

**Addis Ababa University  
Institute of Language Studies  
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature  
(Graduate Program)**



TEACHERS' PRACTICES AND STUDENTS'  
PREFERENCES FOR WRITTEN FEEDBACK: DEBRE BIRHAN  
UNIVERSITY IN FOCUS

**By**

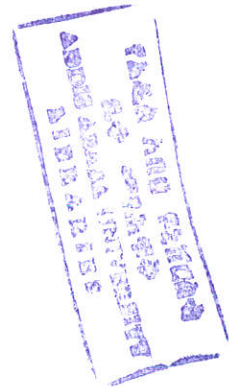
Maru Mohammed

June 2009

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A Thesis Presented to the Department of Foreign Languages and  
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(Graduate Program)

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master  
of Arts (MA) in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

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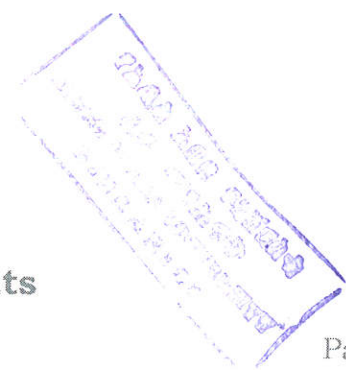
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## **Abbreviation and symbols**

- DBU- Debre Birhan University  
AAU- Addis Ababa University  
I-1 - Instructor 1  
I-2 - Instructor 2  
I-3 - Instructor 3  
I-4 - Instructor 4  
I-5 - Instructor 5  
S-1- student one  
S-2 - student two  
S-3 - student three  
S -4 - student four  
S-5 - student five  
S-6 = student six  
[ ] - Overlapping utterances  
( ) - hearing which are in doubt or not heard  
= - immediately contiguous utterances but not overlapping  
- cut ff or self -interruption often done with glottal or dental stop.  
++ - untimed longer pause  
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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the teachers' written feedback practice and students' preferences and the reasons behind their practices and preferences.

Specifically it was aimed at finding out: (1) What teachers' written feedback practices are, (2) the reasons behind their written feedback practices, (3) students' preferences for this feedback and reasons for their preferences, (4) the discrepancies between teacher written feedback practices and students' preferences (5) the students' feelings about and responses to teachers' written feedback.

In order to achieve these aims, feedback analysis of 75 marked papers collected from 5 instructors of Sophomore English at DBU were compared with: (1) teachers' reported practice from a questionnaire survey and a follow up interview with all of them (2) data found from questionnaire administered to 80 students (who were randomly selected from 12 section of four departments) which probed their preferences and reasons for their preferences (3) an interview data with 15 of students, which revealed their feelings about and responses to written feedback.

The results show that there were mismatches not only between what teachers reported and what they actually provided but also between teachers' actual feedback practice and students' preferences. Teachers provided feedback after students had completed their work, while over half (56.25%) students preferred to get this feedback in the earlier drafts and after the final ones. Feedback analysis indicated that teachers focused on form (86.7%) than on organization (3.07%) and content (3.42%) which met students' preferences. But over 60% the students wanted more feedback on each area. The study also revealed that on average teachers mostly employed direct correction (64.27%) employing the techniques 'adding', 'deleting', 'substitution' /and indirect correction using 'underline'/'circle' technique (34.42%), which mismatched students' preferences as they preferred direct correction over indirect correction. In spite of instructors' error focused feedback, negative comments and criticism, students seemed to be generally positive about teachers' written feedback. Most teachers rarely discussed their feedback behavior for the students.

Finally, based on the findings, discussions and conclusions the researcher suggested the need to: take into account learners' preferences in written feedback, employ a range of indirect error feedback strategies, focus on global aspects of students' writing, give praise and criticism side by side, encourage students to write multiple drafts, and intervene in the students' writing process.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the Study

College/University Students are expected to express their ideas, feelings and opinions effectively in English. But many students lack the skills necessary for meeting the writing task requirements (Geremew 1999).

In the teaching of writing, teachers' written feedback to students' writing continues to play a vital role in most EFL/SL writing classes despite the increasing emphasis on the importance of oral responses (conferences), the use of peer feedback, and self-evaluation as a source of feedback (Leki 1990) . Many teachers write substantial comments on papers, justifying the grade they have given and providing responses to the students' written works. Similarly, many students see their teachers' feedback as crucial to their improvement as writers (Leki 1990).

Teachers are under pressure from expectations of their students to treat errors. Different factors may affect teachers' practice in response to the students' works such as the learning situations, learner type, purpose of the lesson, nature of the particular error, the teachers' belief, etc. (Makino 1998).

Students' preferences for and responses to teachers' written feedback could be connected not only with students' characteristics like proficiency level and background, but also with teacher factors such as teachers' beliefs and practices and their interaction with students as well as the instructional context in which feedback is provided (Zamel 1985; Lee 2007).

Teacher comments are vague, confusing, can be incorrect, form focused (Grape and Kaplan 1996). Other research suggests that there may be a mismatch between the feedback that students want and what teachers actually provide (Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990).



Students' expectations shouldn't be ignored though it is difficult to cater for all expectations of learners. In other domains of FL learning teachers are urged to consider students' needs and feelings into account, so teachers shouldn't ignore the preferences of students for error feedback (James 1998).

The purpose of the present study is to examine teachers' written feedback practice and compare them to students' preferences for and students' responses to teachers' written feedback practices. It is hoped that such a comparison will provide a greater understanding of how and how well written feedback addresses the needs of student writers

There are some studies in the Ethiopian contexts on feedback in writing. Some of the findings of Getinet (1994) and Italo (1999) have a direct implication for the present study. Getinet's (1994) study focused on the feedback behaviors of teachers at Addis Ababa University. His findings showed that teachers focus on form than on content and organization in responding to students' writing and there was a mismatch between what teachers did and what students wanted. Italo (1999) compared the effectiveness of peer feedback and teacher feedback on Addis Ababa University second year students' writing. His main finding was that teachers' and peer-feedback are equally effective. His study also surveyed teacher practices and students' preferences for feedback in writing and found out that teachers mostly used error identification, writing comments and conferencing in descending order. Students, according to the study, preferred writing comments, conferencing and error identification in descending order.

Though these studies' main focus is different from the present study, some of the findings in their study are very relevant. Getinet (1994) studied teachers' feedback behavior in writing (both oral and written feedback) though in some way he tried to relate some teacher written feedback practices to the students' preferences. Similarly, Italo (1999) which was an experimental Study, compared the effectiveness of teacher and peer feedback and also surveyed teacher practices versus students' preferences (both written and oral feedback) for written feedback.

The present study, however, is different from the aforementioned studies in some way as it focuses only on written feedback by examining wider issues of teacher practice and students' preferences and then relating them to the students' responses to this feedback in specific context.

None of the earlier studies had specifically compared teacher written feedback practice (both reported and actual practice) and students' preferences. The present study also explored the reasons behind teacher practice and students' preferences. The previous studies Getinet (1994), Italo (1999) and Derb (2007) also tried to compare teacher practice and students' preference but their comparison is not focused on written feedback only .They included other forms of feedback (conferencing, peer feedback, self correction) whereas the present study specifically investigated written feedback practice versus students' preferences (focus of feedback, error feedback strategies, focus of written comments, etc.) Moreover, the current study's methodology, setting, and research questions are different from the aforementioned studies.

It is hoped that the current study will have some contribution by attempting to build on some of the findings of Getinet (1994) and Italo (1999), Derb (2007).

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the teaching of writing, the teachers' contribution is vital in helping students to develop the writing skill and alleviate the prevalent problems of creating effective writing in English.

The way teachers provide feedback to students' writing is one of the contributions to the development of students' writing as most teachers/researchers believe that providing productive feedback has positive impact on students' writing performance (Hyland 1990; Leki 1990)

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Students' preferences for and responses to teachers' written feedback could be connected not only with students' characteristics like proficiency level and background, but also with teacher factors such as teachers' beliefs and practices and their interaction with students as well as the instructional context in which feedback is provided (Zamel 1985; Lee 2007).

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Students' expectations shouldn't be ignored though it is difficult to cater for all expectations of learners. In other domains of FL learning teachers are urged to consider students' needs and feelings into account, so teachers shouldn't ignore the preferences of students for error feedback (James 1998).

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It is hoped that the current study will have some contribution by attempting to build on some of the findings of Getinet (1994) and Italo (1999), Derb (2007).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In the teaching of writing, the teachers' contribution is vital in helping students to develop the writing skill and alleviate the prevalent problems of creating effective writing in English.

The way teachers provide feedback to students' writing is one of the contributions to the development of students' writing as most

teachers/researchers believe that providing productive feedback has positive impact on students' writing performance (Hyland 1990; Leki 1990)

Both teachers and students consider written feedback as an essential part of the writing process (Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990), Fathman and Whelley (1990), Ferris (1995) and Getinet (1993)). In other studies, it has been suggested that students are more likely to find teacher feedback useful and effective when it is given in consideration of their needs (Hyland and Hyland 2006b). Therefore, there is a need to investigate teacher feedback practices and students' preferences. Such a mismatch would undermine the role of feedback as students may ignore teacher comments which are imposed on them.

Sometimes learner expectations and preferences may drive from previous instructional experience, which may not be necessarily beneficial for the development of writing (Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990). In such cases, it may not be necessary for the teacher to follow students' expectations or preferences but to change those expectation according to what contributes most to the development of writing skills (Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990).

Although scholars suggest teacher-student negotiation on written feedback practices (Ferris 1995, Reid, 1994; Zamel 1985), in my experience as a teacher at pre-college and college level writing teachers don't seem to take students' preferences in to account in their decision of written feedback practices.

In our college /University level or pre-college level writing, like any other teaching writing contexts, some discrepancies between teacher written feedback practices and students' preferences will be inevitable as there are underlying factors behind these practices and preferences.

The teachers' written feedback practice in our context could be one main problem as some written feedback is reported to be inaccurate, inconsistent, form focused, negative, no feedback /or only a mark (Derb 2007, and Getinet

1994). Such written feedback could affect the students' writing and attitude to writing. If students receive grade /mark only as feedback, they may consider they have mastered writing when they haven't, may fossilize in errors, become discouraged or resent the effort they have put in (Catterall 1995: 224).

Irrespective of students' preferences, a focus on form by the teachers on students' writing may lead students to focus on form (local issues). Such a focus may misrepresent both the importance of form) and the importance teachers' place on it (Leki 1990).

Therefore, exploring teachers' written feedback practices and students' preferences, and the reasons behind these practices in our teaching contexts will be essential in order to find out how and how well teacher written feedback considers students' preferences. Without understanding how student feel about and respond to teachers' written feedback, teachers may continue using strategies which are counter productive, and as a result the gap between teacher practices and students' preferences for written feedback may not be minimized.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the present study is to investigate teachers' written feedback practices and students' preferences for this feedback and their reasons behind their practices and preferences

To this end, the present study will answer the following research questions:

1. What are the written feedback practices (focus of feedback, error feedback strategies, focus of written comments, etc) of instructors of Sophomore English course at DBU?
2. What are the reasons behind their written feedback practices?
3. What are the preferences of students for written feedback?
4. Are there any discrepancies between teacher written feedback practices and the students' preferences?

5. How do students feel about and respond to the teachers' written feedback practices?

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

An awareness of learner preferences and reactions to teacher feedback can help teachers understand how they can adjust their feedback, cater to students' needs and bring about long term beneficial effects on students writing (Leki 1990).

Moreover, it is hoped that the techniques employed and the arguments forwarded in this paper will contribute to a better and efficient practice of teaching and learning writing skill.

#### **1.5 Delimitation of the Study**

The study is delimited to written feedback. It didn't address other forms of feedback. It investigates teacher practice and students' preferences and the reasons behind their practice and preferences. The findings of the study is based on the data gathered from interview with 5 teachers and 15 students, 75 marked papers, questionnaire data from 80 students and 5 teachers.

#### **1.6 Limitations**

The researcher is aware that there are some possible shortcomings of the study that are mostly attributed to the shortage of time. The effect of language proficiency on the students' preference was not investigated due to time constraints.

It would have been better if it was possible to examine more than one educational context where more subjects would be included, which makes the findings more reliable and at the same time inspects the topic from different angles which is still considered as another means of triangulation.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **2.1 The Nature and Purpose of Writing**

##### **2.1.1 What is writing?**

The skill of writing in L1/L2 is a complex issue as becoming a proficient writer entails mastering elements of content, style, and organization in addition to surface elements such as grammar, vocabulary, and the actual mechanics of writing. According to Pincas (1982: 5), “writing is an instrument of communication and self-expression, most people, however use it primarily to communicate with other members of their community or wider”. The double function of writing as a skill that is communication and self-expression as pointed out by Pincas (1982) enables individuals to communicate with members of other groups to express themselves and to produce ideas in an interaction. According to White and Arndt (1991: 4) “through Writing we are able to share ideas, arouse feelings, persuade and convince other people”.

Similarly, Byrne (1988: 1) argues that: “In Writing we produce a sequence of sentences arranged in a particular order and linked together in a certain ways. It requires some conscious mental effort”. It is a discovery process involving discovering ideas, discovering how to organize them and discovering what it is that you want to put over to the reader (White 1987).

##### **2.1.2 Why is writing Difficult?**

Certain cognitive psychologists have described writing as the most complex and demanding of all cognitive activities (White and Arndt (1991). According to Byrne (1988) certain psychological, linguistic and cognitive factors make writing a complex and difficult discourse medium for most people.

Writing is a solitary activity. We write on our own, in the absence of interaction and feedback. In speech as it is spontaneous, we have little time to pay attention to organizing our sentence structure. We repeat, backtrack, expand

etc. Incomplete and even ungrammatical utterances go unnoticed. We use devices like gesture, facial expressions etc. to get our meaning across. In writing we have to compensate for the absence of these features /immediate feedback/ by keeping a channel of communication through writing a series of grammatically and logically linked sentences which are clear, precise and unambiguous (Byrne 1988)

Writing is a multifaceted activity and a writer is expected to control a number of variables in writing. Nunan (1989) explains:

*Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate a 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 sentence the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts (Nunan 1989: 36).*

Because cognitive skills are involved in writing, proficiency in language doesn't, of itself, make writing easier, native speakers, despite having a more extensive stock of language resources, frequently confront the same kind of writing problems as people writing in their foreign or second language (White and Arndt 1991). As "writing is a technology, a set of skills which must be practiced and learned, the skills required are gained through conscious effort and much practice"( Grabe & Kaplan 1996: 6).

For EFL learners, writing may be more challenging as the amount of language they have may limit their way of expressing ideas in foreign language. Moreover, writing in English is further complicated 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 devices for focus and emphasis,

- a careful choice of grammatical patterns, sentence structure to create a style which is appropriate to the subject matter and eventual readers (Rosen (1981), as cited in Hedge (1988: 5).

### **2.1.3 The Purpose of Writing**

Writing is a skill which is essentially to be developed in order to be able to respond to purpose and the kind of audience we want to address (Pincas 1982). Writing is primarily message oriented (McDonough and Shaw 1993). Writing could also be based on our imagination or creativity (Byrne 1988).

Writing has general and pedagogical purposes. The general purpose of writing is for communication and organizing what we think. The pedagogical purposes of writing include:

- writing as a teaching and learning tool (Raimes 1983)
- providing different learning styles and needs
- Providing evidence for progress.
- often needed for formal and informal testing, etc (Byrne 1988)

## **2.2 Approaches to ESL/EFL Writing**

### **2.2.1 The controlled- to- free approach**

Due to the dominance of audio-lingual approach, writing served to reinforce speech in that it stressed the mastery of grammatical and syntactic forms. In this approach writing is sequenced from sentence exercises then to paragraphs to copy. Changing questions to statements and combining sentences are common exercises. Students are allowed to do free composition when they reached advanced level of proficiency. Marking students' paper is easy and quick because students avoid errors. It emphasizes accuracy rather than fluency or originality (Raimes 1983).

### **2.2.2 The paragraph – pattern- approach**

This approach focuses on organization instead of accuracy of grammar or fluency. Exercises in this approach include copying paragraphs, analyzing the form and model of paragraphs and imitating model passages, putting scrambled sentences into paragraph, order, identify topic sentence. The approach is based on the idea that in different languages there are different ways of organizing and constructing communications (Ibid).

### **2.2.3 The grammar-syntax-organization approach**

This approach stresses both the organization and the necessary grammar and syntax. It links the purpose of a piece of writing to its forms. For example to write a clear instruction the student is taught simple forms of verbs and sequence words (Ibid).

### **2.2.4 The Process Approach**

The aforementioned approaches can be subsumed under the umbrella term, the product approach. In short, the product approach is concerned with the finished product, the text, whether sentence or a whole composition. The teachers' role is to judge the finished work and provide corrective feedback. Writing will converge towards pre-defined goals with model text and exercises undertaken to draw attention to important features (McDonough and Shaw 1993; Jordan, 1997).

Students were restricted in what they could write or how they could write .So in reaction to the product approaches, a process approach began to develop. (Jordan 1997)

In this approach teaching writing has shifted from accuracy, patterns and a focus on product to not just product but also process of writing (to meaning, invention and multi- drafts).The focus is on the writer.

Understanding what writers do involve thinking not just about what texts look like when they are finished but also what strategies writers might employ to produce these texts (Hedges 1988).

Students are given the opportunity to explore writing topics in pre-writing activities such as discussion, reading, debating, brainstorming, list making and then plan and organize their writing, show their drafts to each other and to the teacher, think about it, edit and move to new ideas (White and Arndt 1991)

As White and Arndt (1991) and Hedges (1988: 21) point out the process of writing contains a number of recursive stages:

- Generating – focusing – structuring – drafting – evaluating – re-viewing (White and Arndt 1991).
- “Getting ideas together → planning and outlining → making notes → making a first draft → revising, redrafting → editing → final version

The teachers support their students by encouraging them to try out ideas and giving feedback on the contents of what they write and guiding them through the process, assisting them as they go.

Generally, Hedge (1988), Byrne (1988), Raimes (1983) and White and Arndt (1991) stress that a collaborative writing in the classroom can generate discussions and activities, which encourage an effective process of writing. Feedback is an essential element in this approach, Different forms of responding to student writing, like conferences, peer responses, self-correction, and teacher written comments are employed (Grab and Kaplan 1996).

### **2.2.5 The Communicative Approach**

This approach stresses the purpose of writing and the audience for it. Students are encouraged to behave like writers in real life and identify why they are writing and for whom they are writing (Raimes 1983). In English

classrooms students write for one reader, the teacher. Such readership should be extended to classmates, pen friends, visitors, local newspapers, organizations, etc. to make writing a communicative act. Teachers play a great role to specify readers outside the classroom and provide the student writers with a context to select appropriate content, language and level of formality (Hedge 1988: 64).

Although this approach doesn't solve specific problems which students face while they write, it actually motivates them to write and show them how writing is a form of communication (Byrne 1988: 23).

### **2.2.6 English for Academic Purpose**

The process approach was criticized and the focus of ESL composition shifted from the writer to the readers, i.e. the academic discourse community. Reid (1984a,b) and Harwitz (1986a), in Silva (1990: 16), criticized the process approach arguing that it did not address issues such as the requirements of particular writing tasks, the development of schemata for academic discourse and variations in individual writing situations. Harwitz (1986a) cited in Silva (Ibid) questioned whether the process approach prepared students for the demands of writing for academic contexts. This led to an alternative approach which "involves a primary focus on academic discourse genres and the range and nature of academic writing tasks.

This approach focuses on teaching particular academic genres such as essays, research reports, theses and dissertations (Paltridge 2001: 56)

## **2.3 The Concept of Feedback**

Feedback in general is defined by Kepner (1991: 141) as "any procedure used to inform a learner whether an instructional response is right or wrong Feedback in writing, according to Keh (1990: 63),"as input from the reader to writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision".

Annett (1969), cited in Choudron (1988: 132), points out that “Feedback has been widely investigated in information theory and general communication research outside classroom or language learning contexts”. According to Choudron 1988: 133), feedback is closely tied to behaviorist learning theory, cognitive view of learning; programmed learning.

The behaviorist learning theory views writing instructions as a series of teacher provided stimuli and students respond to these stimuli. The stimulus (i.e. the teachers’ feedback) can be positive or negative reinforcement. The positive reinforcement can result in strengthening whereas; the negative one may result in weakening students’ behavior (Zellermeyer 1989). The writing class is viewed as a rhetorical community where teacher and student interact as readers and writers over texts (Zellermeyer 1989). According to Zellermeyer (1989: 1) writing instructions view “learning to write, like all other learning, depends on successful student – teacher interaction with students’ zone of proximal development.”

In cognitive view of learning, feedback helps to provide reinforcement and information which learners can use actively in modifying their behavior (Chauldron 1988)

According to Vygotsky 1978 and Aderson 1982, both cited in Zellermeyer (1989), in the theory of development and learning response plays a major role. So, learning writers like learners of other skills, need to know when they are performing well and when they are not. They need response not only to monitor their progress but also to learn to take another’s perspective. Theoretically, constructive feedback offers the writer a means of discovering their readers’ needs (Zellermeyer 1989).

Feedback from readers provides opportunities for the students to see others respond to their work and learn from their response, such formative feedback as Hyland (2003) points out is aimed at “encouraging development of students’

writing and is regarded as critical in improving and consolidating learning. Hyland (2003) elaborates that there is a stage in cognitive growth which Vygotsky 1978 calls “the zone of proximal development” where skills are extended through guidance and response of others. As to Hyland (2003: 173) feedback “emphasizes a process of writing, and rewriting”.

## **2.4 The Role of Feedback in Composition**

Feedback has been regarded as vital for the development of SL/FL writing skills both for its potential for learning and for students’ motivation (Leki 1990).

According to Chauldron (1988) feedback has 3 functions: reinforcement, information and motivation.

Without teachers’ feedback, students cannot overcome difficulties they experience in developing clear, effective writing in English. Concerning the importance of feedback, Allwright and Bailey (1991: 99) claimed that:

*Providing feedback will help learners to alter their output in constructive and long lasting ways. However, we are often faced with best, with this without discouraging the learners. We also need to be confident that we treat errors in such a way that learners will in fact, alter their output for better.*

According to McDonough (1995) teacher comments’ on students’ writing have their own genre and could have different purposes:

- to justify a mark
- to show the student how to improve the texts
- to remind the students an indication of the effect of the text on a reader.
- to suggest ways of talking about writing a fresh topic

Feedback in product oriented classes, where the teacher responds to the final work only, is found to be in effective in developing the writing skills because he/she is evaluating not influencing the students’ writing. The teachers’

feedback is limited to giving marks, writing comments and correcting errors. (Raimes 1983). Brown (1981, cited in Leki (1990) comments:

*We need to look out at the responses written on final drafts but rather at responses written on immediate drafts and at how those drafts were reshaped as a result of the teachers comments and, we need to look at the on going dialogue between students and teachers (Leki 1990: 63)*

In process oriented classes feedback is “an important development tool leading learners through multiple drafts, the capabilities for effective self-expression” (Hyland and Hyland 2006: 83).

Although research questions the effectiveness of teacher written feedback on students’ writing development-both-immediate impact on primary draft and longer development, it can contribute a lot if it is provided appropriately. (K.Hyland 1990, Ferris 1995; Fathman and Whalley 1990).

## **2.5 Sources of Feedback**

### **2.5.1 Conferencing**

In conferencing the teacher discusses with the students the work in progress. It is a useful technique during the earlier stages of composition when writers are still thinking about content and organization (Hedge 2000). It encourages students to think about writing as something that can be organized and improved.

### **2.5.2 Peer Response**

Students in a group of two, three or four exchange their papers and receive comments from the other student in the group. Student use the comments from the peers to write the first draft. Some peer sessions might require students to use guidelines (Grape and Kaplan 1996).

The effectiveness of peer group response depends on the extent:

- Students are persuaded that such approaches will lead to writing improvements.
- Students are trained to provide peer group feedback effectively.

- Students have clear goals and guidelines for peer group work and
- Peer group members are held accountable for their feedback (Ibid: 386).

### **2.5.3 Self-correction**

According to Raimes (1983: 149) learners need to be able to find and correct their mistakes. They need to develop “the ability to read their own writing and examine it critically to learn how to improve it, to learn how to express their meaning fluently, logically, accurately”. Raimes also stresses that students should know when and how to edit their own writing. Students can use an editing checklist. Indirect correction of errors by the teachers can help them develop independent self-editing skills (Ferris 2001).

### **2.5.4 Teacher Written Feedback**

Teacher written comments on essay drafts is another source of feedback from the teacher. Teachers’ written feedback can have different forms or approaches. Descriptive writing commentary, comments on revising major content and organization of the essay, and prose-editing responses on major editorial weakness. (Grabe and Kaplan 1996).

Although researchers feel it is less effective there is counter-evidence suggesting that “written commentary is a viable and effective” (Fathman and Whalley 1990; Ferris 1995).

The common problem with written feedback, according Grape and Kaplan (Ibid) is that teacher comment are often vague, confusing, and provide little specific direction for students when they try to revise. Teachers sometimes provide detailed editing comments on surface form with minimal attention to major organizational and content issues (Ibid: 394). Grabe and Kaplan (Ibid) suggests that teachers should:

- find some positive thing to say about the essay.
- raise a number of specific questions for revisions
- make suggestions for changing the organization

- Provide a small set of concrete suggestions for improving the structural and mechanical aspect.

Teachers can provide written response in the form of a response note (feedback sheet), through the computer, using minimal marking method, etc.

## **2.6 Some Issues in Teacher Written Feedback**

### **2.6.1 When to Provide Feedback?**

There is no clear answer to the question ‘when should teachers provide feedback?’, as researchers and teachers promote different orientations to giving feedback. In product oriented classrooms the focus of providing feedback is to evaluate correct errors and give marks to the finished product (Raimes 1983). The assumption behind this kind of feedback is that students will improve in their future writing from teacher comments (Ziv 1984). However, this feedback is criticized as unproductive in facilitating students’ improvements (Ferris 1995).

In process oriented classrooms feedback is an integral part of the writing process and students get feedback (both content and form) throughout the writing process which helps them revise their drafts and develop their writing skills (Zamel 1985)

### **2.6.2 What Areas to Focus?**

Different scholars /researchers use different terms which refer to different features of writing. Form feedback which is also known as ‘surface level’ feedback, or ‘Lower order concern’ (LOC’s) is a type of feedback that looks into issues like, spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc, whereas content feedback which usually refers to matters like organization, ideas, etc, is also called, higher order concern /HOCs/ or global issue. As there are different names to different features of writing, Fathman and Whalley (1990) classification of ‘content’ and ‘form’ is mostly accepted by many scholars (Zamel 1985).

There is a debate on what type of feedback is important and whether to focus on form or content in written feedback. Some research (Truscott 1996) has shown that providing local feedback is not helpful. Other research, however, has indicated that this feedback has improved learners of their local errors (Fathman and Whalley 1990).

Most researchers and scholars agree that both form and content feedback are important issues throughout the writing process. Especially focusing on global issues in early drafts and on local issues in later drafts is beneficial as it avoids having to correct local issues on sentences and paragraphs that maybe deleted or changed anyway (Zamel 1985).

#### **2.6.2.1 Responding to Form**

Research has shown that teachers:

*Attend primarily to surface-level features of writing and seem to read and react to a text as a series of separate sentences or even clauses rather than as a whole unit of discourse. They are in fact so distracted by language-related local problems that they often correct these without realizing that a much larger meaning related problem has totally escaped their notice (Zamel 1985 :86 )*

Despite teachers' form focused practice; there are contradictory findings on whether teachers should focus on local issues. Some studies have indicated that providing feedback on form doesn't help learners make fewer local-errors than providing no feedback on such issues (Kepner, 1991) and Truscott (1996). Truscott (1996) who argues against form feedback claims that correcting local errors leads to learners' making more errors on subsequent drafts. He argues that correcting local errors takes away from focusing on aspects of writing which students have greater chance of improving over the course of one writing class. Other similar studies like Henderickson 1978, Semeke 1984, reported form focused feedback doesn't make any difference in students' improvement.

Despite Truscott's (1996) claims, Fathman and Whalley (1990) and Leland (1982) found positive results of error correction. Fathman and Whalley (1990) indicated that providing local feedback on students' composition improves learners' ability to recognize and fix their own errors. Moreover, Ferris 1997 examined teacher feedback on 47 advanced ESL students and examined how students responded to that feedback Ferris found that many of the feedback on students' composition improve learners' ability to substantive revising by learners. Those who advocate form feedback comment Truscott's (1996) weak point as most of the literature he used to support his claims were actually researchers in L1 contexts which cannot be transferred to complete ESL contexts as students in the latter contexts struggle with L2 and errors would be expected from them (Radecki and Swales 1988). Teachers fear the fossilization of errors and feel obliged to correct all errors in their students' work (Kepner 1991).

If accuracy of local errors is stressed in early drafts, then students may feel inhibited and limited in their ability to develop the global aspects of their compositions (Compell 1998). Again, if teachers focus on form through out the writing process students may understand that it is the product not the process which is important to the teacher (Zamel 1985).

Although research questions the value of error correction (especially direction correction) students and teachers consider it helpful (Hendricksn 1978). Most college teachers have little tolerance for the type of errors students make (Shaughnessy 1977). A study on professors' reaction to written works of non-native speaker students (Santos 1988) indicated that some errors of form have irritating effects and need to be corrected. The professors perceive certain types of errors as "indicators of uneducability and "there is urgency of students to meet the teachers' 'criteria' (Santos 1988: 8).

### **2.6.2.2 Responding to Content**

Zamel (1985) suggests that feedback usually tends to concern itself more with accuracy in form than with meaning. Studies stress the importance of providing feedback to students on content first as a priority. (Crawes and Mcleod 1986, cited in Dheram 1985, Chenoweth 1987, and Shih 1986). Content feedback from teachers helped students improves their rewrites (Fathman and Whalley 1990). Studies also indicated that students can improve their writing in a situation where content and form feedback are given simultaneously (Keh, 1990; Fathman and Whalley 1990).

Ignoring the content in written feedback leads the learners to the kind of “under developed writing strategies those unskilled writers have (Chenoweth 1987: 25). According to Shaughnessy (1977) poor writers write one draft with many good ideas poorly developed and they are not given or shown how to explore these ideas further.

### **2.6.3 Ways of Providing Teacher Written Feedback**

#### **2.6.3.1 Error Feedback**

James (1998: 237) has used the term ‘correction’ to have three ‘senses’:

1. Informing learners that there is an error leaving them to discover it and repair it themselves. He called this feedback.
2. Providing treatment or information that leads to the revision and the correction of the specific instance of error without aiming to prevent the same error from recurring later. In addition to indicating that the present attempt is wrong, the corrector can specify how and where, and suggest an alternative.

He called this ‘correction’ proper

3. Providing learners with information that allows them to revise or reject the wrong rule they were operating with when they produced the error.

He called this ‘remediation’

The terms error correction and error feedback are used interchangeably in this paper.

Error correction is a form of negative feedback. An important function of providing feedback to written errors is its role in making errors salient. (Gardner 1990). Hendrickson (1980: 217) suggested the following factors to consider in deciding which errors to correct and how to correct them.

1. One needs to be aware of the students' purpose and goal for communicating in writing, their proficiency of the target language.
2. The teachers' awareness of error types and frequency as well as understanding how these two aspects relate to students' writing goals.
3. Students' attitude about the nature of errors and error correction.

Correcting errors is one of the most widely used ways of responding to students' writing. In providing error correction teachers use different techniques such as direct-indirect correction, correcting all errors, selective correction and indicating errors, (Byrne 1988, Leland 1987; Hendrickson 1980).

Hendrickson (1980: 218-219) suggests the use of direct and indirect ways of error treatment in combination.

Indirect correction of errors can be made in either one or a combination of four ways.

- by underlining incorrect orthographic and morphological form
- by circling an appropriate word
- by inserting an arrow, to indicate a missing word
- by placing a question mark along a confusing word or structure.

Direct error treatment can be made by:

- underlining a word, and providing a written tip

- bracketing a misplaced word or phrase and indicating its proper place in a sentence.
- crossing out a superfluous word and
- providing a correct form or structure of an incorrect word or phrase

#### **a) Correcting All Errors**

This is a traditional technique of error correction in which teachers overtly correct all errors students make which amounts to almost rewriting the students' whole paper. Teachers employ this technique because they believe that students' writing improves if their errors are corrected (Lelande 1982). According to Gardner (1990) most researchers believe that teachers should at least signal all errors, even though they will not be able to deal with them all in the follow up work.

This technique has been criticized by researchers for it is time consuming for the teacher and discouraging for the students (Byrne 1988). Such practice will lead the learner to "focus on the errors rather than on the presumed aim of the piece of written communication" (Norrish 1983: 179).

#### **b) Selective Error Feedback**

In this technique teachers attend to errors which "inhibit communication, appear frequently, or stigmatize the learner" (Hendrickson 1978:).

When less serious errors are ignored by the teacher, students may consider them as correct and may fossilize. To prevent this problem the teacher may inform learners of his/her feedback focus area (Norrish 1983).

#### **c) Indicating Errors**

This technique of error correction is favoured by many teachers who use error codes to indicate learners' errors by writing the errors in the codes in the margins or above. Some scholars commented the effectiveness of using error

codes (Wingfield 1975). Error codes don't address errors in content areas (Norish 1983).

In addition to using error codes or symbols, teachers indicate errors by underlining, circling, using arrow, with a cross in margins, etc

A more interacting way of marking errors is a 'minimal marking method' developed by scholars who argue that surface errors should be indicated by a cross in the margins alongside the lines in which they occur (Hyland 1990: 281). It provides less information to students about their mistakes by removing the assistance given in indicating the type of error and its exact position. In this technique, nothing is underlined no symbols are used to point students in the right direction. This method has the advantage of obliging students to go back and rework their drafts. The students' active involvement in correcting their work, help them "develop a greater sensitivity to linguistic errors and substantive improvement in the quality of subsequent written works" (Hyland1990:281). Moreover, this method has the advantage of both avoiding disheartening abundance of red ink for student and decreasing the burden of the teacher.

However, this technique works only for surface level errors, but not for communicative aspects as such issue cannot be identified by a cross in the margins (Ibid).

### **2.6.3.2 Written Commentary**

Written comments are common type of teacher written feedback which consists of handwritten commentary on students' paper itself. It is better seen as responding to students' work than evaluating what they have done. The reader states how successful the paper has been and how could it be improved (Hyland 2003).

Teacher comments have terminal (Comprehensive end notes) comments which allow more space and opportunities for the teacher to summarize and prioritize key points and general observation about the paper (Hyland 2003).

Marginal comments on the essay margins, on the other hand, are both immediate and proximate (appearing at the exact point in the text' (Ibid).

According to Hillocks (1986) except for positive or negative feedback, the distinction between intensive and partial, frequent or infrequent, marginal or terminal comments make little or no difference.

Some studies have examined the effect of teacher comments. Gee 1972, as cited in Hillocks (1986: 160) studied the effect of praise, negative criticism and no comment. Although the research found no difference in the quality of writing between first and final draft, praised students had significantly more positive attitudes towards their writing than the criticized or no comment group. It was pointed out that the negative attitude may be the result of teachers' lack of comment or negative comment and such feedback results in less interest for writing which leads to in less writing.

According to Hillocks (1986: 165) most teacher comments are diffuse, commenting on a wide variety of problems from organization to content. Diffuse comments also tend to be abstract (e.g. your first paragraph is too general. Be more specific). Written comments might be focused (dealing with one or two related problems (e.g. Focus and specificity over several pieces of writing)

As to Hillocks 1982, cited in Hillocks (1986), report focused, specific comments probably have a positive effect on quality of writing, whereas Keh's (1990) survey indicated that one word comments like 'good', 'why' are less helpful than comments with most information.

For more effective comments Keh (1990: 303) recommends the following:

- Connect comments to lesson objectives (vocabulary) etc.
- Note improvements, 'good', plus reason why;
- Refer to a specific problem, plus strategy for revision.
- Write questions with enough information for students to answer.
- Write summative comments of strength and weakness
- Ask honest questions as a reader to a writer rather than statements which assume too much about the writers' meaning.

Teachers use questions, statements or imperatives in their written comments. Ferris (2001) notes that not all questions are equally effective or accessible to all students. Teacher commentary and students' ability or willingness to utilize it in revision will vary depending on the abilities of students and the nature of the writing task.

In giving comments teachers should also identify local and global issues in commenting final drafts and throughout the writing process (Keh 1990).

### **2.6.3.3 Reformulation**

Reformulating is a valuable technique which makes revision and editing an integral part of writing classes (Hedge 1988).

It has several versions and consists, basically, of a native speaker rewriting a student's text, as far as possible retaining the intended meaning (Jordan 1997). Johnson (1988) as cited in Jordan (Ibid) explains the difference between reconstruction and reformation in that in reconstruction, errors and mistakes are simply corrected. The classroom reformulation procedure is:

*Rewriting may necessitate making changes of many kinds and at all levels, involving syntax, lexis, cohesion and discourse functions, but the point of any such changes must be to respect and bring out the original writer's probable intentions (Allwright 1998 cited in Jordan 1997: 175)*

Reformulation enables students to see a 'native speaker' 'proficient' model with which to compare their own attempts, and it encourages the learners to discuss issues concerning overall organization, the development of ideas, the writer's sense of audience, and appropriate style (Hedge 1988). These important issues, according Hedge (1988) are often neglected in correction activities.

## **2.7 Students' Preferences for Teachers' Written Feedback**

Individual students' preference for feedback varies considerably. Some students want praise, others may see it unimportant, some like a response on their ideas, others demand to have all their errors to be corrected, some use teacher comments, others ignore it ( Hyland 2003). According to Hyland (2003: 179), it is difficult to cater for these different expectations. But these do not mean that learners' preferences for feedback should be ignored when teachers are urged to take learner needs, feelings into account in other domains of FL learning (James 1998). Teachers may not necessarily follow learners' preference as learners sometimes wrongly expect some forms of feedback which are not effective or practical. In order to minimize the gap between teacher feedback practice and students' preference for feedback, scholars advise teachers to discuss the purpose of each type of feedback practices for students. A study revealed that students' preferences for some forms of feedback changed as a result of teacher-student dialogue (Italo 1999). According to Hyland (2003: 179) a full-dialogue with individual students is often beneficial and this can take a form of:

- a 'revise and submit' letter in which students detail the changes they have made.
- Journal reflection on the feedback they have received
- A pre-course questionnaire in which students fill out their areas of which they want feedback to focus.

As Ferris (2001: 313) points out the 'revise and re-submit' cover letter in which students express how they have addressed the feedback received or why they have chosen not to is beneficial in that it:

- requires students to take feedback seriously and to think reflectively about their own writing and revision,
- gives teachers in sights into their students' 'writing process strengths and weakness; and
- gives instructors information about the clarity and helpfulness of their own written commentary.

Research on student views of feedback has consistently indicated that students give much greater importance to teachers' feedback than other forms of feedback such as peer feedback, self-evaluation (Leki 1991, Saito 1994; Italo 1999). For example in Italo's study students preferred writing comments, conferencing and error identification in descending order.

### **2.7.1 Students' Preferences for Areas of Focus**

Many learners especially like feedback on their grammar (Leki 1990). Error-free written work is the concern of L2 writers possibly because of prior learning experience, and students' understanding that good writing means 'correct writing' (Shaughnessy 1977).

In classroom contexts where students are asked to write multiple drafts however, students tend to prefer feedback on ideas and organization in earlier drafts and on grammatical issue on later drafts (K. Hyland 2003: 179). Probably students are influenced by process oriented feedback practice. Therefore, students' preferences for feedback could be affected by classroom contexts in which feedback is provided.

On the other hand (Ferris 1995) and Cohen (1987) surveys on the amount and the effectiveness of teacher written feedback indicated that students felt teachers should focus their feedback on local issues such as grammar and

mechanics more than on global issues. A replication of Cohen's (1987) study in product context by Ferris 1995 revealed the same result. Such findings indicate that students have strong preference for feedback on form/local feedback.

In a study to identify any differences in preferred feedback between ESL and EFL writers (Hedgcock and Lefkowitz 1994: 157) reported a "high concern for matters of content, rhetorical structure, and communication in writing by ESL writers and form focused response needed by FL-subjects".

James (1998: 253) interpreted the findings "for EFL students composition is a form of language practice so they will expect focus on accuracy. ESL writers on the other hand, "view writing as a means of communication so most prefer functional and content oriented correction" (Ibid).

Generally, most studies of student preferences for feedback indicated that students like receiving feedback on language issues, although some also like comments on content and ideas of their writing (Hedgcock and Lefkowitz 1994, Leki 1991b, Saito 1994).

### **2.7.2 Students' Preferences for Teachers' Strategies for Error Feedback**

Some students respond to different types of error feedback. Some studies like Radecki and Swales (1988) indicated that students wanted overt correction of errors (i.e. direct error feedback) from teachers. According to the study, the majorities (87%) of students expect their instructor to correct all their surface level errors (Ibid: 309). Similarly in Gardner's (1990) study on Italian secondary school children's teacher error feedback preferences reported that roughly half of them (54%) would like their teachers to correct all their errors, while 40% preferred the correction of the most serious errors and only 5% preferred to have no correction at all. According to the interpretation of findings made by the researcher those students who preferred all their errors

marked may have realized that if they are not aware of making an error they cannot remedy the situation. Those who preferred their most serious errors corrected might have felt they cannot take more than a certain amount of corrective feedback per activity. The other interpretation that was made is that students were concerned about their marks and felt that little mistakes shouldn't be penalized. Gardner's (1990) study also reported that most students are not interested in problem solving method of error correction as 67% of the respondents preferred direct correction, while 25% preferred to underline the error and indicate the category, only 1% the subjects preferred minimal marking method.

On the other hand, in Leki (1991b) study, 70% of the subjects who preferred all their errors to be corrected also reported they wanted their teachers to locate their errors and to give correction clues (Ibid: 207). They didn't want the teacher to write in the correction but preferred to solve the correction problem themselves in order to improve (James 1998: 253) Most other researches also (E.g. Saito 1994 and Hyland 2001) reported that students preferred indirect to direct error feedback, where they were given clues and a more active role to play in the feedback process.

According to Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) study a balance between correcting errors and praising what is correct may be the best means of encouraging improvements in writing. Their study noted that students especially the weak ones are quite anxious to receive at least some feedback as to what they are doing right (Jordan 1997).

A study reported that students would like feedback to cover drafts (Dherem 1995). Students welcome praise (Gee, 1972), but like to receive praise and constructive criticisms (Ferris 1995).

As different studies involved different student background, motivation, and proficiency level and took place in different classroom context learner and contextual factors might have influence their students preferences (Reid 1994).

## **2.8 Related Local Studies in Written Feedback**

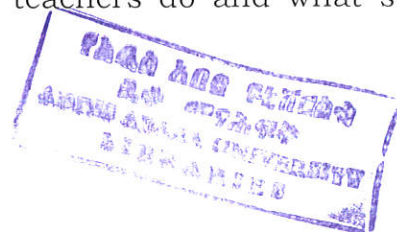
There are some local studies on feedback in writing which are relevant to the present study.

As it is mentioned in the background part Getinet (1994) studied the feedback behavior of sophomore English Instructors at Addis Ababa University. Based on questionnaire survey of teachers and students, analysis of teacher marked papers, and observation of classes, he found that:

- the instructors spent much time focusing on form than on content,
- there was a mismatch between not only what teachers do and what their students wish them but also between what teachers intended to do and what they actually do.
- Teachers employed limited techniques of responding to students' writing. (used direct correction)
- Most instructors (84%) gave feedback after students have completed their writing tasks.
- Students had a positive attitude to teachers' feedback.
- Instructors appeared to give positive feedback while responding orally but few instructors praised the students' written work.

Italo Beriso (1999) compared the effectiveness of teacher and peer feedback on Addis Ababa university second year students' writing revision. He found out that both teacher and peer feedback were equally effective. The findings which are relevant to the present study include:

- There was a mismatch between what teachers do and what students would like to have.



- The study from students' reports and teachers' questionnaire revealed that writing teachers mostly used error identification, writing comments and conferencing in descending order. Teachers' practice, according to the study seemed to have a mismatch with students' preferences as they liked to have writing comments, conferencing and error identification.
- Teachers' feedback focused area was on form
- The students' preferences for form of feedback changed after students get some orientations on each form of feedback.

Derb Abiew (2007) investigated the feedback practice of English Language teachers on students' written works and the study revealed that teachers explicitly corrected errors by themselves after students completed written works. The study also indicated that teachers focus on form in providing written feedback. Most students, on the other hand, like their teachers to employ self-correction, peer-correction, and indirect correction by the teacher.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Methodology**

This study used a descriptive survey method because it helps to identify present conditions and point to present needs (Sharma, 2000).

Multiple data obtained from questionnaire, interview and feedback analysis of sample marked papers were analyzed and interpreted.

#### **3.1 Subjects, Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The subjects of this study were instructors of sophomore English course and their students at Debre Birhan University (DBU). Five instructors of the course, and 600 students from 4 departments ,who were registered for this course were the target population of the study.

Four of the five instructors at DBU who participated in this study were EFL specialists while one instructor's field of specialization was journalism. One instructor had MA in TEFL and a ten years teaching experience while others had BA/B Ed and about two years of teaching experience.

Out of the total students' population (600), 90 students (15%) were selected randomly from each section of four departments for questionnaire administration. Ten students didn't return the questionnaire. Table -A shows the number of students in each class, the number of sections in each department, the total number of students in each department, the questionnaire distributed and returned and sample marked papers collected from each department.

**Table –A: Sample population, questionnaire administered and returned, and sample marked assignments**

Department	Num. of sections	No. of stud. Per sec.	Total no. of stud.	Sample questionnaire administered	Returned questionnaire	Sample marked assignments
Accounting	3	50	150	22	20	15
Business management	5	52	260	39	31	30
Economics	2	50	100	15	15	15
Nursing and health science	2	45	90	14	14	15
Total	12		600	90 (15%)	80 (13.33%)	75 (12.5%)

### 3.2 Data Gathering Tools

Multiple sources of data from questionnaire, interview and analysis of teacher written feedback were used. Most of the items in the students and teacher questionnaire and interview were adapted from Lee (2007).

#### 3.2.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire having both close ended and open-ended items were prepared and administered to 90 students and 5 teachers.

Students' questionnaire comprised 17 items which probed students' understanding, views and preferences for written feedback. It was piloted before it was administered to improve its validity and reliability and to develop an appropriate survey instrument. Test-retest method of questionnaire reliability was employed. In the first administration of the questionnaire 20 randomly chosen AAU students who completed the course 'intermediate writing' filled out the questionnaire. After 14 days the same questionnaire was administered to 15 of them. From the analysis of the responses, it was found that most of the respondents on average (91.82%) responded consistently to

each item. Moreover, most of the responses given by the students were relevant to the intended purpose of the questionnaire.

Information from these students' responses, comments and the researcher's observation allowed the researcher to improve 4 items which were ambiguous and difficult.

Teacher questionnaire comprised 13 closed ended and open-ended items. Teachers were asked to remember and report their written feedback practice (focus of written feedback, error feedback strategies, etc.).

Teacher and student questionnaires were distributed towards the end of the semester after teachers had finished grading the assignments. About 7 or 8 student questionnaire were distributed to each section using a simple random sampling technique. Altogether 90 Student questionnaires were personally administered to students and 80 of them were returned. All of the teachers' filled and returned the teacher questionnaires.

### **3.2.2 Interview**

Nine and five semi-structured interview items were prepared for teachers and students, respectively. Instructors' interview questions which were some what similar to questionnaire items were set to triangulate data found from the questionnaire, while students' interviews were mainly aimed at finding the students' feelings and reactions to teachers' written feedback.

All of the teachers' volunteered for the interview. As for students' interview, it was possible to interview only 15 students (18.75% of the sample population). Three students were selected randomly from each participating teachers' classes. They were selected on the basis of their willingness. It was difficult to conduct an interview with more student samples because of the shortage of time.

The interview data from five teachers and 15 students were tape recorded and transcribed.

### **3.2.3 Marked Students' Papers**

Teachers' feedback on students' composition was evaluated in order to compare this feedback to teachers' reported practice and students' preferences.

Teachers' written feedback on the compositions was evaluated by calculating frequency count on the same types of feedback as those listed on the teacher and students' questionnaire (ideas/content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, mechanics. Instead of 'Likert' scale, the actual number of feedback instances for each category was calculated.

Teacher feedback was taken from students' assignments which were collected towards the end of the semester. All the instructors gave one (paragraph level or essay) writing assignment to the students, marked them, reported the results and collected them. ). Most of the students of 4 teachers wrote a paragraph on any topic of interest in groups .Some wrote two or more paragraphs. Students of one instructor wrote term papers in groups summarizing and describing the contents of the course, which were marked out of 20%. Four of the instructors marked the assignments out of 10% and awarded marks ranging from 7 to 9, while one instructor marked them out of 20% and gave marks ranging from 14 to 18. In order to examine teachers' overall use of feedback independent of grade/mark, an attempt was made to include assignments for each teacher, which had received high pass (9/10(18/20), intermediate (8/10(16/20), low pass 7/10(14/20 .A total of 210 assignments were marked by teachers of which fifteen students' marked assignments were randomly chosen for each participating teacher for a total of 75/15x5 teachers) assignment altogether. To select the items first they were categorized into high pass, intermediate and low pass. For each participating

teacher 5 marked assignments were selected from each category using a simple random sampling technique.

Some types of feedback were simple to categorize while others were more complex and were categorized depending on their context. For example, comments such as ‘we has discussed” were easily counted as feedback on grammar, but crossing out a word and replacing it with another could be categorized as vocabulary, grammar or mechanics depending on whether the new word was more descriptive, or appropriate, improved the grammar or changed the spelling of the original student chosen word. Such circumstances were considered when categorizing each instance of teacher written feedback.

A model of describing and categorizing teacher written feedback to students’ writing was adapted from Ziv (1984) Getinet 1994, and Lee 2007)

- Feedback on ‘form’/ ‘content’
- Direct correction: substitution, addition, deletion etc.
- Indirect correction: circle/underline, etc,
- Implicit cues /explicit cues
- Written comments /marginal comments
- General written comments
- Praise/criticism

The above points were considered in describing the teachers’ feedback

### **3.3 Method of data organization and analysis**

Teacher questionnaire data was backed up by interview data and compared with actual feedback practice. Data gathered from actual feedback and students’ preference from questionnaire were tabulated into frequencies, percentages and means. Then, they were analyzed and interpreted accordingly. Moreover, the quantitative data were organized and analyzed in line with the quantitative data. Students’ feelings and reactions were described from interview data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results and Discussions

#### 4.1 Teachers' Written Feedback Practice

##### 4.1.1 Teachers' Intervention, their involvement of students in writing drafts, and frequency of their written feedback provision

In items 1-3 of the teachers' questionnaire, teachers were asked how often they provide written feedback, whether they let their students write multiple drafts and when in the writing process they provide this feedback.

Four out of five teachers responded that they provide written feedback 'frequently'. One instructor (I-2) said that he 'sometimes' gives written feedback. Asked if they made students write multiple drafts, three of the teachers responded in the affirmative, while two of them, answered in the negative. Teachers' response to item (3) indicated that four teachers responded to students' writing after they completed their work. Whereas one instructor reported that he gave written feedback both at earlier and final drafts. If we examine the reported practice of teachers in light of the current trends of teaching writing, it is encouraging as three of the instructors made their students write multiple drafts. But, this reported practice seems to be contradictory as four of the five instructors said that they responded when students completed their work. Some teachers may consider advising students to revise their writing before submitting as they are promoting multiple drafts as one instructor responded "I often gave them as an assignment telling them that writing is done as a process in which more than one draft is required".

Asked how often their teacher gave them written feedback, 81.25% of the students said that their teacher provided written feedback 'sometimes', while, 18.75% of them, said 'rarely'.

Previous studies (Zamel 1985, Getinet 1994) confirm the present finding which indicated that teachers intervene after students have completed their work. For instance, Getinet 1994 indicated that 84% of the instructors intervened after students completed their work.

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Teachers' teaching load (nine credit hours for most of them) and large class (45-52 students per-class (see table A) might have affected their frequency of feedback provision.

The focus of providing written feedback in product oriented classes is to evaluate, correct and give marks (Raines 1983) with the assumption that students will improve in their future writing from teacher feedback (Ziv 1984). On the other hand, providing written feedback after students have finished their writing is criticized as less effective in developing their writing skill as it doesn't help them revise drafts (Ferris, 1995; Zamel 1983).

#### **4.1.2 Focus of Teachers' Written Feedback**

To examine teachers' reported written feedback practice, teachers were asked to decide how frequently they gave due attention to the students' writing through out the last semester (Item 4) and responded that most teachers (four out of five) (Likert 'always' and 'often' combined) reported to have focused on organization, grammar, mechanics and content 'frequently or 'always'. Three out of five teachers also reported that they focused on vocabulary 'sometimes', while the other two, said, rarely'. It seems that most of the teachers gave almost equal emphasis to both language forms (grammar and mechanics) organization and content in their provision of written feedback.

When interviewed, however, four out of five teachers said they focused more on grammar and mechanics than on organization and content. One instructor said that he focused on all areas of feedback.

Among the different reasons teachers gave for their focus on form, one teacher said "As the students have many language problems, there is a need to



address first on errors before responding on content. “Other instructor also said “as accuracy in writing is important I focus on grammar and mechanics to avoid errors”.

On the other hand, teachers reported that they give priority to organization and content and explain that “I believe that a written material that is not well organized and has not a complete idea is difficult to understand to the readers”. Another instructor also said “grammar, mechanics, organization, vocabulary and content are essential for effective writing”.

Actual teacher written feedback practice as revealed through feedback analysis indicated that teachers focused on language form in their response to student writing, with 86.7 percent of the teacher feedback addressing form and 13.2 percent content and organization. (See table 1). Teachers focused on grammar (32.8%), mechanics (31.9%), vocabulary (20%), organization (9.5%) and content (3.5%), in descending order.

The extent instructors gave emphasis to areas of feedback varied from one instructor to another to some extent. Instructors (I-3 and I-1) were found to emphasize relatively more on organization

Unlike the instructor’s reported practice, their actual written feedback practice tended to focus more on ‘form’ than ‘organization and content’. Earlier studies (Zamel 1985, Cohen 1987, Italo 1999, Getinet 1994, Derb 2007) corroborate this finding which indicated that most teachers focus on ‘form’ than content and organization. For example Zamel (1985) noticed that most ESL writing teachers comments were concerned about surface level errors and she suggested that ESL writing writers see themselves more like ‘Language teachers’. Though the debate whether to focus on form or content continued, most scholars and researchers agree that both of them are important in the writing process (Zamel 1985).

Such practice may limit students' ability to develop the global aspects of their composition. Ignoring the content and organization in written feedback leads to kind of under developed writing strategies that unskilled writers have (Chenoweth 1987).

**Table 1: Focus of written feedback  
Emphasis on each area of feedback**

Areas of feedback	I-1		I-2		I-3		I-4		I-5		Average	
	Feedback points	%	Feedback points	%	Feedback points	%	Feedback points	%	Feedback points	%	Feedback point	%
Grammar	35	32.11	60	42.25	45	31.91	69	33.65	33	24.26	48.4	32.83
Mechanics	43	39.44	49	34.5	24	17.02	5.1	24.87	60	44.11	45.4	31.98
Vocabulary	25	22.93	30	21.12	30	21.27	36	17.5	24	17.64	29	20.09
Organization	5	4.5	3	2.11	21	14.8	27	13.17	18	13.23	14.8	9.56
Content/ideas	1	0.91	0	0	21	14.8	3	1.46	1	0.73	5.2	3.58
Form	103	94.5	139	97.8	99	70.21	175	85.36	117	86	12.6	86.77
Content & organization	6	5.5	3	2.11	42	29.78	30	14.63	19	13.97	20	13.23

In teachers' questionnaire item 5, teachers were asked to mention the main purpose of providing written feedback. Among the purposes they mentioned were:

- to help learners correct their mistakes on the spot
- to enable students to master the expected skills of writing.
- to evaluate students' work.

Instructors were also asked what their error feedback practice was (item 6). Four out of five instructors responded that they were selective in error feedback. They also gave their reasons for their practice. The reasons for being selective in error feedback:

- Students may be frustrated or discouraged if I correct all their errors.

- I prefer to selectively deal with some of the features in accordance with objective of the assignment.
- I don't have time to address to all the errors; if I had the time and mark all errors students will not pay the desired attention to their 'big' errors.

One instructor reported that he addressed all students' errors because he believed that students should avoid any error in writing. Four out of five teachers are using red pen in marking. It could make comprehensive marking rather disheartening as 80% of the students showed a negative attitude towards it. (see table 16)

Instructors gave a similar response when interviewed. Whereas written feedback analysis of students' marked papers indicated that only 57.8% of the grammar, 52.3% of the mechanics, 34.3% of the vocabulary, 25.4% of organization, and 12.8% of the content errors were addressed by the teachers( see table 2) That means the instructors had ignored knowingly or unknowingly many of students' errors. A close look at marked papers at the appendix- G shows that the instructors ignored errors not on the basis of being 'major' or 'minor' but they inconsistently corrected errors. Not only poorly developed paragraphs, unclear and ineffective sentences, but also many 'surface level' and other 'global' errors are left uncorrected. Previous research (Zamel 1985, Getinet 1994) also showed that teachers inconsistently correct errors. For instance Zamel (1985) indicated that sometimes minor errors are corrected, while major errors which cause serious ambiguity in meaning and the content of writing is ignored. In the selective error feedback technique, teachers are expected to attend to errors which are common to most students, inhibit communication, or stigmatize the learner (Hendrickson 1978). This technique is not time consuming and is not discouraging for students but when serious and less serious errors are ignored by teachers, students may consider them as correct and may develop fossilization (Norrish ,1983).

**Table 2: Amount of feedback teachers provide to each features of writing**

Area of feedback	I-1		I-2		I-3		I-4		I-5		Average	
	Feedba ck points	%	Feedba ck points	%	Feedba ck points	%	Feedba ck points	%	Feedba ck points	%	Feedba ck points	%
Grammar	35	59.32	60	68.9	45	62.5	69	67.64	33	30.53	48.4	57.8
Mechanics	43	50.58	49	67.12	24	25	51	56.66	60	62.5	45.4	52.37
Vocabulary	25	32.46	30	37.03	30	33.33	36	41.37	24	27.58	29	34.33
Organization	5	17.21	3	8.33	21	31.81	27	42.85	18	26.47	14.8	25.43
Content/ideas	1	5.8	0	0	21	41.17	3	11.53	1	5.88	5.2	12.87

#### 4.1.3 Error Feedback Techniques

Instructors were also asked to rate the frequency of employing error feedback techniques using the Likert scale and to explain the reasons for using them more frequently. (see table3 below).

**Table 3: Teachers' error feedback techniques**

Error feedback techniques	1	2	3	4	5
A. Substitute			I-4	I-5	I-1, I-2, I-3
B. Add missing words or phrases			I-4	I-1, I-3	I-2, I-5
C. Delete an incorrect word, phrase, etc.			I-4	I-2, I-3	I-5 I-1
D. Underline, circle, etc, correct them and categorize them with marking code	I-5	I-3	I-1, I-4	I-2	
E. Underline /circle, etc errors, and categorize them with a marking code	I-3, I-5	I-1, I-2	I-4		
F. Underline/circle, etc the errors		I-4, I-3 I-2	I-1	I-5	
G. Give a hint about the errors by putting a mark in the margin		I-3	I-4, I-5	I-1, I-2	
H. Reformulate students' work	I-5	I-1, I-3	I-4 I-2		

Others (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Four out of five instructors (I-1, I-2, I-3, and I-5) reported that they employed direct ways of correcting errors, A, B and C “often/always”, while I-4, said he employed them ‘sometimes’. As to technique ‘D’, two teachers (I-5 and I-3) said they employed it ‘rarely’/‘never’, while other two teachers (I-1 and I-4) said they used it ‘sometimes’. Only I-2 responded that he used it ‘often’. According to the instructors’ response the indirect error correction technique, technique E (underline/circle, and categorize with a marking code) was ‘never’/‘rarely’ used by three instructors (I-3, I-5 and I-1), ‘often’ by I-4, and ‘sometimes’ by I-2. Technique F (underline/circle errors) was reported to be used rarely by 3 instructors (I-4, I-3 and I-2), ‘sometimes’ by I-1, and ‘often’ by I-5. The marginal marking method (technique G) was reported to have been used ‘Often’ by two teachers (I-1 and I-2), ‘sometimes’ by other two teachers (I-4 and I-5), and ‘rarely’ by I-3. The other technique (H), reformulation, was also reported to have been used by two teachers (I-4 and I-2), ‘sometimes’, while the other two teachers (I-1 and I-3) and I-5 said they employ ‘rarely’ and ‘never’, respectively.

Teachers also expressed their reasons for employing error feedback techniques. Among the reasons they gave for using direct error correction techniques (A, B, C, D and H) one was:

- Since students are unable to correct errors themselves, I have to help them.

On the other hand, the reasons for employing the indirect error feedback techniques (E, F and G)

- Marginal marking (technique G) involves learners thinking about errors and solving the problem (correction) by themselves and it also decreases teachers’ time investment.
- When students’ errors are corrected indirectly by underlining, by giving a hint, they will learn to improve or avoid errors because they are encouraged to self-correct errors which are beneficial for learning.

- On instructor said “I don’t categorize errors with codes because some students may not understand them”.

The range and the frequency of error feedback techniques reported to have been used by instructors is encouraging as every technique mentioned seems to have been employed at least ‘sometimes’ which suggests that teachers are familiar to all error feedback techniques.

However, interview data and actual feedback analysis revealed that the range and the frequency of employing error feedback techniques is far from what had been reported from the questionnaire data.

When interviewed instructors (I-4, I-5, and I-2) said they often use the techniques ‘underlining’, or ‘adding a missing words’, while I-1 and I-3 said that they often use the technique ‘adding’, ‘underlining’, or ‘deleting’ the errors.

The actual error feedback strategies as shown in table 4 below indicate that on average instructors used ‘underlining/circling errors’ (34.42%) ‘adding missing words’ etc. (29.77), ‘deleting an incorrect word, etc’ (18.3%), and ‘underlining, circling/crossing out, etc’ and correct (‘substitution’) (16.13%), in descending order. Only I-3 used explicit cues on a few occasions in addressing global features of students’ writing. Instructors used mainly overt corrections (64.27%), they also employed sometimes indirect technique (circle/underline, etc) (34.42%). Most instructors relatively used a variety of techniques for direct corrections whereas for indirect correction only circling/underling was often used.

The frequency of using techniques varies greatly from one instructor to another. For example, ‘add’ was used by I-1 most frequently (54.28%) while I-4 and I-5 appeared to have employed the indirect technique (circle/underline) 47.8% and 40.51%, respectively. I-1 employed direct corrections (83%), very

frequently. Previous studies (Getinet 1994; Derb 2007) showed that most teachers mainly correct errors directly. Derb (2007) indicated that teachers explicitly correct errors, while Getinet 1994 showed that teachers used a limited strategy of error feedback. In comparison to direct correction, indirect corrections were used with minimum degree and frequency. The most frequently used error feedback technique were 'substitute' and 'add'. Most of the teachers in the study invested their time mostly directly correcting errors. This also made students passive learners as they were not provided opportunities for self-correction (e.g. underlining/circling, etc.) of errors which requires learners to invest additional attentional resources in determining the type of error before correcting it. This type of feedback is beneficial for the students in the long run. But such teacher dominated feedback practices especially in three of the instructors in this study would breed passive and dependent learners.

**Table 4: Error feedback strategies**

Error feedback strategies	I-1 %	I-2 %	I-3 %	I-4 %	I-5 %	Average %
A. Substitution	14.28	18.75	13.88	14.83	18.91	16.13
B. Add missing words/phrases	54.28	29.16	33.33	13.18	18.91	29.77
C. Delete an incorrect word or phase, etc.	11.42	14.58	20.83	23.07	21.62	18.3
D. Circle, underline, etc the errors	17.14	37.5	29.16	47.8	40.54	34.42

#### **4.1.4 Teachers' Provision of Feedback Types (grades/marks/, error feedback and written comments)**

Asked how frequently they employ the feedback types in responding to students' writing, all the instructors said that they employed feedback type A (only grades marks), and C (only written comments) 'rarely' or 'never'. As to feedback type B (only response to errors), two teachers (I-1 and I-4) reported that they had employed it 'sometimes', while the other three teachers (I-2, I-3 and I-5) said that they 'rarely'/'never' used it. Feedback type D (Mark/grade + error feedback) was reported to be used 'sometimes' by two teachers (I-5 and I-

1), 'often' by I-4 and I-2, and 'always' by I- 3. Four instructors (I-3, I-4, I-5 and I-1) said they 'often' used feedback type E (mark/grade + written comments), while I-2 reported to have used it 'sometimes'. Three teachers (I-1, I-2, and I-3) said that they employed feedback type F (error feedback + written comments 'rarely', while I-4 and I-5, 'sometimes'. Feedback type G (error feedback + written comments + mark/grade was reported to have been used 'often/ always 'by instructors (I-5, I-2, and I-4), 'sometimes' by I-3 and rarely by I-1.

**Table 5:- Teachers' provision of feedback types**

Feedback type	1	2	3	4	5
A. Only grades/marks	I-5,I-4,I-5	I-2,I-3			
B. Only response to errors	I-2,I-5	I-3	I-1, I-4		
C. Only written comments	I-2,I-3,I-5	I-4,I-2			
D. Mark/grade + error feedback			I-5,I-1,	I-4, I-2	I-3
E. Mark/grade + written comments			I- 2	I-4, I-3 I-1,I-5	
F. Error feedback + written comments		I-1,I-2 ,I-3	I-4, I-5		
G. Mark/grade + error feedback + written comments		I-1	I-3	I-4	I-5, I-2

Teachers also explained for employing the feedback type more frequently:

- " to complete the continuous assessment I have to mark each of the students' work and give them the feedback on their errors "

(I-3)

- " grades/marks are 'wake up' calls and feedback (written comments) might last long and easy to refer to " (I-1)

When interviewed teachers also responded that they often gave marks after correcting errors and they explained that:

"Feedback without marks makes students careless. They won't practice. So, I give them marks for their writing " (I-2)

- "it serves to find out the difficulties students have" (I -5)

Another instructor said that he gave marks to what students write though he doesn't have faith in awarding grades as he thinks that these direct students' attention from comments. He said "most students only look at the grade".

In the interview instructors confirmed that they used criteria for marking (accuracy, content, organization, format, etc) and gave a range of comments on students' weakness and strength. In response to questionnaire item 11, the instructors also gave a similar response.

The actual feedback analysis indicated that three instructors (I-1, I-2, I-3) employed consistently feedback type G (error feedback + comments + grade), while I-5 ignored giving comments and used type D (error feedback + grade) consistently. As for I-4, 80% of his feedback is found to be type G and 20% of type D.

The focus of general comments given by instructors ranged from no comment (I-5), focus on accuracy (I-2), 60% on accuracy and 40% on both accuracy and organization(I-4), on accuracy organization and content (diffuse comments) (I-3).

The frequency and the type of feedback instructors reported using varied from what was found from feedback analysis as instructors might have overestimated or underestimated what they had used.

Marginal comments were rarely used by instructors. The general comments were mainly abstract and not focused. Comments (good, why? etc.) as Keh (1990) survey indicated will not be helpful unless they are provided with more information (e.g. very good! plus the reason why).

In item 15 and 16 of students' questionnaire students were asked how frequently teachers praise/criticize them (see table 6 below).

**Table 6: Students' Response to Teachers' Praise and Criticism**

	1		2		3		4		5		Total	Mean	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No	Ex	x
Praise			28	35	46	45	6	7.5	-	-	80	218	2.75
Criticism			13	16.25	39	48.51	28	35	-	-	80	255	3.18

Students indicated that their teachers 'praised' them 'rarely' (35%), 45 % of them said their teachers 'praise' them 'sometimes'. Over all, the lower mean value (2.75) seems to indicate those teachers 'sometimes' praise students. About 48.5% and 35% of the students said that their teachers criticize them 'sometimes', and 'often' respectively (mean value = 3.18).

From feedback investigation, it was found that on average 34% of the teachers' general comments focus on 'criticism only', 22.6%, on 'praise plus criticism'. 6.6% on 'praise only' and 22.6% of the papers marked, had no comment.

**Table 7: Teachers' Praise and Criticism**

	I-1		I-2		I-3		I-4		I-5		Total	Mean
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No	Ex
Praise only	2	13.33	2	13.33	-	-	1	6.6	-	-	5	6.6
Criticism	6	40	6	40	13	86.6	1	6.6	-	-	26	34
Praise + criticism	7	46.66	5	33.3	2	13.3	1	6.6	-	-	17	22.66
No comment	-	-	2	13.33	-	-	-	-	15	100	17	22.68

Examples of praise and criticism from teachers' feedback (see Appendix \_)

Praise  
Well developed  
Very good,  
Well done!

Criticism  
do not write such marathon sentences  
No coherence

When interviewed, teachers mentioned what they expected their students to do after receiving comments as:

- students notice their errors and try to correct
- read the comments
- rewrite their assignments
- discuss with their peers.

Asked whether teachers believe that the error feedback and comments they provided to students help them improve their writing (Item 12), all of them responded in the affirmative and explained:

- students can learn writing from error corrections (I-1)
- When students lose marks they move their eyes to the errors and comments so they can learn from it (I-3).

Teachers were also asked whether they discussed their purpose of written feedback practice for the students. Four out of five teachers responded that they 'rarely' did this. One teacher, however said, he did it 'sometimes'. A similar question was forwarded to students and the majority of them (80%) responded in the negative.

Teachers were asked whether they were aware of students' preferences for written feedback, to which all of them responded in the negative, and they added that they did not know what is considered good feedback by the students. On the other hand, when they are asked to suggest solution for minimizing the gap between teacher feedback practice and students' preferences for this feedback (item-13), four of them suggested that teachers should discuss their feedback practice to students.

## **4.2 Students' Preferences for Written Feedback**

### **4.2.1 Students' Preferences for Teacher Intervention**

In item 4 of students' questionnaire, students were asked when they best like their teacher to give them the written feedback and responded that over half of

them (56.25%) preferred to get this feedback both in earlier and final drafts, while some of them (30%), at the final drafts, others (13.75%), at earlier drafts.

Although, teachers often intervene at the final draft of students' writing, students wanted teachers' intervention before and after completing their work. On the other hand, some students did not want their teachers to interfere in their writing before they develop their ideas and edit their errors.

Previous research Chenweth (1987) also indicated that students like feedback to cover drafts. Whereas a survey in L1 writing context revealed that students preferred their teacher to respond to the final version (Freedman 1987, cited in, Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990)

#### **4.2.2 Students' Preferences For Teachers' Focus On Areas of Written Feedback**

In item 5 of students' questionnaire, students' were asked which features of writing they want their teacher to emphasize. They were asked to rank order their preferences starting with the most preferred (1) to the least preferred (5) with their reasons as well.

It was found that students wanted their teacher to emphasize on grammar (2.61), mechanics (2.68), and vocabulary (2.96), organization (3.07) and content/ideas (3.42 in a descending order. (see table 8)

**Table 8: Students' Preferences for Teachers' Focus on Areas of Feedback**

Areas of feedback	*1		2		3		4		5		Grand total	Average
	No.	Total V	No.	Total V	No.	Total V	No.	Total V	No.	Total V		
A. Content/ideas	10	10	10	20	18	54	20	80	22	110	274	3.42
B. Organization	13	13	15	30	20	60	17	68	15	75	246	3.07
C. grammar	23	23	18	36	15	45	15	60	9	45	209	2.61
D. Vocabulary	14	14	18	36	18	54	17	68	13	65	237	2.96
E. Mechanics	21	21	18	36	16	48	15	60	10	50	215	2.68

\* Rank value (1 highest value and 5 least value)

As we can see the table above the respondents on the whole liked their teacher to focus more on local than global issues. This finding confirms earlier studies,

(Ferris 1995, Cohen 1987, Hedgecock and Lefkowitz 1994, Getinet 1994) findings which indicate that students have a strong preference for feedback on form/ local feedback. A possible explanation for preferences of students can be obtained from Kepner (1991) who notes that FL writers are aware of linguistic limitations so local errors occupy the prominent status. Similarly, as Shaugnessy (1977) explains "error-free written work is the concern of L2 writer possibly because of the prior learning experience and students' understanding that good writing means 'correct writing'". Students' preferences might also be influenced by teachers' feedback practice which is form focused (see table 1). The classroom teaching context might have affected their preference. If students were required to re write drafts based on teacher feedback their preferences might have changed.

The students had also specified the reasons for prioritizing some areas. Those who preferred grammar said "ideas that I want to transfer to my readers are highly dependent on the grammar as accuracy is expected from me". Those who preferred mechanics said that like grammar, mechanics is useful for complete expression of ideas. Still other respondents indicated why they prefer vocabulary .In the words of one student "most of us have difficulties using appropriate vocabulary to express ideas so I need my teacher to focus on this area, too". On the other hand, some respondents reported that they wanted their teacher to emphasize on organization because they had difficulties in organizing ideas although they had good ideas.

Students were also asked to opt for any of the areas (content/ideas, organization, language) they wanted their teacher to emphasize more in the future (Item 6). Generally, they seemed to show a tendency for 'more' from the teacher. Over 60% the respondents said that they wanted more emphasis on each of feedback areas. (see table 9). Although the instructors focused on language areas (grammar, mechanics vocabulary) in their actual feedback practice, students still like more feedback on form.

As indicated in the above table, 75% of the students wanted more feedback on organization, while 63.5% on content. As the teachers feedback practices on these areas are very limited (9.5% and 3.5% respectively) (see table 9), it is expected from students to need more feedback on these areas. Only 6.25% of the students opted for 'none of the above' which means they wanted their teacher to continue with the current practice.

When asked what their teacher should focus 'less' in their feedback practice. (See table 9), the majority of the respondents (93.75%) chose 'none of the above' .Consistently, questions that asked about preferences for "more" feedback (see table 9) received a much lower percentage of responses in 'none of the above' options (6.25%) than questions that asked about "less" feedback (93.75%) (see table 9).

**Table 9: Students' Preference for 'more/less 'Emphasis on Areas of Feedback**

Students feedback preferences	Less feedback		More feedback	
	Responses		Responses	
	No.	%	No.	%
A. Content/ideas	4	5	51	63.5
B. Organization	3	5	60	75
C. Language (e.g. grammar, mechanics vocabulary)	5	6.25	72	90
D. None of the above	75	93.75	5	6.25
E. Others (please specify)	0	0	0	0

In response to item 8 of students' questionnaire, students indicated the amount of error they wanted their teachers to respond to and their reasons for their preferences (see table 10).

#### 4.2.3 Students' preferences for the amount of error feedback

**Table 10: Students' preferences for the amount of error feedback**

**Item 8.** Tick one box below to indicate the amount of error you want your teacher to respond to.

Students' feedback preferences	Responses	
	No.	%
A. None of my errors	5	6.25
B. All of my errors	36	45
C. Some of my errors	39	48.75
Total	80	10

About half (48.75) of the respondents said that they wanted their teacher to respond to some of their errors while 45% of them wanted 'all of their' errors to be addressed. Only 6.25% of the students did not want any error feedback. Among the respondents reasons for their preference of comprehensive error feedback the following is indicated in the words of one student:

*I want my teacher to respond to all my errors since my errors I commit can change the meaning of my written work confuse the reader and even lead to misunderstanding, so, to avoid any mistakes I may make in the future. I need my teacher to respond to any of my errors.*

According to the above respondent all errors are important because they can affect meaning and need to be corrected.

Among the respondents' who wanted selective error feedback explained their reason as:

- correcting of all the errors by the teacher makes the students dependent on the teacher (information flows one (way) so, I want my teacher to correct some of my errors.
- I don't want my paper to be covered with red ink. There are many simple errors that I usually make which can be left to be corrected by myself.

As some respondents indicated above, they did not want to be passive and dependent learners; they wanted to be involved in self-corrections and hence wanted selective error feedback.

#### 4.2.4 Students' Preferences For Error Feedback Strategies

Students were also asked to identify the extent they like the different techniques using Likert scale and to express their reasons (see table 11 below).

**Table 11: students' preferences for error feedback techniques**

Students' preference for error feedback technique	V1		V2		V3		V4		V5		Total Ex	mean x
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
A. Substitute	4	5.33	6	8	3	4	26	26	34.66	36	309	4.12
B. Add	5	6.6	3	4	2	2.66	28	28	37.33	37	314	4.18
C. Delete	6	8	7	9.33	11	14.66	25	25	33.33	26	283	3.77
D. underline, circle, etc. correct and categorize them with a marking code	7	9.33	8	10.66	12	16	7	24	32	24	275	3.66
E. Underline/ circle, etc errors and categorize them with a marking code	23	30.66	29	38.66	8	10.66	14	7	9.33	8	173	2.3
F. Underline /circle etc. the errors	23	30.66	16	21.3	13	17.33	5	6.6	18.66	9	195	2.6
G. Give me a hint about my errors by putting a mark in the margins	27	36	24	32	16	21.33	27	36	6.6	3	168	2.24
H. Reformulate my work	7	9.33	9	12	9	12	27	36	36	24	280	3.73
Grand mean											3.32	

\* Ex = No. x V

Overall, the majority of students 'liked' direct ways of corrections (techniques A, B, C, D and H); mean value ranging 3.66-4.18), over the indirect techniques (E,F and G), mean value ranging from 2.3-2.6. (see the table 11)

The majority of students (82.66%) 'liked /strongly liked' their teacher to correct their errors by substitution (to underline, circle, cross out errors, etc and to correct), as students wanted their teacher to play an active role in correction. Only 13.33% of the respondents 'strongly disliked/disliked' this

technique. Similarly, a large number of respondents (86.66%) wanted their teacher to add the missing words, phrases etc (technique B). As for technique C, 'delete', students also showed a strong preference as most of the students (78%) 'strongly liked/liked' their teacher to 'delete' wrong words or phrases', etc. A considerable number of respondents (64%) strongly 'liked/liked' their teacher to work out everything for them. This technique however was not used by the teachers (see table 10). On the other hand, 18% of the respondents 'strongly disliked/disliked it while, 16% of them chose ' I don't know'. Similarly, most students had a positive view of the teacher 'reformulating their work, directly correcting errors and organizations, but not ideas (technique H), as 68% of the respondents 'strongly liked/liked this technique although it is not used by teachers. The mean values indicate that students prefer the direct error feedback techniques 'add' (4.18), 'substitute' (4.12), 'delete' (3.77), technique H, 3.73 and technique D (3.66) in descending order.

The indirect error feedback technique E (underline, etc and categorize), technique F (underline/circle), and technique G (give me a hint about the errors by putting a mark in the margins) were 'disliked \strongly disliked by 69.3% ,42% and 68% of the students, respectively. A lower mean for these techniques (2.3-2.6), below the grand mean (3.32) seems to imply that students generally don't favour indirect error feedback.

Students also expressed their reasons for their preferences as follows:

- if my teacher directly corrects my error, I believe I can learn more. Moreover, if my errors are simply underlined, I may wrongly correct them.
- If all my errors are corrected and identified I can get more information about my errors.
- The technique I expressed as 'strongly' 'liked' /'liked' are usually used by the teacher in such a clear and simple way that I understand them.

Among the reasons given by those students who prefer indirect correction were:

- I want my teacher to indicate my errors because if my errors are indicated I can correct them and learn from that.
- I like my teacher to indirectly correct my errors because this type of technique makes me think about the error and correct so I can learn to avoid that kind of error.

As the findings of this study revealed most of the students wanted overt corrections of errors by their teachers, which supports Gardner's (1990) study which reported that most students are not interested in problem solving method of error correction.

#### 4.2.5 Students' Preferences For Type of Feedback

**Table 12: Students' preference for type of feedback**

Feedback type	V1		V2		V3		V4		V5		Total		mean
	No.	%	No.	%	No	%	No.	%	No.	%	No	E	x
A. only grade/mark	39	48.75	32	40	5	6.25	2	2.5	2	2.5	80	130	1.7
B. only response to error	33	41.25	27	33.75	6	7.5	4	5	-	-	80	121	1.51
C. Only written comments	40	50	25	31.25	7	8.75	5	6.25	3	3.75	80	146	1.82
D. Mark/grade + error feedback	4	5	6	7.5	10	12.5	33	41.25	27	33.75	80	313	3.91
E. Mark/grade + written comments	3	3.75	7	8.75	4	5	29	36.25	37	46.75	80	330	4.12
F. Error feedback + written comments	32	40	25	31.25	12	15	7	8.75	4	5	80	166	2.07
G. Mark/grade + comments + error feedback	0	0	4	5	4	5	27	33.75	39	48.75	80	323	4.03

In item 10 of students' questionnaire students were asked to indicate the extent they like the type of feedback using a Likert scale (see table -12 above) and express their reasons for their preferences.

As shown in the table above, the feedback types 'only grade/mark (type A), only error feedback (type B), only written comments (type C) and error feedback plus written comments (type F) were 'strongly disliked/disliked ' by 88.8%, 75%, 81.25% and 71.25% of the respondents, respectively. The mean score values of these feedback types ranging from 1.51 to 2.07 also seem to indicate the students' negative view of these feedback types.

Although most of the students (88.8%) expressed their dislike on feedback 'only grades/marks', the majority 'strongly liked/liked' this feedback when it is combined with error feedback(type D, 82.5%, mean = 3.91), written comments (type E, 75%, mean = 4.12 or error feedback plus comments (type G, 81.2%, mean = 4.03), which are largely the teachers' practice. Students also expressed their reasons for preferring feedback types as:

- we are writing assignments for evaluation so I need both my grade/mark and error feedback with written comments.
- If I get full information about my work (errors, comments and mark) it will help me improve for the future. But simply putting only the marks/errors or comments is not satisfactory.
- If marks are not given for my written work, I don't know whether I have done good or bad.

Students' preference for more written comments is shown in table 13, where they hoped for the teacher would give more written comments (81.25%) and error feedback (62.5%) in the future. Only 6.25% of the respondents expressed their dislike for more emphasis on these feedback types and wanted the teacher to continue with the present practice.

When asked what type of feedback they liked their teacher to emphasize 'less' in the future the majority (97.5%) opted for 'none of the above'. As teachers' actual written feedback was found to be form – focused and as many of contents, organization and local errors were ignored by most of the teachers, it is expected from students to like more emphasis on error feedback and written comments. The results of table 14 show similar trend among the students as more of them said they could be most interested in teachers' comments

(36.25%), some (25%) in error feedback although they seemed to be equally interested in the marks (38.75%).

Among the reasons given by students for being most interested in marks they indicated that it is essential for passing the course “Another student also said,” I need my teacher’s comment most because they are essential for my success in my future written works”.

As the purpose of giving feedback is for evaluation, the students will show great concern about their marks (Gardner 1990). Although comments and error feedback is better seen as responding to students’ work than evaluating (Hyland 2003) teachers award marks to students work.

**Table 13: Students’ Preference for Emphasis on Feedback Types**

Item 11: Which of the following type of feedback would you like you teacher to emphasize more in the future? (Tick any item).

Item 12: Which of the following types of feedback would you like your teacher to emphasize less in the future?(Tick any item).

Student feedback preferences	More emphasis		Less emphasis	
	No	%	No	%
A. Written comments	65	81.25	0	0
B. error feedback	50	62	4	5
C. None of the above	5	6.25	78	97.5

**Table 14: Students’ most preferred feedback type**

Item 13. Which of the following would you be most interested in finding out on your written work? (Tick only one)

Student feedback preferences	Responses	
	No	%
A. The mark/grade	31	38.75
B. Teachers’ comments	29	36.25
C. The errors I’ve made	20	25
D. Others specify	-	-

#### 4.2. 6 Students' Preference For Praise and Criticism

In students' questionnaire item 14, students were asked what they like to appear in teachers' written comments (see table 15).

**Table 15: Students' Preferences for Praise and Criticism**

Feedback type	V1		V2		V3		V4		V5		Total		mean
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No	E	x
A. Praise only	6	0	3	3.75	7	8.75	45	56.25	25	31.25	80	182	4.15
B. Criticism only	46	57.5	23	28.75	7	8.75	4	5	0	0	80	129	1.61
C. Praise + criticism	2	2.5	3	3.75	5	6.25	32	40	38	47.5	80	341	4.26
D. No comment	28	35	35	43	64	7.5	6	7.5	5	5.25	80	165	2.06

The majority of students strongly liked/liked 'praise only' (87.5%), and 'praise plus criticism' (87.5%) only 3.75% and 12.5% of the students expressed their dislike of these comments, respectively. On the other hand 86.25% and 78.75% of the respondents expressed their dislike of 'criticism only' and 'no comment', respectively whereas only 5% and 12.75% of the respondents didn't mind 'criticism' and 'no comment', respectively. The mean score also seem to indicate that students prefer 'praise plus criticism' (4.26), 'praise only' (4.15), 'no comment' (2.06), and criticism (1.61), in descending order.

Students also expressed their reasons for their preference as

- Criticism is the basis for future complete and accurate work and praises will boost my confidence and interest in my works, so I need both of them.
- 'Criticism only' is discouraging and when my work is returned without comments I got disappointed because I expect to get information about my strength and weakness.

Previous studies which showed that students welcome praise (Gee, 1972), but like praise and constructive criticism (Ferris 1995) supports this finding.

#### 4.3 Students' Understanding and View of Written Feedback

When students were asked how much of teachers' written feedback they understand, they responded that about 56.25% of them understand most of it,

31.25% of them, 'all of it' and 12.5% them 'some of it' (see table 16). A high mean (3.18) gives the strong impression that students understand most of teachers' comments. Students' interview data also revealed the same results.

Similarly, when students were asked about their view regarding the significance they assign to teachers' written feedback, (Item 17B), 80% ('4' and '5' on Likert scale) of them agreed that teachers' feedback is useful, only 12.5% them disagreed on the importance of written feedback(see table 17).

The finding supports previous research (Kepner 1991). It gives ample evidence that most students not only agree on the importance of written feedback, actually they do so passionately which can be drawn from the very high mean (4.12). Most students understand the teachers' written feedback so it is logical that students feel this feedback is useful. Not all students said they understood the written feedback or found it useful. This confirms the previous research which shows that teacher feedback is not always understood (Zamel 1985).

**Table 16: Students' Understanding of Written Feedback**

Item 3: how much of teachers' written feedback do you understand?

Feedback type	None of it (1)		Some of it (2)		Most of it (3)		All of it (4)		Total		mean
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No	Ex	
A.	0	0	10	12.5	45	56.25	25	31.25	80	255	3.18

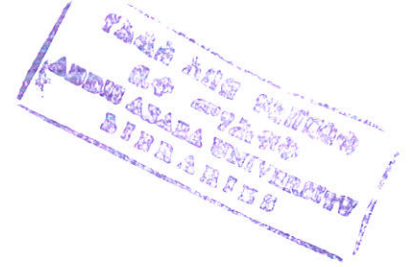
\*Ex=No . V

**Table 17: Students' views of the written feedback and the red pen**

Item 17: A: I found teachers' feedback useful

Item 17:B. I want my teacher to mark my written work with a pencil or a black or a blue pen rather than with a red one.

	Strongly disagree(1)		Disagree (2)		Do not know (3)		Agree (4)		Strongly Agree (5)		Total		mean
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No	No	No	Ex	
17A	0	0	10	12.5	6	7.5	28	35	36	45	80	330	4.12
17B	0	0	0	0	16	20	27	33.75	37	46.25	80	341	4.26



#### **4.4 Students' Interview Reaction**

Most of the interviewees (12 out of 15) expressed their positive responses about their understanding and usefulness of written feedback, which confirms to what they indicated in the questionnaire data, as shown in the words of some students below:

- yes, I learnt many things from past mistakes
- I have found it useful because after I got such kind of feedback, I was able to correct my errors, so it is useful.
- I usually understand teacher's corrections because he gave us in a clear way.

Three of the respondents, however said that they sometimes found teachers handwriting, and corrections unclear.

Asked what they did after they received the written feedback, most of them said they read the mark and the comments, made corrections, and read references.

Most of the students also said that they liked the way their teachers provided this feedback. One interviewee reacted: "when I make a mistake he cancels it, underline it ...I like it".

Other student also said that his teachers corrections are generally good but what concerned him was teachers' marking as "the way he gives me error correction is in a way I like, but what makes me unhappy is that the teacher takes into account minor errors (spelling, etc) in reducing our marks". Most of the interviewees expressed their feelings about teacher feedback. Generally, they seemed to have positive feelings about written feedback.

When they were asked their feelings most of them (12 out of 15) said they were happy about the overall feedback practice. Two of them were neutral while one of them was unhappy.

#### **4.5 Discrepancies Between Teachers' Practice and Students' Preferences**

Teachers intervened in students writing after they have completed their writing whereas 56.25% of the students preferred to get this feedback in the earlier and final drafts.

For focus of written feedback, it seemed that teachers form focused (86.7%) feedback met students' preferences. Teachers focused on grammar (32.8%) mechanics (31.9%) vocabulary (20%), organization (9.51%) and content (3.5%), in descending order, while students preferred grammar (2.61%), mechanics (2.68), vocabulary (2.96), organization (3.07) and content (3.42), in that order. However, when students were asked to react to the teachers' feedback practice, over 60% of the respondents wanted more emphasis on each area of feedback (90%, 75%, 63.5% of respondents wanted more feedback on language, organization and content, respectively). It can be implied that although focus of teachers' feedback on each area met students' expectations, the amount of feedback students preferred on each area didn't match their want.

Feedback analysis revealed that teachers addressed some of students' errors irrespective of being 'global' or 'local' .Only 57% of the grammar, 52.3% of mechanics, 34.3% of vocabulary, 25.4% of organization and 12.5% of content errors were corrected whereas 48.7 % of the students' who wanted selective error feedback moderately matched teachers' practice. A considerable number (45%) of respondents wanted comprehensive error feedback which mismatched teachers' practice.

Teachers combined overt correction (64.27%) and indirect correction (predominantly using underline/circle) etc technique). On average, 'underling/circling' was the most frequently used (34.42%) followed by 'adding' (29.77), deleting (18.3) and 'substitution' (16.13). Most students, on the other hand, preferred direct corrections over indirect correction. The most preferred

technique is 'addition' (mean 4.18) followed by 'substitution' (4.12), deletion (3.77) underling/circling (2.6), underline/circle and categorize errors (2.3) and 'give a hint about errors' (2.24). Unlike students' preferences, teachers used an indirect technique /underlining, etc. most frequently.

More than teachers' practice, students needed a range of direct error feedback (e.g. reformulation, underline and categorize errors and correct).

Most teachers' practice met students' expectation of feedback type as they used mainly error feedback, plus comments and marks, which was most preferred by most students.

In spite of teachers' error focused feedback practice, students also wanted more comments and error feedback.

From feedback investigation, it was found that of the comments given by instructors, 6.6% focused on 'praise only' 34.6% on 'criticism', 22.66% on 'praise plus criticism' and 22.6% of papers marked had 'no comments'. (see table 7).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 5.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussions made for this study, the following conclusions are made.

1. Teachers' self-reported practice regarding their intervention, frequency of providing written feedback, and their involvement in promoting multiple drafts has not been corroborated by students. It can be said that teachers provided written feedback after students had completed their work. Most of the students reported that instructors provided written feedback 'sometimes'.
2. Most instructors reported giving equal emphasis to all features of feedback. The actual feedback data, however, revealed that teachers on average gave priority to 'local' features (86.7%) than 'global' ones (13%) (see table 1). Though four of the five teachers claimed to have been selective in error feedback, actual error feedback analysis also revealed that they addressed 57.8% the grammar, 52.3% of the mechanics, 34.3% of the vocabulary, 25.4% of the organization and 12.8 % of the content errors. But these errors were selected for correction irrespective of being 'global' or 'local'. Instructors inconsistently marked errors (See table 2).
3. As far as error feedback techniques are concerned on average teachers used direct correction (64.27%) (adding, deleting, and substitution) and indirect correction (34.42%)(predominantly using underlining/circling). This indicates that teachers employed a limited range of techniques.
4. Most of the findings of this study suggested that there was a mismatch between what teachers reported and what they actually did.
5. Instructors tended to give more criticism (34%) than praise (6.6%) or praise plus criticism (22.6%).
6. All the instructors believed that the comments and the error feedback they provided to the students' work help students to improve their writing.

7. Most of the instructors rarely discussed the purposes of their written feedback practices for their students and were not aware of students' preferences for this feedback.
8. The study also revealed that the instructor's area of focus in providing of written feedback met students' expectation but the majority of students wanted more feedback on each area.
9. This study also revealed many discrepancies between teacher practice and students' preferences for written feedback.
  - Most students preferred direct correction over indirect corrections. Whereas teachers, unlike students' preferences, used indirect technique circle/ underline, more frequently.
  - In spite of teachers' product oriented approach to feedback, a considerable number of students preferred to get written feedback before and after completing their work.
10. In spite of most instructors' error focused feedback, negative comments and criticism students seemed to be generally positive about teacher written feedback. The study also indicated students showed a positive response and feeling as they understood most of the written feedback and felt it useful for their improvement.
11. Instructors rarely gave marginal comments to students' writing and general comments tended to focus form than content.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study reported and the conclusions above, the following recommendation can be made.

- Since theories of learning and teaching emphasize students' motivation for learning the language and their involvement in the learning process, it might be important to take into account learner preferences in written feedback and to explore the role of teacher practice in accordance with them. To that end, the teacher might want to make an effort to explore student preferences in error correction at the beginning of a course. Either informal discussion or a formal questionnaire could be used to

ascertain the students' preferences. If there are discrepancies between teacher's practices and preferences of those students, teachers need to explain why they use certain types of written/error feedback instead of the types of that the learners prefer. This is especially true if the learners are older, college/university students who have previously learned foreign language and have formed their own preferences for written feedback. The conflict between teacher practice and learner preferences in written feedback without explanation may result in students' frustration and lack of motivation. Explicit explanation can help learners better accept teachers' practice with understanding of the rationale behind the teachers' written feedback practices. Previous study (Italo 1999) indicated students' preferences for some forms of feedback changed as a result of discussion.

- As providing written feedback is tiresome and time consuming, there is a need to employ a range of indirect strategies of error feedback which are less time consuming and also are pedagogically recommended as they encourage self-correction and problem solving which is beneficial for students' learning. Though these types of techniques of error feedback are not favored by most students in this study, teacher - student discussion may help learners better accept this type of error feedback strategy.
- There is a need to focus on global aspects of students' writing in the provision feedback in organizing, structuring ideas clearly logically and meaningfully.
- It is important to encourage and motivate students by giving praise and constructive criticism side by side.
- Though English for academic purpose classroom context require students to write research reports, essays and exam essays on their own, it is also important that teachers also encourage students to write multiple drafts, and intervene in their writing before the final version.
- Finally, future research is recommended on this area especially focusing on the preferences of higher and lower performers for written error feedback.

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## **Appendix A: Teachers' questionnaire**

**Addis Ababa University  
School of Graduate Studies  
Department of foreign language and Literature**

### **Teachers' questionnaire**

Dear teacher,

The aim this questionnaire is to gather information on your written feedback practice and students' preferences for this feedback. The researcher kindly requests you to remember your feedback practice while answering the items in the questionnaire attached here with

Your genuine response will be of great help to the success of this study and it will remain confidential and be used only for the purpose of the study.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Maru Mohammed

### **Teachers' Questionnaire**

#### **I. General Information**

1. Area of specialization, \_\_\_\_\_ qualification \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your total teaching load? \_\_\_\_\_
3. On the average how many students do you teach in a class in this course?

**II. Think of the written feedback you provided to your students and answer feedback questions**

For questions which are multiple type, circle the letter of choice, and write your free responses to those which are open-ended on the space provided. For those questions provided with tables, mark with a tick (√) under the columns indicated. Please respond as honestly as you can.

1. How often do you provide written Feedback to students' writing? (please circle the answer)
  1. never    2) rarely    3) sometimes    4) frequently    5) always
2. Do you make students write multiple drafts about a topic?
  - 1) No            2) Yes
3. When do you provide written feedback to what your students write?
  1. Only at the final draft
  2. at the drafts (if any)
  3. both at earlier drafts and at the final draft
4. How often do you pay more attention to the following features of writing in the provision of written feedback? *Why?* (Please tick the appropriate answer.)

	Always	often	sometimes	rarely	never
Grammar					
Mechanics					
Vocabulary					
Organization					
Content/ideas					

**Why?** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. In your opinion, what is the main purpose of providing feedback to students' errors in writing \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Which of the following statements below describes your existing error feedback practice? (Please tick the most appropriate box.)

- A. I don't mark students' errors in writing
- B. I mark all students' errors
- C. I mark students' errors selectively

The reason behind your error feedback practice \_\_\_\_\_

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\* If your answer to question 7 is 'A' go to Q. 9

7. Rate the frequency with which you use each of the following error feedback techniques according to the scale (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) often (5) always. (Please **circle** the appropriate **number** and **explain the reasons** for employing some techniques most frequently.)

A. *substitute* (underline, circle, cross out, etc) errors and *correct* them e.g.

has went gone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

B. add *missing words, phrases* (e.g. I eaten my lunch)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

C. delete an incorrect word, phrase, etc

D. underline/circle, etc) errors, *correct* them and *categorize* them with help of *marking code*. E.g. he has went gone (Vf)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

E. (underline/circle, etc) errors and *categorize* them with the help of a marking code), e.g. has went (Vf)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

D. I *indicate* (underline./circle, etc), but I *don't correct* them (e.g. has  
went

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

E. Give a *hint* about the location of errors, e.g. By putting a mark in the  
margin to indicate a preposition error on a specific line

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

G. *reformulate* students' written work

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

What are the **reasons** behind employing of the above **techniques** *always* or  
*often*?

**Reason for:**

Technique A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**B** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**C** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**D** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**E** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**F** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**G** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**H** \_\_\_\_\_

8. How frequently do you employ the following in responding to students'  
writing? (Rate the frequency using the scale 1-5 as described in Q. 8. **Circle**  
appropriate number

A. Only grades/marks

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

B. Only response to errors

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

C. Only written comments 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

D. Mark./grade + error feedback 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

E. Mark/grade + written comments 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

F. Error feedback + written comments 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

G. Mark/grade + error feedback + Written Comments 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

The reasons for the most frequently used feedback types are :

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9. How often do you discuss the reasons and purposes of your written feedback practices for the students?

1. never    2. rarely    3. sometimes    4. often    5. always

10. If you have any colour preference while marking what colour do you prefer? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What is the focus of your general written comments? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. Do you believe that the error feedback and the comments you provide to students help them improve their writing?

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13. How can we minimize the gap between written feedback practice and students' preferences for this feedback?

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## **Appendix B: Teachers' Interview**

### **Teachers' Interview**

1. What is the objective of providing written feedback?
2. Do you discuss the rationales behind your written feedback practices to the students? Are you aware of students' preferences?
3. What is considered 'good' feedback practice by the students? Do you agree?
4. Are you in favour of comprehensive or selective error feedback? Why?
5. What areas do you focus on in your written feedback? Why?
6. What error correction strategies do you use? Why do you choose these strategies?
7. Do you write comments on students writing? Are you aware of the range of comments you write? How do you see the functions of your comments? What do you expect students to do afterwards?
8. Do you give students' writing a grade? Why? What criteria are the grades based on?
9. In your opinion, what is the best way to go about error correction?

**Appendix C: Students' Questionnaire**  
**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of Graduate Studies**  
**Department of foreign language and Literature**

April, 2009

**Students' questionnaire**

Dear student,

The aim this questionnaire is to gather information on written feedback practice of your teacher and your preferences for this feedback. The researcher kindly requests you to remember the feedback practice of your teacher while answering the items in the questionnaire attached here with.

Your genuine response will be of great help to the success of this study and it will remain confidential and be used only for the purpose of the study.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Maru Mohammed

**Student Questionnaire**

I. General Information: This section asks you general questions about your educational and linguistic background (Just tick or fill out the correct answer or the most suitable one.)

Specialization: Department \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions: Please remember the corrected papers that your teacher returned to you or look at the corrected written work in your exercise book if necessary.**

For questions which are multiple types, circle the letter of choice, and write your free responses to those which are open-ended on the space provided. For those questions provided with tables, mark with a tick (✓) under the columns indicated. Please respond as honestly as you can.

1. Does your teacher discuss his/her written feedback practices (focus, strategies, symbols, terminology etc. and their purposes) early in the semester or while course is in progress.

No  Yes

2. How much of the teacher written comment do you understand?

1. None of it  3. Most of it

2. Some of it  4. All of it

3. How often does your teacher provide written feedback?

1. Never  2. Rarely  3. Sometimes  4. Often  5. Always

4. When do you best like your teacher to give you written feedback?

a) at earlier drafts (if any)

b) At the final draft

c) Both in earlier and final drafts

5. Which areas do you want your teacher to focus on while providing written feedback? (Rank the areas 1-5 in order of your preference starting with the most preferred for emphasis, and give reasons for your preference?)

A. Content/ideas

B. Organization

C. Grammar

D. Vocabulary

E. Mechanics

Reasons for the preference of each areas of feedback are:

**Content** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**organization** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**grammar** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Vocabulary** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**mecanics** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Which of the following areas would you like your teacher to emphasize **more** in the future? (Tick any item/s)

A. content \ ideas

B. organization ( eg. Paragraphing, linking between ideas)

C. Language forms ( eg. Grammar, mechanics, vocabulary)

D. None of the above

Others (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Which of the following areas would you like your teacher to emphasize **less** in the future? (Tick any item/s)

A. content \ ideas

B. organization ( eg. Paragraphing, linking between ideas)

C. Language forms ( eg. Grammar, mechanics, vocabulary)

D. None of the above

E. Others (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Tick ONE box below to indicate the amount of error you want your teacher to respond to and explain your reason

A. None of my errors  B. All of my errors

C. Some of my errors only

**Reasons** \_\_\_\_\_

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\*If your answer to Q 8 is 'A' go to Q. 10

9. Which of the following methods would you like your teacher to use when providing written feedback? Rate the extent you like a method with a scale (1) strongly dislike it, (2) dislike it, (3) do not know, (4) like it, (5) strongly like. Circle the numbers and finally give the reasons for preferring some techniques.

A. Substitute (underline/circle /cross out my errors and provide correction for me( e.g. has went<sup>gone</sup>. This books

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

B. Add the missing words, phrases, etc.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

C. Delete (the unnecessary word, phrase .etc

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

D Underline/circle my errors, categorize them, with a marking code and provide correction for me. E.g. has went<sup>gone</sup> (VF)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

E. Underline/circle my errors and categorize them with a marking code. e.g. has went (VF)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

F. Underline/ circle my errors. E.g. he has went

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

F. Give me a hint about my errors. E.g. by putting a mark in the margins to indicate an error on a specific line

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

e.g. Yesterday I witness a robbery on my way home from school. It is about 5 pm. I was walking along Bole road when a car stopped right in front of me ...	*
	*

H. reformulate (rewrite my work without affecting its content)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Reasons for 'strongly liked' or 'liked' techniques \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Which of the following type of feedback do you prefer to get from the teacher? (Please circle one number to indicate to which extent you like (1) Strongly disliked, (2) disliked, (3) do not know, (4) like it, and (5) Strongly liked

- A. Only grades/marks 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
- B. Only response to errors 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
- C. Only written comments 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
- D. Mark/grade + error feedback 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
- E. Mark/grade + written comments 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
- F. Error feedback + written comments 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
- G. Mark/grade + error feedback + written comments 

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

The reasons for feedback type 'strongly liked'/'liked'

11. Which of the following areas would you like your teacher to emphasize **more** in the future? (Tick any item/s)

- A. written comments
- B. Error feedback)
- C. None of the above

12. Which of the following areas would you like your teacher to emphasize **less** in the future? (Tick any item/s)

A. written comments

B. Error feedback)

C. None of the above

13. Which of following would you be most interested in finding out on your written works? Why? (Tick one answer).

A. The mark/grade/

B. Teacher's comments on my writing

C. The errors I've made

D. Others (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Which of the following do you like to appear in teacher written comment?

Why indicate the extent you like using the scale 1-5 (1) strongly dislike, (2) dislike, (3) do not know (4) like (5) strongly like it

A. *Praise only* (e.g., by saying "good, well done", etc.)

B. *Criticism* (e.g. by saying "this is a careless point in it" etc)

C. *Praise + criticism*

D. *No comment*

	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	

Reason \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. How often does your teacher praise you (e.g., by saying "good, well done", etc.) for what you have tried?

1. Never 2 rarely 3. Sometimes 4. Often. 5. always

16. How often does you teacher criticize your for poor performance, (e.g. by saying "this is a careless work. There is no point in it" etc?)

1. Never 2. rarely 3. Sometimes 4. Often. 5. Always

17. Please indicate whether you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) do not know, (4) agree, or (5) strongly agree with the following statements regarding teacher's written feedback.

A. I want the teacher mark my written work with a pencil or black or blue pen than with a red one.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

B. I found teacher's feedback useful.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



## **Appendix D: Students' Interview**

### **Students' Interview**

1. How did you feel when you received the feedback?
2. Did you understand the written feedback?
3. Did you find the feedback useful?
4. Generally, is the written feedback that you receive in a way you like?
5. What do you do after you have received the written feedback?

## **Appendix E**

### **Transcription of Sample Teachers' Interview**

#### **Symbols used**

- [ ] - Overlapping utterances
- ( ) - hearing which are in doubt or not heard
- = - immediately contiguous utterances but not overlapping
- cut off or self-interruption often done with glottal or dental stop.
- ++ - untimed longer pause
- + - untimed shorter pause
- R - Researcher

#### **I - 1**

**R:** Thank you for volunteering for this interview. The objective of this interview is to get some information about written feedback. To begin with what is the objective of providing this feedback?

**I-1:** Ok, + thank you very much. The objective of providing this written feedback is to make some improvisation on students' skills of writing and to do so we are supposed to provide them non-verbal feedback type [alright] so the written feedback may last for some time-for long time so it is going to be a benefit for students.

**R:** Ok, do you discuss the rationales or the reasons behind some written feedback practices? I m asking this because – if you can answer - if you have awareness about students' preferences in written feedback.

**I - 1:** Ok, the basic rationale for written feedback because you're supplying this feedback it may last long so this written feedback may give you a preference to do so.

**R:** What I'm saying is, do you discuss the rationales or reasons for students? Because students may run away with some preferences [ok], discussing have you have you attempted to discuss some of the rationales behind using some technique in written feedback.

**I-1:** So far? I can say I haven't discussed for the students but in recent times I'm attending HDP program and I'm adapting to this culture of discussion on issues of written feedback. So may be in the future I'll.

**R:** If you have any idea on students' preferences, what is considered 'good' feedback by students?

**I - 1** No

**R:** Are you in favour of comprehensive or selective error feedback? Why?

**I-1:** Selective error feedback because one means of teaching students how to deal with knowledge's is to be time effective, so depending on the subjects we're lecturing will dictate you to do so. For instance, I'm teaching them English so my focus area will be some features I discussed. So, selective feedback may be time effective.

**R:** Ok, what areas do you focus on in your written feedback? Areas mean [like grammar] yes, language areas, organization, etc.

**I-1:** To be specific I want to make a great deal of concentration on grammar, some mechanics and sometimes I'll go through content and vocabulary because the two mentioned earlier may support the two mentioned later.

**R:** What error feedback strategies do you use?

**I-1:** Like what? Directly teachers correct errors by supplying sometimes by using some symbols, corrective techniques, which techniques or strategies do you use? Why? Why do you choose these strategies?

**I-1:** I prefer direct method of correction because if you're using some symbols then there will be a kind of misunderstanding between you and the students because the symbols may be known only by you, the teacher who is instructing the students, so he should be clear, to do so he should follow the direct methods of correction of errors.

**R:** alright, do you write comments on students writing [ya, most of the time] – terminal or end comments.

**I-1:** Ya – most of the time according to the course objective I make correction any time I ordered them to write pieces. So, I do corrections.

**R:** And, are you aware of the range of comments that you give? What I mean is the focus area of that you give comments after students have written?

**I-1:** Ya, especially mechanics and sometimes grammar these are the basic.

**R:** How do you see the functions of your comments?

**I-1:** So far, I've found them very useful because the moment I start teaching my students and the end teaching shows a big difference

**R:** What do you expect students to do after wards after you've given comments, what do you expect students to do?

**I-1:** Ok, above all this feedback is guidance. They make mistakes and we will guide them to guide them you supply them with feedback. I want them to be guided with this feedback and to do as I do.

**R:** Do you give grades/marks to students' writing?

**I-1:** Actually I'm not interested in giving them grades. Because you are making them to write a piece while thinking of this grade and the piece they are going to produce may not be good, but you may dictate them that writing is for their own good.

**R:** Do you have criteria for marking? Grading criteria

**I-1:** The criteria are specified in the course objective that I've designed. So, any of them who accomplish the set objectives will get the highest mark.

**R:** In your opinion, what is the best way to go about error feedback? The best way to go about – to deal about written errors (like oral errors) – written errors – my focus is on that:

**I-1:** All of them should be applied.

**R:** Thank you very much

**I-1:** You are welcome

## **I - 2**

**R:** First of all I would like to thank for volunteering for this interview. The aim of this interview is to get some information about your written feedback practice. To begin with, what is the objective of providing written feedback?

- I-2:** yes, I always discuss the reasons why I give them feedback and some of the errors they made.
- R:** And are you aware of students' preferences for some techniques for your written feedback.
- I-2:** Actually yes, as the aim of correcting is for communication we agree upon common errors. So, that I don't think that students to have their own preferences for correction. Actually they may be corrected in different way but I want the correct ones.
- R:** They want also to be corrected in certain ways direct or indirect correction – well, if you are aware of certain preferences. I want to ask you what is considered good feedback by students.
- I – 2-** Actually, I haven't come across the agreement of correcting or giving feedback for the students so that I didn't have any student.
- R:** Are you in favour of comprehensive or selective errors feedback?
- I-2:** Well, I actually support comprehensive error feedback.
- R:** You're correcting all students' errors?
- I-2-** I make corrections to all written errors.
- R:** Why do you do that?
- I-2:** Because, in general. They are writing, they are learning writing so they need to know every error-every point so they'll change the problem, they will make some improvements in their written work.
- R:** Well, what areas do you focus in your written feedback?
- I-2:** I focus on the grammar, mechanics and the content?
- R:** Why do you do that?
- I-2:** Just you know that grammar is very important for students to write well. In addition mechanics plays great role in conveying message through. In addition contents are important. So I focus on these features of writing.
- R:** What error correction strategies do you use? Techniques why do you choose those strategies?
- I-2:** I show the areas of their errors just by underlining by using coloured pen. Sometimes I correct the errors, give marks because if they didn't get the

point or the exact one, the correct one I will diminish their mark so that they'll learn through that.

**R:** Do you write comments on students' writing?

**I-2:** Yes, comments regarding the error they made, their area of improvement, and their accuracy. I can sometimes write.

**R:** How do you see the functions of your written comments?

**I-2:** Actually, I thought that it brings some worth while improvement so that I hope that it changes their writing.

**R:** What do expect students to do after wards, after you've written comments?

**I-2:** I hope they'll improve their writing.

**R:** Do you give students' writing grade or mark? Why? What criteria are grades/marks based on?

**I-2:** yes, I do because only if it is related with marks/grades that may like it. Without giving marks for their writing, students will be careless they won't practice. So I give them marks for their writing.

**R:** What criteria are the grades/marks based on?

**I-2:** Grammar, accuracy, mechanics and content

**R:** In your opinion, what is the best way to got about error correction?

**I-2:** Just the best way is showing the students the area of error and correcting, telling them the correct form, making them rewrite a piece of writing in order to avoid their problem.

**R:** Thank you

**I-2:** You are welcome.

### **I- 3**

**R:** Thank you [i-3] for volunteering for this interview

**I-3:** Thanks.

**R:** The aim of this interview is to get information about your written feedback practices and students' preferences for this feedback? What is the objective of providing written feedback?

**I-3:** First of all thank of for giving the chance. The objective of providing written feedback is simply to make students feel free and understand their

problem. As you know in our country students are highly related to marks, and it is better to comment them on the written paper instead of correcting them orally because they couldn't pay an attention when you tell them orally, but if it is written form and in assignment. Just for the sake of looking at their mark just they directly move their eyes to the comment.

**R:** Do you discuss the rationales behind your written feedback practice.

**I-3:** No I don't

**R:** are you aware of students' preferences for written feedback?

**I-3:** Concerning what?

**R:** Concerning some preferences (some techniques) focus if you're not aware of - you may not answer the question: what is good feedback by students?

**I-3:** No, I'm not because I'm not experienced in teaching and I didn't take teaching methodology because my department was 'applied'. I've an experience of, ½ years; I don't know the preferences of students.

**R:** May be from day to day teaching practice of yours you may identify \_\_\_ students may show preference from one technique to the other.

**I-3:** When you're putting a big 'x' students do not feel good I generally know that giving students a comment in written form is good for students. I know this. So, I've to give them the comments.

**R:** Are you in favour of comprehensive or selective error feedback?

**I-3:** Selective

**R:** Why?

**I-3:** Because I don't have to correct all the errors including all the minor and major errors. Students may get confused when you give them corrections for minor errors. They cannot identify which is big error and which is minor. They can be bored. So, I'm selective.

**R:** What is the focus of your written feedback?

**I-3:** The grammatical aspect of the language since the course is highly interrelated with grammar.

**R:** What error feedback strategies do you use?

Why do you choose these strategies?

- I-3:** Putting the correct form of the grammar, for example if they are mistaken when they write sentences (e.g. subject verb agreement, dangling modifier, mechanics, etc).
- R:** Are you using direct corrections or indirect techniques?
- I-3:** If students make big errors I correct them. If they use unnecessary words (e.g. if they use two main verb I will cancel one verb if they miss I 'add' the correct form).
- R:** Do you write comments for the students' writing?
- I-3:** Comments?
- R:** Comments at the end of students' writing-end comments?
- I-3:** Sometimes for some students.
- R:** Are you aware of the range of comments, the focus of your comments?
- I-3:** Sometimes I write comments to appreciate students-sometimes students bring assignments copied from others, if I get such work, I write 'this is a carbon copy of someone.
- R:** What do you expect students to do after wards?
- I-3:** To improve for the next assignment, especially copied should be prohibited.
- R:** Do you write students' writing a grade/mark? Why?
- I-3:** yes, because I have to complete the continuous assessment on time.
- R:** Do you have criteria for grading?
- I-3:** For any assignment.
- R:** For final grade
- I-3:** I've criteria. For example in the term papers you saw, there are some criteria like content, organization, grammar, mechanics.
- R:** Last, in your opinion what is the best way to go about error feedback in providing written feedback?
- I-3:** If it is error feedback, I put some sign may be underlining, circling or by indicating and putting the answer above the indicated error, if it is about written comments, most of the time I used to jot down the comments I want to deliver to the students.

## **Appendix F: Transcription of Sample Students' interview**

**R:** How did you feel when you received the teachers' written feedback?

**S-1** – I feel happy when I receive the teachers' written feedback. For the next work I can improve the errors I committed so the teachers correction is in the way I like.

**R:** Do you understand the teachers' written feedback?

**S-1:** Sometimes, teachers' comments and my wants may not match. The teacher may provide comments in the way I cannot understand.

**R:** Is the teachers' written feedback useful?

**S-1:** Yes, because if the teachers don't give comments or error feedback, if I don't know my errors. I will repeat the same mistake, I can't do accurate work. But if I get the correction I know my errors and I'll improve in my next writing.

**R:** what do you do after the teachers' feedback?

**S – 1:** I'll check reference materials.

### **S-2**

**R:** thank you for volunteering for this interview.

**S-2:** Thanks

**R:** How did you feel when you received the teachers' written feedback?

**S-2:** My first impression when the teachers give comments, I was a little bit surprised or confused. I know anything a teacher gives me to correct me so I might be confused or surprised. My first impression may be some sort of confused one but I was actually but after I've seen it I'll already accepted with pressure.

**R:** You seem to imply that you're happy or surprised, but pleased later. Do you understand teachers' written feedback?

**S-2:** Yes, I usually understand it because the teachers gave those kind of corrections in such a way that we can understand and in such a way that was clear.

**R:** Do you find the written feedback useful?

**S-2:** Yes, of course. I've found it useful because even after I got such kind of feedback or corrections I was able to correct some sort of my friends' written material so it was useful.

**R:** Generally, is the written feedback you receive in the way you like?

**S-2:** Ya, it was in such a way that I'd like. First, he'll give me in written form. If there were anything I'd committed on my paper, he will delete it he'll tell me in a very clear way so it is in very clear way and useful, I also like it.

**R:** What do you do after you receive the written feedback?

**S-2:** After I receive such kind of feedback I'll will get that I'll try change my self by correcting I'll will get that I'll try to change my self by correcting I'll try not to repeat that kind of mistakes again.

**R:** Do you refer to books, or dictionaries, etc.

**S-2:** To be honest with you. I don't actually refer to books because the kind of corrections the teacher gives me is not the kind of mistakes that encourage me to refer to books (corrections like making small letters into capital) I can correct my self. I may not go to refer books but if there is any kind of corrections that can be corrected by referring books, I will go to the library and refer.

**R:** Thank you very much

**S-2:** Thanks

### **S- 3**

**R:** Thank you for volunteering for this interview.

**S- 3:** Thank you, too.

**R:** The aim of this questionnaire is to get some information about teachers' written feedback and your preferences for this feedback. How do feel when you receive teachers' written feedback?

**S-3:** It was very interesting? It was useful for me it was important for improving our skills.

**R:** Do you understand the written feedback?

**S-3:** Yes, to some extent, it is understandable to me

**R:** And is it useful for you? How it is useful.

**S-3:** When there is missing ... corrections by the teachers is useful.

**R:** Is the teachers' written feedback in the way you like?

**S-3:** Yes- students' want and teachers' corrections by the teacher is related.

**R:** What do you do after you receive the written feedback?

**S-3:** I take correction from the other, check references, and make corrections

**R:** Thank you

#### **S-4**

**R:** Thank you for volunteering for this interview. The aim of this questionnaire is to get some information about you teachers' feedback and your preferences for this feedback.

How do you feel when you first receive the teachers' written feedback?

**S-4:** When teachers' indicate our errors (eg. Sp) because the correction gave information about my errors. I was happy and it is good

**R:** Do you understand the teachers' written feedback?

**S-4:** I usually understand what my teachers' corrections

**R:** How are they useful?

**S-4:** Based on the corrections, I will improve for the future. I know or identify the type of errors I committed and I'll take care not to commit or make other corrections especially when I'm writing a paper.

**R:** Is the teaches' written feedback in the way you like?

**S-4:** If my paper is covered by red ink I don't like. But if the teacher underlines and identifies the error instead simply underling or circling it is good.

**R:** What do you do after receiving the written feedback?

**S-4:** First of all, it is good to receive the written feedback from the feedback I received it is possible to learn by rewriting my work and correcting my errors.

**R:** Thank you

**S-4:** Thank you

### **S- 5**

**R:** thank you for volunteering for this feedback. How did you feel when you received the written feedback?

**S-5:** It depends on the teacher – in the form of advice – grammar, mechanics, if the teacher comments appreciating me to try again I'm happy. But if the teacher wrongly corrects me I may disagree and be disappointed.

**R:** Do you understand the written feedback?

**S-5:** Yes, I do.

**R:** Do you find the written feedback useful?

**S-5:** Yes, it helps to do more in the future.

**R:** Generally, is the written feedback that you get from the teacher in the way you like?

**S- 5:** Most of the time, yes – but I prefer if the teacher gives me the feedback orally instead of by writing.

**R:** What do you do after you receive the written feedback?

**S-5:** Most of the time I accept the corrections positively and try again to avoid the mistake

**R:** Thank you very much

**S- 5:** You're welcome

### **S-6**

**R:** Thank you for volunteering for this feedback

**S-6** you're welcome.

**R:** What did you feel when you received the written feedback?

**S- 6:** I am happy.

**R:** Do you understand the teachers' written feedback

**S-6:** Yes, I do.

**R:** Do you find the feedback useful?

**S-6:** Yes, when the teacher corrects, I may not repeat the same mistake again.  
So, it is useful.

**R:** Generally, is the written feedback that you get from the teacher in the way  
you like?

**S- 6:** Most of the time, it is in way I like

**R:** What do you do after you receive the written feedback?

**S-6:** I try to re-correct my mistakes.

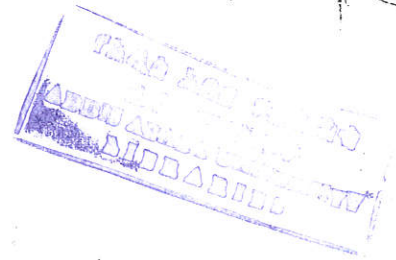
**R:** Thank you

**S-6:** ( ).

## Teaching Learning Process.

First, we would like to thank our English Instructor Solomon for giving basic knowledge about sentence, sentence clarity and paragraph. Under this topic we <sup>have learnt</sup> learn many things. In teaching learning process, you support students by appreciate when we answer and you support student by checking the class work and by correcting our mistake. You are help students like your sister and brother. First, we see about the term sentence and subdivision of sentence. We did different exercises. In the second chapter, also we <sup>have learnt</sup> learn about sentence clarity and pronoun, In addition you give group assignment and presentation to increase the knowledge of the students. Finally we learn the paragraph and by getting the knowledge, we shall to try write one paragraph about the teaching learning process.

(8/10)



- Be aware of tenses and put punctuation marks where it is appropriate.

Direct Correction.

- Substitute 2  
- Add 6  
- delete 1

Indirect Correction

recede 1

"No tension at all!"

## Using Narrative Paragraph

I never forgot my first class of Debrebrihan university, <sup>the</sup> that class was introduction to Accounting. The teaching learning condition <sup>made</sup> make me confused. I believe that I will fail my education. I became tensioned. But now I sawe my problem I said for my self "no tension at all!". By this, every night I would sit at the window reading by the electric light from dusk till dawn.

- It is impressive.

- use past tenses to narrate

part actions

### Direct Correction

- substitute 2
- add 2
- delete -

### Indirect Correction

underline/circle -

9/10

Appendix B - Maked Assignment - sample - 3  
Descriptive Paragraph (I-B)

class

In unit one we ~~were~~ <sup>had</sup> discussed about sentence writing, with like: noun, verb, adverb, adjectival, conjunction e.t.c. We learned ~~that~~ <sup>how</sup> sentence divided into five groups. They are; functional, imperative, exclamatory, interrogative and optative. And when we see the structural division of sentence. we have simple, compound, complex and compound complex sentences. so our unit one lesson <sup>is</sup> based on sentence and its structure.

When ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> came to unit two, our unit two lesson was based on sentence clarity. And we were discussed about confused pronouns reference. They are possessive, reflexive, indefinite, introductory etc. And also we were learned about unclear (vague) pronoun and dangling modifiers. We have two kinds of sentence fragment. They are, phrase fragment and subordinate clause fragment. We were also learned about faulty parallelism. under this we were discussed about subordinating conjunction. And we have some kinds of subordination conjunction like; conditional, time, place and e.t.c. so we were deeply learned about sentence clarity in our unit two lesson.

Generally, we can get a great awareness about sentence and its function from our unit one and unit two lesson.

- Be wise to assess your grammatical arrangements and choice of words.

• Direct Correction	
• substitute	2
• Add	2
• Delete	1
• Indirect Correction	
• Underline	3

8/10

### Abortion

Abortion should be legalized for many reasons. In third world countries, especially Sub-Saharan, improved where improved governance and justice not fully practiced, people unknowingly or knowingly not, married under 18 girls. Additionally some people perform rape and this leads for unwanted pregnancy; moreover, illegitimate children who unable to grow and develop properly. There is also a risk of sexual transmitted disease both to the mother and to the child. Under 18 girls who are pregnant, during delivery have problem, such as fistula, premature birth, etc.

So, abortion should be legalized to help these people.

blondworen laugen

ID = 075

well done!  
3/0

• Direct Correction	
• substitute	<u>1</u>
• add	<u>2</u>
• delete	<u>   </u>
• Indirect Correction	
circle	<u>1</u>

Argumentative/Persuasive Paragraph

Abortion should be legalized or not.

~~Abortion should not be legalized~~

Some <sup>people</sup> person says abortion should be legalized because if there is a law on legality the person goes to directly to hospital, health center (health institution) for legal abortion but if it is not legal they want to go every where on cultural traditional, person at that time the foreign material will go to uterus (♀) damage some part of uterine parts and she may be infected and or excessively bleeding then goes to die. But my opinion is abortion not legalized because if it is legal ~~some person~~ the people (client) will not come at health institution to take family planning method, they said to be if it happen on I want to go for abortion. If <sup>now</sup> it is legal at that time the <sup>no</sup> 7 declining mother will increase the main <sup>cause of</sup> maternal death is one of abortion.

watch out grammar

errors

8/10

Direct Correction

- substitute 1
- add 5
- delete 2

SINAR LINE

Indirect Correction

Underline/circle 6

Our suggestion on English Education

English education is the prerequisite to learn other subjects. We have well experience about English education which given by well trained teacher. We have learned more about the definition of sentences, types of sentences, pronouns, and also how can we write essay free from: dangling run on, miss placed etc. In addition, to this we also learned types of essay writing: narrative, explanatory, argumentative and descriptive writing. But we Ethiopians have great problem in English communication rather joking un wanted (boast) things by Amharic. Due to this lack of daily exercise, every <sup>student</sup> society <sup>is</sup> afraid of <sup>speaking</sup> it. We also sometimes have such problem. We will improve it by practicing daily with peers. Finally, we want to say thank very much that you teach us well and we ~~stand~~ <sup>will</sup> for encourage the next year generation to join English dept.

U good!  
(9/10)

<u>Direct Correction</u>	
• substitute	<u>3</u>
• add	<u>5</u>
• delete	<u>-</u>
<u>Indirect correction</u>	
• underline / circle	<u>7</u>

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are very glad to appreciate to thank the library works who play an indispensable role in providing valuable reference material to do our assignment. Above all, our special appreciation goes to our sophomore English instructor, Dejen M, who allowed all us to participate and do this particular assignment given by the same instructor.

We are also grateful to our close classmates & relatives who guide and assist us in a number of ways to arrive at a best decision making process so that we are forced to do the assignment in such a way that our instructor becomes satisfied at all. Interesting enough, it is good to share our interest to those that bring us in a good situation by informing different information about how to work the assignment.

Finally, we can express our sincere thanks to the second year students that help us with different constructive ideas which certainly play a crucial role in directing us to the exact position of doing the given sophomore English assignments.

Be economical

Source?

Direct Correction	
• Substitute	-
• Add	1
• delete	-
Indirect Correction	
- underline/circle	6

CHAPTER THREE

SUMMARY

When we write a sentence we have to make sure that,

1. The sentence has a subject
2. The sentence has a complete verb, and
3. The clause is not introduced by a subordinating word.

Core ideas:

To correct pronoun we must consider the following:

- The pronouns agree with noun in number, gender and person.
- If the nouns are connected by connecting words it should agree with it, and it should not be confusing and unclear to refer more than one word.

~~It should agree with it, and it should not be confusing and unclear to refer more than one word.~~

**Dangling modifiers:** are modifiers that makes sentence to take unintended meaning. To correct dangling modifiers by revising the independent clause, to make it modify the introductory phrase or make it subordinate clause.

**Misplaced modifiers:** modifiers that modify wrong word, give wrong sense. To correct misplaced modifiers-by moving the modifier as close as possible to the word it modifies.

**Fragment:** is only the part of a sentence which does not express a complete thought. To correct fragment-add subject, subject and verb, modifying phrase, verb-to-be or independent clause.

**Run-on:** are fused sentences as same or written like one complete sentence while they are not.

To correct run-on we should separate main clause with an end mark, comma and conjunction between the main clause.

**Faulty-parallelism:** is the lack of parallel structure occurring when there are non-parallel constructions in a sentence.

To correct faulty parallelism we should make words or phrases similar in structure to get right information.

Direct Correction	
• Substitute	<u>1</u>
• Add	<u>5</u>
• delete	<u>2</u>
Indirect Correction	
• circle / underline	<u>    </u>

(I-3)

**Summary:**

In this term paper we have done that sentence converts a complete thought which has a subject and predicate. *Not Summary but an introduction.*

There are short and long sentences based on the number of a subject and a predicate.

There are two divisions of sentence: these are structural and functional sentences

According to their structures sentences also classified in to simple which has one main clause and no subordinate clause, compound has two or more main clauses that are joined by comma and a coordinating conjunction, complex consists of one independent clause with one or more subordinative clause and compound complex sentence contains the elements of both compound sentence and complex sentence.

Simple sentence which has Subject and \_\_\_\_\_

We can convert one type of structural sentence to another form of structural sentence.

Finally, we deal with classification of sentence based on purpose. Unlike the other classifications, functional division of sentence focuses on how we construct sentence. Based on this fact functional division of sentence is classified in to declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, imperative and optative.

*Not Summary but report:*

- Not well organized.
- Egs: are not correct.
- No coherence b r/n b/n  
Some topics & their body.
- Lacks sources.

- Content - - - 3
- Organization - - - 2
- Completeness - - - 4
- Grammar - - - 5

14 + 2 = 20

Direct Correction.	
Substitute	1
Add	1
Delete	
Indirect Correction	-
Marginal Comment	
- explicit cues	2

# Advantages of Learning English

We know that English is an international language. It can be used to communicate people on the world not only in some countries. There are so many languages which is found in the world, but few of them are lingua franca. So from that English is one of them. Many people in language to be one of them. We learn English language since we were in lower grade. And now we <sup>are</sup> learning the language too and ~~we~~ get important things from what we learn still now. And we learn additional things beside what we know before. We take the course called Sophomore and we learn many things through this from this we get many advantages like now to write sentences, how to discuss about some issues etc... Generally we get important things from our English lesson.

- Use appropriate words

9/10

Direct Correction  
 - Substitute -  
 - add 4  
 - delete 2

Indirect Correction  
 - Underline / Circle 9

8/16

Sample 11

Appendix E - Market assignment (I-4)

II.

## EXPOSITORY WRITING

### PROBLEMS WHICH WE SUFFER

Since ~~January~~ December 24-4-2000 up to now, we have faced many problems in Debre Birhan University. As <sup>long</sup> ~~soon~~ as we arrived at this University, we have never seen such cold weather. But we are challenging it by adjusting our glomings (wearing) and some times by taking food which contains carbohydrates such as: honey, butter etc. In addition to the weather condition, we also faced the problem in department choice. Even if we are social science students, we live the life of more than natural science. Means that most of our first choice <sup>were</sup> was not respected. Mostly, our first choice was management. We tried a lot to change from Accounting <sup>Business</sup> in to social science and ~~to join at English department~~ but it is impossible <sup>well</sup> according to the university's principle. There fore, we forced to join ~~it~~ ~~Accounting~~ ~~Accounting~~. Still we have no know-how about calculation. This influenced in our learning. Due to the decline of our tests, some teachers try to frighten us: every one should prepare your bread case and win <sup>it</sup> ~~it~~ back to your parents house. <sup>plus</sup> to the above problems, the number of females in class as well as in department in creeds than boys, is the head ache of every females. Generally, even if we have faced many problems, we are challenging it up to the rest of five semesters by the help of God.

# DESCRIPTIVE WRITING PARAGRAPH

In unit one we were discussed about sentence writing word like noun, verb, interjection, conjunction, adjective etc as we learned before, sentence <sup>are</sup> divided into five they are functional, imperative, exclamatory, interrogative and optative and when we see the structural division of sentence we have, simple, compound, complex and compound complex sentence so our unit one lesson was based on sentence and its structure. when we came to unit two, our unit two lesson was based on sentence clarity and we were discussed about confused pronouns reference, they are passive, reflexive (indeterminative, interrogative and etc) and also we were alarmed about unclear (vague) pronoun reference and dangling modifiers we have two kinds of modifiers they are, object and adverbs modifier after this we were learned about sentence fragment and subordinate clause fragment, we were also learned about faulty parallelism under some kind of subordination conjunction like conditional, time, place and etc. so we were delay learned about sentence clarity in our unit two lesson. Generally we can get a great awareness about sentence and its function our unit one and unit two lesson.

- 7/10
- Your sentences lack clarity
  - Not well organized
  - Watch out of your grammar & mechanics

Direct Correction

- Substitute —
- Add —
- delete — 3

Indirect Correction

- underline / circle — 4

PHARAGRAPH  
 SOPHOMORE ENGLISH  
 Descriptive

This course of the course sophomore English provide me some knowledge and skill by giving an extended emphasis on the Grammar and how to use Grammar or how to use Grammar in writing. It primarily presents sentences i.e. Type and function of sentences based on their structure and use and how to write each of sentence type when we used it. It provides knowledge about pronouns; how to reduce confusion of pronouns in our written message, how we clearly reference pronouns to their antecedents with respect to number, gender and person (degree). It also lead me to know about modifiers; how to use modifiers in my writing. It means that how modifiers are positioned in sentences and how to reduce dangling modifiers. It also increase knowledge about how to reduce fragments or how to translate my complete thoughts through writing with complete verb and subject.

In my sentence regards to dependant words, in and to, subject and verb in addition to the above it also provide skills about parallelism (parallel construction of sentences) sentence combination and paragraph type and how to write paragraph.

Direct correction

- substitute 2
- add 2
- delete 4

Indirect correction

underline/circle 4

8/10

3

Life in DBU

Debre Birhan University was established in 1997 F.C. In 2000 F.C, the University intake capacity was 1400 students. Most of the students were females. Females did not use the services wisely rather they use in likes did not about the toilet. Due to the above reason, the university fresh air is changed into polluted air and mostly the students have got a common cold. In addition to this now add a night (Electricity) in Ethiopia gives services by the shift, when the lights the University dormitors such type of problem are very difficult to the University.

8/10

Direct Correction

- Substitute - 3
- Add - 1
- Delete - 1

Indirect Correction

• Underline/circle - 3

not a good title

15

How to describe the teaching & learning process in DBU

As we observe the teaching and learning process is very good because of many reasons. Among these the reason, the major one is that it has peculiar or unique is base on continuous assessment.

Means that the students work hard. The reason why the assessment encourages the students to read different materials, so the student is very competent in their activities.

The second reason about teachers and student relation. The relation between teachers and students is very smooth because every student respect the teachers to get full information & to motivate the teachers when the teaching and learning process becomes successful on their education. On the side of teachers, they have a good behaviour that forward to the students, so that it is good situation about teaching and learning process. The other good issue to facilitate good teaching and learning process is the most teachers are young that means fresh, so they have unlimited effort to help their students.

In these campus is very child; that means the new one is starts teaching after five years, so it lacks infrastructure and other facility. For example the infrastructures like road, communication, transportation and network coverage is very poor and also student's recreation place, gym station is not facilitate.

However the student's main target is teaching your success, so it is not great effect on the teaching and learning process, but other problem has very difficult to hinder the teaching process. For example lack of class, library and guidance book, yet the students exist these problem and continue the teaching & learning process without problem.

marginal comments

implicit cue - 1

9/10

Direct Correction

substitute

add

3

delete

2

Indirect Correction

circle underline

# PARAGRAPH

This course or the course sophomore English provides me some knowledge and skill by giving and elevated emphasis on the Grammar or how to use Grammar in writing. It primarily presents Sentences: that is type and function of Sentences based on their Structure and use and how to write each of the Sentences type when we used it. It provides knowledge about Pronouns; how to reduce Confusion of Pronouns in <sup>referring</sup> our written message; how we clearly refer to their antecedents with respect to number, gender and person (they). It also lead me to know about modifiers, how to use modifiers in my writing. It means that how to clearly modify words or how modifiers are positioned in sentences and how to reduce dangling modifiers. It also increase knowledge about how to reduce fragments or how to translate my complete thoughts through writing with complete verb and subject in my sentence regarding to dependent words, inf and to.

Subject and Verb. In addition to the above it also provide skills about Parallelism (Parallel Construction of Sentences), Sentence Combination and Paragraph type and how to write Paragraph.

- do not write such marathon sentences

- It is attempted well

8/10

Direct Correction	
- substitute	1
- add	3
- delete	3
Indirect Correction	
<del>circle</del>	-1

## Declaration

I, the under signed, declared that this thesis is my own work and has not been presented for any other degree and all the sources of materials used for the thesis have been fully acknowledged.

Name Maru Mohammed

Signature 

Date 12/06/2009