliminary drafts help students to improve their final drafts.

6.3.4.2.3 Peer feedback

The other area that needs to be strengthened is using peer feedback along with teacher feedback. This practice seems to be useful in the sense that in addition to easing the heavy burden of marking on the writing teacher, the practice will give the peers the chance to see how other

fellow students compose on different topics. Moreover, it gives the peers enormous experience of working cooperatively with their peers. As Norrish (1983:71) remarks, peer correction is a useful and stimulating exercise for students as it encourages communication between students.

6.3.4.3 Awareness

The results of this questionnaire revealed the areas which teachers reckon to be difficult for their students. Most teachers think that organization is the most difficult writing component and next to speaking, writing is the most difficult language skill. The results agree with what students said about organization and writing in the first questionnaire for students. The results would help the writing teacher to know the areas that seem to be more difficult for the students and give due attention and time to help their students so that they might master these areas of difficulty and use them effectively in their writing classes.

6.3.4.4 Perseverance

The results of this questionnaire show that most of the teachers tend to believe that the present students' writing performance is "satisfactory" for their level. This result seems to agree with what students by and large think about their writing abilities. As pointed out earlier, most students tend to rate their writing skills as 'good' or 'fair'. But their actual writing performance and their self-rating seem to vary when their raw scores in the various essays are judged by the *ESL composition profile* holistic scoring guide (see 6.2.3.9 above). The possible reason for the discrepancy between their writing performance and self-rating of students could be that some students seem to have overestimated their writing abilities. However, the underlying argument should be how to promote further students' writing skills so that they can use writing effectively

for various purposes. The desire to achieve this goal requires both determination and perseverance from the writing teacher and the student writers as well. Students need to realize that they can learn to write well by writing and rewriting. As Richards (1990: 108) writes, "Learning to write well is a difficult and lengthy process, one that induces anxiety and frustration in many learners." This may help student writers to realize the difficulty involved in writing and understand that the key to become a skilled writer is to persevere to write well. There does not seem to be a magic solution to become a proficient writer. Students should endeavour to write well by writing and rewriting.

All in all, the results of the questionnaire for writing teachers revealed the actual writing practices in general and what forms of feedback writing teachers used in responding to their students' writing and teachers' opinions about their students' writing performances in particular.

6.4 Student essays

6.4.1 Introduction

As in the pilot study, the students wrote an impromptu essay and three other essays with one first and one final drafts in both groups as part of their Sophomore English (FLEn 201) writing course for one semester (16 weeks). The main objective of the impromptu essay was to find out students' ability to communicate in writing. The main objective of the other essays was to find out if (a) the first drafts produced by Group 1 (teacher feedback) and the first drafts produced by Group 2 (peer feedback) would be significantly different, (b) the final drafts produced by the students in Group 1 after they received teacher feedback and the final drafts produced by the students in Group 2 after they received peer feedback would be significantly different and (c) the first and

final drafts within the two groups would be significantly different . In this study, Group 1 received teacher feedback and Group 2 received peer feedback.

Twenty six students (in both groups) wrote 26 originals and 26 rewrites for a total of three essay topics and one impromptu essay over a period of one semester (16 weeks) during the main study. All in all, the students produced 182 essays. Out of these 182 essays, 126 essays (of 18 students) were randomly selected (from both groups), analyzed and discussed in the main study. The same essay topics that were used in the pilot study were also used in the main study because the students suggested during the pilot study (see 5.4.1 above) that the essay topics were straightforward, relevant and fairly easy to understand and write about. The results of all the essays were analyzed and discussed below (see 6.4.2).

As regards the number of words used for writing the essays for this study, the students were expected to use between 200 and 300 words in the impromptu essay and about 350 words in the other major essays during this study. The results show that the students used about 238 words (on average) in the impromptu essays and 354 words (on average) in the other major essays. Further, it was found out that the students used more words in the final drafts than in the first drafts. Thus, the students used 328 words (on average) in the first drafts and 381 words (on average) in the final drafts.

6.4.2 Analysis and discussion of the essay results

This part attempts to analyze and discuss the results of the first drafts and final drafts of the essays between and within the groups in the main study (see the raw scores and the values of $S.D$ (standard deviation) and t_o (t-observed) and t_c (t-critical) in *Appendix L*).

6.4.2.1 Between the groups (first draft)

The mean score of each essay was computed for both groups and compared (using a *t-test* research procedure) to find out if there was any significant difference between the mean scores of the two independent groups for each of the essays. The results show that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups for all the essays (first drafts and final drafts). The results can be verified with the practical results of the essays as follows: The mean score of Group 1 for the impromptu essay was (62%) and the mean score of Group 2 for impromptu essay was (62%). The two mean scores were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance to find out if the two mean scores were significantly different. The result shows that (the two mean scores of the two independent groups are not significantly different. After that, the mean score of the first draft of essay one (61%) for Group 1 and the mean score of the first draft of essay one (60%) for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores of the two groups are not significantly different.

Further, the mean scores of the first draft of essay two (58%) for Group 1 and (57%) for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores of the two groups are not significantly different. Then, the mean scores of the first draft

of essay three (60%) for Group 1 and (61%) for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores are not significantly different.

6.4.2.2 Between the groups (final drafts)

In addition to the impromptu essay and the first drafts, the final drafts of the three essays were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance to find out if the mean scores of the final drafts of the two independent groups were significantly different. Hence, the mean scores of the final drafts essay one (63%) for Group 1 and (64%) for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores are not significantly different. Then, the mean scores of the final drafts of essay two (61%) for Group 1 and (62%) for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores of the two groups are not significantly different. Finally, the mean scores of the final drafts of essay three (63%) for Group 1 and (64%) for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores are not significantly different.

6.4.2.3 Within the groups (first drafts versus final drafts)

On the other hand, besides comparing the mean scores of the two independent groups, the mean scores for the first and the final drafts within each group were also compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance (using a *matched t-test* research procedure) to find out if there was any significant difference between the mean scores of the first and the final drafts within the two groups for each of the essays. To this end, the mean score of the first draft (61%) and the final draft (63%) of essay one for Group 1 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and

the result shows that the two mean scores are significantly different. Next, the mean scores of the first draft (60%) and the final draft (64%) of essay one for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores are significantly different. Then, the mean scores of the first draft (58%) and the final draft (61%) of essay two for Group 1 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores are significantly different.

Further, the mean scores of the first draft (57%) and the final draft (62%) of essay two for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores are significantly different. Similarly, the mean scores of the first draft (60%) and the final draft (63%) of essay three for Group 1 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores are significantly different. Finally, the mean scores of the first draft (61%) and the final draft (64%) of essay three for Group 2 were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the result shows that the two mean scores are significantly different.

The following table summarizes the results of the mean scores between and within the two groups discussed above.

Table 6.1: Summary of mean scores (between and within the groups)

Group	Essay	first draft (%)	final draft (%)
1	Impromptu	62	-
2	Impromptu	62	-
1	1	61	63
2	1	60	64
1	2	58	61
2	2	57	62
1	3	60	63
2	3	61	64

6.4.3 Writing components (see *Appendix L*: main study essay results)

In addition to the overall essay results, the results of the individual writing components were also computed in the main study of this research. The main objective of this part was to find out if the students made improvement at individual writing components' level in their revisions of essays. These writing components are content, organization, language use (grammar), vocabulary and mechanics.

6.4.3.1 Content

The average score was 59% in content for Group 1 in the impromptu essay and 62% for Group 2. The average score in content for Group 1 in the first draft was 58% and 60% in the final draft of essay one. Similarly, the average score in content for Group 2 in the first draft was 61% and 64% in the final draft of essay one. Further, the average score in content for Group 1 in the first draft was 60% and 63% in the final draft of essay two. Likewise, the average score in content

for Group 2 was 56% in the first draft and increased to 60% in the final draft of essay two. On the other hand, the average score in content was 61% for Group 1 in the first draft and later increased to 64% in the final draft of essay three. The average score in content was 58% for Group 2 in the first draft and was 61% in the final draft of essay three.

The following table summarizes the mean scores of content in the Impromptu essay, Essay one, Essay two and Essay three in the main study.

Table 6.2: Content mean scores

Group	Essay	component	first draft (%)	final draft (%)
1	Impromptu	content	59	-
2	„	„	62	-
1	Essay one	„	58	60
2	„	„	61	64
1	Essay two	„	60	63
2	„	„	56	60
1	Essay three	„	61	64
2	„	„	58	61

6.4.3.2 Organization

The average score was 62% in organization for Group 1 in the impromptu essay and 60% for Group 2. The average score in organization was 61% for Group 1 in the first draft and 64% in the final draft of essay one. Similarly, the average score in organization was 58% for Group 2 in the first draft and 61% in the final draft of essay one. The average score in organization was 55% for Group 1 in the first draft and it was 60% in the final draft of essay two. Likewise, the

average score in organization was 57% for Group 2 in the first draft and 60% in the final draft of essay two. The average score in organization was 59% for Group 1 in the first draft and was 62% in the final draft of essay three. It was 59% for Group 2 in the first draft and it increased to 61% in the final draft of essay three.

This table summarizes the mean scores of organization in the Impromptu essay, Essay one, Essay two and Essay three.

Table 6.3: Organization mean scores

Group	Essay	component	first draft (%)	final draft (%)
1	Impromptu	Organization	62	-
2	„	„	60	-
1	Essay one	„	61	64
2	„	„	58	61
1	Essay two	„	55	60
2	„	„	57	60
1	Essay three	„	59	62
2	„	„	59	61

6.4.3.3 Vocabulary

The average score was 69% in vocabulary for Group 1 in the impromptu essay and 69% for Group 2. The average score in vocabulary was 64% for Group 1 in the first draft and was 67% in the final draft of essay one. Similarly, it was 63% for Group 2 in the first draft and 67% in the final draft of essay one. The average score in vocabulary for Group 1 in the first draft was

59% and the average score increased to 62% in the final draft of essay two. Further, the average score in vocabulary for Group 2 in the first draft was 62% and was 66% in the final draft of essay two. Then, the average score in vocabulary for Group 1 in the first draft was 63% and later it increased to 67% in the final draft of essay three. On the other hand, the average score in vocabulary for Group 2 in the first draft was 66% and it increased to 70% in the final draft of essay three.

This table summarizes the mean scores of vocabulary in the Impromptu essay, Essay one, Essay two and Essay three.

Table 6.4: Vocabulary mean scores

Group	Essay	component	first draft (%)	final draft (%)
1	Impromptu	vocabulary	69	-
2	„	„	68	-
1	Essay one	„	64	67
2	„	„	63	67
1	Essay two	„	59	62
2	„	„	62	66
1	Essay three	„	63	67
2	„	„	66	70

6.4.3.4 Language use

The average score was 64% in language use for Group 1 in the impromptu essay and 66% for Group 2. The average score in language use for Group 1 was 61% in the first draft and 65% in the final draft of essay one. For Group 2, the average score in language use was 59% in the

first draft and this increased to 63% in the final draft of essay one. In the second essay, the average score in language use for Group 1 was 57% in the first draft and 62% in the final draft. Similarly, the average score in language use for Group 2 was 57% in the first draft and this later increased to 62% in the final draft of essay two. The average score in language use for Group 1 was 57% in the first draft and 59% in the final draft of essay three. Similarly, the average score in language use for Group 2 was 63% in the first draft and 66% in the final draft of essay three.

This table shows the mean scores of language use in the Impromptu essay, Essay one, Essay two and Essay three.

Table 6.5: Language use mean scores

Group	Essay	component	first draft (%)	final draft (%)
1	Impromptu	lang. use	64	-
2	„	„	66	-
1	Essay one	„	61	65
2	„	„	59	63
1	Essay two	„	57	62
2	„	„	57	62
1	Essay three	„	57	59
2	„	„	63	66

6.4.3.5 Mechanics

The average score was 60% in mechanics for Group 1 and 56% for Group 2 in the impromptu essay. The average score in mechanics for Group 1 was 60% in the first draft and later 62% in the final draft of essay one. Similarly, the average score in mechanics for Group 2 was 60% in

the first draft and later 68% in the final draft of essay one. On the other hand, the average score in mechanics for Group 1 was 62% in the first draft and without showing any change it was 62% in the final draft of essay two. As regards Group 2, the average score was 58% in the first draft and later it was 62% in the final draft of essay two. Finally, the average score in mechanics for Group 1 was 60% in the first draft and later it was 64% in the final draft of essay three. Similarly, the average score in mechanics for Group 2 was 58% in the first draft and later it was 66% in the final draft of essay three.

The following table summarizes the mean scores of mechanics in the Impromptu essay, Essay one, Essay two and Essay three.

Table 6.6: Mechanics mean scores

Group	Essay	component	first draft (%)	final draft (%)
1	Impromptu	mechanics	60	-
2	„	„	56	-
1	Essay one	„	60	62
2	„	„	60	66
1	Essay two	„	62	62
2	„	„	58	62
1	Essay three	„	60	64
2	„	„	58	66

On the whole, it can be argued that students by and large made improvement in the various writing components as they rewrote their essays.

6.4.4 Implications of the essay results

The essay results show that there was no significant difference between the writing performance of Group 1 (teacher) and the writing performance of Group 2 (peer) both for the first and final drafts of the three major essays and impromptu essay at 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance used during the main study of this research. Moreover, the first and final drafts of the three essays were compared to find out if there was a significant difference between the first and final drafts of the three essays within the two groups. The results show that there was a significant difference between the first and final drafts of the three essays for both Group 1 and Group 2. Further, the students by and large improved the individual components (content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics) as they rewrote their essays. So, what do the results imply? The results may have the following implications: First, irrespective of the type of feedback (teacher versus peer) used in responding to students' writing, there was no significant difference between the writing performance of the two independent groups. This may suggest that the two feedback methods are equally effective in responding to students' writing. Thus, if the two feedback methods are equally effective, teacher and peer feedback can be used side by side in responding to students' writing. Second, the fact that the first drafts and the final drafts within the groups were significantly different may suggest that rewriting improves students' writing significantly and students should be encouraged to write and rewrite their essays. The last argument seems to agree with what Fathman and Whalley (1990) reported about rewriting. Thus, Fathman and Whalley (1990:187) remark, "... rewriting in itself is an important way to improve writing skills."

6.4.5 Teacher/peer comments

This part deals with the teacher/peer comments the students received during the main study of this research. This part has two sections: the first section identifies and classifies the teacher/peer comments into various categories and the second section presents the types of responses/reactions of the students (e.g. whether the students used the comments as suggested to them, or used but not as suggested to them, or ignored, etc.) to the teacher/peer comments. The complete list of the teacher/peer comments is given in *Appendix H*.

6.4.5.1 Categories of comments

The following table identifies and classifies the teacher/peer comments the students in both groups received during the main study.

Table 6.7: Categories of teacher/peer comments

categories of comments	teacher	peer	total
content	29	25	54
organization	26	34	60
language use	10	8	18
vocabulary	2	1	3
mechanics			
-punctuation	0	1	1
-spelling	4	0	4
-capitalization	0	2	2
-layout	1	2	3
-legibility	3	2	5
-paragraphing	4	4	8
total	79	79	158

Group 1 (teacher)

- 55/79 (70%) of the comments were on content and organization
- 24/79 (30%) of the comments were on language use, vocabulary and mechanics.

Group 2 (peer)

- 59/79 (75%) of the comments were on content and organization
- 20/79 (25%) of the comments were on language use, vocabulary and mechanics.

6.4.5.2 Analysis and discussion of the teacher/peer comments

The students in both groups received 158 comments for the three different essays they produced during the main study of this research. Most of the comments, 114 (72%), were directed towards content and organization. The rest of comments, 44 (28%), were given for grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The figures show that meaning has received more emphasis in essay writing of this study. However, this does not mean that the other areas which received 29% of the comments are not useful. It may be argued that there are times when grammatical or mechanical errors could hamper communication. The argument is that by and large the focus should be on content and meaning in writing the first drafts. The question of grammar, lexis and mechanics should/could be dealt with in the successive drafts of the essays.

The emphasis seems to be similar in both Group 1 and Group 2. In Group 1 (teacher feedback), 55/79 (70%) of the comments were on content and organization and 24/79 (30%) of the comments were on language use, vocabulary and mechanics. On the other hand, in Group 2,

59/79 (75%) of the comments were on content and organization and 20/79 (25%) of the comments were on language use, vocabulary and mechanics.

6.4.5.3 Conclusion

As mentioned in the pilot study, the fact that most of the comments were on content and organization may imply two things: First, content and organization may be the most important writing components in writing. Second, these two areas seem to be the most challenging components for our students. This could be verified from the responses of the students to the questionnaires during the study. Most students reported that organization is the most difficult writing component. Further, if we look at the comments (see *Appendix H*) the students received for their essays, the most common comments (paraphrased) could be summarized as:

- The central idea of your essay is not clear.
- Your essay lacks clarity.
- Some of your sentences are not clear.
- Your paragraphs are not coherent.
- Your paragraph is incomplete. etc.

These comments may further suggest how problematic and challenging organization and content are for our students. This is not to suggest, however, that the other components are easy for the students. The argument is only to indicate that organization and content seem to be relatively more problematic and need more time and efforts so that students may master and use them in their writing.

6.4.5.4 Types of responses

This section presents the responses/reactions of the students (in Group 1 and Group 2) to the teacher/peer comments they received during the main study.

6.4.5.4.1 Types of responses (G1)

The following table summarizes the responses/reactions of the students in Group 1 (teacher feedback) to the teacher comments.

Table 6.8: Types of responses (G1)

comments (teacher)	changed as suggested	changed but not as suggested	removed part of the text that was the object of comment	ignored	praise	total
cont.	16	2	2	5	4	29
org.	15	6	1	2	2	26
lang. use	8	-	2	-	-	10
voc.	2	-	-	-	-	2
mech.	8	1	2	1	-	12
total	49	9	7	8	6	79

- 62% of the comments were utilized as suggested
- 11% were also used but not as suggested
- (9%) the part that was the object of comment was removed
- 10% were 'ignored' and
- 8% were 'praise'
- 82% of the comments were utilized (on the whole)

In addition to identifying and putting the teacher/peer comments into different categories, the types of responses (reactions) of the students to the various teacher/peer comments (they received) was examined. This was done by comparing the first and final drafts of each essay of each student. To this effect, the students either incorporated the comments into their final drafts as suggested to them, or made changes but not as suggested to them, or removed part of the text that was the object of comment or 'ignored' the comments and some comments were 'praise'. Thus, in Group 1 (teacher feedback), 62% of the comments were utilized as suggested, 11% were also used but not as suggested, (9%) the part that was the object of comment was removed, 10% were ignored and about 8% were 'praise'. As a whole, students utilized 82% of the comments suggested to them and ignored 10% in Group 1. The results suggest that the students by and large utilized the teacher comments suggested to them and improved their writing. Thus, the results may clue that writing teachers should provide their students with feedback in their writing classes because students tend to use teacher comments and improve their writing.

6.4.5.4.2 Types of responses (G2)

The following table summarizes the responses/reactions of the students in Group 2 (peer feedback) to the peer comments.

Table 6.9: Types of responses (G2)

comments (peer)	changed as suggested	changed but not as suggested	removed part of the text that was the object of comment	ignored	praise	total
cont.	5	3	-	4	13	25
org.	16	4	2	4	8	34
lang. use	4	-	2	1	1	8
voc.	1	-	-	-	-	1
mech.	9	-	-	1	1	11
total	35	7	4	10	23	79

Source: The types of responses are adapted from Ridley, D. (1989)

- 44% comments were utilized as suggested
- 9% were also utilized but not as suggested
- (5%) the part of the text that was object of the comment was removed
- 13% were 'ignored'
- 29% were on 'praise'
- 58% of the comments were utilized (on the whole)

Similarly, in Group 2 (peer feedback), 44% comments were utilized as suggested, 9% were also utilized but not as suggested, and (5%) the part of the text that was object of the comment was removed, 13% were ignored and 29% were 'praise'. As a whole, the students utilized 58% of the comments and ignored 13% of the peer comments. These results may suggest that peer feedback can also be used along with the more common and traditional teacher feedback in responding to students' writing. As in the first group (teacher feedback), the majority of students tend to use the peer comments and improve their writing.

6.4.5.4.3 Examples of responses (from student essays)

It is necessary to admit that the judgement of improvement is rather a subjective issue. The important point to note in this part is that the final drafts have included the teacher/peer feedback suggestions. To this end, the following examples were provided to show how the students reacted to the teacher/peer comments in this study. *Example one* shows that the student used the comment as suggested to him or her and improved his or her writing. *Example two* shows that the student used the comment and improved his or her writing but not as suggested to him or her.

Example three shows that the writer removed the part that was the object of comment and *example four* shows that the comment was ignored by the student writer.

Example 1: Used the comment as suggested

Draft one: (see 4a in *Appendix I*)

A person whom I cannot forget in my life is my cousin who came last summer from Canada for the first time in 18 years.

Draft two: (see 4b in *Appendix I*)

The person whom I cannot forget in my life is my cousin. Her name is Metasebia Addisu. She came last year for vacation from Canada for the first time in 18 years.

It may be argued that the two drafts are different in some respects. First, draft one contains one sentence, but draft two contains three sentences. Draft one begins with an indefinite article, but draft two begins with a definite article. Further, draft one does not mention the name of the person the writer seems to write about, but draft two mentions the name of the person the writer seems to write about.

It can be seen that a one sentence-paragraph in the first draft became a three-sentence paragraph in the second draft. Thus, draft two seems to be more clear and developed than draft one although the judgement could be subjective. The second draft was produced in response to the comment, "*Your introductory par. lacks clarity as it is now. It needs further development.*"

Thus, the writer seems to have accepted the teacher/peer comment and revised his or her writing.

Example 2: Used the comment but not as suggested

Draft one: (see 9a in Appendix I)

During my stay in my hometown I usually had chat with my friends, my relatives about University life. They were delight to hear from me about the city of Addis, its people, its weather, its social and economic affairs. My friends also asked me some questions about University and University life. I told them all I could frankly about the situation.

Draft two: (see 9b in Appendix I)

During my stay in my hometown, I usually had a chat with my friends and relatives. They asked me many questions about the University life. I told them that all I could say about their questions. They were happy to hear from me. They were surprised when I told them the situations which I faced during my stay in the University.

It may be argued the two drafts are largely similar. However, the writer seems to have made some changes to improve the second draft. For example, the long sentence, " They were delight to hear from me ..." in the first draft was seemingly changed to "They were happy to hear from me" in the second draft. It seems that the writer changed two things at a time: First, he or she changed the long the sentence into a shorter one. Second, he or she substituted 'delight' by 'happy' in the second draft. The argument is that the writer may have realized that the form 'delight' was somehow incorrect, but he or she did not know the correct form, at least for the time being. Thus, he or she resorted to another word of similar meaning (happy) to overcome the problem. The

second draft was written in response to the comment, "*Your essay(par. 2) has some grammatical errors.*"

Thus, the writer seems to have realized the error, but the change he or she made seems to be at variance with the expectation of the teacher/peers who provided the comment in the sense that the teacher/peers expected that the writer would change 'delight' into 'delighted', not 'delight' into 'happy'.

Example 3: Removed the part that was the object of the comment

Draft one: (see 3a in Appendix I)

... then we said, starting from now and then we don't want any person to show the taxi, since we knew it. so please go out. then the two persons go away and we go to the university by foot without asking any person.

Draft two: (see 3b in Appendix I)

... finally I concluded that all persons that are well dressed and seemingly honest and kindly in Addis are not probably good and honest persons, they might be a thief as such not all of course.

The second draft was produced in response to this comment on the first draft: "*Your par. lacks clarity because it is difficult to see what you wanted to say.*" The writer seems to say in the first draft that because he/she (a new comer from the context) did not trust those who offered to show him or her where to catch the taxi to the University and wanted to find his way to the taxi on his or her own. Actually the writer was asked to make the text in the first draft more clear in the

second draft of the same essay. However, instead of improving the first draft and making it more clear to the reader in the second draft, the writer removed this text from his second draft.

It can be argued that the text which substituted the removed text is different from the original one. If we guess what the writer is trying to say in the second draft, it may be that the writer would not trust some people in Addis Ababa who are decently dressed because they could be thieves or pickpockets. The argument is that the original text of the first draft which was the object of comment was removed and replaced by something which is entirely different in the second draft.

Example 4: Ignored the comment

Draft one: Taken from S10 (first draft) (peer feedback group)

She is my best friend whom I do not forget always. We are still friends. She was good to me and my family. I like her attitude towards other people. She has a good outlook towards education. She is sociable. She is advisable. All this made me not to forget her.

Draft two: S10 (final draft)

She is my best friend whom I do not forget always. We are still friends. She shows good behaviour towards me and my family and this made me not to forget her. Her attitude towards other people is also the other reason. She has a good outlook towards education. She is so sociable. She is also advisable. The sum total of all these behaviours has made me not to forget her.

The texts in both drafts were taken from the introduction of the first and final drafts of the same essay. The writer of this essay was asked *not to discuss the details of the reasons about the person he or she will not forget in the introduction*. However, the writer seems to repeat the same sentences of the first draft in the second draft of the essay. He or she was probably expected to discuss the specific reasons in the body of the essay not introduction. So, it looks that the writer ignored/rejected the peer comment on his or her first draft.

6.4.5.4.4 Discussion of the results of the students' responses

The responses of the students in the main study (above) were by and large similar to the responses of the students in the pilot study (see results). As reported in the results of the pilot study, students seem to ignore more comments in peer feedback than in the teacher feedback in the main study. A possible explanation for this could be that some students felt that their work was correct as it was and they hesitated to incorporate the peer comments into their essays and improve their writing. Another area of difference between the two groups was that the peers gave more 'praise' (29%) than the teacher (8%). A possible reason for this difference could be that the peers evaluated their peers' essays in comparison with their own writing performance and thus they seemed to be content with their peers' first drafts.

In general, despite some differences in experience, confidence and training between the teacher and the peers in responding to students' writing, both teacher and peer feedback seem to be equally effective in responding to students' writing. However, as noted in the pilot study, peer feedback could be more effective if students are trained and encouraged by their writing teacher.

It was noted during this research that students had the potential to read and provide useful and relevant comments to their fellow students. The main obstacle seems to be lack of confidence and experience. Thus, it was felt that adequate training and encouragement from their writing teacher could help the students to develop confidence and self-esteem.

6.4.6 Correlation coefficient (r)

Another area worth examining in this research was the correlation between the values awarded by the two raters for the essays produced by the two groups. Thus, this part summarizes the results of the correlation coefficient (r) of three sample essay drafts of the main study. The main objective of this part was to find out whether the values awarded by the two raters to the same students for the same essay drafts would correlate or not. To this end, as in the pilot study, the results of Impromptu essay, Essay 2 (D1), and Essay 3 (D2) were selected and compared to find out if the values awarded to the students in the two groups by the two raters for the same essay drafts would correlate or not. The results of the correlation coefficient (r) show that $r = 0.94$ for Impromptu essay, $r = 0.95$ for Essay 2 (D1), and $r = 0.96$ for Essay 3 (D2). The results suggest that the values given by the two raters for the three sample essay drafts highly correlate and this may signify that the rating was reliable (see *Appendix N*).

6.4.7 The present study versus other similar research works

This part attempts to compare and contrast the essay results of this research with the essay results of other similar research works. This will help to see how much the results of the present study agree or vary with other similar research works.

Research that contrasts the effectiveness of peer and teacher feedback has been conducted at all levels. Several of the studies with native speakers show that there are no significant differences in writing ability when the teacher feedback is compared with peer feedback (Berger 1990). As mentioned in the review of related literature (see chapter three), studies by Pierson (1967), Putz (1970), and Pfeiffer (1981) found no significant differences between students receiving various peer evaluation feedback and equivalent groups receiving teacher feedback.

On the other hand, other L1, as Chaudron (1984) and Berger (1990) note, studies have found that groups experiencing peer evaluation improved more than control groups with teacher evaluation. The first study of this nature with L2 learners was by Partridge (1981). *T-test* comparisons between a sampling of originals and rewrites on six different essay topics showed that the teacher feedback contribute to greater improvement.

In another L2 study, Chaudron (1984) investigated the effects of teacher and peer feedback on ESL learners' revision in their work. According to this study, the two methods of feedback are equally effective in improving students' writing.

The main focus of this research was to find out the effectiveness of teacher versus peer feedback in improving students' writing revisions. To this effect, teacher and peer feedback methods were compared both in the pilot and main studies of this research. The results of both the pilot and the main studies largely revealed that these two feedback methods are equally effective in improving students' writing revisions. In comparison with the findings of other similar L2 research works,

the findings of this research seem to agree with the studies by Pierson (1967), Putz (1970), and Pfeiffer (1981) (research on L1) and Chaudron (1984) (research on L2), who investigated the effects of teacher and peer feedback on learners' revision and found out that teacher and peer feedback are equally effective in improving students' writing revisions. However, the results of this study seem to be at variance with the findings of Partridge (1981), who also investigated the effects of teacher and peer feedback on students' writing revision and found out that teacher feedback contributed to greater improvement. The possible explanation for the difference between the result of the present study and that of Partridge (1981) could be that in Partridge's research the subjects (in both groups) received both types of feedback (teacher and peer) alternately. In the present research, however, the subjects in the two different groups received different types of feedback, i.e. Group 1 received teacher feedback and Group 2 received peer feedback.

On the other hand, no research work that compares the effectiveness of teacher and peer feedback in improving students' writing revisions has been done, as far as the researcher is aware, at any level in Ethiopia. This, therefore, calls for more research to be done at all levels (schools, colleges and universities). It is believed that the results of this study can be used as a framework for future research.

6.5 Second questionnaire for students

6.5.1 Introduction

This part presents the summary of the results and the implications of the results of the second questionnaire for students. Based on the results of the second questionnaire for students in the pilot study, a sixteen-item questionnaire was designed and administered to twenty-six students in the main study of this research. The main objective of the second questionnaire was to find out, if and in what ways, the different feedback treatments used in the main study might have influenced students' attitudes towards writing practices in general and feedback in particular. The results of the second questionnaire for students were analyzed and discussed as follows:

6.5.2 Results of second questionnaire for students

The questions and results of the second questionnaire for students are given in *Appendix F*.

6.5.3 Analysis and discussion of second questionnaire (Group 1 versus Group 2)

This part attempts to analyze and discuss the results of the second questionnaire for students in the main study.

6.5.3.1 Teacher/peer feedback

This part (see Questions 1, 2, 8, 9, 14 in *Appendix F*) focuses on the role teacher/peer feedback played in improving students' writing during the main study. To this effect, *Question 1* was on how much of the essay the students read when they got it back from their teacher/peers. The results show that (see Question 1 in *Appendix F*) the majority of students (84%) in Group 1

(teacher) reported that they read all or most of the essay when they got it back from their teacher and 69% of the students in Group 2 (peer) reported that they read all or most of the essay when they got it back from their peers. *Question 2* was on how many teacher/peer corrections the students gave thoughtful attention to. The results show that (see *Question 2* in *Appendix F*) 76% of the students in Group 1 said that they attended to all teacher corrections and 69% of the students in Group 2 reported attending to all peer corrections.

Further, *Question 8* was on whether the students liked the teacher/peer feedback they received during this study. The results show (see *Question 8* in *Appendix F*) that 77% in Group 1 said they liked teacher feedback "very much" and 61% in Group 2 also said they liked peer feedback "very much". *Question 9* was on whether the students benefited from the preliminary drafts they produced before they wrote the final drafts. The results show that (see *Question 9* in *Appendix F*) 92% of students in Group 1 said that they benefited from the preliminary drafts and 77% of the students in Group 2 also said that they benefited from the preliminary drafts they produced before they wrote the drafts. Finally, *Question 14* was on whether the teacher/peer comments were useful for the student writers. The results show that (see *Question 14* in *Appendix F*) all the students in Group 1 reported that the teacher comments helped them to improve their writing. In Group 2, 77% said the peer comments helped them to improve their essays and 8% said the comments did not help them to improve their writing and 15% did not respond.

These results may suggest that students by and large want to have teacher/peer feedback to improve their writing. The results further suggest that both teacher and peer feedback are useful and can be used side by side in responding to students' writing.

6.5.3.2 Area of focus

This part focuses on the area that was mostly emphasized by writing teachers in responding to students' writing and the area that students gave more attention to when using the teacher/peer comments in their writing classes. Thus, the majority of students reported (see Question 3 in *Appendix F*) that their writing teachers gave a lot of attention to comments on organization, content, mechanics, language use and vocabulary in descending order. On the other hand, the students reported (see Question 4 in *Appendix F*) that they gave a lot of attention to comments involving content, organization, language use, mechanics and vocabulary in descending order.

The results suggest that both the teacher and peers, unlike the results of the first questionnaire for students and questionnaire for teachers where the focus was mainly on language use, focused primarily on meaning when responding to students' writing in the second questionnaire for students and the students also gave more attention to comments that primarily dealt with meaning. It may be argued that all writing components are useful to write effectively. However, some components should be given priority in writing the first drafts and some components should be handled in the later process of writing. In other words, content and organization should be given priority over other peripheral areas (lexis, grammar and mechanics) in the first drafts and the peripheral areas should/could be dealt with in the subsequent drafts.

6.5.3.3 Level of difficulty

This part focuses on how students (in both groups) ranked the various writing components and language skills according to their level of difficulty (for them) in this study. Thus, the majority of students ranked (see Question 6 in *Appendix F*) the writing components according to their

level of difficulty as organization, content, language use, mechanics and vocabulary in descending order. On the other hand, the students ranked (see the following table) the language skills according to their level of difficulty as writing, speaking, reading and listening in descending order.

rank	speaking	listening	reading	writing
1	12	0	2	15
2	11	4	6	8
3	3	16	8	1
4	0	6	10	2

It can be argued that these results could help the writing teachers primarily to know the areas that are more challenging for their students and then help their students to learn and master these areas of difficulty and use them effectively in their writing.

6.5.3.4 Strategies

This part (see Question 7 in *Appendix F*) shows the strategies used by the students when they received teacher/peer feedback in this study.

- 41% made a mental note of the comments
- 4% wrote down points to consider for revision or for future use
- 50% rewrote the essay incorporating the comments
- 4% referred to other papers and rewrote the essay.

The results above show the average figures of the two groups. If we see the results of Group 1 versus Group 2: 38% in Group 1 and 46% in Group 2 made a mental note of the teacher/peer

comments, 4% in Group 1 and 4% in Group 2 wrote down points to consider for revision or for future use, 54% in Group 1 and 46% in Group 2 rewrote the essay incorporating the comments, 4% in Group 1 and 4% in Group 2 referred to other papers and rewrote the essay.

It may be argued that the majority of students used in one way or another the teacher/peer comments they received in their writing classes during this study. It may be argued, therefore, that feedback is useful in writing classes because students seem to use the comments and improve their work. It can further be argued that peer feedback can be used along with the more common teacher feedback in writing classes because it was found out by and large that the students in Group 2 used the peer comments and improved their essays during this study. The results may also encourage writing teachers to provide feedback in their writing classes.

6.5.3.5 Preferences

This part attempts to show (see Questions 10, 11 in *Appendix F*) students' preferences for forms of feedback and why they would prefer these forms of feedback. The results show (see the following table) that 77% of the students in Group 1 said that they would prefer 'writing comments', 15% would prefer 'error identification', and 8% would prefer 'conferencing'. In Group 2, 62% said that they would prefer 'writing comments', 15% said 'error identification', 15% said 'conferencing' and 8% would prefer 'reformulation'.

error identification	writing comments	conferencing	reformulation
4	18	3	1

Further, *Question 11*, (see *Appendix F*), was on why the students wanted to have the forms of feedback pointed out above. The students gave the following reasons for their preferences:

- The comments helped me to improve my essays (*writing comments*).
- The comments showed me my problem areas (*error identification*).
- The comments showed me my weak points in writing (*writing comments*).

The results suggest that writing teachers should realize that students have their own preferences and negotiate with their students the forms of feedback that could be effective, relevant and feasible in their writing classes.

6.5.3.6 Self-rating

This part (see *Question 16* in *Appendix F*) shows how students rated their writing abilities. The results show that (see the following table) the majority of students (85%) in Group 1 rated their writing skills as "good" and 15% as "fair". In Group 2, 77% rated their writing skills as "good" and 15% as "fair" and 8% did not respond.

excellent	good	fair	poor	no response
0	21	4	0	1

However, this self rating seems to disagree with the actual writing performance of the students because the results of their essay drafts show that they are by and large "fair" or "poor" writers although a few students who wrote relatively 'good' essays during this study could be in the category of "good to average" writers according to the *ESL composition profile* holistic scoring guide (see 6.2.3.9. above).

6.5.4 Implications of the results of second questionnaire...

This part attempts to show the implications the results of the second questionnaire for students may have for language teaching in general and developing students' writing skills in particular.

6.5.4.1 Importance of feedback

A close examination of the results of the second questionnaire for students reveals that the majority of students read all or most of the essay when they got it back from their teacher/peers and attended to the corrections of their teacher/peers. This suggests that students want feedback from their teacher/peers to improve their writing. Moreover, the majority of respondents reported that they rewrote their essays incorporating the comments and said that the comments they received from their teacher/peers helped them to improve their writing. Further, it was reported that most of the students liked the teacher/peer feedback "very much". This result may clue the important role peer feedback can have along with the teacher feedback in responding to students' writing. Thus, all these results suggest that writing teachers should provide feedback to their students because students want feedback to know their problem areas and to reappraise their work and improve on it.

6.5.4.2 Awareness

The students reported that organization and writing are the most difficult writing component and skill, respectively. The results suggest that writing teachers should realize that certain language areas are more challenging than others and need more time and attention before students master and use them effectively. It is important that both teachers and students realize that writing is a highly recursive and complex activity. In the words of Taylor (1981:11), "Learning to write is

a complex process that takes long practice and extensive experience." There is no magic solution to this problem. But the problems can be overcome provided that both the teacher and students realize that the way to become skilled writers is to write and rewrite.

On the other hand, most of the students preferred to have 'writing comments' as a form of feedback on their writing. This form of feedback was used exclusively in responding to students' writing in this research and the students seem to have liked it for the obvious reason that 'writing comments' shows their errors and problem areas in writing. By using the written comments suggested to them the students can correct the errors and improve their writing. As pointed out earlier, the question of preferences for forms of feedback should be monitored by the effectiveness and feasibility of the feedback forms. Teachers and students have a common goal in writing classes. The main aim of writing is to make the student writers more aware of their writing processes and then write effectively. To achieve this goal, the teacher and students should work cooperatively. They should discuss and negotiate the forms of feedback that could be helpful and useful in their writing classes.

6.5.4.3 Change of perceptions

This part will attempt to show the change in perceptions noted in this study. The following changes were noticed during the main study of this research:

6.5.4.3.1 Area of focus

It was noted that the majority (54%) of students focused on grammar and only 42% focused on meaning while using teacher feedback in their writing classes in the first questionnaire for

students. However, the majority (58%) of students focused on meaning and only 31% focused on grammar in the second questionnaire for students in this study. The results would suggest that there was a shift from focus on form in the first questionnaire to focus on meaning in the second questionnaire for students.

6.5.4.3.2 Level of difficulty

It was reported that 38% of the students said organization was the most difficult language component in the first questionnaire for students. However, 58% of the students ranked organization as the most difficult component in the second questionnaire for students. Moreover, 38% of the students ranked writing as the most difficult skill in the first questionnaire for students. But, 58% of the students ranked writing as the most difficult skill in the second questionnaire for students. The argument here is that as the students experience writing more the better they understand the nature of writing. It seems that eventually the students have realized how demanding and recursive writing was during this study.

6.5.4.3.3 Strategies

The following figures show what the students did with the teacher feedback in the first questionnaire for students and teacher/peer feedback in the second questionnaire for students.

In the first questionnaire for students:

- 50% made a mental of the teacher comments
- 23% wrote down points to consider for revision or for future use
- 11% rewrote their essays incorporating the teacher comments

- 11% referred to other papers and rewrote the essay and
- 4% did nothing.

In the second questionnaire for students:

- 41% made a mental note of the teacher/peer comments
- 4% wrote down points to consider for revision or for future use
- 50% rewrote the essay incorporating the teacher/peer comments, and
- 4% referred to other papers and rewrote the essay.

It could be argued that the students seem to have realized the role feedback could play in improving students writing more in the second questionnaire than in the first one. A large percentage (50%) of students made a mental note of the comments in the first questionnaire. But in the second questionnaire for students, 50% of the students incorporated the teacher/peer comments and rewrote their essays in contrast to 11% in the first questionnaire for students. There seems to be a significant change of perception and the results sound encouraging for writing teachers. It can be further argued that the results would encourage writing teachers to give due attention to teacher/peer feedback in their writing classes.

6.5.4.3.4 Preferences for forms of feedback

Another area of focus in this study was to find out what forms of feedback teachers usually use and what forms of feedback students would prefer. To this end, in the first questionnaire for students, 54% said writing comments, 15% said error identification, 19% said conferencing and 12% did not respond. On the other hand, in the second questionnaire for students, 69% said

writing comments, 15% said error identification, 12% said conferencing and 4% said reformulation.

The results show that most students would prefer 'writing comments' and their choice for this form of feedback seems to have increased in the second questionnaire for students. This form of feedback was used exclusively in responding to students' writing in this study. It was largely selected for its convenience in the sense that it would enable the researcher to see how many comments were given and which of these comments were used and which ones were ignored etc. As reported earlier, most writing teachers tend to use error identification and writing comments. Some teachers reported that they use conferencing in their writing classes too. The argument is that teachers should find out their students' choices and why their students choose certain forms of feedback. Then, through discussion negotiate with their students the forms of feedback that could be effective and feasible in their writing classes.

6.5.4.3.5 Self-rating

This refers to how students would rate their writing abilities. It was reported that 65% rated their writing skills as 'good', 31% as 'fair' and 4% as 'poor' in the first questionnaire for students. On the other hand, 81% rated their writing skills as 'good', 15% as 'fair' and 4% did not respond in the second questionnaire for students.

The results show that most students rated their writing skills as 'good' or 'fair'. The argument is the students seem to have developed more confidence in the second questionnaire because the percentage of students who claimed to be 'good' writers increased from 65% in the first

questionnaire to 81% in the second questionnaire for students. The researcher has his own doubts about their claim. As reported earlier, it was found out that most of them would be in the category of "fair" or "poor" writers, not "good" writers as most of the students tend to claim.

All in all, the results of the second questionnaire for students revealed the influences the teacher/peer feedback and writing had on the students' attitudes towards writing in general and feedback in particular during the main study.

6.6 Summary of the main study

6.6.1 Introduction

This chapter attempted to analyze and discuss the results of the various research methods used to generate data for the main study. To this effect, the results of the first questionnaire for students, questionnaire for writing teachers, essays and second questionnaire for students were analyzed and discussed vis-a-vis the objectives of this research pointed out at the beginning of this chapter.

6.6.2 First questionnaire for students

The main objective of the first questionnaire for students was to find out students' opinions about their own writing practices and preferences for forms of feedback. The results of the first questionnaire for students show that the students largely believed that their writing skills were 'good' or 'fair'. However, as reported earlier, there was a discrepancy between the students' self-rating and their writing performance. The possible reason for the discrepancy could be that some students seem to have overestimated their writing abilities. As regards their preferences for forms

of feedback, most of the students would prefer 'writing comments', 'conferencing' and 'error identification' in descending order. As reported earlier, writing teachers usually use 'error identification', 'writing comments' and 'conferencing' in descending order. Thus, there seems to be a mismatch between what teachers actually do and what students would like to have.

6.6.3 Questionnaire for teachers

The main objective of questionnaire for writing teachers was to find out writing teachers' opinions about their students' writing and the forms of feedback they usually use in responding to students' writing. The results revealed that the majority of teachers reported that their students' writing was 'satisfactory' for their level. The results largely agree with what students said about their writing abilities --- 'good' or 'fair'. As regards the forms of feedback, most teachers reported that they usually use 'error identification', 'writing comments' and 'conferencing' (in descending order) in responding to their students' writing. The results agree with what students reported about the same question in the first questionnaire for students.

6.6.4 Student essays

The students in both groups (Group 1 and Group 2) wrote one impromptu essay and three other major essays during this study. The main objective of the impromptu essay was to find out the students' ability to communicate in writing. The other three essays were used to find out if (a) the first drafts written by Group 1 (teacher feedback) and the first drafts written by Group 2 (peer feedback) would be significantly different, (b) the final drafts of the same essays written by Group 1 and the final drafts written by Group 2 would be significantly different, and (c) the first and final drafts of the same essays would be significantly different within the two groups. The

results of the two groups were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance using a *t-test* research procedure. The results revealed that the mean scores of the first drafts of Group 1 and 2 are not significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance. Moreover, the final drafts of the two groups were compared at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance and the results revealed that the mean scores of the two groups are not significantly different.

Further, a *matched t-test* research procedure was used to find out if the mean scores of the first and final essay drafts of Group 1 and the first drafts and final essay drafts of Group 2 would be significantly different. The results showed that the mean scores of the first drafts and final drafts of Group 1 are significantly different at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance. The results also showed that the mean scores of the first and final drafts of Group 2 are significantly different at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance. Thus, it could be argued that the results of the essays may imply that teacher and peer feedback are equally effective in responding to students' writing and rewriting can help student writers to improve their originals significantly.

6.6.5 Second questionnaire for students

A second questionnaire for students was used near the end of the study to find out, if and in what ways, the different feedback treatments used in the main study might have influenced their attitudes towards writing in general and feedback in particular. To this effect, the results of the second questionnaire for students revealed that students' perceptions about writing and feedback changed considerably near the end of the study. For example, students ranked writing as the second most difficult skill (after speaking) in the first questionnaire for students. However, they ranked writing as the most difficult skill in the second questionnaire for students. It might be

argued that this change of perception could come after students experienced how complex and recursive writing was during the study. Further, a large percentage of students (50%) reported that they 'made a mental note' of the teacher feedback in the first questionnaire for students. In the second questionnaire for students, however, a large percentage of students (50%), in contrast to 11% in the first questionnaire for students, reported that they incorporated the teacher/peer comments suggested to them and improved their writing. It may be argued that near the end of the study the students seem to have realized the importance of teacher/peer feedback much better.

6.6.6 Conclusion

It can be argued, as mentioned in the pilot study, that the results (questionnaires and essays) of the two groups seem to be similar in most cases. However, it was observed that students largely seem to be more comfortable with teacher feedback than peer feedback. Most of the students in Group 2 (peer feedback) seemed to be skeptical and uncomfortable with their peer comments in the beginning of the study. It may be because as Sengupta (1998:20) argues, "... student writers take selective account of peer comments when they revise, preferring to depend more on their own knowledge." They could be skeptical probably because they didn't have confidence in their peers' ability to read and provide useful feedback. Students' doubts may emerge, on the one hand, from the belief that the teacher is the "knower" who should be resorted to for all learning. On the other hand, it could emerge from their doubts about the ability of some of their peers to read and provide useful comments. Whichever the reason may be, the effect could undermine the role peer feedback might play in responding to students' writing.

However, as the study went on it was observed that they could feel more comfortable and confident. The students became more comfortable probably because they came to realize that their fellow students could by and large read and provide relevant and useful comments. Even those students who provided feedback were equally skeptical and uncomfortable in the beginning of the study. Later on, however, they also seemed to have developed confidence and enjoyed discussing and providing comments (in pairs) which they thought could be relevant and helpful to reshape the final drafts of their peers. The point of argument is that writing teachers should make a lot efforts to change this biased view and attitude amongst student writers. Radecki and Swales (1988) suggest that teachers can change their students' attitude. Thus, they write, "... teachers must intervene and change student attitude; one way for teachers to change their students is by sharing with them the research in writing" (Radecki and Swales 1988:364).

It may be further argued that the teacher's main responsibility should be to monitor and guide the learners towards a conducive environment in which the learner can learn on his/her own and in collaboration with other fellow students. As Richards (1990: 114-115) remarks, "The effective writing teacher is not one who has developed a 'method' for the teaching of writing, but one who can create an effective environment for learning, ..." This is not to undermine the role the teacher has in the teaching and learning process. The argument is that students can learn from each other and can help each other so long as they are aware and believe that this is possible and it is worth doing.

On the whole, this chapter attempted to address the results of the various research tools selected for this research vis-a-vis the general as well as the specific objectives of the research.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion and recommendations

7.1. Conclusion

This part attempts to review the methods, objectives and the main findings of this research.

7.1.1 Introduction

The general objective of this research was to compare the effectiveness of different feedback methods on students' writing revisions. The specific objectives were to: (a) discover what feedback methods are in fact used in writing at present (b) find out what students feel about the different feedback methods in writing (c) compare the effectiveness of the teacher and peer feedback on students' writing revisions, and (d) suggest the feedback method/s that could promote students' writing skills.

To achieve these objectives, questionnaires, essays for students and questionnaires for writing teachers were used both in the pilot and the main studies. The results of the pilot and the main studies were analyzed and discussed in chapters five and six, respectively. However, this chapter attempts to review the methods, objectives and main findings of the research.

7.1.2 Research methods

Two groups of second year students were used both in the pilot and the main studies of this research. Group 1 received teacher feedback and Group 2 received peer feedback during this research. At the start of the research, the students in both groups were oriented on the objectives

of the research and the procedures to be followed during the research so that the students could fully cooperate for the success of the research. After that, they wrote an impromptu essay. The main objective of the impromptu essay was to find out the students' ability to communicate in writing. Next, the students completed the first questionnaire which was designed to find out their opinions about their own writing practices and preferences for forms of feedback. Then, the students in both groups were taught the same course (Sophomore English) by the same teacher for one semester (16 weeks). In the mean time, the students in Group 2 (peer) practised evaluating (in pairs) three different essays written by the previous Sophomore English students for two weeks. The main objective of this practice was to help the students to acquire some confidence and experience in responding to their peers' essays in this research.

Then, the students in both groups wrote three first and final drafts on three different topics during the study. Group 1's essays were read and commented on by the teacher and Group 2's essays were read and commented on by peers (in pairs). Then, the students in both groups received their first drafts with comments attached to them on separate sheets of paper. Next, they produced the final drafts using the comments suggested to them by the teacher (Group 1) and peers (Group 2). After that, both the first and the final drafts were collected and shuffled and then given to two raters who read (in turn) and awarded marks for the individual writing components (content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics) as well as for the overall essay for each of the first and the final drafts according to the *ESL composition profile* evaluation procedures, a holistic scoring guide adopted by Jacobs et al. (1981). Near the end of the study, the students in both groups completed the second questionnaire for students which was designed and administered to find out how much the teacher/peer feedback they received during this study

influenced their attitudes towards writing in general and feedback in particular. On the other hand, a seventeen-item questionnaire was administered to six writing teachers in the pilot study and a sixteen-item questionnaire was administered to twelve writing teachers in the main study. The main objective of the questionnaire for teachers was to find out writing teachers' opinions about their students' writing and the forms of feedback they usually use in responding to their students' writing. The results of the various research tools used to generate data for the pilot and the main studies were analyzed and summarized in chapters five and six, respectively.

7.1.3 Practices versus preferences

This part shows the forms of feedback usually used in writing classes (see objective 'a' above). The results of the questionnaires revealed that 'error identification', 'writing comments', 'conferencing' and 'reformulation' were the most common forms of feedback used in responding to students' writing. The students reported that their writing teachers mostly used 'error identification', 'writing comments' and 'conferencing' in descending order. The results of questionnaire for writing teachers also revealed that writing teachers usually use 'error identification', 'writing comments' and 'conferencing' in descending order. This practice, however, seems to disagree with what students want to have. The results of the questionnaires for students revealed that students would like to have 'writing comments', 'conferencing' and 'error identification' in descending order. The fact that there is a mismatch between what teachers do and what students want to have suggests that writing teachers should find out their students' preferences for forms of feedback and why they would prefer them. Then, they need to discuss with their students the merits and demerits of these forms of feedback and negotiate the forms of feedback that would be relevant, helpful and effective in their writing classes.

7.1.4 Students' perception of feedback

This part attempts to show what students feel about the various forms of feedback used in writing (see objective 'b' above). The results of the questionnaires for students revealed that the majority of the students read all or most of the essay when they got it back and attended to all or most of the corrections. Further, the majority of students reported that they either made a mental note of the comments or incorporated the teacher/ peer comments and rewrote their essays. The majority of students also reported that the teacher/peer comments they received during the first drafts helped them to improve their final drafts. In addition, the majority of students said that the preliminary drafts they produced before they wrote the final drafts helped them to revise their writing. The majority of students also reported that they liked "very much" the teacher/peer feedback used in responding to their writing. The results, on the whole, revealed that students want feedback on their writing and feedback is a useful and relevant activity in writing classes.

7.1.5 Teacher feedback versus peer feedback

This part shows the effectiveness of teacher feedback versus peer feedback on students' writing revisions (see objectives 'c' and 'd' above). The students in both groups wrote one impromptu essay and three other essays during this study. The main objective of these essays was to find out if there would be any significant difference between the writing performance of the two groups by using teacher feedback versus peer feedback in responding to their writing. To this end, teacher feedback was used to respond to Group 1's writing and peer feedback was used to respond to Group 2's writing. A *t-test* research procedure was used to find out if there was any significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups for the impromptu essay and the first and final drafts of the three other essays they produced during this study. The results of

the essays show that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the impromptu essay and the first drafts of the three other essays of the two groups. Further, the results show that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the final drafts of the three other essays of the two groups.

On the other hand, a *matched t-test* research procedure was used to find out if there was any significant difference between the mean scores of the first and the final drafts of the three essays within the groups. The results show that there was significant difference between the mean scores of the first and final drafts of the two groups for all the three essays. Moreover, the essay results show that the students by and large improved the individual writing components (content, organization, language use, vocabulary and mechanics) as they rewrote their essays.

Thus, it can be argued that the results of the essays may have these implications: First, irrespective of the type of feedback (teacher versus peer) used in responding to students' writing, there was no significant difference between the writing performance of the two independent groups. This may suggest that teacher and peer feedback are equally effective. Hence, peer evaluation feedback can be used along with the more common and traditional teacher feedback in responding to students' writing. Second, students' writing improved significantly when they rewrote the originals. This may imply that rewriting improves students' writing significantly.

7.2. Recommendations

Based on the main findings of this research, the following recommendations are proposed.

7.2.1 Introduction

The central and relevant question worth raising at this juncture is: How can the findings of this research be incorporated into the teaching of writing in the Ethiopian context? As Hughey et al. (1983: 53) remark, in order for students to successfully develop their writing abilities, they need to know how they are progressing. As part of their strategies of organizing and structuring information about the second/foreign language, students learn from their successes and mistakes. They, then, require frequent and selective assessments from their teachers. Teachers need to provide their students with objective, straightforward and precise comments about their writing. The teacher comments should be channelled towards building upon student success. Helping students to see what they have done well enables them to try to repeat successes in future pieces of writing. Moreover, errors in students' writing should be treated as a means to discover the inconsistencies in their learning strategies. In other words, we need to look at the pattern of errors and provide students with tools to correct the pattern rather than merely point out the errors that might appear on a page. Students can deal with only a limited number of items at a time, teachers should encourage them to deal first with those that seem to be most fundamental (meaning and organization), leaving others (grammar, vocabulary and mechanics) for successive drafts. As Jordan (1997:173) writes, "... not all errors are cued. The emphasis should be on errors that interfere with communication and those that recur frequently."

Further, it may be argued that teachers should not be the only source of feedback for the student writer. Peer-provided feedback (as used in this research) and self-provided feedback, whereby students are given a means to measure their own performance on a particular assignment could be beneficial sources of feedback for the student writer (Hughey et al. 1983: 53). The idea of

giving students an opportunity to evaluate their peers' texts is a useful and stimulating exercise for students. A number of researchers (Edge 1989, Dheram 1995, Ferris 1995, Sengupta 1998) suggest that peer correction could have a number of pedagogical values: First, it would help the students to understand a reader's perspective because someone other than the writer would read the text. Second, it would enable students to become independent writers invoking the authority of personal experience as 'potential readers'. Third, it would enable the teachers and the researcher to examine whether the strategies taught in order to develop writing and revising skills had actually been learnt. Fourth, it reduces students' dependency on the teacher. Besides, students will be more able to successfully accomplish their goals if they have a writing context. In other words, students need to know: (a) what they are writing about (b) who they are writing to and (c) why they are writing (Pincas 1982, Widdowson 1983, Raimes 1983c, Hughey et al. 1983, Hedge 1988). It can be argued that these basic principles of writing are vitally important for effective writing.

7.2.2 Nature of writing

It seems important that writing teachers and students be aware of the nature of writing, i.e. writing is a highly recursive, complex and multi-faceted activity (Chimombo 1986, Blanton 1987, Richards 1990, Raimes 1991, McDonough 1995, Tribble 1996). This may suggest that writing entails a lot of time and perseverance on the part of the student writers before they master and use it effectively. As Sommers (1980: 384) writes, "Writing develops like a seed, not a line." Or as Zamel (1985:79) notes, "writing involves producing a text that evolves over time." It looks imperative that student writers should be given the opportunity to write and rewrite until they have fully communicated some intended message in their minds or as Brannon and

Knoblauch (1982:162) say, until the discrepancies between intention and effect are eliminated. To this effect, the researcher would like to suggest that writing teachers help their students to realize the nature of writing before students embark on writing at any level.

7.2.3 Integration of skills

It seems imperative to note that one language skill enhances the development of another language skill. As Rivers (1981:309) remarks, "Writing is most efficiently acquired when practice in writing parallels practice in the other skills." For example, students can read a text and then use the information of the text to write about a related topic. The same can be said about integrating listening and writing or speaking and writing. Student may listen to a text and then write the summary in their own English. Students may discuss a certain topic in class and then write a report which they may give to their teacher or peers for comments. As Byrne (1981:108) remarks, "The process of integrating language skills involves linking them together in such a way that what has been learnt and practised through the exercise of one skill is reinforced and perhaps extended through further language activities which bring one or more of the other skills in use." Therefore, the researcher would suggest that writing teachers realize that one language skill promotes the development of another language skill and integrate language skills in their classes.

7.2.4 Area of focus

The other important point worth suggesting is that writing teachers should focus on meaning (content and organization) when responding to students' first drafts and the other components (vocabulary, grammar and mechanics) can be dealt with in the successive drafts. This is so because certain concerns (content, organization) are more important than others (grammar, lexis,

mechanics) in producing preliminary drafts. As Zamel (1982:205) notes, student writers need to be taught that since writers do not produce perfect essays in one sitting, certain features of composing (content and organization) should be focused upon before others. Zamel further argues that attending to the writing components step by step may keep students from exercising a cognitive overload, a situation which results when too many factors, concerns, or problems are being attended to simultaneously (ibid.). Similarly, Dheram (1995:166-167) argues that it is important to give feedback on content before focusing on language use to help students to appreciate the communicative function of writing and avoid making revisions to the text at surface instead of a global level. It is believed that this systematic way of approaching writing would enable the student writers to write more purposively and clearly.

7.2.5 Teacher feedback

It may be argued that students want feedback on their writing and feedback is a useful and relevant activity in writing classes. The results of the questionnaires revealed that students want teacher feedback on their writing. Students further reported that the teacher comments helped them to improve their writing. The results suggest that there does not seem to be a question of whether teacher feedback is useful. The question worth raising would be: When should teacher feedback be provided? To this end, it is highly recommended that the teacher intervene as the students are writing and revising because the final product shows improvement over the preliminary drafts (Sommers 1982, Brannon and Knoblauch 1982, Leki 1990, Reid 1994, Frankenberg-Garcia 1999).

7.2.6 Peer feedback

It seems that writing teachers give little importance to peer feedback in their writing classes. It was reported in the results of the questionnaires that teachers largely use peer feedback 'sometimes'. However, most of the students reported that they liked peer feedback "very much". It seems there is a mismatch between what the teachers do and what the students want. Different researchers (Norrish 1983, Edge 1989, Ferris 1995, Dheram 1995, Sengupta 1998) report that peer feedback has a number of advantages: First, it can ease the heavy burden of reading and marking students' papers in large classes. Second, it encourages communication between students. Third, it helps students to read and see how their fellow students compose on different topics. Fourth, it enables students to assess their own writing performance in comparison with their fellow students' writing. Moreover, it was found out during this study that teacher and peer feedback were equally effective in improving students' writing. Thus, it may be argued that peer feedback is useful and effective and can be used along with teacher feedback in responding to students' writing.

7.2.7 Implications for teaching writing

It is important that language teachers in general and writing teachers in particular believe that writing is a skill worth learning and practising in our day-to-day life. To this effect, Raimes (1991: 415) notes, "..., while students need to learn how to pass exams, they also need to perceive writing as a tool for learning, a tool that can be useful to them throughout their professional and personal lives." This is important because our attitude towards writing can either promote our learning and teaching of writing or undermine our efforts. Rivers (1981:308) also believes that writing is a skill which must be taught and practised. The researcher shares this view and the

impetus to do this research largely emerged from the researcher's firm belief that writing is a skill worth learning and practising at any level. It is felt the results of this research might contribute to the overall endeavour being made to promote the learning and teaching of writing in Ethiopia in general and Addis Ababa University in particular.

The results of this research revealed that teacher and peer feedback are equally effective in improving students' writing. Thus, these results may help the writing teachers to use peer feedback along with the more common and traditional teacher feedback in their writing classes. Further, the results revealed that students' writing seem to improve significantly when they rewrite their originals. This may suggest that the practice of rewriting is vitally important to foster improvement in writing classes. As Zamel (1983:178) notes, "The first draft is for getting the ideas down. The second draft is for finding the way to say it the way I want." Therefore, the researcher would like to suggest that writing teachers use both teacher and peer feedback side by side in their writing classes. Moreover, writing teachers should encourage their students to write and rewrite the texts (paragraphs, essays, term papers, etc.) in their writing classes before the final product is made available for evaluation/marking.

7.2.8 Further research

The results of this research may help writing teachers to realize that both teacher and peer feedback are useful and they can be used side by side in writing classes. However, the fact that this research used a small sample of two groups of students in the Addis Ababa University might have its own bearing on the generalizability of the results of this research. This, therefore, calls for further research at school, college and university levels to reinforce and enrich the findings

of the present study or otherwise. Further, the researcher would like to suggest that future research consider: (a) a comparison of the effectiveness of peer feedback versus self-feedback on students' writing revisions, and (b) students' self-rating in writing skills vis-a-vis their actual writing performance.

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Appendices

Appendix A: First questionnaire for students and the results (pilot)

Read the following items carefully and provide the correct information accordingly.

A. Identification

1. Code No.:_____

2. Group: _____

B. Questions on feedback and writing

Please think of the last essay/s that your teacher corrected and returned to you. You will be asked questions about what you did with this feedback from your teacher. Please answer as honestly as you can. In questions where multiple choices are given, circle the letter of your choice and where *Yes* or *No* is given, tick one of them.

1. How much of the essay did you read when you got it back?

all of it	most of it	some of it	none of it
4	9	6	1

2. How many of the teacher corrections did you give thoughtful attention to?

all of them	most of them	some of them	few of them
2	12	4	2

3. To what extent did these teacher comments deal with:

	a lot	some	little	none
organization	7	7	6	-
content	5	7	6	2
language use	10	6	4	-
vocabulary	1	10	7	2
mechanics	4	5	10	1

4. If you attended to your teacher comments, how much attention did you give to items involving:

	a lot	some	little	none
organization	6	10	4	-
content	7	9	4	-
language use	10	8	2	-
vocabulary	6	10	4	-
mechanics	3	6	11	-

5. Rank the following writing components according to their degree of importance in teacher feedback. (1 = most important)

rank	organization	content	lang. use	vocabulary	mechanics
1	4	7	9	0	1
2	6	3	3	3	4
3	3	4	3	3	5
4	2	5	5	9	1
5	5	1	0	5	9

6. Rank the following writing components according to their degree of difficulty for you.

(1 = most difficult)

rank	organization	content	lang. use	vocabulary	mechanics
1	8	3	1	2	6
2	4	5	3	3	4
3	3	0	5	8	5
4	3	7	3	4	3
5	2	5	8	3	2

7. Please indicate what you did when you went over the teacher comments.

- 50% made a mental note of the comments
- 25% wrote down points to consider for revision or for future use
- 10% rewrote the essay incorporating the comments
- 10% referred to other papers and rewrote the essay
- 5% did nothing.

8. Were there any teacher comments that you did not understand? If so, give an example.

Yes	No	no response
-	10	10

- No examples were given.

9. Did your teacher use peer feedback in his/her writing classes?

Yes	No
11	9

10. If yes, how did you like it? (5 = very much; 1 = very little)

5	4	3	2	1
8	0	0	0	3

11. Did you produce preliminary drafts before you wrote the final drafts?

Yes	No
14	6

12. If yes, how many?

one	two
10	4

13. Which of the feedback form/s was/were usually used by your teacher?

error identification	writing comments	conferencing	reformulation
13	6	1	0

14. If more than one feedback form had been used in No.13, which one/s would you have preferred and why?

error identification	writing comments	conferencing	reformulation	no response
4	9	6	5	2

The following main reasons were given for their preferences:

- helps me to know my errors

- helps me to identify my errors
- helps me to improve my writing
- face to face discussion with my teacher helps me to know my errors
- can discuss my problem areas with the teacher

15. Were any of your teacher comments positive? If so, give an example.

Yes	No	no response
16	2	2

The following positive comments were given as examples :

- Good!
- Good handwriting!
- Excellent !
- Very Good!
- Keep it up!

16. Were there any negative comments made by your teacher? If so, give an example.

Yes	No	no response
5	10	5

The following negative comments were given as examples:

- Your paragraphs are not well developed/organized!
- Your handwriting is not readable!
- Your ideas are not related to the topic of the essay!

- Your ideas are not clear!

17. Did you feel that your teacher comments helped you to improve your composition writing skills and why (not)?

Yes	No	no response
17	2	1

The following were put forward as reasons for the improvement:

- I did not make similar mistakes in my subsequent essays
- The comments helped me to improve my essay
- The comments helped me to know my problem areas

18. Rank the following language skills according to their level of difficulty for you as a student. (1 = most difficult)

rank	speaking	listening	reading	writing
1	11	2	-	7
2	7	1	-	10
3	1	13	5	3
4	1	4	15	-

19. Rank the following language skills according to their degree of importance for English learners in Ethiopia. (1 = most important)

rank	speaking	listening	reading	writing
1	11	2	2	5
2	6	4	3	7
3	1	7	5	7
4	2	7	10	1

20. How would you rate your skills in writing compositions?

excellent	good	fair	poor
2	9	7	

Appendix B: First questionnaire for students and results (main)

1. How much of the essay did you read when you got it back?

all of it	most of it	some of it	none of it
7	10	8	1

2. How many of the teacher corrections did you give thoughtful attention to?

all of them	most of them	some of them	few of them	none
5	12	7	2	-

3. To what extent did these teacher comments deal with:

	a lot	some	little	none
organization	10	9	7	-
content	6	11	8	1
language use	12	9	5	-
vocabulary	2	11	9	4
mechanics	5	10	7	4

4. If you attended to your teacher comments, how much attention did you give to items involving:

	a lot	some	little	none
organization	10	12	4	-
content	12	12	2	-
language use	14	10	2	-
vocabulary	6	15	5	-
mechanics	4	8	14	-

5. Rank the following writing components according to their degree of importance in teacher feedback. (1 = most important)

rank	organization	content	lang. use	vocabulary	mechanics
1	5	12	9	0	1
2	10	5	3	5	5
3	4	3	7	4	6
4	2	5	6	10	2
5	5	1	1	7	12

6. Rank the following writing components according to their degree of difficulty for you.
(1 = most difficult)

rank	organization	content	lang. use	vocabulary	mechanics
1	10	5	2	3	8
2	5	6	5	5	5
3	4	1	6	9	6
4	4	8	4	5	4
5	3	6	9	4	3

7. Please indicate what you did when you went over the teacher comments:

- 50% made a mental note of the comments
- 23% wrote down the points to consider for revision or for future use
- 11% rewrote the essay incorporating the comments
- 11% referred to other papers and rewrote the essay
- 4% did nothing

8. Did your teacher use peer feedback in his/her writing classes?

Yes	No
19	7

9. If yes, how did you like peer feedback? (5 = very much; 1= very little)

5	4	3	2	1
14	3	2	0	0

10. Did you produce preliminary drafts before you wrote the final draft?

Yes	No
15	11

11. If yes, how many?

one	two
12	3

12 Which of the feedback form/s was/were usually used by your teacher?

error identification	writing comments	conferencing	reformulation
16	12	2	0

13. If more than one feedback form had been used in No. 12, which one/s would you have preferred and why?

error identification	writing comments	conferencing	no response
4	14	5	3

The following main reasons were given for their preferences:

- help me to know my problems
- helps me to identify my errors
- helps me to improve my essays
- face to face discussion with my teacher enables me to know my problems more

14. Were any of your teacher comments positive? If so, give an example.

Yes	No
6	20

Examples:

- Good ideas!
- Clear ideas!
- Good handwriting!
- Your pars. are well organized!
- Your conclusion is good!

15. Were there any comments made by your teacher that were negative? If so, give an example.

Yes	No
10	16

Examples:

- The main idea of your essay is not clear!

- Your handwriting is not readable!
- Your pars. are not coherent!
- Some of your ideas are not related to the topic!

16. Did you feel that your teacher comments helped you to improve your composition writing skills and why (not)?

Yes	No	no response
22	3	1

These reasons were given for the improvement:

- The comments showed me my problem areas
- The comments helped me to improve my essays
- The comments enabled me not to repeat my previous errors

17. Rank the following language skills according to their level of difficulty for you as a student. (1 = most difficult)

rank	speaking	listening	reading	writing
1	14	3	1	10
2	8	3	3	11
3	2	15	6	3
4	2	5	16	2

18. How would you rate your skills in writing compositions?

excellent	good	fair	poor
0	17	8	1

Appendix C: Questionnaire for writing teachers (pilot)

A. Background information

Please provide the correct information in each of the following questions. In questions 1-3, below, please underline the correct information.

1. Qualification:

B.A	M.A	Ph.D
-	6	-

2. Academic rank:

asst. lecturer	lecturer	asst. prof. and above
-	5	1

3. Teaching experience:

10 years and above	5-9 years	0-4 years
4	2	-

B. Questions on feedback and student writing

Please think of the last essay/s you corrected and returned to your students. You will be asked about what you did with the essay/s from your students. Please answer as honestly as you can. In questions where multiple choices are given, circle the letter of your choice and where Yes or No is given, please tick one of them.

1. Which of the following writing courses have you taught? (Tick the correct one/s)

Sophomore English	Intermediate English I and II	Advanced composition I and II
6	1	-

2. The writing course/s I have taught has/ have helped my students improve their composition writing skills.

I strongly agree	I agree	I strongly disagree	I agree	I am not sure
1	5	-	-	-

3. Rank the following language skills according to their level of difficulty for your students.

(1 = most difficult)

rank	speaking	listening	reading	writing
1	5	-	-	1
2	1	-	-	5
3	-	4	2	-
4	-	2	4	-

■ The rank in descending order: speaking, writing, listening and reading

4. Rank the four language skills according to their degree of importance for English learners in Ethiopia. (1 = most important)

rank	speaking	listening	reading	writing
1	3	-	-	1
2	1	-	-	3
3	-	1	3	-
4	-	3	1	-

- The rank in descending order: speaking, writing, reading and listening

5. What form/s of feedback did you use to respond to your students' writing? Tick the relevant one/s.

error identification	writing comments	conferencing	reformulation
6	6	2	-

6. Can you give any reason/s why you have used the form/s of feedback you have indicated in No. 5?

Reasons:

- The comments help the students to identify their errors
- The comments help the students to improve their writing
- The students can see their problem areas
- The students can discuss their problems with the teacher

7. Were there any of your comments that the students did not understand?

Yes	No
-	6

8. If yes, give an example.

- No examples were given

9. While you were reading/ evaluating students' writing, what was your main focus on and why?

content	organization	lang. use	vocabulary	mechanics
2+4	2+4	4	4	4

- 2/6 said content and organization
- 4/6 said all components

Reason:

- All components are equally useful

10. Rank the following writing components according to their degree of difficulty for your students. (1= most difficult)

rank	content	organization	lang. use	vocabulary	mechanics
1	1	4	1	-	-
2	3	2	1	-	-
3	2	-	2	1	1
4	-	-	1	4	1
5	-	-	1	1	4

- The rank in descending order: organization, content, language use, vocabulary and mechanics

11. Which one did you use in your response to students' writing?

praise	criticism	both
-	-	6

12. Did your students write preliminary drafts before they wrote the final draft?

Yes	No
4	2

13. If yes, when did you intervene in students' writing?

during the first draft	during the final draft
4	2

14. Did you use peer feedback in your writing class?

Yes	No
5	1

15. If yes, how frequently?

always	often	sometimes	seldom
-	1	4	-

16. How much did your students like peer feedback? (5 = very much; 1 = very little)

5	4	3	2	1
4	2	-	-	-

17. In your opinion, was the writing performance of your students 'satisfactory' for their level?

Yes	No
5	1

Appendix D: Questionnaire for writing teachers (main)

A Background information

1. Qualification:

Ph.D	M.A
1	11

2. Academic rank:

assistant professors	lecturers
2	10

3. Teaching experience:

10 years and above	5-9 years	1-4 years
8	3	1

B. Questions on feedback and writing

1. Which of the following writing course/s have you taught?

Sophomore English	Intermediate English I and II	Advanced composition I and II
12	1	0

2. The writing course/s I have taught has/have helped my students to improve their composition writing skills.

I strongly agree	I agree	I am not sure
1	10	1

3. Rank the following language skills according to their level of difficulty for your students.

(1 = most difficult)

rank	speaking	listening	reading	writing
1	9	0	0	3
2	3	1	1	7
3	0	10	1	1
4	0	1	10	1

4. Which form of feedback did you use to respond to your students' writing?

error identification	writing comments	conferencing	reformulation
12	10	4	0

5. Can you give reasons for using the forms of feedback you have indicated in No. 4?

The following reasons were given for using these three forms of feedback:

- *Error identification* helps students to correct their own writing.
- *Writing comments* helps students to be aware of their errors and to improve their compositions.
- *Conferencing* gives the students the chance to talk with their teachers and to explain to their teachers why they wrote their composition in the way they did.

6. Were there any of your comments that the students did not understand?

Yes	No	no response
4	6	2

7. If yes, can you give an example?

- No examples were given.

8. While you were reading students' writing, what was your main focus on and why?

content	organization	lang. use	vocabulary	mechanics
5+7	5+7	7	7	7

- 5/12 said content and organization

- 7/12 said all components

Reasons:

- Those who said content and organization gave no reason/s
- Those who said all of the components said because they are equally important.

9. Rank the following writing components according to their level of difficulty for your students. (1 = most difficult)

rank	organization	content	lang. use	vocabulary	mechanics
1	8	4	0	0	0
2	3	6	4	2	0
3	1	2	4	5	0
4	0	0	4	3	5
5	0	0	0	2	7

10. Which one did you use in responding to students' writing?

praise	criticism	both	no response
2	1	8	1

11. Did your students write preliminary drafts before they wrote the final draft?

Yes	No	I am not sure	no response
9	0	1	2

12. If yes, when did you intervene in students' writing?

first draft	final draft	no response
8	1	-

13. Did you use peer evaluation feedback in your writing classes?

Yes	No	no response
10	1	1

14. If yes, how frequently?

often	sometimes	no response
2	8	-

15. How much did your students like peer feedback? (5 = very much; 1 = very little)

5	4	3	2	1	no response
2	4	5	0	0	1

16. In your opinion, was the writing performance of your students 'satisfactory' for their level?

Yes	No	no response
8	3	1

Appendix E: Second questionnaire for students and results (pilot)

Read the following items carefully and provide the correct information accordingly.

A. Identification

1. Code: _____

2. Group: _____

B. Questions on feedback and writing

Please think of the last essay/s that your teacher/ peer corrected and returned to you. You will be asked questions about what you did with this feedback from your teacher/ peer. Please answer as honestly as you can. In questions where multiple choices are given, choose the one you think is correct and where Yes or No is given, say yes or no.

1. How much of the essay did you read when you got it back ?

all of it	most of it	some of it	none of it
13	3	4	-

2. How many of the teacher/peer corrections did you give thoughtful attention to?

all of them	most of them	some of them	few of them	none
4	11	5	-	-

3. To what extent did these comments deal with:

	a lot	some	little	none
organization	7	6	5	2
content	8	5	7	-
language use	4	8	6	2
vocabulary	2	7	8	3
mechanics	3	10	5	2

4. If you attended to your teacher/peer comments, how much attention did you give to items involving:

	a lot	some	little	none
organization	13	5	1	1
content	15	4	1	-
language use	6	9	2	3
vocabulary	4	8	4	4
mechanics	6	7	3	4

5. Rank the following writing components according to their degree of importance in feedback. (1 = most important)

rank	organization	content	lang. use	vocabulary	mechanics
1	6	12	2	1	1
2	10	4	4	1	2
3	2	3	10	2	2
4	2	1	1	7	8
5	0	0	3	9	7

6. Rank the following writing components according to their level of difficulty for you. (1 = most difficult)

rank	organization	content	lang. use	vocabulary	mechanics
1	9	5	1	1	4
2	7	5	4	2	2
3	2	8	4	1	5
4	1	2	3	11	3
5	1	0	8	5	6

7. Please indicate what you did when you went over the teacher/peer comments:

- 20% made a mental note of the feedback
- 5% wrote down points to consider for revision or for future use
- 70% rewrote the essay incorporating the comments
- 5% referred to other papers and rewrote the essay

8. Were there any teacher/ peer comments that you did not understand? If so, give an example.

Yes	No	no response
2	14	4

- No examples were given.

9. How did you like the teacher/ peer feedback you received during this semester? (5 = very much; 1 = very little)

5	4	3	2	1
14	4	2	0	0

10. Did you benefit from the preliminary drafts that you produced before the final draft?

Yes	No
18	2

11. Which of the feedback form/s was /were usually used by your teacher/peers?

error identification	writing comments	conferencing	reformulation	no response
0	18	0	0	2

12. Which one/s would you have preferred and why?

error identification	writing comments	conferencing	reformulation
3	14	2	1

The following were given as reasons for their preferences:

- To understand my errors
- To see my errors
- To know my errors and correct them
- To improve my writing
- To discuss my errors with my teacher
- To compare my essay with the version improved by the teacher
- To identify my errors

13. Were any of your teacher/ peer comments positive? If so, give an example.

Yes	No	no response
16	2	2

The following examples were given:

- Good introduction!
- Good ideas!
- Clear central idea!
- Clear ideas!

14. Were there any comments made by your teacher/peers that were negative? If so, give an example.

Yes	No	no response
12	4	4

The following were given as examples:

- Not well argued!
- Poor handwriting!
- Poor paragraphing!
- Your essay is not related to the topic!

15. Did you feel that the teacher/peer comments helped you to improve your composition writing skills?

Yes	No	no response
18	1	1

The only reason suggested was:

- I could see my errors.

16. Rank the following language skills according to their level of difficulty for you as a student. (1 = most difficult)

rank	speaking	listening	reading	writing
1	6	3	0	13
2	8	1	1	3
3	6	10	6	3
4	0	6	13	1

17. Rank the following language skills according to their degree of importance for you. (1 = most important)

rank	speaking	listening	reading	writing
1	7	2	1	10
2	7	4	4	5
3	3	10	4	3
4	3	4	11	2

18. How would you rate your skills in writing compositions?

excellent	good	fair	poor	no response
0	15	4	0	1

Appendix F: Second questionnaire for students and results (main)

1. How much of the essay did you read when you got it back?

all of it	most of it	some of it	none
15	5	6	-

2. How many of the teacher/peer corrections did you give thoughtful attention to?

all of them	most of them	some of them	none
6	13	7	-

3. To what extent did these comments deal with:

	a lot	some	little	none
organization	9	13	3	1
content	8	12	6	-
lang. use	4	15	6	1
vocabulary	2	10	10	4
mechanics	5	14	4	3

4. If you attended to your teacher/peer comments, how much attention did you give to items involving:

	a lot	some	little	none
organization	14	6	4	2
content	16	4	6	-
lang. use	8	14	2	2
vocabulary	5	7	5	9
mechanics	7	7	6	6

5. Rank the following writing components according to their degree of importance in feedback.

(1 = most important)

rank	organization	content	lang. use	vocabulary	mechanics
1	8	10	6	0	2
2	11	9	5	5	4
3	4	3	11	5	5
4	0	4	3	14	3
5	3	0	1	2	12

6. Rank the following writing components according to their degree of difficulty for you.

(1 = most difficult)

rank	organization	content	lang. use	vocabulary	mechanics
1	15	10	6	3	6
2	8	6	8	5	3
3	1	7	10	3	8
4	2	3	0	10	1
5	0	0	2	5	8

7. Please indicate what you did when you went over the teacher/ peer comment.

- 41% made a mental note of the comments
- 4% wrote down points to consider for revision or for future use
- 50% rewrote the essay incorporating the comments
- 4% referred to other papers and rewrote the essay.

8. How did you like teacher/peer feedback? (5 = very much; 1 = very little)

5	4	3	2	1
18	5	3	0	0

9. Did you benefit from the preliminary drafts that you wrote before the final draft?

Yes	No	no response
22	3	1

10. Which of the feedback form/s was/were usually used by your teacher/peers?

error identification	writing comments	conferencing	reformulation	no response
0	25	0	0	1

11. Which one/s would you have preferred and why?

error identification	writing comments	conferencing	reformulation
4	18	3	1

Reasons:

- The comments helped me to improve my essays
- The comments showed me my problem areas
- The comments showed my weak points in writing

12. Were any of your teacher/ peer comments positive? If so, give an example.

Yes	No	no response
24	0	2

These were examples given for positive comments:

- Good introduction!
- Clear ideas!
- Your main idea is well-developed!

13. Were there any negative teacher/peer comments? If so, give an example.

Yes	No	no response
8	16	2

Examples:

- Poor paragraphing!
- Some ideas are not related to the topic!
- Your pars. are not well developed!
- Poor handwriting!

14. Did you feel that your teacher/peer comments helped you to improve your composition writing skills and why?

Yes	No	no response
23	1	2

Reasons:

- I could see my errors.
- I corrected my errors in the final drafts.
- I learnt from my mistakes.

15. Rank the following language skills according to their level of difficulty for you as a student.(1 = most difficult)

rank	speaking	listening	reading	writing
1	12	0	2	15
2	11	4	6	8
3	3	16	8	1
4	0	6	10	2

16. How would you rate your skills in writing compositions?

excellent	good	fair	poor	no response
0	21	4	0	1

Sources: Adapted from Cohen (1987) and Ferris (1995)

Appendix G: Teacher/peer comments (pilot)

The following is a complete list of the teacher/peer comments provided to students in both groups (Group 1 and Group 2) during the pilot study. *S* stands for the student writer. The teacher comments on the three essays were provided first and then the peer comments on the three essays were provided.

■ Teacher comments (Group 1)

Essay 1

S1

1. You have raised good points in your essay. That is good!
2. There are some errors in tenses (e.g. 2nd par. 1st sentence). Read your essay again and correct your sentences.
3. The expression “ I acquainted with her” (4th par.) is not clear to the reader. So, you need to revise it.
4. Your 5th par. does not have a clear main idea. Think about the main idea you want to develop in this paragraph and write it clearly in the final draft.

S2

1. Your first par. doesn't clearly show the main idea of you want to develop.
2. These words which begin sentences in your essay should be capitalized (e.g. 'since' in par. 1, 'then' in par.2, 'as' in par.3, etc.).
3. The last sentence of your par.1 is not quite clear.
4. The phrase “the new man ... bodily” (par.3) is not clear.
5. It is difficult to see what you wanted to say in the last par. of your essay.

S3

1. The person whom you want to write about is not clearly specified in the introduction. So, you need to clearly identify the person you want to write about in the introduction before you write other pars.
2. Some words are mis-spelt in your essay (e.g. kindes, forgete, memoreable, etc.). You need to check and correct them in the final draft.
3. There are errors in verb forms (e.g. 'have concerned' in par.1, 'has born' in par.2, etc.). You should check and use the correct forms in the final draft.
4. The last sentence of par.3 needs a revision because it is not clear as it is now.
5. It is not clear what main idea you wanted to develop in your last par.

S4

1. Your introduction is not very clear as it is now. It does not clearly show the direction of your essay.
2. The expression “as a good luck for me” (par. 1) is not clear. Think about what you wanted to say and revise it.
3. The phrase “... tough but rather thin” (par. 2) also needs a revision. It is not quite clear.

S5

1. You have good points to make in your essay. Well done!
2. Some expressions (e.g. 'easy temper' in par.3, 'it is accustomed students' in par.4, etc.) are not clear.
3. Your conclusion seems to be incomplete. It needs further development so that the reader can clearly see what you wanted to say.

■ **Teacher comments (contd.)**

Essay 2

S1

1. Most paragraphs of your essay are not fully developed as they are now. So, you need to develop each par. adequately by adding more relevant points.
2. Your essay lacks a conclusion. Think of points that can help you to sum up the essay and write a clear conclusion.
3. The phrase "... can be get rid of ..." (last par.) is not quite clear. It needs a revision.

S2

1. You seem to discuss more than one idea in a par. You should discuss one main idea in each par. and then move on to the next par.
2. The introduction and conclusion of your essay are not very much related to your topic of your essay as they are now. You need to write an introduction and a conclusion which are relevant to the topic of your essay.
3. Capitalize words which begin new sentences in your writing.

S3

1. Your essay is not well developed as it is now. Each par. needs to be developed further so that the reader can see what the whole essay is about.
2. Your essay seems to lack a clear organization as it is now. You need to show clearly the beginning, development and end of your essay.
3. Your handwriting makes it hard to read and understand what you wanted to say. You need to write legibly.

4. Subject- verb- agreement seems to be a problem in your writing (e.g. 'she do' in par.2, 'the husband take' in par. 3, etc.).

5. The phrase "... little works ..." (par.3) is not clear .

S4

1. You have raised good points in your essay. Good!

2. Your introduction does not seem to clearly show to the reader the direction of your essay.

3. Your conclusion is incomplete as it is now. It needs further development so that it can sum up what you have said in the preceding pars.

S5

1. Your essay needs further development because it looks too short as it is now. Each par. needs to be developed further so that the reader can see the main ideas of the essay.

2. Your essay also lacks a clear organization. Your essay does not show to the reader the beginning, development and conclusion of the essay.

3. Subject-verb-agreement is another problem area in your essay (e.g. 'children of above eighteen years seems to have'..., etc.).

■ **Teacher comments (contd.)**

Essay 3

S1

1. Your introduction is clear. That's good!

2. Your conclusion is incomplete. It needs further development.

S2

1. Your introduction does not clearly show the direction of your essay.

2. You need to have one main idea in each par. and then develop that main idea into a clear and complete par.

3. Your 3rd par. is not quite clear as it is now. It needs a revision.

4. Your conclusion is incomplete. It needs further development so that the reader can see what you actually want to say.

S3

1. Your introduction is clear. That is nice!

2. Pars. 2, 3, and 4 deal with similar ideas. Each of them should deal with a separate idea.

3. Some words are look strange and difficult to understand. So, check their spellings (e.g. mimorable, summerize, etc.).

4. Your conclusion needs further development so that the reader can see what you want to say.

S4

1. You have raised goods points in your essay. That is fine!

2. The major problem of your essay seems to be that your ideas are not well developed into complete pars.

3. You tend to write long sentences only. This has caused difficulty to read and understand your ideas. So, you need to vary your sentences by using both short and long sentences.

4. Your essay lacks a clear beginning, development and conclusion. This makes it difficult to see the progress of your essay and follow what you wanted to say.

S5

1. Your introduction does not seem to show the reader the direction of your essay.

2. The main idea of your 2nd par. is not quite clear as it is now.

3. Your conclusion is too short as it is now. So, you need to develop it further so that the reader can clearly see what you wanted to say.

■ Peer Comments (Group 2)

Essay 1

S6

1. You seem to include events not related to the main topic (most memorable person).
2. Your ideas lack coherence.
3. There are some grammatical errors (e.g. par. 1 sentence 2)

S7

1. Your essay lacks one clear main idea.
2. You have used short sentences throughout the essay. You should use both short and long sentences for clarity and variety.
3. The same idea seems to have been repeated in pars. 2 and 3.
4. Some words are also misused (e.g.'envisaged' in pars. 1 and 7).
5. The word "Advice" is misused.

S8

1. Pars. 1 and 2 discuss the same idea.
2. "women" and "children" are plural nouns already.
3. Pars. 3 and 4 are too short. You should develop them further.

S9

1. Your introduction is very short.
2. Your organization of ideas is good.

3. Some of your sentences have no verbs (e.g. 'I trying' ..., 'My heart always in depression'...in par. 2).

S10

1. Your essay is difficult to understand because you haven't shown the introduction, development and conclusion clearly.
2. Some of your sentences (par. 2) are too long and difficult to understand.
3. Your tenses are also sometimes incorrect (e.g. 'I did not opposed' in par.4).

■ Peer comments (contd.)

Essay 2

S6

1. You need to develop each main idea in a separate par.
2. Your handwriting is hard to read and understand.
3. Your ideas should be confined to the main topic.

S7

1. Your essay has no clear introduction and conclusion
2. Pars. 1, 2 and 3 contain the same ideas.
3. Most of your pars. are so short.
4. Some words are mis-spelt (e.g. 'stablished' in par. 1).

S8

1. The central idea of your topic is clearly shown. That is good.
2. Your conclusion is not well developed.
3. There are spelling errors in your essay (e.g. 'reuined' in par.3 and 'intemate' in par. 4.).

S9

1. The main idea is not clearly shown.
2. There is no coherence between your pars.
3. Your essay has no conclusion.
4. Your handwriting is difficult to read.

S10

1. Your ideas are good.
2. Some of your sentences are too long and lack clarity.
3. Your handwriting is difficult to read.
4. Your essay has no conclusion.

■ **Peer comments (contd.)**

Essay 3

S6

1. Your essay is well organized.
2. Your handwriting is not readable.
3. Some of your ideas seem not to be related to the topic.

S7

1. Your 1st par. is not well developed.
2. You seem to repeat the same ideas in different pars.
3. Most of your sentences are too long. This has made your writing difficult to understand.

S8

1. Your introduction is not clear.
2. Some sentences are vague in your essay.

3. Your conclusion is very short.

S9

1. You have mentioned good ideas in your essay.

2. Your introduction is not well organized.

3. Your conclusion lacks clarity.

S10

1. You have raised good points in your essay.

2. Your handwriting is hard to understand.

3. Your essay has no conclusion.

Appendix H: Teacher and peer comments (main)

The following is a complete list of the teacher/peer comments provided to students in both groups (Group 1 and Group 2) during the main study. S stands for the student writer. The teacher comments were provided first and then the peer comments.

■ Teacher comments (Group 1)

Essay 1

S1

1. Your introduction is not quite clear as it is now. You need to write it in such a way that the reader can see the direction of the essay.
2. Your 2nd par. is difficult to read and understand.
3. Your 3rd par. lacks a clear main idea.
4. Your conclusion looks incomplete. You need to develop it further in such a way that it sums up the main ideas of the essay.

S2

1. The main problem of your essay seems to be organization. You may begin your essay by introducing the person whom you cannot forget without discussing the specific reasons in the introduction. Then, you can show the specific reasons in the body of the essay.
2. ... “ to had” ... (3rd par.) an incorrect form of the verb.
3. The abbreviation “ESLES” seems to be incorrect for what it suggests.
4. Your conclusion seems to lack clarity. It may be rewritten in such a way that it can sum up the main ideas of the whole essay.

S3

1. You may begin your essay by introducing the person whom you cannot forget first and then specify the reasons why you cannot forget him/her in the body of the essay.
2. Your conclusion looks incomplete. So, you need to develop it further so that it may show, for example, the main points of the essay.

S4

1. Your essay should focus on one person whom you cannot forget for the various reasons you have mentioned.
2. Your tenses in the 2nd par. need a thorough revision .
3. You may use linking words (e.g. 'in sum', 'to conclude', 'as a whole', etc.) that can help you to conclude your essay.

S5

1. Begin your essay by introducing the person whom you cannot forget and then give the specific reasons why you cannot forget him/her.
2. Pars. 1 and 3 lack clear main ideas.
3. Some words seem to be mis-spelt in the 4th par.(e.g. 'acadamic').
4. Your handwriting is at times hard to understand. Try to write more legibly and clearly in the final draft.

S6

1. You haven't specified the person you want to write about in the introduction. So, how can your reader know who you are writing about?
2. Your conclusion is not quite clear. Read your essay again and then write a conclusion which may sum up the main points of the essay.

S7

1. What are the reasons that make your character memorable ? You need to specify them in the pars. of your essay.
2. Your handwriting is not legible. So, you need to write more legibly and clearly in the final draft.
3. Your conclusion looks incomplete. You may use, for instance, the main points of the preceding pars. to write the conclusion.

S8

1. Your introduction should introduce to the reader the person you want to write about.
2. What are the main reasons that make the person you want to write about unforgettable?
3. Your conclusion may be rewritten in such a way that it can sum up the main points discussed in the essay.

S9

1. What is the main idea of you want to write about in your essay?
2. You essay seems to lack a clear organization. Which is the beginning? Which is the development? Which is the conclusion?
3. There are errors in subject-verb-agreement in your sentences (e.g. 'my sister carry'...in par. 1, etc.).

■ **Teacher comments (contd.)**

Essay 2

S1

1. What do you understand by the word 'family'?
2. Your 2nd par reads well. Well done!

3. Your conclusion should sum up the main points of the essay.

S2

1. What do you mean by the word 'family'?
2. Your second par. contains more than one major idea.
3. There are errors in subject-verb- agreement in your writing (e.g. 1st sentence in par. 1).
4. Your handwriting is at times hard to read what you are trying to say. So, you need to write more legibly and clearly in the final draft.

S3

1. What is 'family'?
2. You seem to talk about a particular family in your *kebelie* now. But, you should show to the reader 'family life' as a whole so that the reader can have some general idea about family life in your *kebelie*.

S4

1. You have raised good points in your essay. That is fine!
2. Your 2nd par. is not quite clear to see what you wanted to say.
3. Your conclusion is not clear either.

S5

1. What is the title of your essay?
2. What do you mean by the word 'family'?
3. Your last par. seems to be incomplete.

S6

1. What is 'family'?
2. Your conclusion is not clear enough to see what you wanted to show.

S7

1. What do you understand by the word 'family'?
2. Have some clear points about family life in your *kebelie* and then discuss each of them in separate pars.

S8

1. What do you mean by 'family'?
2. Some verb forms need revision (e.g. par. 3 ... 'is seems').
3. You have raised good points in your essay. That is good!

S9

1. What do you mean by the word 'family'?
2. Your 2nd par. is not quite clear to see what main idea you want to develop here.
3. Some of your words look strange. Check their spelling (e.g. 'apartma' in par. 2).
4. Your conclusion is not quite clear to understand what you wanted to say.

■ **Teacher comments (contd.)**

Essay 3

S1

1. You have raised good points in your essay. That is good!
2. Your conclusion looks incomplete. It needs to be developed further.

S2

1. Some of your sentences seem to lack clarity (e.g. last sentence of par. 2).
2. This verb form seems incorrect (e.g. 'I was spent'- par. 2).
3. You have mentioned some good points in your essay. That is good!

S3

1. Why did you discuss the details of activities in the introduction?
2. The last sentence of your 2nd par. is not quite clear.
3. Your conclusion is not clear.

S4

1. The last sentence of your introduction is not quite clear.
2. The main idea of your 2nd par. is not clear.
3. The phrase 'a shoes' needs a revision.

S5

1. On the whole, your essay is clear. That is good!
2. 'One of the NGO shop'...needs a revision.
3. Your last par. is incomplete.

S6

1. Some words are mis-spelt in your essay (e.g. 'siting', 'felt' in par. 2).
2. Your conclusion is not quite clear.

S7

1. You need to have more ideas for your essay. Think about some more points related to your topic.
2. Do not discuss more than one main idea in a par. as you did in the first draft.

S8

1. Your introduction is not clear.
2. Your grammar needs a revision (e.g. 'is build' in 3rd par., 'I always happy', 'to spent', 'must spent' in the last par.).

3. Your conclusion is not quite clear.

S9

1. The report in par. 2 should be written in past tense not present tense because you seem to talk about a past event.

2. Your 2nd par. is too long. You may need to divide it into separate pars.

3. Some of your words are misspelt (e.g. "leaft" in par. 2).

4. There are errors in subject-verb-agreement (e.g. 'I and my aunt is very happy' in par.2).

■ Peer comments (Group 2)

Essay 1

S10

1. Your description of the person is good.

2. Your introduction and conclusion need to be developed further.

S11

1. Your ideas are good.

2. Some abbreviations (b/n, b/c. etc.) are difficult to understand so you should write them fully.

3. You should also write the title of the topic clearly at the top.

S12

1. You have raised a good idea in the introduction.

2. It is difficult to clearly see the main ideas of some pars.

3. You should develop the ideas in your pars. further.

S13

1. Your organization of ideas is good.

2.The problem in your essay is that some of your words are not readable.

S14

1. Your essay has no introduction.
2. Your argument is not sufficient. You need to argue more.
3. You tend to repeat the same ideas in different pars.
4. The main idea of the essay in not clearly indicated.

S15

1. You have mentioned good ideas.
2. You need to develop the ideas in each par. adequately.

S16

1. Your pars. are not well developed.
2. You have repeated the same ideas in different pars.
3. You have also used (sometimes) wrong linking words.

S17

1. Your 2nd par. is too long and it is difficult to understand the main idea.
2. Your 3rd par. lacks good organization of ideas.
3. You have misused linking words in the 4th par.
4. The main idea of the essay is clearly presented. That is good.

S18

1. Par. 3 should come before par. 2
2. There is a repetition of ideas in par. 2

■ **Peer comments (contd.)**

Essay 2

S10

1. You should not discuss specific points in detail in the introduction.
2. Your pars. are well organized.

S11

1. You have mentioned good ideas in your essay.
2. But some of your sentences are too long to understand what you mean.
3. There are grammatical errors (subject-verb- agreement) in your essay.

S12

1. Your pars. are not well developed.
2. Some pars. are not clear.
3. Some of your sentences are difficult to understand.

S13

1. Your essay has no sufficient points.
2. Your pars. are not well organized.
3. Your essay has no conclusion.

S14

1. Your introduction is not clear.
2. Your pars. are not coherent.
3. Some sentences are too long to understand what you want to say.
4. You have made errors in capitalization.

S15

1. The 1st par. contains two different ideas
2. Your layout is good.
3. Your pars. are coherent.

S16

1. You have good points to make.
2. Your essay is well organized.
3. The last sentence (par.4) is not clear.

S17

1. You have good ideas in your essay.
2. Your tenses need improvement.

S18

1. The main idea of each par. is not clearly shown.
2. Your organization of ideas need revision.
3. Your English is good.

■ **Peer comments (contd.)**

Essay 3

S10

1. There are grammatical errors in your essay (e.g. par.2)
2. Your handwriting is hard to read.

S11

1. Your pars. are not coherent.
2. Some of your sentences are difficult to understand because they are too long.

3. There are errors in capitalization.

S12

1. Your pars. are not well organized.
2. There are errors in tenses.
3. You seem to misuse the comma (see par. 2).

S13

1. You have developed your pars. very well.
2. You have used linking words correctly.
3. Your conclusion is also good.

S14

1. There are errors in tenses.
2. You have raised good points in your essay.
3. Your essay is also well organized.

S15

1. The pars. of your essay are not well developed.
2. You have made errors in prepositions.
3. There are repetitions of ideas in all the pars.
4. The last par. is not related to the topic.

S16

1. Your essay has no clear introduction.
2. There are repetitions of ideas in your essay.
3. Some of your sentences are hard to understand.
4. Your conclusion is not well developed.

S17

1. You have mentioned good points.
2. Your 2nd par. is too long.
3. Most pars. are well organized. That is nice.

S18

1. Good content.
2. Your essay is clear.
3. There is a repetition of the subject of the sentence in your 1st par.

Appendix I: Students' sample essays

About twenty sample essay drafts were selected from the pilot and main studies of this research and given below. Two sample essays were selected from the impromptu essays (one from the pilot study and another one from the main study both with intermediate scores as per the scores given by the two raters). The topic for the Impromptu essay was: *Two most common student hobbies at the Addis Ababa University*. The other eighteen draft essays were taken from the other three essay topics used in the pilot and the main studies of this research. Six of the essay drafts were selected from the pilot study and twelve essay drafts were selected from the main study. These eighteen essay drafts were selected from low, intermediate and high scores (as per the scores given by the two raters). The essays were taken from three different topics: *The most memorable person in my life* (first essay), *Family life in my kebelie* (second essay) and *How I would like to spend my kiremt vacation* (pilot)/*How I spent my last kiremt vacation* (main) (third essay).

The twenty sample essay drafts are shown below. *S* refers to the student writer and *D* refers to the draft. The first two draft essays were taken from the impromptu essays (pilot and main). The other eighteen essay drafts were taken from the other three major essay topics mentioned above.

1. Two most common student hobbies at the Addis Ababa University (S7- pilot)

Usually, university students may be engaged in different activities. But the most common hobbies I have seen so far are playing different games and reading different books especially fictions, magazines etc. When we talk about games, they participate in different games which differ in

rules, and the number of students who participate depend up on their interest. University students engaged themselves to one or more than one game. Some play football during the day and chase after 8 p.m. Others play football and volley ball when conditions are favourable. There are students which engaged themselves to one and only one game, for example chase, football, volley ball etc.

The second and most common hobby in my university is reading different fictions written by famous foreign writers and some books translated to our languages besides newspapers are also read by university students as a source of information concerning science and technology, social problems, successs of different educators such as Nobel prize for different scientific research and new discovery etc. which give them encourage in their study and make their horizon of thinking more wider.

2. Two most common student hobbies at the Addis Ababa University (S3- main)

Every member of AAU can easily observe some common hobbies performed by the students. From my point of view most of the students pass their time in sports, specially in football. If somebody goes out to the football field on Friday afternoon and Saturday mornings, he would see many guys playing football and others waiting to play it. The writer thinks that it is a good prospect for the country in producing a healthy society and they may be examples for some other students who wanna pass their time in bars, which delivers them to many problems.

The other enjoyable hobby, actually it is becoming part of our life, is going to churches. If somebody watches the whereabouts of all students in the weekends, specially on Friday evenings

and Sunday mornings, most of them are found in the churches. The St. Mark church near the campus and the Entoto protestant church up near the American Embassy gather most of the students, helping them to be morally good citizens.

If it were not for the lack of time it can be said more about them. It is to say that the problems like after somebody plays football, how much food does he get to replace the lost energy? Is there any water to wash his body? and so on. Or is there any controversy between followers of any religion, or they go hand in hand to teach others and discuss each others?

By this time I wanna thank the AAU officials or government for preparing convenient situations for the students to have good hobbies like by making easy access for the students in getting playing materials like football, basketball, handball fields and the balls too and I hope this situation will endure for a long time.

3a. The most memorable person in my life (S2 -D1) (pilot)

One year ago, when I was a freshman student, it was my first time I came to Addis Ababa. We were two, with my dear elder brother. It was the first day. since we came from rural area so we saw Addis we became very happy however, we became affraid of gradually because every thing what we saw was new to us.

then, we tried to come to the university but we didn't know the place where the taxi found. we asked the man who stood up near to us to show us the place. the man was well dressed. he said, " oh! I can show you the taxi, it is easy to show, come and follow me." we then followed him.

The man asked us, "where do you come from?" we answered, we came from kiflehagar. he said, "oh! it is nice." having walked a kilometer of distance, the man met with one giant person. the new man was bodily and he dressed an old punched closes. and he seems a murderer. we are affraid of when we see the new man.

as soon as the new man met the man with us, he reached to us and he come near to me and touch me. then he ask me excuse of his touching me. I response no matter just leave it. as soon as I spoke with the new man the old man or the first man tries to pick up my money from my pocket, I have never seen him but my brother catch up his hand as immediately as possible when the first man pick up the money from my pocket. after that we said, thanks for your cooporation for showing the taxi and then we have already know that the person are a thief. then we said, starting from now and then we don't want any person to show us the taxi, we knew it. so please go out. then the two persons go away and we go to the university by foot with out asking any person.

3b. S2-D2

It was the first day of University of Addis Ababa. The story took place one years ago here in Addis Ababa when I was a freshman student. We were two, with my brother. We became very happy when we saw Addis. However we became affraid because every thing what we saw was new and things became fast here in Addis.

Having reached the bus station, we tried to come to the university but we didn't know the place where the taxi is found. We asked the man who stood up near to us in order to show the place where taxi found. He was well dressed and seems very kind. Then he said, "oh! I can show you.

It is easy. Come and follow me." We followed behind him. The man asked us, " where do you come from?" We said we came from 'kiflehagar'. He also asked us, " for what purpose do you come here?" We also answered to learn in University. He then said, "oh! it is nice."

After we had walked a kilometer of distance from the bus station, the man met with another giant person. The new person was fat and he dressed an old punched clothes. He really seems a murderer. we are affraid when we saw him.

As soon as the new person met the former man, he then came near to me and touched me. Having touched me he asked excuse of his touching as so he made it wrongly. I said, don't mention it, it doesn't matter just leave it. He tried to talk much with me. As soon as I talked with the new man, the former man tried to pick up my money from my pocket. I have never seen him as I didn't expect him for doing as such. Because as I have mentioned before he was well dressed as well as he seems very kind and honest. He speaks also smoothly and kindly. By the mean time my brother saw him when the person tried to pick up the money so that my brother catch up his hands together with the money immediately. The man then said, "I am sorry, I made a mistake unknowingly, excuse me please." We said also, thank you for your cooporation. It doesn't matter so now you can go away. Then finally, the two thieves went away and we came to the University on foot.

The most memorable person is the person that tried to pick up the money while I spoke with the other person and since he was well dressed and spok kindly I tell surely no one expected him as he was a thief. Then finally I concluded that all persons that are well dressed and seemingly

honest and kindly in Addis are not probably good and honest persons, they might be a thief as such not all of course.

4a. The most memorable person in my life (S6-D1) (main)

A person whom I cannot forget in my life is my cousin who came last *kiremt* from Canada for the first time in 18 years.

She lived Canada for a long time. In Canada there are few Ethiopians living and in the college she is enrolled she and other two are the only Ethiopians out of many. With her in Canada are her mother and her only brother relatives.

She stayed here for two months of vacation. She is so frank and sociable. When she went I was very small to remember her. She is intelligent and has the capacity to remember events that had happen 18 years back when she was very small to remember such things.

During her stay I was along with her every single tour even we used to send letters, photographs and other things so I haven't found it difficult. We visited so many place some of them I haven't seen them before or should say she showed me so many places. And she found the city (Addis Ababa) very attractive.

Another thing about her is she loves music very much. She adore going to the night clubs and enjoy herself with her relatives. She doesn't want to disappoint any body but if she is very angry

she doesn't know what she is talking about and every body knows her and try our best to calm her down.

The thing I couldn't forget is that had happened to her. One day she went out with one of my niece. She was wearing top mini skirt like the way that was dressed abroad and nobody has told her our culture or they forgot. As they reached to the place what is called Stadium the people who saw her stopped walking and start insulting her and she didn't understand it why because she can't hear Amharic perfectly and at last the girl that was with her understood and they took a taxi and went home canceling other appointments. When she told me what happened to her immediately she got her house and I couldn't stop laughing at the consequences and told her about those things that are not accepted by our society.

When she return back to her country she was disappointed and she missed every thing. And she planned to return and settle her once and for all.

4b. S6 -D2

The person whom I cannot forget in my life is my cousin. Her name is Metasebia Addisu. She came last year for vacation from Canada, for the first time in 18 years.

When she left Ethiopia she was about eight years old. Her father died when she was one, so she has no idea about her father. She has a brother whose name is Biniyam and a mother named Nigisti. The three of them are together now in Canada.

In Canada, Metasebia is studying nursing and she sometimes work in the hospitals. In the college she is staying there are few Ethiopians who are intelligent as well. When she told me about them (foreigners) there is a competetion with the Ethiopians and they have negative attitudes towards Ethiopians and she said if you are not shy you would succeed in all aspects.

Metasebia is very intelligent and sociable. She has a long blonde hair and she is very short. She like music and going to the night clubs and have fun with her relatives. I can't forget about her. Most of all I admire is her capacity of remembering things eighteen years back: the good things and bad things. She also remembered and asked my mother questions about events which my mam herself forgot such things.

One thing I cannot forget most about her is something that happened to her here in Addis Ababa. As I mentioned above she has been abroad for almost eighteen years, which is very long and she has no idea about the dresses, totally the culture. One day when she went to visit her friends mother she was wearing mini skirt. She was with her niece. As they reached a place what is known as stadium to take a taxi, the people who were there stopped walking and started insulting her. At first she didn't understand what that was all about. Suddenly, her niece told her and they took a taxi and went home canceling her appointment. She was shocked about that thing and upto now she told everyone laughing the skirt story.

As I mentioned above there are many things which are unforgettable and I will never forget the time we shared together, that I hope she felt the same as me. I know she enjoyed her vacation and

it was beyond her expectation. After these memorable and sweet times we spent together now she is back to Canada but she planned to return here after she finished her course and get married.

5a. The most memorable person in my life (S18-D1) (main)

The most memorable person in my life is my best friend when I was in grade eleven. How can I ever forget her? We used to have such good times together. She was so brilliant, humorous and fortunatly pretty. She happened to be full of energy and very lively till the time that awful truck appeared from nowhere and just passed over her!

Her name was Silvia. She was half cast; her father was an Italian. He was an ingeneer. Her mother was an Ethiopian and she was always busy working in their restaurant. Because of her roman's blood, Silvia turned out to be a beautiful girl with a fantasy body. She was happy, with medium weight and small feet. Her long golden hair matched with her blue eyes. She usually dressed carelessly and always wore jeans with tee-shirts. As for her character, I found her sincer and franc. She never lied and even wondered why everyone had to hide behind lies. The other thing I really admired from her was her selfishness. May be most people don't take this criteria positively but that definitely suited her. She never worried for anything, not even when she was plunged in a deep trouble. "God created me, then he's aware of my destiny for he's the one who's established it! So, why worry!" said she one day.

When I first met her, I remember, we talked about pop music and films. We were attending our first history class and our teacher made us sit together. I was amazed because she knew perfectly well every pop star. And I did my best to impress her. Then, we found out we had so many things

in common. We started exchanging films and cassettes. One day, she even translated Bob Marley's song untitled "Africa unit" into french and presented it in class. Music was her life.

But, there comes a time in everybody's life when one is confronted to an unresolvable problem. And Silvia couldn't avoid it. She was crossing the road, actually it was Churchill Road so as to get in school when she was suddenly run over by a truck.

5b. S18-D2

The most memorable person in my life is my best friend when I was in grade eleven. How can I ever forget her? We used to have such good times together. She was so brilliant, humorous and pretty. She happened to be full of energy and very lively up to the time that awful truck appeared from nowhere and just passed over her!

Her name was Silvia. When I first met her , I remember, we talked about pop music and films. We were attending our first History class and the teacher made us sit together. I was amazed because she knew perfectly well every pop star. And I did my best to impress her. Then, we found out we had so many things in common. We started exchanging films and cassettes. One day, she even translated Bob Marley's song untitled "Africa unite" into French and presented it in class. Music was her life.

Silvia was half cast; her father was an Italian. He was an engineer. Her mother was an Ethiopian and she was always busy working in their restaurant. Because of her Roman's blood, Silvia turned out to be a beautiful girl with a fantastic body. Her long golden hair matched with her blue eyes.

She usually dressed carelessly and always wore jeans with tee-shirts. As for her character, I found her sincere and franc. She never lied. What I really admired on her was her selfishness. Maybe most people don't take this criteria positively but that definitely suited her. She never worried for anything, not even when she was plunged in a deep trouble. In fact, she was fatalist. "God created me, then he's aware of my destiny because he is the one who's established it! So, why worry!" said she one day.

But, there comes a time in every body's life when one is confronted to an unexpected happening. And Silvia couldn't avoid it. Perhaps, was it her destiny? She was crossing the road, actually, it was Churchill Road, so as to get in school when she was suddenly run over by a track. That charming, brilliant and vivid flame was unlightened in a very sinister way. And, she left me, wondering in the middle of nowhere!

6a. Family life in my *kebelie* (S12-D1) (main)

Family means the group of relative people in one house usually all the members have similar behaviour as they follow identical way of life.

The number of family members different in one family from the other as a result of the type of family. In my *kebelie* it is common to see the number of family members their two to ten children or only both otherwise additional of other partener like servants.

Each member has his or her own role in family of life. Like mother in the kitchen to cook food or sometimes she may be working out of the house and father who is the head of the house only

bring money for monthly budget of the family and mostly he do not spent his time in the house. And the children have a role to be as their parants want and guide like if they want education they must learn properly. Finally the servants with the role to help the mother.

One normal family has to communicat with his his neighbours and a society within his village. Then social life is important for the life of the family. The relationship of family with the neighbours is different as the village or kebelie.

In my kebelie the way each family relate with their neighbours is very very limited than other kebelie which I saw. It is only for when there is bad things like death and also to share one family's happines not more than that. We don't know details all about each families. But all are coperative for such things. Still in love each other. However, our kebelie is similar with the others by some social associations like *edir* and *maheber*.

Even if it is our culture to see neighbours family as our family it must have a limit in the communication it must be only for importance to have real love not for all sily ones as our kebelie. Not what I mean to say not to love a neighbour at all but the relation must have gap to have ones own family to shape his member as his own family.

6b. S12-D2

Family means a group of relatives within one house usually with all the members who have similar behaviour as they follow identical way of life.

The number of family members is different in our family from the other. This is a result of different family types. In my kebelie it is common to see the number of family number from two to ten. It includes mother and father with their children. Sometimes only both of them as a family.

Each member has his or her own role in a family of life. Mother works in the kitchen to cook food usually or sometimes she may be working outside of the house. Father is the head of the family. Mostly he do not spend his time in the house. Finally, the children have a role as their parants want and guide them. If their parants want education, the children must go to school and learn properly.

A normal family has to communicat with its neighbours and society, which means social life is important for the life of the family. The relationship of family with neighbours is different as the kebelie is different. In our kebelie it may be strong and in others it may be low.

In my kebelie the way each family relate with their neighbours is very limited than other kebelies which I saw. In my kebelie it is when there is something special in a family like death and so they share one's happiness not more than that. For such things all the members of the kebelie are cooperative especially in a funeral ceremony. But we don't gather for each coffee ceremony in every house. So we don't know each other deeply. Our knowledge is only about who belongs to which family. However, our kebelie is similar with the other by some social associations like 'edir' and 'mahber' and still I think we love each other.

Even if it is our culture to see neighbours as a family, it must have a limit in communication. The more we communicate the more we quarrel. I mean not to love neighbours at all. But the relations must have a gap. It is also important to have one's own family. To shape a family member as one's own family. I think our kebelie can be a good example for others. But we know each family has its own characteristics.

7a. Family life in my *kebelie* (S8-D1) (pilot)

Whenever I come across family life in one particular area, I immediately recognize family life in my kebelie. I try to memorize its characteristic features. It is based on cooperation rather than individualism.

The majority of families in my kebelie are composed of husband, wife and childrens. However, there are still families that are composed of grandfather, grandmother, uncle, nephew or niece in addition to husband, wife and childrens. Families which include servants are also common.

Coming back to their share of tasks, each member of the family has his own specific task to accomplish. For example, the task of leading the family is the husband's. The husband proposes to do one specific task. Then the wife gives her opinion or suggestion toward the proposed task. If they agree, they will perform the task other wise, they will be lead to collapse. This shows us even if the husband is the one who proposes suggestions for the act of leading, the wife is not neutral to the act of leading the childrens and other members of the family. Similarly childrens and others that are members of the family has their own performance based on their maturity

level, intelligence and physical fitness. For example, childrens work in the garden, they repair ruined fences. Grand mothers support babies or they perform any simple house work.

Eventhough they accomplish their own specific tasks, their main purpose is to achive their intemate goal in common. They respect one another and agree up on any situation. For example, the father is given the first position in respect. Wife and childrens respect the husband. Next, childrens respect their mother. Younger childrens respect their elder brothers and sisters also.

In general, family life in my kebelie is an interesting one. It is based on the performance of share of tasks and mutual beneficial.

7b. S8-D2

Knowing the family life of one particular society is important because it has its own advantages and disadvantages. Whenever I come across the family life of one particular society, I immediately think of family life in my kebelie. Its characteristics are interesting. People are cooperative rather than individualist.

The majority of families in my village are composed of husband, wife and children. However, there are still some families that are composed of grandmother, grandfather, uncle, nephew or niece in addition to husband, wife and children. Families that include servants are also very common.

When we come to their share of work, each member of the family has his own specific task to accomplish. For example, the task of leading the family is the husband's. The husband proposes one specific idea. Then, the wife gives her opinions or suggestions toward the proposed one. If they agree, they will perform it, otherwise they try to find other possible solutions. The implication of this is that wives are not neutral to the act of leading but have their own role according to family life in my kebelie. In addition to participating in the act of leading, wives have their own common work. Of course these jobs are the main ones for them. For example, housework is totally burden or loaded on the mother. Similarly, children and other members of the family have their own task to perform based on their maturity level, intelligence and physical fitness. For example, children repair ruined fences, look after the house, fetch water and so on. Grandmothers support babies or perform any easy housework.

Eventhough each member of the family performs his own specific job to do, the main purpose is to achieve intimate goals in common and manage life in a systematic way. The respect of one for another in the family is related to hierarchy. For example, wife and children fear and respect the husband. Children respect their mother too. Finally, younger children respect their elder brothers and sisters.

In general, family life in my kebelie is cooperative. It is based on performing and sharing of tasks and mutual support.

8a. Family life in my *kebelie* (S18-D1) (main)

In my *kebelie*, families have different ways of living. Their difference lie mainly on their standard of living. The big business man's family is not similar with that of the poor factory worker. But generally, families happen to ignore their background differences and interact happily, which brings to the *kebelie* harmonious charm.

First of all, what is a family? It is the smallest group of individuals, hereditarily related, who live together. This group includes the father, the mother, the children and other relatives. The ideal family is generally said to be that which is composed of four individuals. The parents have to assume the biggest responsibility. They have to run the house, take care of their children and interfere in the *kebelie*'s life. As for the children, they must obey to their parents and go to school.

Different families meet at different occasions in the neighbourhood. Important contacts are made through what is traditionally called the '*edir*'. Every time a sadest event happens in one's house, each member of the *edir* must be present for at least bringing consolation.

Another contact between neighbours is also done through the ceremony of the coffee. In Ethiopia, there's a tradition which states that one mustn't drink the coffee alone. So, every time the coffee is ready, all the neighbours should be present till the ceremony ends.

There are also other pleasant contacts and relations in the family life of the *kebelie*. Helping those who are in trouble, celebrating together a happy event like marriage for instance or meetings in church are some of these. But should we limit ourselves in these events that occur

every day throughout our lives. We don't give enough time for other enjoyments. Maybe, it is because of the lack of entertaining places in the kebelie. If the local government had taken into consideration the fact that each family is in the need of more activities, it could have tried to at least bring new ideas.

8b. S18-D2

In my kebelie, families have different ways of living. There are those who, due to their standard of living, can't get away from a sophisticated and luxurious habit. Near to these are the unfortunate who can't get rid of their misery. In other words, the big business man's family is dramatically opposite to that of the poor factory worker. But, generally, in my kebelie, families have completely forgotten and ignored their background differences and interact happily, which has brought a harmonious life to the neighbourhood.

First of all, what is a family? It is the smallest group of individuals, hereditarily related and live together. This group includes the father, the mother, the children and sometimes other relatives. The ideal family is said to be that which is composed of four individuals. Each member of the family has its own role to play and its own duties to fulfill. The parents have to assume the biggest responsibility. They have to run the house, take care of their children and moreover interfere in the kebelie's life. As for the children, they must obey the parents, help in the house and go to school.

Different families meet at different occasions in the neighbourhood. Important contacts are made through what is traditionally called the 'edir'. Every time a sad event happens in one's house, each

member of the 'edir' must be present for at least bringing consolation to the sad family. Another contact between neighbours is also done through the ceremony of coffee. In Ethiopia, the tradition does not allow oneself to drink coffee alone. So, every time the coffee is ready, all the neighbours should be present till the ceremony ends. There are also other pleasant contacts and relations in the family life of my kebelie. Helping those who are in trouble, celebrating together a happy event like wedding or meetings in church are some of these. Children do also participate in the life of the kebelie. They usually organize some big activities like for example football, athletics or even music nights. They join in group and prepare the whole thing in the kebelie's sport field. Then, every interested person is welcome. But, most of the time, the field is so crowded that they must send away non-members of the kebelie.

In any case, every body does always try to bring a more fresh and viable atmosphere to the neighbourhood but there is still lack of creativity. In other words, all these activities are monotonously repeated and part of the kebelie is now showing its bored face. In fact, we have limited ourselves in events that occur every day throughout our lives. We are not giving enough time for new entertainments. We keep on sticking to the same routine.

9a. How I spent my last *kiremt* vacation (S10-D1) (main)

I spent my last *kiremt* vacation mostly by visiting my relatives and friends inside and outside my hometown, Haik. I am really interesting to see them again.

During my stay in my hometown I usually had chat with my friends, my relatives about university life. They were really delight to hear from me about the city of Addis, its people, its weather, its

social and economical affairs. My friends also asked me some questions about university and university life. I told them all I could frankly about the situation.

I don't forget the time when I was visiting my aunt and her daughters outside my hometown. She is a farmer, her daughters are high school students. When I went there my aunt was very happy. She gave me something to eat and drink and asked me some questions about my stay in the university, about the city of Addis and so on. I was really surprise because my relatives as well as my friends asked me the same questions. And I spent most of my *kiremt* vacation there. It was very interesting to me to stay in the rular area during *kiremt* vacation.

To sum up my last *kiremt* vacation passed like this. I entertained myself because I have got my relatives alive and I was very happy to see my friends. My last *kiremt* vacation was very nice. I am longing to see them again. I wish that I were with them.

9b. S10-D2

I spent my last *kiremt* vacation mostly by visiting my relatives and friends inside and outside my hometown. I am really interested to see them again.

During my stay in my hometown, I usually had chat with my friends and relatives. They asked me many questions about the university life, the city of Addis, its people, its weather, and its social and economic life. I told them that all I could say about their questions. They were happy to hear from me. They were surprised when I told them the situations which I faced during my stay in the university.

I do not forget the time when I was visiting my aunt and her daughters outside my hometown. She is a farmer and her daughters are high school students. When I went there, my aunt was very happy. She asked me about my stay in the university, the city of Addis and so on. I was surprised because my relatives as well as my friends asked me the same questions. I spent most of my last *kiremt* vacation there. It was very interesting to me to stay in the rural area during my last *kiremt* vacation. I cannot forget the scene in rural areas, the herds, the rivers, the mountains covered by grass, trees and the people. To be honest, the rural people are very friendly, hospitable and hardworking.

To sum up, my last *kiremt* vacation was very nice. I was very happy to see my friends and relatives. I am longing to see them again. I wish I were with them.

10a. How I spent my last *kiremt* vacation (S13-D1) (main)

The last *kiremt* vacation was interesting for me in many ways. But the main one was my journey to Arsi to visit my uncle. Ther I spent a lot of interesting time. The other one was after I came back from Arsi I spent here in Addis the rest of time with my brother. I was glad to meet him when I came back because he was in Assab for about 6 months and above. Besides these I helped my parents in the house and my brother in his study.

During my stay in Arsi I saw many things since I was there for the first time. Starting from my way to Arsi I saw many farmers in the field far away outside the car. When I reached there every thingg was different from Addis. The streets were full of donkeys. The houses were scattered here and there. There is only one Orthodox church around one village. I was interested to see all

the things. The way of life was completely different from Addis. The children I saw was helping their parents rather than going to school. They fetch water, keep cattle and even plough. That was the only thing that made me sad otherwise I was happy.

When I came back from my journey I spent my time by visiting my relatives and going to different recreation centres with my brother here in Addis. We saw films and musiums. I was glad to be with him and do all these things.

Besides these I assist my parents in the house. I prepare food for the family, clean the house, wash clothes and every thing I can.

I also help my brother in his study. I gave him some informations for the next class. I prepare him by reading the books of the next class in advance and other English books which help him to increase his vocabulary power.

For me it was the best *kiremt* of all those I spent before. Every thing I did was interesting for me. My visit of Arsi, meeting my elder brother after 6 months and every thing.

10b. S13-D2

The last *kiremt* time was interesting for me in many ways. But the main one was my journey to Arsi to visit my uncle. There I spent a lot of interesting time. The other one was the time I spent here in Addis with my brother after I came back from Arsi. I was glad to meet him when I came

back because he was in Assab for about 6 months and above. Besides these I helped my parents in the house and my brother in his study.

In my stay in Arsi I saw many new things since I was there for the first time. Starting from my way to Arsi, I saw many farmers and cattle in the field far away outside the car. When I reached there every thing was different from Addis. The streets were full of donkeys and other animals. The houses were scattered here and there and there is only one church around every village. I was interested to see all things. The way of life is completely different from Addis. The children I saw were busy helping their parents. They fetch water, keep cattle and even plough, that means they can't go to school. That was the only thing which made me sad otherwise every thing was interesting.

When I came back from my journey I spent my time by visiting my relatives and going to different recreation centres with my brother here in Addis. We saw films and visited musiums. I was glad to to be with him and do all these things.

Beside these what I did in my last *kiremt* time was that I assisted my parents in the house. I prepared food for the family, cleaned the house, washed clothes and everything I can.

I also helped my brother in his study. I gave him some information for the next class. I made him ready by letting him read the books of the next class in advance and other English books which can make him to increase his vocabulary power.

For me it was the best *kiremt* of all those I spent before. Everything I did made me happy: my visit of Arsi, meeting my elder brother after 6 months and everything was nice.

11a. How I would like to spend my *kiremt* vacation (S7-D1) (pilot)

I would like to spend my vacation in a proper and well programmed way. During the *kiremt* vacation if God allows me, I have planned to do four things.

One of them is reading Bible. In order to develop in God word, I would like to spend by reading Bible. I have planned to read Bible for three hours every day. When I read a lot I will know the aim of God for my life and recognize the message of God. By doing so, I hope I will get some knowledge of God word.

Since reading the Bible doesn't result in the development, I have planned also to pray a lot to know the aim of God. Since the fruit of praying is good, I would like to bear this fruit by doing so. I have also planned to pray for those people who do not know Jesus Christ. After praying, I will tell them about Jesus Christ and the revealed God grace for human being. Since the revealed God grace is to save the world through Jesus Christ, I will tell to every body about the revealed God grace through Jesus Christ.

Besides reading the Bible and praying , I would like to spend my vacation by reading different spiritual magazines and books. I hope these things also may help me in maturing in God word.

In addition, I would like to go to Bahrdar and Gondar to visit my relatives. On my way of visiting my relatives, I will see lake Tana and the Fasiledes castle.

To sum up, these are my plans for kiremt vacation and I hope I will enjoy my vacation by doing these things.

11b. S7- D2

I would like to spend my vacation in a useful well programmed way. During this *kiremt* vacation if God allows me, I have planned to do four things: I will read the Bible. I will pray a lot, I will read other spiritual books and magazines and I will also visit my relatives in Bahrdar and Gondar.

In order to develop in God's word. I would like to spend by reading the Bible. I have planned to read the Bible for three hours every day. When I read a lot I will know the aim of God for my life and other people and know more the message of God. By doing so, I hope I will get some knowledge of the God's word or message.

Since only reading Bible doesn't result in what I expect, I have planned also to pray a lot and to know the aim of God. Since the fruit of praying is useful, I would like to bear this fruit by doing so. I will pray for those people who do not know Jesus Christ. After praying for them I will tell them about Jesus Christ and the revealed God's grace to human being. Since the revealed God's grace is to save the world through Jesus christ, I will tell to everybody the revealed God's grace.

Besides reading the Bible and praying, I would like to spend my vacation by reading different spiritual magazines and books. I hope all these things also may help me to mature in God's word.

In addition, I would like to go to Bahrdar and Gondar to visit my relatives. On my way of visiting my relatives, I will see lake Tana and the Fasiledes castle.

To sum up, these are my plans which I have for this vacation. I hope I will enjoy my vacation by doing these things and others if there is enough time.

Appendix J: Essay results (pilot)

Table 5.2: Impromptu essay

code	content	organization	vocabulary	language use	mechanics	total	average score
G₁							
S1	22+23	12+14	13+ 14	18+19	3+3	68+73	70
S2	17+18	12 +13	14 +12	15+ 14	2 +2	60+ 59	59
S3	17+18	13 +12	13+ 15	16+ 17	3+ 3	62+ 63	62
S4	18+ 19	12+ 12	14 +14	13 +15	3+ 3	60+ 63	61
S5	19 +20	14+ 15	15+ 16	18 +20	3 +4	69+ 75	72
G₂							
S6	19 +20	14+ 13	16 +17	18 +19	3 +3	70 +71	70
S7	18 +20	14 +13	14 +13	18 +20	3 +3	67+ 69	68
S8	17 +18	12+13	13 +12	14 +16	3 +3	59+ 62	60
S9	19 +21	13 +13	13+ 13	15+ 15	3 +3	63+65	64
S10	20 +21	13 +13	15 +13	18+ 17	3 +3	69+67	68

Note: the first scores (in each cell) were given by the first rater and the second scores were given by the second rater.

Table 5.3: Essay 1

code	content	organization	vocabulary	language use	mechanics	total	average score
G₁							
S1	17 +18 18 +18	13 +13 13 +14	13 + 14 15 + 14	17 +18 18 +18	3 + 3 3 + 4	63 + 66 67 + 68	64 67
S2	14 +15 16 +15	10 +13 12 +13	14 + 13 12 + 13	14 + 13 15 + 15	3 + 2 3 + 3	55 + 56 58 + 59	55 58
S3	16 +15 18 +16	12 +13 13 +13	12 + 12 13 + 12	12 + 13 12 + 14	3 + 3 3 + 4	55 + 56 59 + 59	55 59
S4	18 +20 20 +20	14 +14 14 +14	15 + 16 16 + 15	18 + 17 18 + 18	3 + 3 3 + 4	68 +70 71 +71	69 71
S5	18 +18 18 +19	13 +13 14 +14	14 + 13 15 + 14	18+19 18+20	3+3 3+4	66 +66 68 +71	66 69
G₂							
S6	15 +16 16 +16	13 + 12 14 + 15	14 + 15 14 + 16	15 + 17 17 + 18	3 + 3 3 + 3	60 + 64 64 + 68	62 66
S7	17 +17 20 +19	13 + 13 14 + 13	15 + 15 14 + 15	14 + 13 15 + 14	3 + 3 3 + 3	62 + 61 66 + 64	61 65
S8	16 +18 17 +18	13 + 13 12 + 13	14 + 13 13 + 15	16 + 17 16 + 18	2 + 3 3 + 3	61 + 64 61 + 67	62 64
S9	18 +18 19 +20	12 + 13 14 + 13	15 + 14 15 + 16	18 + 17 19 + 17	3 + 3 3 + 3	66 + 65 70 + 69	65 69
S10	16 + 15 17 + 16	12 + 12 13 + 13	12 + 11 11 + 11	14 + 15 16 + 15	3 + 2 3 + 3	57 + 55 60 + 58	56 59

Note: the scores in the first row (in each cell) refer to the first draft and the scores in the second row refer to the final draft as given by the first and second raters.

Table 5.4 : Essay 2

code	content	organization	vocabulary	language use	mechanics	total	average score
G₁							
S1	18+18	13+14	14+13	18+20	3+3	66+68	67
	20+18	14+14	15+13	19+20	3+3	71+68	69
S2	16+17	12+13	14+15	14+14	3+3	59+61	60
	16+18	13+12	14+15	16+16	3+3	62+64	63
S3	15+17	10+10	13+14	11+12	3+3	52+56	54
	17+18	11+11	12+14	12+14	3+3	55+60	57
S4	18+20	14+13	14+15	17+18	3+3	66+69	67
	18+20	15+14	14+15	16+18	3+3	66+70	68
S5	18+16	13+12	12+14	14+16	3+3	60+61	60
	18+16	12+13	14+15	15+18	3+3	62+64	63
G₂							
S6	18+20	13+13	12+13	15+15	3+3	61+64	62
	18+20	13+13	13+14	15+16	4+4	63+67	65
S7	19+20	12+13	14+16	18+17	3+3	64+69	66
	20+22	12+14	15+15	18+18	3+3	68+72	70
S8	17+17	12+11	13+13	16+17	3+3	61+61	61
	18+18	12+13	13+15	16+18	3+3	62+67	64
S9	15+16	12+13	13+13	15+16	3+3	58+61	59
	15+16	13+12	14+13	16+16	3+3	61+60	60
S10	16+15	13+12	13+13	15+15	3+3	60+58	59
	16+16	14+13	14+14	15+16	3+3	62+62	62

Table 5.5: Essay 3

code	content	organization	vocabulary	language use	mechanics	total	average score
G₁							
S1	17+18	12+13	13+14	18+20	3+3	63+68	65
	18+19	13+13	14+15	20+20	3+4	68+71	69
S2	15+14	12+12	13+14	13+15	3+3	56+58	57
	16+14	12+13	12+14	15+16	3+3	58+60	59
S3	16+18	12+13	13+14	17+16	3+3	61+64	62
	18+18	13+13	13+12	18+18	3+3	65+64	64
S4	17+16	12+13	13+14	15+17	3+3	60+63	61
	18+18	13+13	14+14	18+18	3+3	66+66	66
S5	16+18	13+13	14+14	18+17	3+3	64+65	64
	18+18	14+13	13+14	18+18	3+3	66+66	66
G₂							
S6	18+18	13+12	14+15	17+17	3+4	65+66	65
	20+20	13+14	15+15	18+19	4+4	70+72	71
S7	18+19	14+14	14+15	18+20	3+3	67+71	69
	20+20	15+14	15+16	20+20	3+3	73+73	73
S8	15+16	13+12	15+14	17+18	3+3	63+63	63
	16+18	13+13	15+16	17+19	3+3	64+69	66
S9	14+14	12+13	12+13	14+13	3+3	55+56	55
	15+16	13+13	13+14	15+14	3+3	59+60	59
S10	14+15	12+13	12+13	15+15	3+3	56+59	57
	16+17	12+12	11+13	15+15	3+3	57+60	58

Appendix K: Categories of comments and students' responses (pilot)

Table 5.6: Categories of teacher/peer comments

categories of comments	teacher	peer	total
content	21	16	37
organization	13	15	28
lang. use	6	6	12
vocabulary	6	1	7
mechanics			
-punctuation	0	0	0
-spelling	2	2	4
-capitalization	2	0	2
-legibility	1	5	6
-paragraphing	3	5	8
Total	54	50	104

Group 1 (teacher)

- 34 (63%) comments dealt with content and organization and
- 20 (37%) dealt with grammatical, lexical and mechanical errors

Group 2 (peer)

- 31 (62%) dealt with content and organization and
- 19 (38%) dealt with grammatical, lexical and mechanical errors

Table 5.7: Types of responses (Group 1)

comments (teacher)	changed as suggested	changed but not as suggested	removed part of the text that was object of comment	ignored	praise	total
cont.	10	2	-	4	5	21
org.	5	3	2	2	1	13
lang. use	4	1	1	-	-	6
voc.	4	1	1	-	-	6
mech.	5	1	2	-	-	8
Total	28	8	6	6	6	54

Source: The types of responses used in this section were adapted from Ridley, D. (1989)

- 52% were used by students as suggested by the teacher
- 15% were also used but not as suggested by the teacher
- (11%) part of the text that was object of the comments was removed
- 11% were 'ignored'
- 11% were 'praise'
- 78% were utilized as a whole

Table 5.8: Types of responses (Group 2)

comments (peer)	changed as suggested	changed but not as suggested	removed part of the text that was the object of comment	ignored	praise	total
cont.	5	3	1	3	4	16
org.	5	4	1	3	2	15
lang. use	3	1	2	-	-	6
voc.	-	-	1	-	-	1
mech.	9	-	1	2	-	12
Total	22	8	6	8	6	50

- 44% of the comments were used as suggested by peers
- 16% were also used but not as suggested
- (12%) part of the text that was the object of comment was removed
- 16% were 'ignored'
- 12% were 'praise'
- 72% were utilized as a whole

Appendix L: Essay results (main)

Table 6.10: Impromptu essay (G1 (1-9) and G2 (10-18))

code	content	organization	vocabulary	lang. use	mechanics	total	average score
S1	19+20	12+13	13+15	15+17	2+3	61+68	64
S2	15+16	11+12	12+12	13+14	2+3	52+57	54
S3	20+19	14+14	16+15	20+19	3+4	73+71	72
S4	20+21	13+11	17+15	18+20	4+4	72+71	71
S5	20+18	13+15	17+14	18+18	3+3	71+68	69
S6	14+13	10+12	11+12	12+12	3+4	48+53	51
S7	20+20	11+13	14+13	15+18	2+3	62+67	64
S8	13+14	11+12	13+13	14+13	3+3	54+54	54
S9	18+17	13+13	13+14	16+15	3+3	63+62	62

S10	19+18	11+13	14+13	18+20	3+3	65+67	66
S11	20+19	13+15	14+16	17+16	3+3	67+69	68
S12	17+19	11+11	13+12	15+14	2+3	58+59	58
S13	18+17	12+11	13+14	15+16	2+3	60+61	60
S14	20+19	12+13	14+13	15+17	3+3	64+65	64
S15	20+21	14+16	13+15	17+15	3+3	67+70	68
S16	14+16	10+10	10+11	12+13	2+2	48+51	49
S17	18+19	14+13	15+15	16+17	3+3	66+67	66
S18	20+19	13+12	12+12	15+16	3+3	63+62	62

S.D = 7.8 (G1) and 6.09 (G2)

$t_0 = 0$ and $t_c(0.05 \text{ and } 0.01, 16) = 2.120 \text{ and } 2.921$ respectively.

Table 6.11: Essay 1(G1)

code	content	organization	vocabulary	lang. use	mechanics	total	average score
S1	16+15	11+12	13+12	13+14	3+3	56+56	56
	16+16	11+12	13+13	15+14	3+3	58+58	58
S2	17+18	12+11	12+11	14+13	3+3	58+56	57
	17+19	12+12	12+13	15+13	3+3	59+60	59
S3	18+19	13+14	14+14	17+18	3+4	65+69	67
	19+20	14+14	14+15	18+20	4+4	69+73	71
S4	19+20	13+14	15+16	18+19	3+4	68+73	70
	20+20	14+14	15+16	18+20	3+4	70+74	72
S5	17+18	12+13	13+14	17+16	3+3	62+64	63
	18+18	13+14	13+15	18+18	3+3	65+68	66
S6	18+17	11+12	12+12	15+16	3+2	59+59	59
	18+19	12+13	12+13	17+17	3+3	62+65	63
S7	17+18	11+12	11+12	14+13	3+3	56+58	57
	17+18	12+12	12+12	15+15	3+3	59+60	59
S8	16+15	12+12	12+13	13+13	3+2	56+55	55
	16+16	13+13	12+13	14+13	3+3	58+58	58
S9	18+18	12+13	14+13	16+17	3+3	63+64	63
	19+20	12+14	15+14	17+16	3+3	66+67	66

- S.D (G1) = 0.84
- $t_0 = 7.143$ and t_c (0.05 and 0.01, 8) = 2.306 and 3.355 respectively.

Table 6.12: Essay 1 (G2)

code	content	organization	vocabulary	lang. use	mechanics	total	average score
S10	16+18	11+10	12+11	13+12	3+2	55+53	54
	16+18	11+11	12+12	13+14	3+3	55+58	56
S11	18+18	11+11	11+11	13+14	3+3	56+57	56
	18+19	12+12	13+12	15+14	3+3	61+60	60
S12	16+17	10+10	11+10	13+13	3+3	53+53	53
	17+17	11+10	12+10	15+14	3+3	58+54	56
S13	18+17	12+13	12+11	13+15	2+3	57+59	58
	20+18	13+13	13+11	14+15	3+3	63+60	61
S14	20+19	12+12	13+14	15+16	3+4	63+65	64
	20+20	12+13	13+15	16+16	4+4	65+68	66
S15	21+20	13+13	14+14	17+16	4+3	69+66	67
	22+22	13+13	16+15	18+16	4+4	73+70	71
S16	16+17	10+11	11+12	13+13	2+3	52+56	54
	17+17	11+11	12+12	13+15	3+3	56+58	57
S17	20+18	12+12	13+14	16+15	3+3	64+62	63
	21+20	13+12	14+14	18+16	4+3	70+65	67
S18	22+21	12+13	16+17	18+20	4+4	72+75	73
	24+22	14+14	16+18	21+22	4+4	79+80	79

- S.D = 5.27 (G1) and 7.28 (G2) for D1
- $t_0 = 1.492$ and t_c (0.05 and 0.01, 16) = 2.120 and 2.921 respectively.
- S.D = 5.75 (G1) and 7.82 (G2) for D2
- $t_0 = 1.087$ and t_c (0.05 and 0.01, 16) = 2.120 and 2.921 respectively.
- S.D (G2) = 1.5
- $t_0 = 8$ and t_c (0.05 and 0.01, 8) = 2.306 and 3.355 respectively.

Table 6.13: Essay 2 (G1)

code	content	organization	vocabulary	lang. use	mechanics	total	average score
S1	20+20 21+21	11+10 12+12	11+10 11+10	14+15 16+16	3+3 3+3	59+58 63+62	58 62
S2	18+17 18+18	10+11 11+11	10+10 10+12	11+12 13+13	2+2 2+3	51+52 54+57	51 55
S3	20+20 21+20	13+13 13+13	13+14 15+14	16+18 19+20	3+3 3+4	65+68 71+71	66 71
S4	22+20 22+22	13+12 13+13	14+15 15+15	18+19 19+20	3+3 3+4	70+69 71+74	69 72
S5	19+18 19+18	12+10 12+12	12+10 13+12	14+15 16+16	3+3 3+3	60+56 63+61	58 62
S6	17+17 18+19	10+11 11+12	12+11 13+11	13+14 14+16	3+2 3+3	55+54 58+61	54 59
S7	14+15 16+16	10+11 12+11	12+10 13+11	13+13 12+14	3+3 3+3	52+53 56+55	52 55
S8	14+15 16+17	10+10 11+12	11+12 11+12	12+11 12+10	3+3 3+3	50+51 53+54	50 53
S9	18+19 18+20	12+11 13+12	13+14 14+14	14+16 16+16	3+4 3+4	60+64 64+66	62 65

• S.D (G1) = 0.84

• $t_0 = 10.714$ and $t_c(0.05 \text{ and } 0.01, 8) = 2.306 \text{ and } 3.355$ respectively.

Table 6.14 :Essay 2 (G2)

code	content	organization	vocabulary	lang. use	mechanics	total	average score
S10	14+16 17+17	10+10 11+10	11+10 11+10	12+13 13+13	2+2 3+2	49+51 55+52	50 53
S11	15+17 18+18	10+10 10+11	10+10 10+11	11+12 13+13	3+3 3+3	49+52 54+56	50 55
S12	14+13 15+14	10+9 10+10	9+10 10+12	11+12 11+12	2+3 3+3	46+47 49+51	46 50
S13	13+13 14+14	11+12 12+12	12+13 13+13	14+15 16+16	3+3 3+3	53+56 58+58	54 58
S14	20+19 20+21	13+13 13+14	13+14 14+14	17+18 18+19	3+4 3+4	66+68 68+72	67 70
S15	21+20 22+20	14+14 14+15	15+14 16+16	16+15 17+17	4+3 4+4	70+66 73+72	68 72
S16	13+14 15+14	10+10 11+10	10+12 12+13	13+13 14+15	2+2 2+2	48+51 54+54	49 54
S17	18+20 20+21	12+13 13+13	14+15 15+16	15+16 17+18	3+3 3+3	62+67 68+71	63 69
S18	22+21 22+23	13+13 14+13	15+16 16+16	17+18 19+20	3+4 4+4	70+72 75+76	71 75

- S.D = 6.91 (G1) and 9.65 (G2) for D1
- $t_o = 1.087$ and $t_c (0.05 \text{ and } 0.01, 16) = 2.210$ and 2.921 respectively.
- S.D = 6.88 (G1) and 9.59 (G2) for D2
- $t_o = 1.099$ and $t_c (0.05 \text{ and } 0.01, 16) = 2.120$ and 2.921 respectively.
- S.D (G2) = 0.97
- $t_o = 15.625$ and $t_c (0.05 \text{ and } 0.01, 8) = 2.306$ and 3.355 respectively.

Table 6.15: Essay 3 (G1)

code	content	organization	vocabulary	lang. use	mechanics	total	average score
S1	18+18	11+10	12+10	12+13	3+3	56+54	55
	20+19	12+11	13+11	12+13	3+3	60+57	58
S2	15+16	12+10	10+11	11+12	3+3	51+52	51
	17+17	11+11	10+12	12+13	3+3	53+56	54
S3	20+20	12+13	13+12	14+15	3+3	62+63	62
	20+21	13+13	13+13	15+15	3+4	64+66	65
S4	21+22	13+14	14+15	18+17	3+3	69+71	70
	22+22	13+14	16+15	18+18	3+4	72+73	72
S5	18+17	13+13	13+14	15+16	3+3	62+63	62
	18+19	14+14	14+14	14+16	3+3	63+66	64
S6	17+18	12+13	12+13	14+12	3+3	58+59	58
	17+18	13+14	14+15	15+13	3+3	62+63	62
S7	18+18	11+12	13+12	14+15	3+3	59+60	59
	18+19	11+13	14+13	16+15	3+3	62+63	62
S8	17+19	11+10	13+12	14+14	3+3	58+58	58
	18+19	12+11	13+13	16+15	3+3	62+61	61
S9	18+20	12+12	13+14	16+15	3+3	62+64	63
	20+20	13+12	13+15	16+16	4+3	66+66	66

• S.D (G1) = 0.78

• $t_0 = 11.538$ and $t_c(0.05 \text{ and } 0.01, 8) = 2.306 \text{ and } 3.355$ respectively.

Table 6.16: Essay 3 (G2)

code	content	organization	vocabulary	lang. use	mechanics	total	average score
S10	14+14	10+11	12+12	13+14	3+2	52+53	52
	15+16	10+12	12+13	14+15	3+3	54+59	56
S11	16+16	10+10	12+13	14+15	2+3	54+57	55
	17+16	10+11	13+14	15+15	3+3	58+59	58
S12	16+15	12+10	12+13	14+14	3+3	57+55	56
	17+16	12+11	12+14	15+15	3+3	59+59	59
S13	17+16	12+12	13+11	16+15	3+2	61+56	58
	18+18	13+12	12+13	16+16	3+3	62+62	62
S14	20+20	13+12	15+14	18+17	3+4	69+67	68
	21+20	13+13	16+15	18+18	4+4	72+70	71
S15	20+20	13+14	14+16	16+18	3+4	66+72	69
	21+21	14+15	15+16	18+18	3+4	71+74	72
S16	14+15	9+11	10+12	13+15	2+2	48+55	51
	15+15	10+11	12+11	14+15	3+2	54+54	54
S17	17+19	12+13	14+13	17+19	3+3	63+67	65
	18+20	12+12	15+15	17+19	4+3	67+70	68
S18	21+22	14+15	15+16	20+18	4+4	74+73	73
	22+22	15+15	17+17	20+20	4+4	78+78	78

- S.D = 5.38 (G1) and 8.48 (G2) for D1
- $t_o = 0.961$ and t_c (0.05 and 0.01, 16) = 2.120 and 2.921 respectively.
- S.D = 5.07 (G1) and 8.32 (G2) for D2
- $t_o = 0.925$ and t_c (0.05 and 0.01, 16) = 2.120 and 2.921 respectively.
- S.D (G2) = 0.52
- $t_o = 17.647$ and t_c (0.05 and 0.01, 8) = 2.306 and 3.355 respectively.

Appendix M: Correlation coefficient (r) (pilot)

Table 5.9: Correlation coefficient (r) (Impromptu essay)

G1/G2	X	Y	x	y	x^2	y^2	xy
S1	68	73	3	6	9	36	18
S2	60	59	-5	-8	25	64	40
S3	62	63	-3	-4	9	16	12
S4	60	63	-5	-4	25	16	20
S5	69	75	4	8	16	64	32
S6	70	71	5	4	25	16	20
S7	67	69	2	2	4	4	4
S8	59	62	-6	-5	36	25	30
S9	63	65	-2	-2	4	4	4
S10	69	67	4	0	16	0	0

X=65

Y=67

$\Sigma x^2=169$

$\Sigma y^2=245$

$\Sigma xy=180$

- X = 65 and Y = 67 (mean scores)
- $\Sigma x^2=169$ $\Sigma y^2=245$ $\Sigma xy=180$
- Correlation coefficient (r) = 0.88
- The values awarded by the two raters correlated positively.
- Therefore, the rating was reliable.

Table 5.10: Correlation coefficient (r) (Essay 2 - D1)

G1/G2	X	Y	x	y	x^2	y^2	xy
S1	66	68	5	5	25	25	25
S2	59	61	-2	-2	4	4	4
S3	52	56	-9	-7	81	49	63
S4	66	69	5	6	25	36	30
S5	60	61	-1	-2	1	4	2
S6	61	64	0	1	0	1	0
S7	64	69	3	6	9	36	18
S8	61	61	0	-2	0	4	0
S9	58	61	-3	-2	9	4	6
S10	60	58	-1	-5	1	25	5
X = 61 Y = 63					$\Sigma x^2 = 155$	$\Sigma y^2 = 188$	$\Sigma xy = 153$

- X = 61 and Y = 63 (mean scores)
- $\Sigma x^2 = 155$ $\Sigma y^2 = 188$ $\Sigma xy = 153$
- Correlation coefficient (r) = 0.90
- The values awarded by the two raters correlated positively.
- Therefore, the rating was reliable.

Table 5.11: Correlation coefficient (r) (Essay 3 -D2)

G1/G2	X	Y	x	y	x^2	y^2	xy
S1	68	71	3	5	9	25	15
S2	58	60	-7	-6	49	36	42
S3	65	64	0	-2	0	4	0
S4	66	66	1	0	1	0	0
S5	66	66	1	0	1	0	0
S6	70	72	5	6	25	36	30
S7	73	73	8	7	64	49	56
S8	64	69	-1	3	1	9	-3
S9	59	60	-6	-6	36	36	36
S10	57	60	-8	-6	64	36	48
X = 65 Y = 66					$\Sigma x^2 = 250$	$\Sigma y^2 = 231$	$\Sigma xy = 224$

- X = 65 and Y = 66 (mean scores)
- $\Sigma x^2 = 250$ $\Sigma y^2 = 231$ $\Sigma xy = 224$
- Correlation coefficient (r) = 0.93
- The values awarded by the two raters correlated positively.
- Therefore, the rating was reliable.

Appendix N: Correlation coefficient (r) (main)

Table 6.17: Correlation coefficient (r) (Impromptu essay)

G1/G2	X	Y	x	y	x^2	y^2	xy
S1	61	68	-2	4	4	16	-8
S2	52	57	-11	-7	121	49	77
S3	73	71	10	7	100	49	70
S4	72	71	9	7	81	49	63
S5	71	68	8	4	64	16	32
S6	48	53	-15	-11	225	121	165
S7	62	67	-1	3	1	9	-3
S8	54	54	-9	-10	81	100	90
S9	63	62	0	-2	0	4	0
S10	67	68	4	4	16	16	16
S11	71	70	8	6	64	36	48
S12	58	59	-5	-5	25	25	25
S13	60	61	-3	-3	9	9	9
S14	66	65	3	1	9	1	3
S15	69	72	6	8	36	64	48
S16	48	51	-15	-13	225	169	195
S17	68	67	5	3	25	9	15
S18	63	62	0	-2	0	4	0

$X = 63$ $Y = 64$

$\sum x^2 = 1086$ $\sum y^2 = 746$ $\sum xy = 845$

- $X = 63$ and $Y = 64$ (mean scores)
- $\sum x^2 = 1086$ $\sum y^2 = 746$ $\sum xy = 845$
- Correlation coefficient (r) = 0.94
- The values awarded by the two raters were highly correlated.
- Therefore, the rating was reliable.

Table 6.18: Correlation coefficient (r) (Essay 2-D1)

G1/G2	X	Y	x	y	x ²	y ²	xy
S1	59	58	2	-1	4	1	-2
S2	51	52	-6	-7	36	49	42
S3	65	68	8	9	64	81	72
S4	70	69	13	10	169	100	130
S5	60	56	3	-3	9	9	-9
S6	55	54	-2	-5	4	25	10
S7	52	53	-5	-6	25	36	30
S8	50	51	-7	-8	49	64	56
S9	60	64	3	5	9	25	15
S10	49	51	-8	-8	64	64	64
S11	49	52	-8	-7	64	49	56
S12	46	47	-11	-12	121	144	132
S13	53	56	-4	-3	16	9	12
S14	66	68	9	9	81	81	81
S15	70	66	13	7	169	49	91
S16	48	51	-9	-8	81	64	72
S17	62	67	5	8	25	64	40
S18	70	72	13	13	169	169	169

$X = 57$

$Y = 59$

$\sum x^2 = 1159$ $\sum y^2 = 1082$ $\sum xy = 1061$

- $X = 57$ and $Y = 59$ (mean scores)
- $\sum x^2 = 1159$ $\sum y^2 = 1082$ $\sum xy = 1061$
- Correlation coefficient (r) = 0.95
- The values awarded by the two raters were highly correlated.
- Therefore, the rating was reliable.

Table 6.19: correlation coefficient (r) (Essay 3-D2)

G1/G2	X	Y	x	y	x ²	y ²	xy
S1	60	57	-3	-7	9	49	21
S2	53	56	-10	-8	100	64	80
S3	64	66	1	2	1	4	2
S4	72	73	9	9	81	81	81
S5	63	66	0	2	0	4	0
S6	62	63	-1	-1	1	1	1
S7	62	63	-1	-1	1	1	1
S8	62	61	-1	-3	1	9	3
S9	66	66	3	2	9	4	6
S10	54	59	-9	-5	81	25	45
S11	58	59	-5	-5	25	25	25
S12	59	59	-4	-5	16	25	20
S13	62	62	-1	-2	1	4	2
S14	72	70	9	6	81	36	54
S15	71	74	8	10	64	100	80
S16	54	54	-9	-10	81	100	90
S17	67	70	4	6	16	36	24
S18	78	78	15	14	225	196	210

X = 63

Y = 64

$\sum x^2 = 793$ $\sum y^2 = 764$ $\sum xy = 745$

- X = 63 and Y = 64 (mean scores)
- $\sum x^2 = 793$ $\sum y^2 = 764$ $\sum xy = 745$
- Correlation coefficient (r) = 0.96
- The values awarded by the two raters were highly correlated.
- Therefore, the rating was reliable.

Appendix O: General criteria for evaluating writing

- Does the essay have an evident and focused thesis or main point?
- Does the writer control the topic throughout? Set up a context? Develop a main point?
Come to a conclusion that relates ideas or shows implications or significance?
- Are generalizations developed with specific references, examples, and evidence?
- Does the essay maintain a consistent tone that is appropriate to its subject and point of view?

Source: LeFevre and Dickerson (1981:120-21)

Appendix P: Peer evaluation feedback criteria

1. Approach:

- (a) First reading for general impression with focus on content and organization
- (b) Second reading with focus on specific writing components: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

2. Criteria:

(a) content:

- treatment of the subject/ knowledge of the topic
- considerable variety of ideas or argument
- relevance to the topic
- accurate details/ development of the thesis

(b) organization:

- fluency
- ideas clearly stated and supported
- logically sequenced (coherence)
- connectives appropriately used (cohesion)

(c) vocabulary:

- mastery of words
- choice of words
- effective words/ idioms
- appropriacy

(d) language use:

- concord

- tenses
- number
- word order
- articles
- pronouns
- prepositions

(e) mechanics:

- spelling
- punctuation
- capitalization
- layout (indentation, margins)
- legibility
- paragraphing

Source: Jacobs et al. (1981) and Carroll and West (1989)

Appendix Q: *The ESL composition profile*

1. content (30 points)

30-27 excellent to very good:

- knowledgeable
- substantive
- thorough development of thesis
- relevant to assigned topic

26-22 good to average:

- some knowledge of subject
- adequate range
- limited development of thesis
- mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail

21-17 fair to poor:

- limited knowledge of subject
- little substance
- inadequate development of topic

16-13 very poor:

- does not show knowledge of subject
- non-substantive
- not pertinent
- or not enough to evaluate

2. organization (20 points)

20-18 excellent to very good:

- fluent expression
- ideas clearly stated/supported
- succinct
- well organized
- logical sequencing
- cohesive

17-14 good to average:

- somewhat choppy
- loosely organized but main ideas stand out
- limited support
- logical but incomplete sequencing

13-10 fair to poor:

- non-fluent
- ideas confused or disconnected
- lacks logical sequencing and development

9-7 very poor:

- does not communicate
- no organization
- or not enough to evaluate

3. vocabulary (20 points)

20-18 excellent to very good:

- sophisticated range
- effective word/idiom choice and usage
- word form mastery
- appropriate register

17-14 good to average:

- adequate range
- occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage but meaning not obscured

13-10 fair to poor:

- limited range
- frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage
- meaning confused or obscured

9-7 very poor:

- essentially translation
- little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form
- or not enough to evaluate

4. language use (25 points)

25-22 excellent to very good:

- effective complex constructions
- few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions

21-18 good to average:

- effective but simple constructions
- minor problems in complex constructions
- several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions but meaning seldom obscured

17-11 fair to poor

- major problems in simple/complex constructions
- frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions
- meaning confused or obscured

10-5 very poor:

- virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules
- dominated by errors
- does not communicate
- or not enough to evaluate

5.mechanics (5 points)

5 excellent to very good:

- demonstrates mastery of conventions
- few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing

4 good to average:

- occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing but meaning not obscured

3 fair to poor:

- frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
- poor handwriting
- meaning confused or obscured

2 very poor:

- no mastery of conventions
- dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
- handwriting illegible
- or not enough to evaluate

Source: Jacobs et al. (1981:30)

Declaration

The thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any university and that all sources of material used have been duly acknowledged.

Signed: Italo