A STUDY OF QUESTIONABLE EFFECT OF TEACHERS' CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON UNIVERSITY ENGLISH STUDENTS' COMPOSITIONS

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PH.D. DISSERTATION

Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Ana Bilim Dalı

Assist. Prof. Dr. Oktay YAĞIZ

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(Öğretmenlerin Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Kompozisyonlarına Yönelik Düzeltici Dönütlerinin Etkisizliği Üzerine Bir Çalışma)

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Yrd. Doç. Dr. Oktay YAĞIZ danışmanlığında, Maghsoud ALIZADEH SALTEH tarafından hazırlanan "A Study of Questıonable Effect of Teachers' Correctıve Feedback on Unıversıty Englısh Students' Composıtıons" başlıklı çalışma 08/09/2014 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından. Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Ana Bilim Dalında doktora tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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ABSTRACT

PH. D DISSERTATION

A STUDY OF QUESTIONABLE EFFECT OF TEACHERS' CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON UNIVERSITY ENGLISH STUDENTS' COMPOSITIONS

Maghsoud ALIZADEH SALTEH

2014, 254 pages

The purpose of this study was to cast doubt on the usefulness of comments and feedback written by teachers on university students' write-ups. To this end, the literature pertinent to the topic was reviewed thoroughly. The current study attempts to address and explore three questions as follows: 1) Do the students actually revise their written drafts in response to the teachers' feedback or comments? 2) Do the teachers actually read the minds of students while reading students' written documents in their erroneous and idiosyncratic utterances? And 3) Is there any misfit between teachers preference for areas of language that should be stressed while giving feedback and that of students'?

This study was conducted with the participation university English instructors and English majors from Azad and Payam -e- Noor Universities in the northern part of West Azarbayjan Province, Iran. This research project is composed of two qualitative studies labeled as qualitative study I and qualitative study II and one quantitative study. In qualitative studies I and II the leading source of data was obtained via students' write-ups, but in quantitative study, the major source of information was obtained by means of administering questionnaires. It is worth noting that in all of three studies for the sake of validating and triangulating obtained data, some peripheral and secondary data accompanied the major source of data gathered through different data collecting instruments. The qualitative study I investigated and explored the impact of teachers' comments and feedback on the amelioration of students' writing quality. This qualitative study aims to gauge or reckon university English language teachers' ability in guessing and unearthing the students' intended meaning from conceptually and structurally impaired and deviant utterances. The quantitative study was intended to explore whether there exists any incongruity between teachers' preference for features of language to be emphasized while giving feedback and that of students'.

Faigley and Witte's categorization system was used to classify teachers' comments and students' textual changes for the analysis of qualitative study I. For the qualitative study II categorization system is devised by analogy from Khalil's. The procedure is by utilizing a classification system to map teachers' plausible reconstructions against authoritative reconstructions to pass judgments whether teachers can correctly guess students meaning from unintelligible utterances. For quantitative study, all the information obtained from the participants is fed into the SPSS for statistical analysis. Based on the nature of items in the questionnaires, SPSS yielded miscellaneous sort of data.

The results revealed that teachers' comments and feedback overwhelmingly addressed local issues in the students' papers. The result being that students paid inordinate attention to surface features in revision. They did not seem to ascribe to revision any part more than tidying-up or copy-editing, aimed at eliminating surface errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and diction. Their idea of revision as correcting mechanical errors is also strengthened by the teachers' comments mainly by focusing on or addressing these low level concerns and by drawing on their experience that fixing these superficial issues counts or always leads to improvements in their grade. The research results are also indicative of the fact that teachers' reconstruction or interpretation of learners' intent enclosed in the erroneous utterances are not always free from errors and hence unreliable. It is not unlikely that teachers may impose their self - perceived subjective interpretations in lieu of actually discovering learners' intentions in idiosyncratic utterances. Besides, the results showed that there is a mismatch between teachers' attitudes and preferences as to features of language to be emphasized while commenting and those of students'. Further results and implications are discussed.

ÖZET

DOKTORA TEZİ

ÖĞRETMENLERİN ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN KOMPOZİSYONLARINA YÖNELİK DÜZELTİCİ DÖNÜTLERİNİN ETKİSİZLİĞİ ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

Maghsoud ALIZADEH SALTEH

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Bu çalışmanın amacı öğretmenlerin üniversite öğrencilerinin yazılarına ilişkin yazdıkları yorum ve dönütlerin yararsızlığını ortaya koymaktır. Bu amaçla konu ile ilgili yazın etraflıca incelenmiştir. Mevcut çalışma şu üç soruyu irdelemeye ve araştırmaya çalışmaktadır: 1) Öğrenciler yazılı taslaklarını öğretmenlerinin dönüt ve yorumlarına cevaben gerçekten tekrar gözden geçirip düzeltirler mi? 2) Öğretmenler öğrencilerin hatalı ve kendine özgü ifadeleri ile yazılmış yazılı ödevlerini okurken onların fikirlerini gerçekten okurlar mı? Ve 3) Dönüt verirken vurgulanması gereken dil alanlarına yönelik öğretmen ve öğrenci tercihleri arasında bir uyumsuzluk var mıdır?

Bu çalışma Batı İran Eyaleti'nin güney bölgesindeki Azad ve Payam Noor üniversitelerinden üniversite İngilizce öğretmenleri ve İngilizce bölümü öğrencilerinin katılımı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu araştırma projesi *Nitel Çalışma I* ve *Nitel Çalışma II* diye isimlendirilmiş iki nitel ve bir nicel çalışmadan oluşmaktadır. *Nitel Çalışma I* ve *Nitel Çalışma II* çalışmalarında başlıca veri kaynağı öğrencilerin yazıları (yazma ödevleri) ile bununla birlikte nicel çalışmada başlıca bilgi kaynağı anketlerin uygulanması aracılığı ile elde edilmiştir. Üç çalışmanın tamamında da elde edilen verilerin geçerliliğini ve triyangulasyonu sağlamak adına, bazı çevresel ve ikincil verilerin farklı veri toplama araçları ile toplanmış başlıca veri kaynağına eklendiğine değinmek yerinde olacaktır. *Nitel Çalışma I* öğretmenlerin yorum ve dönütlerinin öğrencilerin yazım kalitelerinin iyileştirilmesi üzerindeki etkisini araştırmıştır.

Nitel çalışma üniversite İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğrencilerinin anlatmaya çalıştıklarını onların kavramsal ve yapısal olarak bozuk ve anormal olan ifadelerinden tahmin etme ve ortaya çıkarma kabiliyetlerini ölçmeyi ve değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Nicel çalışma ile ise öğretmenlerle öğrencilerin dönüt verirken üzerinde durulması gereken dil özelliklerine yönelik tercihler açısından bir uyuşmazlık olup olmadığının araştırılması hedeflenmiştir.

Öğretmenlerin yorumlarının ve öğrencilerin metindeki değişikliklerinin *Nitel Çalışma I*'in analizi için sınıflandırılmasında Faigley ve Witte'in sınıflandırma sistemi kullanılmıştır. *Nitel Çalışma II* için Khalil'den alınan analojinin kullanılması ile oluşturulan sınıflandırma sistemi kullanılmıştır. Prosedür, öğretmenlerin öğrencilerin anlatmaya çalıştıklarını anlaşılmaz ifadelerden doğru şekilde tahmin edip edemedikleri hakkında yargıya varmak için öğretmenlerin olası yeni kurumlarının güvenilir yeni kurumlarla karşılaştırılmasına yönelik bir sınıflandırma sisteminden yararlanma şeklinde gerçekleşmiştir. Nicel çalışma için, katılımcılardan toplanan tüm veriler istatistiksel analiz için SPSS'e yüklenmiştir. Anketlerdeki maddelerin özelliğine bağlı olarak, SPSS çok yönlü veriler sunmuştur.

Sonuçlar öğretmenlerin yorum ve dönütlerinin büyük bir çoğunlukla öğrencilerin kağıtlarındaki lokal sorunlara yönelik olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Sonuç bu olunca öğrenciler de yazıyı gözden geçirirken yüzeysel özelliklere aşırı özen göstermişlerdir. Revizyonda hiçbir bölüme dilbilgisi, noktalama, yazım ve sözcük seçimindeki yüzeysel hataları azaltmayı-yok etmeyi amaçlayan düzenleme veya yazıyı kontrol edip düzeltmeden daha çok yer vermiş gözükmemektedirler. Mekanik hataları düzeltme şeklindeki gözden geçirme düşünceleri öğretmenlerinin çoğunlukla bu düşük öneme sahip alanlara yoğunlaşan veya değinen yorumları ve bu yüzeysel sorunların düzeltilmesinin notlarına katkı sağlaması ve düzelmelerle sonuçlanması yönündeki deneyimlerinden yararlanmaları ile de pekiştirilmiştir. Araştırma sonuçları öğretmenlerin öğrencilerin hatalı cümlelerinde saklı niyetlerini yeniden ifadeleri veya yorumlarının her zaman hatasız olmadığı ve dolayısıyla güvenilir olmadığı gerçeğinin de bir göstergesidir. Öğretmenlerin öğrencilerin kendine özgü ifadelerindeki anlamları anlamaya çalışmak yerine kendi algılamış oldukları öznel yorumlarını dayatıyor olmaları da olasılık dışı değildir. Bunun yanı sıra, sonuçlar öğretmenlerin değerlendirme yaparken göz önünde bulundurulması gereken dil özelliklerine ilişkin tutum ve tercihleri ile öğrencilerinkiler arasında bir uyumsuzluğun varlığını da göstermiştir. Diğer sonuç ve çıkarımlar da araştırılmıştır.

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Last but not least, I am grateful of my wife and son who suffered most during my four - year accommodation in Turkey, and whose unconditional help and patience paved the course smoother.

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ABBREVIATIONS

cf.	: Compare
CF	: Corrective feedback
Ph.D.	: Doctor of philosophy
e.g.	: Exempli gratia
EFL	: English as a foreign language
ESL	: English as a second language
ELL	: English language and Literature
ELT	: English language teaching
ET	: English translation
et al.	: et alii /alia
ibid	: Ibidem
IELTS	: International English Language Testing System
MA	: Master of Arts
L1	: Native language
NS	: Native speaker
NNS	: Non-native speaker
Op. cit.	: Opere Citato
p.	: Page
pp.	: Pages
SLA	: Second language acquisition
L2	: Second or foreign language
S	: Student
T	: Teacher
i.e.	: That is to say, in other words, id est
TOEFL	:Test of English as a Foreign Language
TOLIMO	:The Test of Language by the Iranian Measurement Organization
UG	: Universal Grammar
vs.	: Versus
WCF	: Written corrective feedback

TO THOSE WHO SUFFERED MOST

MY WIFE AND SON

CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Statement of the Problem

Writing is an important skill and a valuable part of any language course and feedback is an important aspect of the teaching of writing. Academic writing is a process of toil, challenge and a process of emptying out one's innermost feelings and emotions (Anderson, 2010). Many factors contribute to the success or failure of academic texts. The obstacles that all writers face in producing these texts can be challenging as they navigate their way through a multitude of complex factors in the quest to produce scholarly, grammatical and interesting writing. The main role of English as a foreign or second language writing teachers is to help their students improve their writing proficiency in accordance with students' needs and course objectives (Polio, 2003).

How teachers correct second or foreign language students' writing is a topic that has aroused interest in teachers as well as researchers (cf. Diab, 2005). However, a recent review of feedback on L2 students' writing by Hyland and Hyland, 2006 in Ellis, 2009 revealed that notwithstanding all the research, there is still no obvious response to the questions posed by the researchers.

For the students of English as a second language attaining grammatical accuracy in their academic writing is an important part of greater academic success. While the goal for students is to achieve this success, the goal for teachers is how best to help, how best to facilitate student improvement and how to involve and implement relevant pedagogy and methodologies so that students can grow and succeed. Although this process is a long and complicated one, the feedback that teachers provide on students' writing plays an important role in this progression (Ferris, 2002; Ferris, 2004; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998).

Providing feedback is viewed both by teachers and students as an important part of writing instruction (Diab, 2005; Lee, 2004, Lee, 2008; Lee, 2009). One type of

feedback that writing teachers provide is error correction. It is perhaps the most widely used method for responding to student writing. For teachers, it represents the largest allocation of time they spend as writing instructors; and for students, error correction may be most important component that will contribute to their success as writers (Sommers, 1982, Sugita, 2006, Zamel, 1985). In the absence of corrective feedback, it is hard for students to get to know that a learning undertaking has been accomplished properly (Chastain, 1988 in Corpuz, 2011 cf. Alamis, 2010). However, the effectiveness of error correction and its contribution to the development and improvement of writing accuracy continues to be debated (Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 1999; Truscott, 1996; Truscott & Hsu, 2008).

Research shows that comprehensive treatment and overt corrections of surface errors are probably not worth the trouble for teachers to make. Numerous studies have revealed that grammar correction to second language writing students is actually discouraging to many students and even harmful to their wring, and even harmful to their writing ability (Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). Generally, those who do not receive grammar correction have a more positive feeling about writing than those who did, wrote more, and with more complexity, than those who did receive grammar corrections. Besides, the precise role of feedback on writing is still, however, subjective and inconclusive. Teachers are burdened by time constraints, and students often fail to incorporate correction (Anderson, 2010 see also Semke, 1984; Truscott, 2007).

The research evidence on the effects of error correction on students' writing skills is far from conclusive (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). Several research studies (Leki, 1990, for example) investigating the effects of different types of feedback on students' writing have suggested that explicit correction on surface level errors (spelling, punctuation, grammar) seems to be generally ineffective. Truscott (1996) goes even further to conclude that this type of correction should be abandoned in language writing classes because it can have harmful effects. Teachers, students, or researchers who have criticized correction feedback as being ineffective or even harmful (for example, Truscott, 1996; 1999; chief among them), may be missing the point. Corrective feedback (CF) is not an island where all errors can be fixed in isolation. It is a part of much larger second language acquisition

(SLA) process, and like anything else in language acquisition, CF takes time to be effective. Truscott's assertion that CF was at best a waste of time and at worst a detriment is intriguing, but it also might be at odds with what is known in second language acquisition theory (Anderson, 2010 see also Ferris, 1997).

SLA studies indicate that second language acquisition takes place gradually over time and that mistakes are an indispensable part of the highly complex developmental process of acquiring the target language. We cannot expect that a target form will be acquired either immediately or permanently after it has been highlighted through feedback. Even though explicit feedback, as some scholars assert (Ferris, 2004 ; Robb, Ross, & Shortreed, 1986, to name a few), can play an important part in second language acquisition, it needs time and repetition before it can help learners to notice correct forms, compare these with their own interlanguage and test their hypotheses about the target language (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Hyland and Hyland (ibid) observed while feedback is a central aspect of L2 writing programs across the world, the research literature has not been equivocally positive about its role in L2 development, and teachers often have a feeling they are not making use of its full power (Ellis, 2008 see also Ellis, 2009; Ellis, 2013). Despite the differing perspectives on the impact of providing corrective feedback on the development and improvement of L2 writing accuracy, it is clear that both teachers and students feel the need for its employment. Guenette (2007) pointed out one of the reasons for the uncertainty lies in the failure to corrective feedback studies that systematically investigate different types of written corrective feedback and control for external variables that are likely to impact on how effective the corrective feedback is.

The research generally does advocate feedback on the student writers handling of content and organization. There is evidence that such feedback is necessary and does result in improved student writing (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Kepner, 1991). Huntley (1992) maintains that feedback on content and organization should be provided to students while feedback on form should be avoided. In short, error correction has a long and controversial history in the fields of second language acquisition and second language teacher education. Whether and how to correct errors usually depends on the methodological perspective to which a teacher ascribes.

Notwithstanding years of research, there still exists considerable conflict about the exact part that corrective feedback has on the amelioration of writing for second

language learners (Huntley, 1992 cited in Diab, 2006; Ferris, 1999; Ferris; 2004; Truscott, 1996; Truscott, 1999). The debate as to the merit of written corrective feedback has given rise to interest arousing and compelling arguments on both sides. The Truscott – Ferris argument starting in the 1990's sparked a considerable augmentation in interest and attention paid towards investigating the role of feedback on students' writing. Apart from questions regarding the basic worth of corrective feedback were also critiques surrounding the methodologies utilized in many of the studies inquiring feedback. Truscott (1996 see Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008) was prominent in calling into question the outline of different studies and the problem with collating empirical studies which were unlike. In fact, much of the vehement that was fueled by the Truscott- Ferris dispute of the 1990's has become less intense, but this (dispute) in turn has served a worthy end: to enlarge and stretch the range of research into corrective feedback (Anderson, 2010). The debate on the effectiveness of error correction may never be fully resolved, and at a cursory glance, it becomes evident that the arguments for and against the teachers' corrective feedback are all square. In plain terms, at times, the balance is upset by the findings favoring corrective feedback and at other times, by the findings devaluing it. This research study intends by presenting convincing arguments and examples abound in the literature review turn the scales in favor of non-corrective feedback group and render the teachers' corrective feedback strategy, branded with a number of pitfalls which will be expounded in greater detail in the chapters to follow, as an activity of no avail.

1.2. The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is three fold. The reason why this study attempts to render error correction treatment practices as a matter of worthless activity is because of some pitfalls associated with it. Firstly, students do not seem to know that revision is an integral part of writing process and have mistaken revision for editing and proofreading. This study intends to substantiate this misconception. Secondly, there also exit misfits between the students' preference for the type of and areas of feedback and those of teachers'. Backing up of this assertion lays on the agenda. And thirdly, teachers, most of the time, do not understand or misinterpret, the students' intention, the result being that teachers by incorporating their perceived corrections render in the first place the

students' written texts incoherent, in the second place, render error correction an act of no or little avail. This study attempts to provide both theoretical and practical corroboration for this cause.

Responding to students' writing is one of the most challenging and time-consuming aspects of the writing instructors' duties. Writing instructors themselves are often uncertain of the best way to provide feedback to their students. According to Wojtas (1998), students are only interested in their mark or grade and pay little attention to feedback. Fritz, Morris, and Bjork (2000) added that feedback does not improve learning even when provided. One explanation for this might be that students do not understand the feedback provided to them. Though a great majority of scholars comment about the merits of providing feedback, the controversy still rages as to whether it helps students improve the accuracy of their writing. Therefore, it is not worth spending so much time all in vain correcting students' errors. This study is an attempt to convince the teachers to abandon this widely and yet eye-blindly practiced task and instead to persuade them to help improve the accuracy of their students' writings by exposing them to the natural language through the use of language for the communicative purposes.

As Krashen (1985) posits conscious knowledge of language does not help the learners to use language. It serves them just as a monitor. Languages cannot be taught. They can only be learned. People learn language in spite of what goes on in the classroom (Krashen ibid). The study is an attempt to make teachers cognizant of the misfits that exit between the teachers' actual classroom performance and that of their theoretical perception or perspective. If the teachers understand that there are mismatches between teachers and students in terms of the type of feedback and areas of feedback offered by the teachers and the type and areas of feedback preferred by the students, then they (teachers) may do away with these mismatches and so doing, the corrective feedback may be of great use. If the students and teachers have a common and reciprocal understanding of the objective behind a special kind of corrective feedback strategy or technique and come to terms in its use, the odds are that the feedback will bear productive results. The opposite is of sure possibility. Diab (2006 see also Brown, 2009; Diab, 2005; Lee, 2009) maintains that If teachers and students have reciprocally uncommon and dissimilar beliefs concerning correction techniques, the

outcome will most probably be feedback that is inefficacious, in the worst case, disheartening for students learning to compose in their second language.

Many language educators and researchers (e.g. Horwitz, 1988; Nunan, 1987; Schulz, 2001 all cited in Katayama, 2007) maintain that matching the expectations of teachers and students is important for successful learning. Accordingly, it is beneficial for teachers to discover their students' perceptions toward instructional practice.

In a nut shell, as a university instructor teaching writing courses, I often felt disillusioned by being forced to rewrite the same comments to many students, and I felt indignant the time invested writing the same comments on students' second and third papers as on their first. It sounds that the status quo of written comments is of no or little avail and teachers should search and devise ways to ameliorate the efficacy of their written comments.

1.3. Research Questions

The current study attempts to address and explore three questions as follows:

1-Do the students actually revise their written drafts of paper in response to the teachers' feedback or comments?

2- Do the teachers accurately read the minds of students while reading students' written documents in their erroneous and idiosyncratic utterances?

3- Is there any misfit between students' preference for particular areas of language that should be stressed while providing feedback and that of teachers'?

1.4. Definition of Key Terms

A number of essential terms will reappear frequently throughout this dissertation. In order to understand the terms used in the present study clearly, definitions of terminologies are addressed in this section.

Teacher correction: The teacher fixes all the mechanical (mainly grammatical) errors by circling or underlining noted and perceived errors and supplying correct answers (Hamouda, 2011) .

Error correction: Error correction is used to refer to the general activity of providing error feedback on student errors (Lee, 2005).

Feedback: The correction of errors by the teacher is now often referred to in the literature as feedback , error feedback, negative feedback, corrective feedback, or error correction. Freedman (1987) offers a more exhaustive definition. She states that feedback; "includes all reaction to writing, formal or informal, written or oral, from teacher or peer, to a draft or final version" (p. 5). "Corrective feedback refers to any reaction of the teacher which clearly transforms, disapprovingly refers to, or demands improvement of the learner utterance" (Panova & Lyster, 2002, p. 574).

Global errors versus local errors: " Global errors were those that had a more serious effect on communication with regard to overall meaning, while local errors were at the syntax level and did not interfere with the intended meaning" (Peleg, 2011, p. 3)

Revision: Revision literally and precisely means to re-visit, to view something from a new, critical viewpoint. It is a progressive process of reconsidering the paper, reexamining your debates, rethinking your evidence, re-polishing your purpose, reordering your presentation, changing and reformulating the tasteless and commonplace prose (Flower, 1981; Horning & Becker, 2006; Murray, 1981; Sommers, 1980, 1981, 1982; Zamel, 1982, 1983).

Small-scale revision: Small scale revision needs to happen when you know that a certain part of your paper is not working. Maybe the introduction needs work. Maybe one part of the argument seems weak.

Large- scale revision: The large scale revision, on the other hand, involves looking at the entire paper for place where your thinking seems to go awry. You might need to provide evidence, define terms, or add an entirely new step to your reasoning (Lehr, 1995; Gocsik, 2005).

Editing: Too often students confuse editing with revising. They are not, however, the same processes. Editing is the process of finding minor problems with a text, problems that might easily be fixed by deleting a word or a sentence, cutting and pasting a paragraph, and so on (Lehr, 1995).

Proofreading: Proofreading is a crucial step prior to submitting your paper. And it comes last in the writing process. Common mistakes caught in proofreading are

punctuation errors, spelling errors, subject- verb agreement, its/ it's confusion, their / there confusion and so on.

Higher-order issues: Throughout this dissertation, the term higher order issues is used interchangeably with high level concerns. Typically, higher order concerns include such aspects as thesis and major supporting points.

Lower – order issues: The term lower order issues is, also, applied indiscriminately with the terms 'low level concerns', 'surface level features', 'mechanical issues', and 'superficial features'. Lower order concerns are grammatical or mechanical aspects of writing.

Micro - structural changes versus macro – structural changes: "Microstructure changes are simple adjustments or elaboration of existing text but macrostructure changes make more sweeping alterations" (Faigley & Witte, 1981, p. 404) .

Formal changes versus meaning preserving changes: " Formal Changes include most, but not all, conventional copy-editing operations. Meaning preserving changes, include changes that paraphrase the concepts in the text but do not alter them" (Faigley & Witee, 1981, p. 402).

Authoritative reconstruction / interpretation: An authoritative reconstruction is obtained when the researcher/ teacher contacts learners in person and confers with them in their L1 the concepts / the meaning that they wanted to utter in their original expressions. Reconstructed sentences with learners' face-to-face consultation are called authoritative reconstructions (Hamid, 2007 see also Corder, 1981).

Plausible reconstruction / interpretation: If learners, however, are not available for this consultation, a plausible interpretation is made in their absence (Hamid, 2007 see also Corder, 1981).

Deviant sentence: A deviant sentence is one which is not well constructed either structurally or semantically or both from the viewpoint or standpoint of a standard or target language norms or rules.

1.5. Limitations of the Dissertation

This study suffers from some constraints that can be expressed tersely as follows:

To begin with, there is a paucity of studies actually inquiring the effect of teachers' feedback or comments on amelioration of student- writers textual changes or revision of their written drafts. Most studies in this area have just scratched the surface of the issue and taken for granted that teachers' comments or feedback on the students' paper will automatically lead to writing quality furtherance. Few studies have truly dealt with the effect of teachers' comments on the writing quality of student writers. This may be partly, as it is the case with this study, because of a shortage of exact and precise classification systems whereby to objectively classify teachers' comments and students' revision changes, not to mention the burden of undertaking the task.

Subjectivity of classification systems used in this study and, as a consequence, obtained results affected by or stained with likelihood of personal biases is another constraint this study had to undergo.

Last but not least, this dissertation embodies two qualitative studies, either one demands rather burdensome duties and tasks from the participants. So being, the participants were not so cooperative. The results being that the researcher had to be content with the small number of participants. Given the small corpus of the study, small number of participants, the particular instruments used for the purpose of data collection, the scope of study encompassing a small area of investigation and only enclosing university English majors and English teachers, all and all contribute to the limitations of this study. The implications are, thus, quite clear. Great care and circumspection should be taken while generalizing the results to the whole population.

1.6. Overview of the Dissertation

In the first chapter, the research problem, the rationale of the study, the specific questions to be specifically pursued, the key terms frequently seen, and the limitations of the dissertation are given and second chapter will present the previous studies related to the treatment of written errors in the context of second language teaching. The pertinent literature will be reviewed and analyzed with the intention of providing a theoretical foundation to the current study. The literature review will concentrate on the

futility of error treatment in second language acquisition. Due to the complexity of the topic and various opinions, the thesis will be presented in the sections as follows: the first being the discussion of theoretical perspectives of second language acquisition (SLA) and instruction and it will be followed by error correction treatment discussions and criticisms leveled against it and again this will be followed by the students and teachers' preferences for the type and areas of feedback. In chapter 3, a general and brief discussion of the methodology is given. Then it will be followed by the description of the procedures utilized in the data gathering process. Afterwards will come in sequence the procedure for analyzing the data consisting of two qualitative data and one quantitative data. Chapter 4, will see the analysis of the data of the study. First, the analysis of the qualitative data I and qualitative II, then the quantitative data will be presented. Chapter 5 will be devoted to discussion and conclusion and finally, pedagogical implications, if any, and some suggestions for further studies will be presented.

CHAPTER II

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter, literature review, will present the previous studies related to the treatment of written errors in the context of language teaching. This chapter will begin by discussing the theoretical perspectives of second language acquisition (SLA) related to error correction with the intention contextualizing the role of written error correction in language learning. It will then document the ongoing debate by reviewing previous studies on the ineffectiveness of providing written error correction. The pertinent literature will be reviewed and analyzed in order to provide a theoretical foundation for the present study.

Due to the complexity of the topic and various opinions, the literature itself will be presented in the sections as follows: the first being the discussion of theoretical perspectives of second language acquisition (SLA) and instruction and it will be followed by error correction treatment discussions and criticisms leveled against it and again this will be followed by the students and teachers' preferences for the type and areas of feedback.

2.2. Second Language Acquisition Theories

Error correction has a long and controversial history in the field of second language education. Whether and how to correct errors usually depends upon the methodological perspective to which a teacher ascribes. In order to contextualize the role of error correction in L2 learning, it is essential to discuss the different theoretical perspectives of second language acquisition. Over the years, theorists and researchers have investigated one fundamental question: how does a person learn another language after learning the first? Because of this, various models of SLA have been developed in order to explain how people are able to learn an L2. This section of the chapter will

discuss the various SLA theories that are relevant to understanding the role of error correction in language teaching methodology.

2.2.1. Behaviorist Theory of Language Learning

One of the fundamental theories that brought about the emergence of providing written error correction in L2 writing classroom was the behaviorist theory. During the 1950s, the behaviorist theory dominated the mainstream psychology. Historically, the behaviorist teaching models that were practiced in the 1950s and 1960s such as Audio lingual method stressed error correction at all costs. Behaviorists viewed errors as inevitable, but strove to avoid and overcome them by providing speedy examples of correct responses. Brooks (1980 cited in Keshavarz, 2008, p. 128 cf. Corder, 1981) wrote " like sin error is to be avoided and its influence overcome… the principal way of overcoming it is to shorten the time lapse between the incorrect response and a once more presentation of the correct model". According to this theory, language learning involves the formation of habits. This perspective stems from work in psychology that viewed the learning of any kind of behavior as being based on the notions of stimulus and response (Corder, 1981; Keshavarz, 2008; Mitchell & Myles, 2004). In other words, the behaviorist theory asserts that humans are exposed to numerous language stimuli in their environment and their repeated responses to these stimuli will lead to the formation of habits. When applied to language learning, the behaviorist view implies that language learning is promoted when the learner makes active and repeated responses to the stimuli (Skinner, 1957 cited in Corpuz, 2011) . These responses are then reinforced when repeated over and over to form habits that consist of automated responses elicited by a given stimulus. Hence, the implications for language teaching are that language learning would take place through imitation and repetition of the same structures time after time. Furthermore, the theory suggests that teachers need to focus their teaching on structures which were believed to be difficult. By considering this implication it can be inferred that written error correction provided by teachers could serve as the stimuli to which language learners would actively respond in order to promote effective language acquisition.

However, in the 1970s second language acquisition research cast doubt upon behaviorist models of instruction and question the value of grammar instruction and

error correction in the second language classroom, largely based on the research findings of naturalistic SLA. The behaviorist theory was criticized by Chomsky (1959). According to Chomsky, learners create novel utterances that they have never learned before, rather than simply reproducing utterances to suit particular situations. Learners are able to create new sentences by internalizing rules, rather than a string of words. In addition, Chomsky states that the process of language learning is complex and abstract. Some of structural aspects of language could not possibly be learned by students on the sole basis of language stimuli to which learners are exposed. This criticism led to the demise of the behaviorist theory and linguists started viewing the nature of language learning within a naturalistic / communicative perspective. Furthermore, it can be inferred from Chomsky's criticism that providing written error correction may have a minimal effect on students' language development since structural aspects of a target language are learned through internalizing language rules, rather than repeated responses to stimuli.

2.2.2. Generative Transformational Grammar

The shortcomings of behavioristic views of child language acquisition led researchers to seek and formulate an alternative theory, namely the generative theory of first language acquisition. The generative theory with its typical rationalistic approach deals with deeper questions and looks for clearer explanation of the mystery of language acquisition. This theory is also known as the nativist approach. The term nativist, according to Brown (1987 in Keshavarz, 2008), is derived from the fundamental assertion that language acquisition is innately determined, that we are born with a built-in device of some kind that predisposes us to language acquisition- to a systematic perception of language around us, resulting in the construction of an internalized system of language. Lenneberg (1967 cited in Keshavarz, 2008) proposed that language is a species- specific behavior and that certain modes of perception, categorizing abilities, and other language-related mechanisms are biologically determined.

Chomsky (1965) similarly claimed that there should exist innate properties of language to explain the child's mastery of his native language in such a short time despite the highly abstract nature of the rules of language. Chomsky in his critical review of skinner's **verbal behavior** declared that the acquisition and use of human

language is not solely dependent upon stimulus-response which was the essence of Skinner's theory. He rejected the widely –held, but untenable, view that children learn their native language by merely copying in whole, or in part, the utterances of adults in their environment. He said it seems to me impossible to accept the view that linguistic behavior is a matter of habit, that is solely acquired by reinforcement and association (Chomsky, 1966). Instead, Chomsky claimed that the child is equipped with an innate capacity, called language acquisition device (LAD) which enables him to acquire and produce his language creatively. Language acquisition device is made up of a set of principles which allow the child to work out the deep structure of particular languages. These general principles are known as Universal Grammar, which is generally innate. In other words, Chomsky and his followers claim that human languages, though isolated in time and space, share universal properties while having unique characteristics as well.

2.2.2.1. Universal grammar

The Universal Grammar (UG) model, proposed by Chomsky in 1980s, is a development of his earlier ideas into a new form by him, the second conceptual revolution. UG has increasingly been used to explain how second languages are learned, chiefly by those who approach L2 learning from a linguistic perspective. The Universal Grammar model claims that every speaker knows a set of principles which apply to all languages and also a set of parameters that can vary from one language to another, but only within certain limits (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992 cf. Cook, 1991; VanPatten & Benati, 2010).

The Universal Grammar model claims that principles and parameters are built-in to the mind. Learners do not need to learn structure dependency because their minds automatically provide it for any language they meet, whether it is English, Chinese, or Arabic. However, they do need to learn that English is non-pro-drop or non-null subject (to use VanPatten & Benati's term), while Chinese is pro-drop or null-subject language. It is the parameter settings that are to be learnt. All the learner needs in order to set the values for parameters is examples of the language. Hearing, "*there are some books on the table*, a learner discovers English is non-pro-drop because dummy subjects only occur in non-pro-drop languages" (Cook, 1991, p. 117).

Learning in the Universal Grammar model is a straightforward matter of getting the right input. In this theory language input is the evidence out of which the learner constructs knowledge of language. Such evidence can be either positive or negative. Positive evidence consists of actual sentences that learners hear, such as " the train leaves London at five". The information in the sentence allows them to construct a grammar that fits the word order facts of English that subjects come before verbs, verbs come before objects, and prepositions come before nouns. The positive evidence of the position of words in a few sentences they hear is sufficient to show them the rules of English (Cook, 1991; Cook, 2003; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Negative evidence has two types: Because learners never hear certain kinds of sentences, say, sentences without subjects in English such as *leaves* they deduce that English sentences must have subjects-the same evidence as that advanced for curved bananas in the song *I have never seen a straight banana*. The other type of negative evidence is correction: *No you mustn't say 'you was here' you must say 'you were here'* (Cook, 1991, p. 177).

Negative evidence by correction is also different in L2 learning. In the first language it is not so much that it is ineffective as that it does not occur. In the second language it can, and often does, occur with high frequency. The L2 learner has an additional source of evidence not available to the L1 learner. Furthermore, the L2 learner often has grammatical explanation available as another source of evidence. The usefulness of success of this can be debated(Cook, 1991).

Vivian Cook (2003) points out that even though many learners fail to achieve complete mastery of the target language, there is still a logical problem of second language acquisition. That is, we need to find an explanation for the evidence that learners eventually know more about the language than they could reasonably have learned if they had to depend entirely on the input they are exposed to. This suggests that knowledge of Universal Grammar must be available to second language learners as well as to first language learners. Researchers working within the UG framework differ in their hypotheses about how formal instruction or the availability of feedback on their learning will affect learners' knowledge of second language. Schwartz (1993 in Lightbown & Spada, 2006) concludes that such instruction and feedback change only the superficial appearance of language performance and do not really affect the underlying systematic knowledge of new language. Rather, language acquisition is based on the availability of natural language in the learner's environment (Ellis, 1997;

Ellis, 2008; Krashen, 1985). L2 learners need to spend comparatively little effort on grammatical structure as the UG in the student's mind is so powerful there is comparatively little for the teacher to do, since it results from the setting of a handful of parameters. They do, however, need to acquire an immense amount of detail about how individual words are used. The comparative simplicity of syntax learning in UG model is achieved by increasing burden of vocabulary learning.

2.2.2.2. Parameter setting

The L2 learner listens to input and sets the parameters accordingly. The question is whether resetting parameters is the same as setting parameters. Does the fact that there is already one setting in the L2 learner's mind affect learning? White (1986 cited in Cook, 1991) used the pro-drop parameter concerning the presence or absence of a subject in the sentence to investigate this issue. She found that the first language setting for the parameter was indeed carried over to the second. That is to say, Spanish learners of English initially assume that subjects are not needed, French learners assume that they are. Research on other areas of syntax has often produced similar conclusions. The acquisition of L2 word order is influenced by the L1, as is the acquisition of movement of elements within the sentence. It seems that mostly L2 learners seem to start from their L1 setting rather than from scratch (Cook, 1991; Cook, 2003; Ellis, 1997; Ellis, 2008; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; VanPatten & Benati, 2010). So, the fundamental question that arises here is: what does the development look like in second language acquisition (SLA)? There exist two fundamental features of development in SLA. One is that there is developmental sequence or stage like development, specifically, in the domain of sentence structure but not exclusively so. Second feature is ordered development. Each of which will be elaborated on in the sections that follow:

2.2.2.3. Stage - Like development

SLA is a stage like development. Since the early days (1970s) of modern research, staged development has been documented. Stages have been documented for negation, question formation, and other sentence structures in English. One of the most distinguished developmental sequences is negation in English. The stages are illustrated in the following table:

Table 2.1.
Stage – Like Development

Stage	Description	Example
1	negation external to the sentence	no drink beer
2	negation moves inside the sentence	I no can do these
3	appearance of modals and attachment of negation	I can't do that one
4	appearance of analyzed 'do' with negation attached	She doesn't like that one

(taken from Van Patten & Benati, 2010, p. 27; cf. Ellis, 2008)

Developmental sequences have been widely documented in both classroom and non- classroom contexts and is taken for granted in SLA. Besides, "instruction has no effect on stages. That is, learners do not skip stages because of instruction; instruction does not alter developmental sequences" (VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 27). For sure, stages are not arranged in an orderly way that learners suddenly skip something like 'no drink beer' and go straightforward to 'I no drink beer'. As the learners travel along stages, they may produce structures from stage 1 as they enter stage 2 and while in the middle of stage 2, sometimes produce a stage 1 or a stage 3 structure. What constitutes the stage is the great majority of the structures produced. A student is in stage 2 since most of what he or she produces for a given structure has stage 2 like feature. Staged development obeys U-shaped behavior. " U-shaped acquisition, also known as U-shaped behavior, is a particular kind of developmental pattern. During U-shaped acquisition, learners' performance suggests they are doing something rather well. Then, there is a drop off during which their performance indicates a loss of ability, or knowledge. Subsequently, they regain the ability or knowledge" (VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 164 cf. Corpuz, 2011; Ellis, 2008; Keshavarz, 2008; Troike, 2006).

Thus, the acquisition of forms such as 'went' follows a U-shaped pattern of development, with children first using it correctly (for example, 'went') and then incorrectly (for example, 'goed') before they finally once again produce the correct form 'went'. Thus, in foreign language teaching, for the optimum educative effect, grammatical morphemes in the target language should be taught in a specific order. For

example, if morpheme A cannot be learnt effectively without knowing morpheme B, morpheme B should be taught first. This is not always possible, however, because all morphemes cannot be stored in a one- dimensional relationship. On the other hand, knowing which morphemes learners at a certain proficiency level have mastered and which ones they have not could lead to more efficient language teaching (Ellis, 2008; VanPatten & Benati, 2010).

Many studies conducted in an attempt to reveal the second language learners' acquisition order of major grammatical morphemes in the target language, mainly English. As the second languages spoken by the learners of different mother tongues having different features, it is clear that L1 interference has a large effect on second language acquisition. So, is the acquisition order different among learners of different L1?

Based on the results obtained from these studies, it was hypothesized that differences in L1 or other aspects of learners' backgrounds cause differences in the acquisition order (Cook, 1991; Ellis, 2008; KırkGöz et al., 2010; Troike, 2006; VanPatten & Benati, 2010). Although acquisition orders do not seem to be influenced by the L1- that is, whether you speak Chinese or Spanish does not determine the overall order of acquisition of morphemes in English- the rate at which learners acquire morphemes and possibly even how well they do with particular morphemes might be influenced by the L1, especially L1 phonological properties. Truscott's (1996, 1999) reasoning is that the existence of developmental sequences is one of the decisive factors which render error correction debased and unfounded.

2.2.2.4. Ordered development

Besides stages of particular structures, there are also acquisition orders. Whereas developmental sequence implies the acquisition of one particular structure, acquisition orders have to do with the relative order in which different structures are acquired over time (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Therefore, while we have stage like development for the acquisition of irregular past tense forms, in which order the irregular past tense will be acquired as far as the acquisition order of other verbal inflections in English such as third-person-s, and progressive-ing is concerned? For English verbal inflections, the following acquisition order is rigidly pursued: 1) progressive-ing 2) regular past tense 3)

irregular past tense 4) third person-s (KırkGöz et al., 2010; see also Cook, 1991; Ellis, 1997; Ellis, 2008; Keshavarz, 2008; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Troike, 2006; VanPatten & Benati, 2010).

In short, affirmation for instruction making no difference emanates from studies conducted to enquire the impact of formal instruction on the course or path of acquisition and precision. Path, as mentioned above, suggests acquisition orders and developmental sequences. The former suggests the sequence in which particular morphemes such as plural-s, past tense-ed and third person-s are learned over time. The latter, however, suggests the stages or platforms the learners travel in internalizing one particular feature of language. Instruction has been incapable of changing acquisition orders; " learners cannot acquire linguistic features out of order nor can they skip developmental sequences. Because acquisition orders and developmental sequences appear to be immutable, instruction is seen to have no role in the acquisition of formal features of language" (VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 48; Ellis, 2008; Troike, 2006).

2.2.3. Krashen's Monitor Model Theory

Perhaps the most debated and most fully-elaborated model of SLA is Krashen's 'Monitor Model'. In 1970s and 1980s, some scholars averred that error correction was not only superfluous, but also deleterious to SLA. Perhaps the most eminent and outstanding supporter and activist of the " hands off " approach to error correction is Stephen Krashen, whose monitor model includes five hypotheses about language learning (Russell, 2009, p. 21).

2.2.3.1. Acquisition vs. learning theory

In Krashen's acquisition- learning hypothesis, he makes a distinction between implicit (i.e. unconscious) and explicit (i.e. conscious) acquisition of L2 and contends that these two processes are independent and distinct. Of the two, he asserts that only acquisition is the more important one, the process ultimately responsible for language use. Krashen (2004, in Corpuz, 2011) argues that formal instruction and corrective feedback has a very limited role in SLA since the learned knowledge that is the outcome of instruction would be of no help for the learners in the acquisition of target language. He contends that formal instruction contributes to the learning of explicit knowledge

and is unrelated to acquisition (see also Chastain, 1988; Corpuz, 2011; Ellis, 2008; Goldstein, 2004; Krashen, 2009; Troike, 2006; VanPatten & Benati, 2010).

Besides, he claims that learned system has a delicate and secondary part in acquisition for the learned knowledge cannot turn into or effect the implicit acquisition of an L2. According to Krashen, these two systems are far apart. " Most persons working within Universal Grammar would contend that acquisition is implicit, as underlying competence is the result of the interaction of processed data with principles and parameters of Universal Grammar. This interaction happens outside of the learner awareness" (VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 32; Ellis, 1997). Such positions, for sure, do not do away completely with the part played by explicit knowledge, nor do they render it totally futile as far as SLA is concerned, but they imply that implicit knowledge has a primary and fundamental role in SLA, whereas explicit knowledge plays a peripheral and secondary role, if any.

Krashen argues that since language acquisition occurs naturally, error correction may have little or no effect on the acquisition process. The distinction between 'acquiring and learning' suggests that the student's ability to write fluently and accurately is acquired through exposure to texts in a natural process of communication, rather than through studying grammatical and syntactic rules of the language (Krashen, 1984 cited in Corpuz, 2011). Krashen's persistence that conscious knowledge is entirely separate or distinct and cannot be transformed into subconscious knowledge resulted in position known as non-interface position. Krashen averred that subconscious knowledge can only grow when meaning negotiation is the learner's focus of interest or attention, and that neither practice nor error correction has the power of translating learnt knowledge into acquired one. Besides, he asserted that utterances are originated by the acquired system and that the learnt system only becomes active or of influence when learners oversee or monitor the output from it. " Monitoring is possible when learners are focused on form rather than on meaning and have sufficient time to access their learnt knowledge. However, learners can also modify their output by means of 'feel', using acquired knowledge" (Ellis, 2008, p. 420). The monitor theory came under attack from several sides, Mclauglin (1978b in Ellis, 2008), chief among them. Mclauglin (ibid) asserted that Krashen's acquired / learnt dichotomy was untenable because it could not be proved; Krashen failed to provide adequate definition of what he means by

‘subconscious’ and ‘conscious’ and he has provided no way of independently determining whether a given process involves acquisition or learning (Mclauglin, 1978b cited in Ellis, 2008).

2.2.3.2. Natural order hypothesis

It was based on the notion that L2 acquisition, as in the case of L1 acquisition, unfolds in an ordered sequence and that the teachers need to be cognizant of this when they are teaching (Anderson, 2010; Chastain, 1988; Ellis, 2008; Keshavarz, 2008; Troike, 2006; VanPatten & Benati, 2010). Although teaching out of sequence may result in partial or short term use of a particular feature, if it is far removed from its place in the natural order, students cannot successfully acquire it (Krashen,1985). A number of studies generally known as morpheme studies conducted by a good number of scholars such as (Dulay & Burt, 1973; Bailey, Madden, and Krashen, 1974; Larsen-Freeman, 1976b, Krashen, Butler, Birnbaum, & Robertson, 1974 cited in Ellis, 2008) who unanimously agree that acquisition order is not rigorously immutable but is wonderfully congruous despite the learners’ language backgrounds, their age, and whether the medium of instruction is speech or writing. A dissimilar order takes place only when the learners bring the form rather than the meaning of their utterances into the focus (Ellis, 2008). Krashen’s (1982) natural order hypothesis implies that we acquire the rules of language in a predictable way and this is independent of the order in which rules are taught in language classes. To put it differently, the natural order hypothesis expresses that learners acquire grammatical forms and structures in a firmly established order that are immutable to error correction or instruction (Dulay & Burt, 1973,1974 cited in Russell, 2009 cf. Ellis, 2008).

SLA insights point to the fact that different linguistic categories should not be treated as if they are equivalent because they represent separate domains of knowledge that are acquired through different stages and processes (Bitchener, Young & Cameron, 2005). This is a very important point which is often disregarded by teachers who regularly keep correcting the students’ papers with no productive outcomes (Krashen, 1984 cited in Martinez, 2006 see also Bitchener et al., 2005; Nayernia, 2011; Robb et al., 1986; Semke,1984).

2.2.3.3. Input hypothesis

The comprehension hypothesis states that we acquire language when we understand messages, when we understand what people tell us and when we understand what we read. Our reading ability, our ability to write in an acceptable writing style, our spelling ability, vocabulary knowledge, and our ability to handle complex syntax, is the result of reading. Although a great deal of learning takes place through exposure to comprehensible input, learners may require negative evidence (i.e. information about the grammaticality), in the form of either feedback or explicit instruction, when they are unable to discover through exposure alone how their interlanguage differs from the L2.

The input hypothesis, or 'i+1' refers to the comprehensible input that is required for successful acquisition to occur. If the language being inputted is too complex, it is outside of the learners' abilities (such as i+2 or i+3) cannot be successfully acquired (Krashen, 2004). Learning tends not to take place when the material is too new or, conversely, too familiar. Retention will best take place somewhere in between novelty and familiarity (Larsen- Freeman, 2000 see also Chastain, 1988). The implication of input hypothesis for language teaching pedagogy is that if the presentation of instructional material or the provision of meta linguistic information to the learners, in the form of corrective feedback, exceeds far too the learners' current level of knowledge, the learners will have much difficulty internalizing the given guidelines.

2.2.3.4. Affective filter hypothesis

The affective filter hypothesis states that anxiety can heighten a learner's affective filter, which hinders or obstructs fluency in the L2. Terrell (1977, 1982 in Russell, 2009) put into practice Krashen's hypothesis about SLA to classroom instruction by creating the natural approach, a teaching method that lays stress on the development of communicative competence in lieu of attainment of grammatical faultlessness. The natural approach prevents both structured grading and error correction so as to lower students' affective filter. According to Terrell (1977 in Russell, 2009, p. 22) "affective rather than cognitive factors are of primary concern in the language classroom, and the correction of students' errors is negative in terms of motivation, attitude, and embarrassment. With this method, teachers never present grammar explicitly or correct learners' errors". Grammar, thus, is not educated. It is,

however, no longer the star player but has only a supporting role (Krashen, 2004 in Doughty,1988). Abandon all instruction (Krashen and Terrell , 1983 in Doughty, ibid). However, it is up to individual learners to study grammar or structures outside of class and to correct their own written errors (cf. Chastain, 1988; Ellis, 2008).

2.2.3.5. Monitor Model Hypothesis

Krashen's monitor model hypothesis is also pertinent to error correction. The hypothesis, also known as the monitor hypothesis, contends that the rules a student learns aid very little to the learners' language ability because language rules are primarily used to facilitate the learners' language output and comprehensible input is a prerequisite condition for L2 acquisition. In other words, language rules act as an editor or monitor that is utilized by an L2 student to make changes to the output of the L2 before or after the utterance is actually spoken or written. Because of this, the language rules that students learn through error correction may only have a minimal effect on language production, since the output produced by the students is monitored by the acquired language system (Chastain, 1988; Krashen, 2004; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Therefore, it can be argued that although providing written error correction facilitates the writing output of students, it is still uncertain as to whether or not learning has occurred. Furthermore, the hypothesis asserts that the rules students learn have limited application in communicative situations. Because of this, even if the students learn every rule of the target language, the usefulness of those rules is very limited, and to some extent, useless. Hence, it can be inferred that the monitor hypothesis asserts that error correction, regardless of its application, simply has no effect on the language acquisition (Corpuz, 2011 cf. Chastain, 1988; Cook, 1991; Ellis, 2008; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Richard et al., 1992; Troike, 2006; VanPatten & Benati, 2010) .

Krashen (2004) contends that correction helps us fine tune and adjust our consciously learned grammar rules. By the same token, Truscott (1996) asserts that correction only seems to help when students are tested on tests in which the conditions for monitor use appear to be met, e.g. a grammar test.

However, Major (1988 in Corpuz, 2011) states that those who neglect the importance of grammatical competence tend to ignore errors completely as long as

students' writing output are comprehensible. Because of this, students often produce appropriate but grammatically incorrect sentences.

2.2.4. Pienemann's Teachability Hypothesis

Pienemann set forth a series of hypotheses investigating the impact of instruction on SLA. "He argued that instruction will not enable learners to acquire any developmental features out of sequence because processability constrains acquisition and thus any instructional efforts" (Pienemann, 1998 cited in VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 48 see Ellis, 2008). According to Pienemann (1988 in VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 132) " L2 learners must learn certain output processing procedures in order to sting words together to make L2 –like utterances. These procedures emerge over time and in a set order of stage –like fashion. Learners cannot skip any procedure or stage, and any given stage assumes the stages prior to it" (cf. Corpuz, 2011). This hypothesis foresees that language instruction can only benefit the learner on the condition that the L2 student's interlanguage approaches the point when the structure to be taught is acquired in the natural setting. To put it in other words, L2 learners can derive benefit from language instruction provided that their current level of knowledge is fully prepared for it. Therefore, it can be inferred that the impact of instruction or error correction is confined to the instructional materials which the L2 learner is prepared to process (Corpuz, 2011 cf. Ellis, 2008; VanPatten & Benati, 2010). Furthermore, instruction may lend hand to the learners to gain command of a certain developmental feature on the condition that the requisite processing operations for the production of those developmental features that precede it in the acquisitional order have already been acquired. The underlying cause of the stages has not been fully explained, but they may be based at least in part on the learner's developing ability to notice and remember elements in the stream of speech they hear (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Researchers corroborating this view contend that while certain other features of language, say, individual vocabulary items can be taught at any time, other features unfold in accordance with the learner's internal built-in syllabus or schedule.

It is assumed that processing devices will be acquired in the order of " activation in the production process. Thus, failure to master a low-level procedure blocks access to higher- level procedures and makes it impossible for the learner to acquire those

grammatical features that depend on them" (Ellis, 2008, p. 461; Corpuz, 2011; Ellis, 1997; VanPatten & Benati, 2010).

Other researchers have also argued that instruction is not necessary as learners have access to Universal Grammar principles and therefore do not need instruction. Acquisition of an L2 occurs through the interaction between these universal principles and input, thus, learners reset parameters not because they are taught, but because the available evidence in the input leads them to do so (VanPatten & Benati, 2010). In contrast, there are scholars who argue that instruction is beneficial by reasoning that instruction can accelerate the process utilized by learners as they travel along acquisition routes and instruction will help the learners go further ahead.

According to Pienemann each stage suggests certain output processing procedures that the learner has acquired. However, the stages are hierarchical in order and cannot be skipped. Learners follow a very rigid route in the acquisition of grammatical structures. Structures become learnable only when the previous steps on the acquisitional path have been acquired. Thus, a learner at stage 2 cannot be taught to make the output processing procedures for stage 4, for example (Pienemann, 1998 cf. Ellis, 2008). Pienemann (1984 in Ellis, 2008, p. 861) in an oft- cited experimental study demonstrated that instruction in 'inversion' was a success, provided that a leaner had arrived at the immediately " preceding stage, but not in the case of another learner who was at a much earlier stage. Subsequent longitudinal studies by Pienemann further demonstrated the immutability of the word order sequence and the failure of instruction to alter it" (cf. VanPatten & Benati, 2010; Troike, 2006).

A number of studies investigating the effects of instruction on the acquisition of English 'question forms' produced somewhat less convincing support for the claim that instruction is powerless to affect the sequence of development. Based on Pienemann's viewpoint, when the learner is at the right or proper language acquisition stage, instruction can accelerate SLA process with respect to speed of acquisition, the frequency of rule application, and the different linguistic contexts in which the rule has to be applied (Corpuz, 2011)

We, as teachers, have witnessed that notwithstanding our repeated explanation of a particular grammatical point, the students commit the same error over and over again in their subsequent writings (Fritz et al., 2000). This implies that learners' built-in

syllabus is the main determinant in language learning process rather than the teacher's imposed syllabus (KırkGöz et al., 2010; Keshavarz, 2008). Because instruction or error correction cannot change the developmental sequences in any real way but it can accelerate the application of a particular rule when they are ready to use them, Pienemann asserts that instruction is not in totality of any good; instead, instruction is constrained. It can be inferred that the feedback provided by L2 teachers is optimal during the stage when students are ready to internalize the feedback. In addition, the implication of this hypothesis regarding error correction in second language instruction is that L2 teachers need to focus their feedback and error correction strategies to suit the language learning readiness of the students.

Doughty's (1988) empirical study on relative clauses reinforced the role of instructor. When taught more difficult relative clauses (i.e. prepositional object and object), students unexpectedly picked up an easier one as well (subject). This contradicts traditional approach to grammar which said that simpler items should be taught before the more complex in the order the instructor presents them. Similarly, the work on German and English implies that not all features are " developmental in the sense that their acquisition occurs at a particular stage of learners' overall development. Some are variational, i.e. they may or may not be acquired by individual learners and can be acquired at any stage of development" (Ellis, 2008, p. 98). Meisel, Clashen, and Pienemann (1981 cited in Ellis, 2008) cite 'copula' as an example of a variational feature, indicating that learners differ immensely regarding both whether and when they attain it (Ellis, 2008).

From Pienemann's processability or teachability hypothesis can be inferred that two types of constraints are imposed on instruction:

1) Linguistic constraints 2) processing constraints

As stated before, acquisition is not spontaneous and entails things such as acquisition orders, developmental sequences, and other stage like learning. These orders and sequences are quite fixed and impervious, implying that they cannot be changed in a considerable way (i.e. learners do not jump over the stages and go from A to Z without first passing through the preceding or interweaving stages). Also, we have noticed acquisition being largely unaffected by instruction, meaning that instruction does not seem to change acquisition orders and developmental sequences. Due to these

observations, we can think of acquisition being constrained. That is, learners are equipped with the blueprint which determines in advance the shape that language will take (Mitchell & Myles, 2004 cf. Lightbown & Spada,2006 ; Ellis, 2008). It simply means that learners must be bringing something to the task of those constraints.

In one model of acquisition, at least, "the development of formal features of language may be constrained by universal properties of language. That is, languages themselves are constrained in certain ways and because languages are constrained, acquisition of them is constrained as well" (VanPatten and Benati, 2010, p. 53). In SLA, two types of linguistic constraints have been studied. Those based on 'Universal Grammar', and those based on 'Typological Universals'.

2.2.4.1. Typological Universals

Typological universals are identified by examining a representative sample of natural languages in order to identify features that are common to all or most of these languages. Typological universals can be " absolute tendencies (i.e. occur in all languages) or implicational (i.e. the presence of one feature implies the presence of another" (Ellis, 2008, p. 982 see VanPatten & Benati, 2010). That is, if X exits in a language, then Y exists as well. If languages have object relative clauses, then they will have subject relative clauses. Such statements give rise to the notion of markedness. Ellis (2008) asserts that the term markedness is defined in different ways, but underlying all of the definitions is the notion that some linguistic features are special in relation to others, which are basic (see VanPatten & Benati, 2010). If a feature is natural, easy and universal, it is regarded as unmarked. On the contrary, if a feature is unnatural, difficult and specific, it is regarded as marked. Avoiding going deep into details, a basic question that arises here is how does markedness affect acquisition? VanPatten and Benati (2010) are of the view that it is more difficult to learn the more marked things in relation to less marked things. They either emerge later in acquisition compared to their less marked counterparts or are more difficult to master. Thus, subject relative clauses are easier to acquire than object relative clauses. Thus, markedness may constrain acquisition in that unmarked features of language should appear prior to marked ones.

2.2.4.2. Universal grammar constraints

Within Universal Grammar, the idea is that language is composed of abstract principles and that these principles constrain the way in which acquisition happens. Thus, learners may actually be barred from making some errors because Universal Grammar just does not allow the options the errors would imply (VanPatten & Benati, 2010). Structure dependence principle is one such a principle. It means that a knowledge of language relies on knowing structural relationship in a sentence rather than looking at it as a sequence of words, e.g. not The / policeman / raised / his / revolver / but

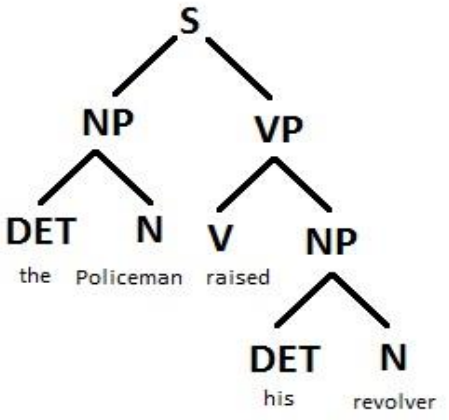

Figure 2.1. Structural dependence (taken from Richard et al., 1992, p. 392)

That is, all syntactic operations are structure dependent. This principle prevents learners from assuming that syntactic operations happen on words or on the order of elements in a sentence. Rather, words are pieces or components of syntactic structures such as phrases which are at the center of syntactic operations. Thus, learners approach the task of learning a language having the knowledge of " what languages can and cannot do and these things are the principles of Universal Grammar" (VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 55). Universal Grammar, then, restrains, the hypotheses that learners can form and restrains their linguistic evolution and growth in certain ways (see Ellis, 2008; Richards et al., 1992; Troike, 2006).

In short, acquisition orders and developmental sequences for acquiring a particular feature of language appears to be invariable, thus, teachers' error correction

practice, in particular, and teachers' instruction, in general, are constrained by these principles. Error correction or instruction is of facilitative or accelerating effect only if the learner is at the right or proper language acquisition stage. It can be inferred that the feedback provided by the teacher is optimal only during the stage which corresponds with learner's proficiency level and in the correct order which the learner can internalize.

2.3. Teachers' Feedback and Comments

As early as 20th century, a number of scoring styles whereby teachers evaluated students' writings were offered. Many teachers find it necessary to assign a letter grade to those papers, a grade untidily and carelessly scribbled in foreboding red ink (Alamis, 2010 see also Semke, 1984). The grades, indeed, imparted nothing of teachers' evaluation of the content, the mechanics, the style, or even the organization of the paper. The student is left to figure out the reason behind the grade on his/ her paper until the next paper was due.

Studies have revealed that language teachers tend to believe that grammar knowledge is the most responsible for learners' positive performance in language production. This perspective influences other facets of language teaching, including writing assessment. For instance, teachers' final decisions on grading learners' grammar accuracy. For this reason, some language teachers scrutinize students' grammatical errors. But not very long ago, things changed. As Connors (1993, cited in Alamis, 2010) contends teachers conceived that grades per se do not assist students in ameliorating their writing skills. Teachers found that grading (Alamis, 2010) scales were only useful as devices for management decision making rather than for student betterment.

Teachers little by little do away with just assigning grades and began bringing students' papers under meticulous and scrupulous observation and considered essays as real audiences and regarded marginal and end comments as the most efficient ways of explaining to the students what needed attention in their writing (Connors, 1993 in Alamis, 2010). Investigating learners' errors is one of major issues dealt with in the field of second language acquisition research. Learners' errors are viewed as a natural and integral part of the learning process. They are also regarded unavoidable, since learners are involved in the exploration of target language (Hamouda, 2011). In a

similar vein, Raimes (1991 see also Bartholomae, 1980; Raimes, 1979) views errors as windows into the mind. A good number of researchers regard errors as " windows to the language acquisition process and as the reflections of the learner's internalized knowledge of language" (Al –Mekhlafi,1997 as cited in Soori, Janfaza & Zamani, 2012, p. 495 cf. Zhu, 2010). We cannot learn a language, whether it be first or second language, without goofing (Keshavarz, 2008 cf. Martinez, 2006; Nayernia, 2011). Learners' errors cannot be seen as signs of failure or serious obstacles to be overcome or eradicated because they actually constitute an important aspect or rather an unavoidable feature of language learning, being then considered as sign of achievement or progress in language learning and as part of language creativity as well. In this sense, James (1998 cited in Agudo, 2012) reminds us that " error is likewise unique to humans, who are not only sapiens and loquens, but also homo errans" (Agudo, 2012, p. 122*)* . The vexing conundrum arises here is that, then, what is the part played by the teacher vis-à-vis learners' errors? Or better to say, should teachers supply corrective feedback on learners' errors or should they not? (Agudo, 2012; Katayama, 2007; Khalil, 1985).

The present study attempts to highlight or shed light on the vanity of written comments or feedbacks offered by the teacher which not only serve no enabling factor in helping students to improve their writing but rather negatively affect students' perspectives towards comments.

2.3.1. Teachers' Written Comments

Responding to student writers errors is a controversial issue and this controversy still rages between the supporters of both options- pro- correction and non-correction – since research has not been able to establish or substantiate, beyond reasonable doubt, that providing feedback is a decisive factor in the attainment of language fluency and accuracy (Guenette, 2007 see also Rezaei, Mozzaffari & Hatef, 2011).

For years and years, error correction in writing has been a matter of hot altercation and strife among language practitioners and researchers. Attitudes towards error correction ranges from the utter abolition of errors before 1960s to strong disapproval of error correction as being noxious and unjustified in the late 1970s, and to a more serious view

of the need and value of error correction in the 1970s and 1980s (Lee, 1997 see also Soori et al., 2012).

The prominence that grammatical errors have had in English language learners' writing, both as daily classroom feedback and as an assessment criterion, has been thoroughly debated. One critical issue in this ongoing debate is presented by Truscott (1996, 1999), who claims that corrective feedback may help with subsequent drafts but does not promote language acquisition. Ferris (1999), on the other hand, insists that careful and consistent feedback is a potential tool for language acquisition. There is among teachers and researchers a widely- held and a deeply seated, yet untenable, belief that grammar correction should, and even must be an inseparable part of writing courses (Truscott, 1996 see also Agudo, 2012).

Another key issue in this debate relates to the supposition that by placing too much emphasis on learners' grammar-based errors, instructors may send English language learners the message that it is their sentence- level errors that they must focus most of their attention. Accordingly, it has been argued that such a practice, highlighting or laying stress on English language learners' grammatical errors when appraising their written work, may give rise to the false belief that once grammatical competence is ameliorated, English language learners will certainly create well- formed texts. Such a sentence- level approach has been admonished recently; many scholars embolden language teachers to utilize a discourse in lieu of a sentence-level approach when they assess English language learners' texts.

Truscott (1996 cited in Lee 1997) even opts for a strong viewpoint and argues for the abolition of grammar correction in the L2 writing classroom (see also Agudo, 2012; Binglan & Jia, 2010; Erel & Bulut, 2007; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Ferris, 2002). Truscott's reasoning is that grammar correction is both pernicious and ineffective, hence, it has to be forcibly uprooted from the writing classroom. He further argues that the existence of developmental sequences is one of decisive factors which render error correction debased and unfounded. When students are corrected on a point for which they are not ready, the correction is not likely to have much merit (Truscott, 1996 see also Binglan & Jia, 2010 Krashen, 1982; Truscott, 1999; Kırkgöz et al., 2010). This absurdness of error correction was not unexpected for the learners are in the stream of acquiring the language and it is their interlanguage that we are correcting which

increasingly unfolds and fluctuates as approximates the target language (Gobert, 2010; Truscott, 1996).

However, until thorough explanation and justification and complete document on the vanity and futility of error correction is found, Truscott's argument would likely have little influence on classroom teachers (see Agudo, 2012). Also, there is abundance of evidence to indicate that ESL students crave for error correction and that it is effective (Agudo, 2012; Oladejo, 1993; Zhu, 2010). So, teachers are forced to deal with errors in the classroom (see Makino, 1993; Alamis, 2010; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Ferris, 2002; Mings, 1993 in Salikin, 2001; Salikin, 2001; Truscott, 1999). Students pursue teacher comments to apprehend their ability and inability. Students crave for feedback in the area of content in the form of approbation or recommendation (Alamis, 2010; Hamouda, 2011). Comments communicate to the students what needs to be revised or changed in their writing for the next draft or paper. The absence of comments sends the messages to the students that they do not need to revise their text because their meaning has been communicated effectively to the audience (Alamis, 2010, cf. Bitchener et al., 2005; Guenette, 2007; Makino, 1993; Salikin, 2001; Sommers, 1982 ; Truscott, 1999)

How much of students' erroneous and feigned belief in error correction is owing to support it gets from their teachers? To some degree, "the argument from students' belief is circular" (Truscott, 1999, p. 116). By correcting students' papers, teachers entice students to have faith in it, as students develop strong faith in it, teachers feel that they must keep using it (Truscott, 1999). Hendrickson (1978 cited in Makino 1993) averred that error correction can demonstrate to be helpful in making students to achieve higher degrees of proficiency provided that they are errors that break down communication, torment the learner, and show up more often (see also Hendrickson 1978 cited in Lee, 1997). Long (1997 in Makino, 1993), however, argued that error treatment is not so momentous and others have had their own uncertainty on the usefulness of error correction (Krashen, 1982; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; cf. Krashen, 1982 cited in Ellis, 2009). Their reasoning is that errors committed by the learners are viewed as the natural and indispensable part of language learning process, and simply indicative of an established stage of their interlanguage which will grow naturally into more precise, proper and well- timed forms (Makino,1993 see Keshavarz, 2008).

SLA researchers also disagree about the role corrective feedback plays in L2 acquisition. Krashen (1982 cited in Ellis, 2009) called error correction a gross mistake. He advanced two major reasons for his viewpoints. First, error correction has the instantaneous influence of putting the student on the defensive, the result being that the learner circumvents or skips errors by evading the use of complicated constructions. Second, error correction only promotes the growth and expansion of conscious knowledge and plays no part in acquisition of unconscious knowledge. VanPatten (1992) disseminated a corresponding view to Krashen's, contending that correcting errors in learner product has a tenuous impact on the unfolding system of most language learners (Van Patten cited in Ellis, 2009). This is while other SLA researchers, especially interactionists have attributed an accelerating role for corrective feedback in second language acquisition.

2.3.1.1. Feedback

Writing is an important skill and a worthwhile part of any language course. Feedback is an important feature of the teaching of writing (Keh, 1990; Mongomery & Baker, 2007). Keh (1990) defines feedback as the drive or force which navigates or pushes the writer through the process of writing on to the eventual end product. Feedback is a significant component of a process approach to writing. It shoulders the function of sending input from reader to the writer with the intention of providing information to the latter for revision. It is the comments, questions or suggestions a reader provides for the writer to engender "reader-based prose" as opposed to "writer-based prose", to use Flower's terms (Flower, 1981, p. 63). It is through feedback that the reader signals to the writer that where he or she has gone astray, or beguiled or bewildered the reader (Keh, 1990). Among the kinds of feedback is teacher feedback (Oladejo, 1993; Zhu, 2010). Unfortunately, there seems to be a dearth of literature about this type of feedback. It is noteworthy that responding to students' writing is time-consuming and requires a great deal of effort from teachers (Peterson, 2010; Semke, 1984 Zamel, 1985). Teachers expect longingly that this time and effort which they spend correcting and commenting on their students' written work will result in some progress in students' compositional skills.

Different researchers (i.e. Freedman, 1987; Sommers, 1982, to name a few) maintain that feedback is an indispensable aspect in the writing process and that it plays a substantial part in acquiring this skill. Through feedback, learners perceive whether they are moving on the right track or not. When they go astray, further feedback helps them to take corrective action about their writing so as to improve its accuracy and reach an acceptable level of performance. Feedback is not intended just to help the student writers to monitor their advancement but it also means arousing their interest to adopt another's perspective and adjust the message to it (Flower, 1981).What is more, another worthwhile characteristic of feedback is that it discourages students in regarding their text as an end or finished product and urges them to compose multiple drafts and go through the cycles of revision in order to engender a much improved piece of writing (Zamel, 1985 cf. Flower, 1981; Sommers, 1981; Sommers, 1982).

Additionally, feedback is helpful in encouraging students not to consider what they write as a final product and in helping them to write multiple drafts and to revise their writing several times in order to produce a much improved piece of writing (Asiri, 1996). This can be adopted and benefited from in a teaching situation where rewriting is encouraged. That is, in situation where the process approach to writing is employed. Sommers (1982) asserts that it is not only student writers who need feedback to make revisions, but also professional and mature writers seek feedback from professional editors, and from their writer colleagues to help them know whether they have imparted their ideas or not. In the absence of feedback, students can become discouraged (Hedge, 1988), and lose sense of how they are doing and which aspects of their writing they should award more attention to. Asiri (ibid) asseverates that their efforts may be misdirected and they may gain an inaccurate impression of their performance in the writing skill. Moreover, a lack of feedback may also create the assumption among students that they have communicated their meaning and, therefore, they do not perceive a need to revise the substance of their texts (Sommers, 1982 cf. Hyland, 2003).

It is a widely-held conviction that in foreign language teaching and learning an erroneous utterance should not be left in the air but corrected (Martinez, 2006). If they left unnoticed or went uncorrected, it is more likely that they would be deeply rooted or fossilized in the learner's cognitive repertoire and it would be doubly difficult for

learners to use language correctly (Semke, 1984; Valero, Fernandez, Iseni & Clarkson, 2008).

Teachers' end and marginal feedback or comments are necessary to a student revising and rewriting his /her composition. The teacher needs to figure out how his /her students regard the feedback. He needs to know whether the students disregard the comments or think sagaciously about their writing and make revisions. Sommers (1982 cited in Alamis, 2010 see also Sommers, 1981) maintains that teachers' feedback should inspire students to re-examine their texts with inquisitiveness and involvement . The idea of giving feedback should be stretched or extended from the mere writing something on the student -writers' papers to fix or patch up their goofs to conducting an interactive process whereby students are granted with the chances to pinpoint their problems, to seek solutions and to appraise likely solutions via seeking help from their fellow partners or teachers. Supplying students with direct feedback and reckoning that it will work is based on the assumption that regards human mind as a hollow container into which teachers can pour whatever knowledge they want (Chuang, 2012 cf. Gabillon, 2007).

The challenge and strenuous task we, as teachers, confront is to organize and develop comments which will supply an essential reason for students to revise; " it is a sense of revision as discovery, as a repeated process of beginning again, as starting out new, that our students have not learned. We need to show our students how to seek, in the possibility of revision, the dissonances of discovery" (Alamis, 2010, p. 20 cf. Sommers, 1981; Sommers, 1982).We, as teachers, ought to bear in mind that students must apprehend the feedback and be susceptible of doing something with it. Teachers, also, must be congruous with their feedback, accommodate it to their students' proficiency and competency to self-repair. The results of some studies are reminiscent of the fact that students await feedback from their teacher and generally feel that it helps them (Guenette, 2007).

Making comments should be an integral part of the teaching and learning process, not something for learning to struggle against. Student writers should be trained that rewriting and revision are vital to writing, and that editing is a progressive, multi-level process, not simply a rash, hurried check for grammatical precision (Alamis, 2010). Feedback appears to be pivotal to the process of teaching and learning as revision to the

process of writing. It is, thus, necessary both teachers and students, to accomplish their roles effectively, to have an increasing knowledge of the nature and function of the feedback. Dehram (1995) by likening feedback to a two-bullock cart argues that in order for the cart to walk or move in the proper course, its two bullocks need to be wary of the objectives of their attempts but also each other. This follows that teachers and learners should opt for a collaborative approach to the processing of feedback.

Having outlined the features of a feedback, it is the right time to deal with the negative aspects of the teachers' feedback or comments which are the focus of the present study.

2.3.1.2. Comments are time-consuming and of little or no avail

Writing teachers customarily write comments on students' papers to utter their reactions to students' work--an activity that demands a huge investment of time (Agudo, 2012; Carol, 2005). Written comments, here, refer to any notes teachers make on students' compositions for the sake of communicating with them, such as checkmarks, grades, statements, questions, and punctuation marks. Teachers seem to envisage that such comments will benefit students and that the students will utilize the new knowledge in succeeding papers or drafts of the same paper, conducing to optimal writing (Dohrer, 1991). Several studies have demonstrated that provision of feedback on local issues or low level concerns does not assist learners to commit fewer local errors than providing no feedback on such issues does (Truscott, 1996), and some studies have even proposed that correcting local errors leads learners to make more errors on subsequent drafts (see Truscott, 1996). Truscott (1996) has reasoned that such feedback may not be of any assistance because students need much longer to automatize or internalize grammatical rules than would happen from one draft to another. Moreover, Truscott (1996) contends that correcting local errors takes time away from focusing on aspects of writing which students have a greater likelihood of improving over the course of one writing class. Student writing appraisal can be one of the most daring, tedious, challenging, baffling, daunting, and time-consuming tasks (Agudo, 2012; Carol, 2005; Dohrer, 1991; Ferris, 2004; Lee, 1997; Sommers, 1982; Truscott, 1999; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). In spite of the fact that responding to student writing is a significant and purposeful part of teachers' task, it is, more often than not, characterized by " negative terms,

referred to as frustrating, grueling and anxiety-ridden, tedious and unrewarding" (Lee, 2008a, p. 13 see Lee, 2008). Teachers, their efforts notwithstanding, are portrayed in belittling words " as composition slaves and as paternalistic figures who appropriate student writing" (Lee, 2008 a, p. 13 cf. Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Greenhalgh, 1992; Neal, Neill, Schendel & Huot, 2007; Reid, 1994; Sommers, 1982, 1985; Wang, 2010). It consumes time, energy, and more importantly, mental energy (Hamouda, 2011; Peterson, 2010; Semke, 1984; Sommers, 1982; Valero, et al., 2008; Zamel, 1985).

That writing teachers invest immense amount of time answering their students' paper is a fact. According to one survey, teachers take at least 20 to 40 minutes to respond to or provide comments on a single paper and this devotion will detract from other aspects of their learning (Carol, 2005; Lee, 1997; Ferris, 2004; Guenette, 2007; Semke, 1984; Sommers, 1982; Truscott, 1999; Valero, et al., 2008; Zamel, 1985). Zamel (1985) gives a detailed account of an English teacher likened to a tired dog which clearly depicts the dreadful and challenging nature of writing comments:

> *It is a November midnight, Johnny Carson has just ended, and throughout the block the last lights flick-off- all but one that is. A single orange light blooms in the darkness. It is the English teacher, weary-eyed, cramped of leg, hand, and brain, sifting listlessly, but doggedly through piles of themes, circling, marking, grading, commenting, and guilt -ridden because the students were promised that papers would be returned last week. The fifth cup of coffee grows cold and bitter. Just one more paper. And then one more, and then …*
> (p. 79 see also Freedman, 1987 for a similar description).

Not only is the drudgery act of correcting students' written tasks time-consuming (Lee, 2009; Hamouda, 2011), for there are simply too many aspects to attend to when responding to a piece of student writing, including content, organization, development, rhetoric, just to name a few , but the feedback the teacher receives is more often than not negative. In a similar vein, Carol argues that a teacher often invests hours on a paper with little pay off in student learning (Carol, 2005). The above quotation may suffice in convincing an impartial, unbiased person to cast doubts at the effectiveness of feedback, but an overwhelming majority of teachers are still slaving over student writing with little or no avail (Lee, 2009, see also Carol, 2005). The term 'slavery' was

rightly applied by Hariston (1986 in Lee, 2009) to denote the hardship and drudgery teachers confront in marking student writing (see also Freedman, 1987; Lee, 2009; Zamel, 1985). We all witnessed, even nowadays, that in a great number of teaching contexts " teachers are still slaving over student writing, making deadline after deadline to provide timely feedback to student writing. While teachers burn midnight oil to mark student writing, students who make significant progress as a result of teacher feedback may be few and far between" (Lee, 2009, p. 34 cf. Lee, 2008; Lee, 2008a). More often than not, teachers are very unsure of the consequence of their endeavors, and they are hard pressed to substantiate that students betterment, if any, can be attributed to their diligence and assiduousness (Lee, 2009). Even more disheartening than exhausting themselves with undue hard work is a sense of absurdness or futility. Writing teachers gain satisfaction from knowing that their students are learning. Nothing dispirits them more than the feeling that irrespective of their hard work, their students are not learning. No matter how many papers they collect and mark, the essays remain unfocused and dull (Carol, 2005 cf. Lee, 2008).

The return of papers embellished by unavoidable red marks, gives rise to looks of frustration and despair in the students' countenance (Oladejo, 1993; Semke, 1984; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). The teacher wonders whether the students will take time and trouble to read the corrections, to say nothing of learning from them (Semke, 1984). We all, as students, have experienced receiving of an essay spoiled or ruined with an instructor's mysterious, indecipherable comments (Chun-xian, 2007). Inundated with piles of papers to read and not knowing how to supply efficacious commentary, mentors (i.e. teachers) often inscribe a few dictatorial, overbearing comments and assign a compulsory score (Treglia, 2008 cf. Hamouda, 2011) . Nothing damages the student's reputation save degrading comments, recurrent and wearisome correction (Corder,1997 cited in Valero, et al., 2008).

Most teachers have observed and, even more likely, encountered with an exasperated and uninterested student who defiantly or casually casts a newly- returned piece of writing into the classroom garbage can after looking at the score but without even bothering to take a quick glimpse at the written comments (Freedman, 1987 see also Chun-xian, 2007; Guenette, 2007; Hamouda, 2011; Valero, et al., 2008). Guenette (2012, p. 117) illustrates the case in point as follows:

> *October, 12, 8:45 a.m.: I hand back the essays my students wrote as practice for the upcoming exam. October, 12,9:5 a.m.: Two thirds of the essays that I spent the whole weekend commenting, praising, and correcting end up in recycling bin.*

Radecki and Swales'(1988) study seeking to cogitate on students' reactions to teachers' comment and on teachers' markings of students papers found that students first take a look at their grades on the returned papers rather than the comments, implying that for students grades are of prime interest or importance. Nonetheless, most teachers still keep on giving grades and more arduously devote time and energy to write comments.

The findings of many experimental studies on written corrective feedback conducted over the last 20 years have been so contradicting and contentious that second language teachers looking to sustain the educational option to correct, or not to correct, the grammar of their students' written products are " left in the midst of controversy" (Guenette, 2007, p. 40 see also Binglan & Jia, 2010).

There are several imperfections or blemishes that lie with old fashioned strategies of correcting grammatical errors. The outright correction of surface errors has been found to be inconsistent, unclear, and overemphasizes the negative points of the essay (William, 2001 cited in Naidu, 2007) . Moreover, when this type of feedback is given, students for the most part simply duplicate the corrections into their succeeding drafts or final copies. The majority of students do not jot down nor study the mistakes highlighted in the feedback. The superficial accuracy of student writing bettered considerably only if the participants were prodded into correcting their errors than if they were not. Clearly, CF (corrective feedback) can only have an impact if students attended to it (Ellis, 2009). Findings of the study by Chandler signified the importance of student correction or revision, and it might be possible that if students did not review or alter their writing on the basis of feedback about errors, getting teachers to mark students' papers after papers was tantamount to giving no error feedback (Chandler, 2003). Getting students simply duplicate or transfer teacher correction into rewrites is a quiescent action that does not tutor students how to identify and self repair their own errors (Naidu, 2007).

That correcting papers consumes instructors' most invaluable time and energy that could be otherwise spent on more valuable aspects of writing is confirmed by Semke (1984). He opined that correcting students' free writing is an exhausting task for the teacher. He argues by reasoning that the amount of free-writing assignments is more determined by the teacher's correcting time than by the amount believed to be helpful to a student's writing. By the same token, Carol (2005) in her book entitled as 'papers, papers, papers' contends that there is a scanty of evidence to demonstrate that teachers' rewriting ends in improved student writing. They do it because they cannot help themselves. It makes them feel devout and enthusiast about a job well done, but if it means 15 minutes spent on a single paper revising, it may mean that they are giving up teaching or assigning or specifying fewer student essays. Carol's (2005) assertion vindicates Lee's (2008 see also Lee, 2007; Lee, 2008a) finding that teachers refrained from selective marking of students' writing just to evade being indolent and irresponsible, thorough, detailed and meticulous marking, by way of contrast, was also meant to make up for student efforts and to provide motive and reason for additional efforts from the students (Lee, 2008). One teacher in Lee's (2008) study on being interviewed remarked that if teachers did not provide comprehensive feedback, it would be difficult for teachers to convince their students to put much effort in their writing. Therefore, it was not only the matter of responsibility but also of doing justice to students' work. Likewise, Goldstein (2004) reported that teachers felt that if they commented on everything, they overwhelmed them, if they did not comment on everything, they did students disservice. He (the teacher in Lee's study) also reported that when students perceive an immense amount of time their teachers expend on marking their output, they are indirectly evoked that they should exert balanced, if not to say more, endeavor in their writing (Lee, 2008 cf. Carol, 2005).

That teachers' arduous and assiduous labor of writing comments to student writers' papers is an activity of little or no avail is strongly corroborated by Krashen (1984 cited in Robb et al., 1986 see also Hamouda, 2011) who avers that feedback should be adjourned to the final stages of revising and he prescribes intensive reading practice as a long-term panacea for the immediate problems of surface-level errors. Overseeing student production while that production is in the course of unfolding may not only be unproductive but may hinder additional development. " We should hold in

abeyance our reflex-like reactions to surface-level concerns and give priority to meaning" (Krashen, 1982 cited in Zamel, 1985, p. 96 cf. Hyland, 2003; Truscott, 1999 in Kırkgöz et al., 2010; Truscott & Hsu, 2008), for by being apprehensive about mistakes prior to helping them with the most critical and serious problems of sufficiently representing meaning, we may be teaching students to do the same.

It is an all-agreed upon fact among language teaching professionals that whereas a teacher plays a needful part in language teaching process, it is the learner who is the leading figure or character at the center of learning process. Based on Personal Agenda Hypothesis proposed by Schumann and Schumann (1977 cited in Martinez, 2006) every student has his own personal taste or attitude on what he wants to learn and the way he wants to do it. The reason why some learners do grasp something but not others, could be attributed to the learners' ability to choose from a lesson only those items that they want and in the way they want. This implies that learners' built – in syllabus or learner engendered sequence, is the main determinant in the language learning process rather than the teacher foisted syllabus (Corder, 1981 cf. Keshavarz, 2008; Kırkgöz et al., 2010; Lightbown & Spada, 2006 Pienemann, 1998). Had teachers known this, they would certainly have raised less hue and cry against their students' heedlessness to their comments (Kırkgöz et al., 2010; Krashen, 1982; Nayernia, 2011).

In the same vein, Nunan (1995 in Gabillon, 2007) avers that learners tend to ensue their own agenda rather than those of their teachers. The leading reason for the incongruity or incompatibility between teachers and learners, which results in dissimilarity between what is taught and what is learned, is that there is disharmony between the instructional syllabus of the teacher and that of the learner. Whereas the teacher is engaged in teaching one thing, the learner is, very often, awarding attention to something else.

Likewise, Krashen's (1982) Natural Order Hypothesis accounts that we gain the rules of language in a foreseeable manner and this is free from the sequence or arrangement in which rules are tutored in language classes. " SLA insights point to the fact that different linguistic categories should not be treated as if they are equivalent because they represent separate domains of knowledge that are acquired through different stages and processes" (Bitchener et al., 2005, p. 194 cf. Falhasiri, Tavakoli, Hasiri & Mohammadzadeh, 2011; Ferris, 1995; Truscott, 1996; Truscott, 1999 in Ferris

, 2002; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). This is a very important point which is often disregarded by teachers who regularly keep correcting the students' papers with no productive outcomes (Krashen, 1984 cited in Martinez, 2006; Nayernia, 2011; Robb et al., 1986; Semke, 1984; Truscott, 1996).

Nayernia (2011), corroborating the viewpoints of Krashen (1984) with regard to language teachers' groan about their students' inability to use the target language structures as they are taught, asserts that this situation arises because of teaches' wrong conception that learner-produced structures should be in complete concordance with the input they are subjected to. This attitude overlooks the role of intake – the part of input that the learner assimilates-which is unrelated to the teachers' agenda and relates to the learner's internal agenda (Nayernia, 2011 see Kırkgöz et al., 2010; Krashen, 1982).

Truscott (1996 cited in Bitchener et al., 2005) contends that grammar correction has no room in writing course and should be dislodged from it. He concludes that there is no convincing research evidence that error correction ever helps student writers improve the accuracy of their writing (see also Binglan & Jia, 2010; Hyland, 2003; Lee, 1997; Peleg, 2011 Semke, 1984). He argues by reasoning that in the first place, it does away with SLA theories about the successive and intricate process of learning second language linguistic structures and forms (cf. Martinez, 2006), secondly, it is pernicious, for it robs the teachers of their invaluable time and energy to be devoted to the productive aspects of a writing program. Besides, Truscott contends that correction tends to make students to curtail and simplify their writing to eschew from being corrected, thereby reducing their opportunities to practice writing and to experiment with new forms (Truscott, 1999, cf. Krashen, 1982 cited in Ellis, 2009; Spandel, 2005 see also Radecki & Swales, 1988 for a similar viewpoint). Efficient correction ought to be grounded on a sound apprehension of complicated learning processes in lieu of depending on naive and ingenuous beliefs of imparting knowledge from teacher to learner, as it is the case with current error correction practices (Truscott, 1999 cited in Peleg, 2011see also Truscott, 1996).

Truscott (1996 cf. Truscott & Hsu, 2008) further asserts that Interlanguage unfolds through tender, feebly apprehended processes. It would have come as a surprise if all types of teaching / learning were congruent with them. Rather, some will fail to impress the underlying, unfolding system, instead engendering merely a superficial and

more likely ephemeral form of knowledge, with little merit for actual use of language. Such learning would be best known as pseudo learning. If the information gained via grammar correction is, or can be, pseudo or fictitious knowledge, then teachers have further reason to discredit the technique's merit (Truscott, 1996 see also Truscott, 1999).

In contrast, Ferris (1999 cited in Bitchener et al., 2005 see also Peleg, 2011), contends that Truscott overstates the negative findings, and disregards those studies that contradict his argument. Ferris (1999) challenges Truscott's viewpoint, claiming that his (Truscott's) arguments were hasty and overly zealous given the rapid growth of a massive bulk of research evidence highlighting the ways in which effective correction can be of help, at least, for some student writers on the condition that " it is selective, prioritized, and clear" (p. 192 see also Agudo, 2012; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Freedman, 1987; Lee, 1997; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Valero, et al., 2008). This is while Semke (1984) contends that corrections are hardly conducive to writing accuracy, writing fluency or general language proficiency; they may deal a lethal blow to students' confidence or attitudes especially when they make corrections on their own.

Santos strongly discards as unfounded Ferris and Roberts (2001) claim that student writers favor correction whether it is direct, indirect or coded by reasoning that at times the categorizing and tabulating of errors becomes a matter of personal understanding and taste (Santos, 1988 see also Khalil, 1985). Labeling errors by type or category may well be more time-consuming for teachers than just indicating that an error has been made (Radecki and Swales, 1988). More momentously, there is much greater likeliness that the teacher may mislabel an error if she/he is identifying it by type rather than simply locating it for the student.

Tedick and Gortari (1998) also reproaches Ferris strong corroboration of direct correction by stating that your students may well be more gifted than you perceive. As teachers, we, often feel a rush in with the correct response long before they are granted sufficient amount of time to process information. Should we allow time and supply pertinent clues for the learner to self-repair, more often than not, the students will come through. The least effective technique, they argue, for correcting a student language is to simply give the answer. Liu (2008 cf. Truscott & Hsu, 2008) in his study inquiring the effect of error feedback on second language writing found that although direct feedback

diminished students' errors in the immediate draft, it did not better students' accuracy in a subsequent paper. Indirect feedback assisted the students to curtail more morphological errors than semantic errors. He finally jumps to the conclusion by uttering that providing feedback on students' writing is not a qualified and satisfactory way to ameliorate students' accuracy in writing. By the same token, Russell Hunt (1989 cited in Dohrer, 1991) contends that on no account, do students acquire or internalize a language by their errors being repaired or indicated, rather they acquire it as a secondary product of using it in order to do things they feel like doing.

2.3.1.3. Teachers' corrections, comments are vague, ınconsistent, abstract and unintelligible.

Teachers' correction is often discredited and underestimated as being non-specific, unintelligible, inconsistent, incompatible, inexact, devoid of meaning, obscure, universal, non- concrete, cliche, and peculiar (Agudo, 2012; Alamis, 2010; Chandler, 2003; Cho & MacArthur, 2010; Chun-xian, 2007; Lee, 1997; Lee, 2008; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Sommers, 1982; Truscott, 1996, 1999; Weaver, 2006; Zamel, 1985).

Zamel (1985) found that marks and comments are often perplexing, arbitrary, and inaccurate. He, further, argues that teachers' marks and comments are usually in the form of impractical and imprecise commands, instructions or directives that are unintelligible to the students (see Cho & MacArthur, 2010; Treglia, 2008). These vague directives, while teachers may take for granted that they have widely-known definitions, are in the form of marks and comments that typify complicated meanings "which remain locked in the teachers' head" (Butler, 1980 cited in Zamel, 1985, p. 83, see also Lee, 2008). Earlier studies demonstrated that teachers inscribed imprecise, unclear, indistinct, non-specific and chiefly negative comments, for teachers seemed to have undertaken the role of an evaluator passing judgment on student writing almost in a vacuum (Lee, 2008 cf. Truscott & Hsu, 2008).

Students are often reminded that something has gone astray in their text and that their texts should undergo some alterations before it qualifies as a fixed or final product. *To tell students that they have done something wrong is not to tell them that what to do about it. In order to offer a helpful revision strategy to a student, the teacher must anchor that strategy in*

the specifics of the student's text. For example, to call on our student, the scribe of the above paragraph, 'be precise and specific' or 'to expand more', does not signal to our student what difficulty the reader has about the sense of the text, or what failure in the logic exists that could be overcome if the scribe provides specific information, nor is he (student) indicated how to obtain that desired specificity (Sommers, 1982, p. 153).

Allwright (1975 in Panova & Lyster, 2002) observation of error treatment practices in the classroom revealed that error treatment is imprecise, inconsistent, and ambiguous. One of Truscott's (1966 cited in Gobert, 2010) focal problems with error correction is that a teacher must develop a sense that a mistake that has been made is not most of the time discerned alike, as it may sound, by native speaking teachers and their non native speaking counterparts with varying degrees of grammatical aptness in the target language. That is why Ferris (1999 in Gobert ibid) while vigorously championing Truscott's point of view opines that teachers should be trained in recognition, identification and correction of errors. The problem of a teacher who fails to discern errors completely and correctly is depicted in the figure 2.2. below.

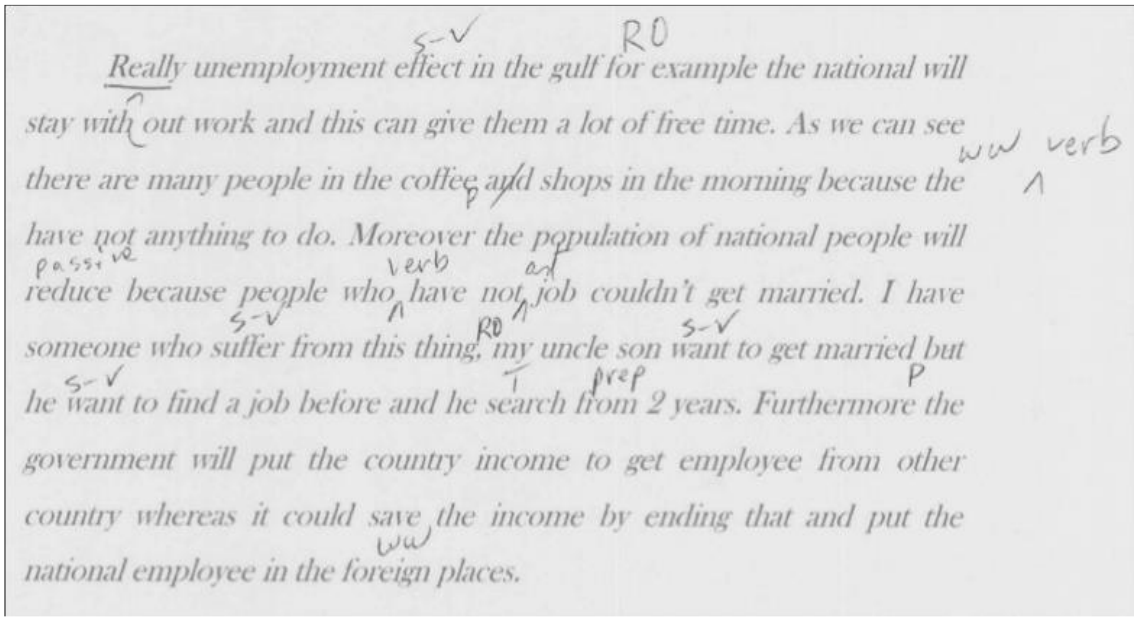

Figure 2.2. Teachers' classroom error treatment practices (taken from Gobert, 2010, p. 124)

As the figure is crystal clear, the teacher in question had a hard time recognizing all the errors in the text (Lee, 2004). He has not been systematic and consistent in pursuing the error correction strategy he has employed either. He has given some errors

a miss, amended minor problems, spared some other serious global issues, underlined and provided error signaling codes for some others (Lee, 2009). The teacher has adopted a haphazard approach in his treatment of errors. He has turned a blind eye to a good number of content errors such as 'national people', 'put', to name a few, just dealt even not completely with low- level concerns. Ellis (2009) rightly puts it that the teacher has to choose both the special plan or policy to utilize in response to a learner error and the particular linguistic devices for implementing that plan. This needs a great deal of pragmatic and pragmalinguistic qualification, and it is probable that teachers respond based on their sheer intuition or perception to particular errors committed by individual students rather than knowingly according to some a priori assigned error correction plan. This shows two major pitfalls associated with teachers' error correction practices (i.e. being imprecise and inconsistent). Teacher specification and particularization of errors in students' write-ups is not a shallow and petty matter. Even diminishing the burden of the error correction code system of providing feedback on writing by concentrating on only a particular kind of error per activity would not completely ease the hardship of exact and complete error specification by the instructor (Gobert, 2010).

Fanselow (1997 in Panova & Lyster, 2002, p. 574) found that corrective feedback was bewildering to the learners in that the latter (i.e. learners) often obtained conflicting signals concurrently as regards the content and the form of their utterances.

Sommers (1982) commenting on the vanity of feedback states that we, all, as teachers, have witnessed our baffled student complaining about unintelligibility of our comments: *I don't know how you want me to change this*, or, *Tell me what you want me to do* (p. 150 see also Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Guenette, 2007). Irrespective of the fact that providing feedback drains the teachers' time and energy, the result often obtained is not satisfactory. A good number of the students lament that they have trouble making sense of their teachers' comments and written corrections while revising their paper (Dohrer, 1991). This may give rise to students' ignorance of feedback or it may lead to feeling of confusion and frustration as well as inaction and indifference on the behalf of students (Williams, 2003 cited in Hamouda, 2011). This does not imply that we can easily disregard inherent positive research evidence on the effects of grammar correction. At least, it can be articulated that if the current longitudinal studies do not

establish the efficiency of error feedback, they fundamentally do not substantiate its futility either (Ferris, 2004 see Agudo, 2012; Carol, 2005; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Ferris, 2002; Semke, 1984 ; Truscott, 2007, 1996, 1999).

Sommers (ibid) further on the contradictory and vague messages given by the teachers says that students are frequently given contradictory messages such as revise a sentence in order to render it correct or summarize a sentence so as to achieve a greater succinctness of style, then in the margins, they were told that the particular sentence needs to be expanded or elaborated. The interlinear and marginal comments embody two distinct functions for the students. The former stimulate the student to view the text as a fixed and definite piece, frozen in time that just requires some editing. In contrast, the latter imply that the meaning of the text is not complete or fixed but rather the student still requires unfolding the meaning by doing additional research. These contradictory signals and equally opposite terms such as "expand and concise", given to the students are indicative of teachers' failure to direct substantive revision of the text as a whole.

At times, students have a hard time understanding the purpose behind teachers' comments and take these comments very superfluous (Hamouda, 2011). Hardly do we have a scanty of empirical attestation to indicate that students typically even apprehend our responses to their writing, not to mention using them deliberately to alter their output (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1981 in Peleg, 2011 cf. Truscott, 1996; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). In a similar vein, Sommers (1982 in Peleg, 2011) asserts that, we do not know in any definite way what constitutes thoughtful commentary or what impact, if any, our comments have on helping our students become more effective writers.

On other occasions, students make sense of the comments, but the teacher misreads or misconstrues the text, the result being that the comments are not applicable (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Ferris, 2004; Zamel, 1985). The teacher by misreading or misunderstanding the text, not only gives rise to appropriating the text, but also his incorporation of his intended changes renders the text less unified or less coherent than the student's original was. To illustrate the case in point, an example is given by Zamel.

There are moments when you think everything is going wrong and nobody cares about you. On (~~does~~) moments you are really down (~~they come up with)~~ some action really

One but then the people you work with

Surprises you (Zamel, 1985, p. 86). The student wants to say "on those moments" which exactly relates to the preceding sentence. The teacher, not knowing that "does" is the graphic representation of "those", misreads the student's text and by incorporating his changes makes the text less coherent than it was (see also Lee, 2009). As teachers mark and correct every slip in students' writing, they are signaling to their students that they expect a flawless writing from them. Errors, however, are unavoidable and integral part of language acquisition. Even teachers' best attempts at correcting won't lead to one hundred percent accurate writing (Ferris, 2008 in Lee, 2009). So why should teachers ambush to catch their students' red-handed (the emphasis is mine) and set unattainable goals for themselves and the students?

More momentously, when focusing on surface level concerns, other important dimensions of writing such as ideas, rhetorical features, style and voice may slip their attention. Writing is not a sheer medium whereby language is exercised. To emancipate themselves of this dogmatic doctrine, teachers have to recall to their memory that " there is much more to good writing than grammatical accuracy" (Lee, 2009, p. 35 cf. Lee, 2004; Lee, 2008, Lee, 2008a). What is most regrettable about teachers' comments is that most teachers' comments are not text-bound and could be exchanged or rubber-stamped from text to text (cf. Cho & MacArthur, 2010; Hamouda, 2011; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Sommers, 1982; Treglia, 2008). The comments are not anchored in the particulars of the students' texts, but rather are a series of vague directives that are not text specific (Sommers, 1982 see Alamis, 2010; Cho & MacArthur, 2010; Freedman, 1987 ; Hamouda, 2011; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Robb et al., 1986; Zamel, 1985; Zhu, 2010).

Many writing educators hold that directive commentary can possibly overpower a student writer's decision-making faculty and usurp authorship of her or his work, and thus, can adversely act on or impress the writer's self-reliance (Treglia, 2008 cf. Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Dohrer, 1991; Gobert, 2010; Greenhalgh, 1992; Lee, 2009; Perl, 1979; Reid, 1994; Sommers, 1980, 1981; Spandel, 2005).

Among reasons cited by the students preferring their paper to be left uncorrected or kept intact was that they often misunderstood their teachers' comments or suggestions (Guenette, 2007; Valero, et al., 2008). Ferris (2004) while holding an irreconcilable viewpoint with those of Lee, Sommers and Truscott, to name a few,

remarks that studies of student opinions about error feedback are very like-minded that L2 student writers yearn for feedback from their teachers and regard it excessively significant to their success (see also Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Makino, 1993; Salikin, 2001; Truscott, 1999, 2007). Truscott (2007), in contrast, opines that " error correction has small harmful effects on students' ability to write accurately and that we can be reasonably confident that if it does have any genuine benefits, they are so small as to be uninteresting" (p. 256). Truscott (1996) holds the opposite viewpoint to that of Ferris, Ferris and Roberts and Makino and contends that learning is a success when students experience the least amount of stress and embarrassment, when they feel relaxed, when they are in a friendly atmosphere, but the use of correction invokes the reverse condition. People feel abhorrent to be reminded permanently that they have been wrong, in particular, to be reminded ceaselessly that they have gone astray in producing a given language structure. Even students viewing error correction an integral part of learning do not feel like seeing the sight of red ink on the writing papers and more likely find the experience disheartening (cf.Oladejo, 1993; Semke, 1984).

Sommers (1982 cited in Alamis, 2010) holds that teachers should not comment with the purpose of repairing a student's writing, but rather with the intention of prodding the student into elucidating his own thoughts and communicate them in a unified and consistent manner. By the same token, Spandel (2005) rightly reminds us of the privilege of writers.

Spandel (2005) reiterates the momentousness of respecting the rights of student writers, including their rights to go astray and to write in a worse manner. To liberate themselves from the toil of marking student writing, teachers can appraise student writing wearing new pairs of lens, treating it as a handiwork or artefact engendered and owned by the student writer (rather than the teacher) and esteeming it highly. Radecki and Swales (1988) assume that non-native speaker student holds some kind of warrant or privilege to commit linguistic errors and some kind of concession on others to come to his redeem. In lieu of marking it as imperfect writing or replenishing it with red ink, teachers could figure out what the writing intends to convey them about students' personal attitudes, their strengths and weaknesses in writing, their worldviews, their peculiar characteristics, and, more importantly, who they are as people and as writers (cf. Lee, 2009; Spandel, 2005).

A striking difference between the teachers' comments and those of computer showed how arbitrary and idiosyncratic most of our teachers' comments are. In addition, the quiet and sound language of the computer provided quite a contrast to antipathy and lifelessness of most of the teachers' comments (Sommers, 1982). Moreover, the comments are usually written in such a way that it is difficult for students to tell the most important problems from the least important ones. Comments about spelling, erroneous sentence, comma, and semi-colon, etc. are given an equal weight as the comments about the text organization or logic.

Hendrickson (1978 cited in Lee, 1997) proposes that some errors should favor higher superiority or preference to others, for instance, those that impede communication or those that students commit repeatedly (cf. Aridah, 2003). There is a broad consensus of opinion among language teachers and practitioners that teachers should correct errors which bring the interaction to a halt, because in daily-life situation, we strive to communicate "successfully than to communicate perfectly" (Martinez, 2006, p. 6). So being, the teacher should inspire students to run the risk of committing errors, if necessary, so as to unfold their learning capabilities which in turn is the foremost end of language teaching and learning (see Spandel, 2005).

There is " an overwhelming similarity in the generalities and abstract commands given to the students. There seems to be among teachers an accepted, albeit, unwritten cannon for commenting on students texts" (Sommers, 1982, p. 153 cf. Zamel, 1985). This consistent form of directives, requests, and pleadings reveals that the teacher holds a concession for indistinctness and imprecision whereas the student is compelled to be text-bound (Sommers, 1982 see also Zamel, 1985). Approximately, majority of students interviewed on written comments, they unanimously acknowledged that they had difficulty in making sense of teachers' comments. They expressed that when a teacher commands in the margins or as an end comment *take care of precise language* or *think more about your audience,* revising or re-examining becomes a guessing game (Sommers, 1982; see Frus, 1999; Dohrer,1991).

Peleg's (2011) study of students' perceptions of written feedback, reveals that students mostly expressed their discontent with the fact that their teacher had just circled the errors, but made no attempt to explain the nature of the errors. They appeared frustrated that their teacher had written the word *redo* across the top of the

essay without explaining whether it was the content of the essay or grammar that needed revising.

2.3.2. Revision

A study undertaken by Zamel (1985) to investigate teachers' responses to students writing. The results revealed that composition teachers write, to a large extent, common or identical comments and deal with language –bound errors and problems. Not only are the comments and marks perplexing, arbitrary, idiosyncratic, and unintelligible, they hardly seem to expect the students to re- examine the text beyond the surface- level (cf. Radecki & Swales, 1988; Keh, 1990). Students tend to correct local errors, for they perceive revising as nothing more than editing and hardly ever considerably rethink and rework their ideas (Faigley & Witte,1981; Horning & Becker, 2006; Dohrer,1991).

For many years teachers saw revision as copy-editing, a tidying-up activity aimed at eliminating surface errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and diction. The polishing-up perspective of revision takes for granted a linear model of composing made up of three stages of prewriting, writing, and rewriting activities (Faigley & Witte, 1981 see also Dohrer, 1991; Sommers, 1980). Students as well as teachers usually perceive of revision mainly as amending or repairing mistakes, the clean- it –up or polish-it-up plan (Faigley & Witte, 1981).

In secondary schools, some of us revised essays by inscribing the correct forms for wrongly represented orthographic forms or grammatical goofs on the same document, just above the teacher's correction symbols. Students may still think of revision this way, counting on their high school experiences (Horning & Becker, 2006).

Radecki and Swales' (1988) study of students' reactions to teachers' written comments on students' papers revealed that students do not have a correct sense of revision. They reflected some of their viewpoints as regards revision. Most of them found no merit in rewriting, some viewing it as discipline. One student declared: *Rewrite is only a way of penalty in elementary school. It only wastes our time. What do you say if somebody copies a paragraph in front of a TV set?* (Radecki and Swales, 1988, p. 358). The above statement implies that students have a mistaken notion of revision and see it on a par with correcting surface level errors. Revision literally and

precisely means to re-visit, to view something from a new, critical standpoint or angle. It is a progressive process of rethinking and reappraising the paper, reexamining your debates, rethinking your evidence, polishing and purifying your purpose, reordering your presentation, changing and reformulating the tasteless and commonplace prose (Flower, 1981; Horning & Becker, 2006; Murray, 1981; Sommers, 1980, 1981, 1982; Zamel, 1982, 1983). Teachers' comments should entice students into re-seeing a text and to maintain their involvement with it (Dohrer, 1991, cf. Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Sommers, 1980).

The pertinent, yet challenging, query that needs to be posed is: Is revision just fixing the commas and spelling? The response is nope. It is a critical step prior to submitting your paper, but if your ideas are foreseeable, your thesis is poor and fragile, and your organization is messy and disordered, then proofreading will just be like laying a band-aid on a bullet injury. When you accomplish revising, then the time is ripe to proofread (Horning & Becker, 2006 see also Flower, 1981; Sommers, 1980, 1981, 1982; Sze, 2002; Truscott & Hsu, 2008; Wall & Petroskey, 1981; Zamel, 1982, 1983). Revision contrasts with editing. Full length revising may include modifying substantial parts of a text or even giving an essentially new try at a document, while editing entails spelling, grammar, mechanics, word-usage, and other low level issues. When the difference between the two is obscured or blurred, both students and teachers disregard conceptual revision. Whatever the person composes the first time, becomes the final product, and major activities inherent to composing such as reexamining or rethinking the purpose, reappraising the arguments are side-stepped (Horning & Becker, 2006 see also Flower, 1981). Probst (1989 in Dohrer, 1991, p. 7) suggests, If education causes students to await only the unfriendly reader, or only the reader who acts as proofreader, or only the reader who functions “ as the gate-keeper, then writing will come to seem less a pursuit of meaning than a survival exercise”.

Some scholars, like Sommers (1981), and Zamel (1985), chief among them, harshly admonish teachers’ comments maintaining that the comments abet students to feel that their first drafts are perfect drafts not discovery drafts, and all that they require to do is to patch and refine their writing. That is, teachers’ comments do not seem to imbue the students with sound reason for amending the structure and meaning of their texts, for the comments propose to the students that the meaning of their texts is already

there, finished, produced, and all that is required is a more becoming word or phrase (Sommers, 1982 cf. Zamel, 1985 ; Horning & Becker, 2006; Sommers, 1980; Dohrer,1991) .

This is while, Elbow and Belanoff (2003 cited in Horning & Becker, 2006 p. 12) see revision as a process of " re-seeing or rethinking : changing what a piece says, or its bones, or as reworking or reshaping how a piece says it, or changing its muscles and finally as copyediting or proofreading for mechanics and usage, checking for deviations from the standard conventions, or changing the writing's skin" (cf. Dohrer, 1991; Faigley & Witte, 1981; Sommers, 1980; Sommers, 1982).

Writing is a process of discovery (Dohrer, 1991), and you don't always engender your best material when you first commence. Therefore, revision affords you with the chances to examine critically what you have produced to see whether it's really worth saying, whether it says what you intended to and whether a reader can make head or tail of what you are saying (Sommers, 1980 see also Brannon & Knoblauch,1982). That is why Dohrer (1991) asseverates that good commentary, then, must instigate revision and must grant the student the chance to reconsider the text in view of a reader's response. This outcome is in line with the findings that indicate that students who are robbed of the chance to revise after teachers' feedback do not improve their writing skills.

Linda Flowers' (1998 in Horning & Becker, 2006 see also Flower, 1981) cognitive model of revision considers revision as a reversal, a reverse of direction or attention, a step, a turn from a writer-based to a reader-based mode of writing. Elsewhere in their book entitled ' Revision, History, Theory and Practice', Horning and Becker make a distinction between ' revision out' and ' revision in'. The former is defined as a process of expanding and unfolding ideas as much as possible whereas the latter is viewed as a process of curtailing and trimming with confidence that you have given yourself lots to work with. Revising out permits for revising in and often assists a writer to produce a becoming text.

Nancy Sommers (1980 see also Sommers 1981, 1982; Flower, 1981) maintains that experienced and skillful writers view revision process as consisting of different plains or circles, " as a recursive process- a process with different levels of attention and different agenda for each cycle. It is a sense of writing as discovery- a repeated process of beginning over again, starting out new- that the students failed to have" (p. 387).

Herrington (1981cited in Dohrer, 1991) proposes that teachers respond to students' writing in a way that lays stress on its merit as a process of discovery. Somewhere in his article bearing the title of ‘Revision strategies of student writers and experienced adult writers’, Sommers (1980) contends that it is not the case that students are reluctant to revise, or when revise with limited success it is because they do not see what to do or see paths to follow to do it (cf. Horning & Becker, 2006; Dohrer, 1991).

In responding to papers, both Sommers and Horning and Becker maintain that, teachers have an opportunity to do more than mark errors. Teachers’ suggestions ought to focus on the important tasks of revising and also give some ideas of how to go about it (Horning & Becker, 2006). Since teachers strive painstakingly at student writing, they are more disposed to take on “ the job of an arbitrator, especially, that of a coroner, announcing the end of life of “ student writing and commenting on it retrospectively. If feedback is to fully realize its potential as feed forward, teachers have to play the role of a diagnostician, helping students identify the most critical problems in their writing” (Lee, 2009, p. 36 cf. Lee, 2008). In lieu of letting student compositions overthrow and submerge them, as diagnosticians teachers can gain control, work on student papers and specify the most critical problems for students to enact.

Dohrer (1991) conducted a study in which he brought teachers’ comments on students’ paper under close scrutiny. In reviewing students’ revisions in response to teachers’ comments and in the subsequent interviews with the students, he figured out that notwithstanding their assertion that they (i.e. students) viewed revision as an opportunity to learn about writing, all students, as deduced from their interviews, regarded revision overwhelmingly as an exercise in correcting errors to promote their score (see also Faigley & Witte, 1981). Students saw the teacher basically as an evaluator, one who assigns grades on students’ papers. Owing to this misconception, the teachers' efficacy in getting students to re-see the text for their own purpose doomed to failure. Students showed reluctance to present their own ideas fearing that the teacher lest should not agree. Despite disapproving of the teacher’s suggested changes, students most often complied with the teacher's suggestions. Besides, he observed that the predominant strategy students employed for revising was to patch and fix all mistakes the teachers had marked or circled in their papers. All students, but one, ceased to read, even cursorily, from beginning to finish the paper they were revising. Rather, they

usually started with the first comment and go through the paper by skipping from one comment to the next or randomly jumping from one to another, often turning a blind eye to large parts of the text and murmuring statement like, *this paragraph sounds all right* and *he won't find any fault with it*. Because the students just read only those parts of their paper tainted or highlighted with teachers' comments, they were dispossessed of getting a plain and general view of their work. Their disintegrated approach to revision might also be partly account for their disinclination to make global changes (Dohrer, 1991 see also Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Faigley & Witte, 1981; Horning & Becker, 2006; Sommers, 1980 ; Sommers, 1982; Zamel 1985).

Contrary to what most academics, teachers, and students may accept as true, the concept of writing as learning, where the formation of ideas occurs concurrently with writing, and where multiple drafts, followed by continual revisions, are perceived as a natural production process, is far from universal. Therefore, most students are not accustomed to the concept of multiple drafts and they may naturally view revision in solely punishing terms as a means to correct surface mistakes, without even trying to develop and refine content (Horning & Becker, 2006, cf. Sommers, 1980).

Dana Ferris (1999), while being faithful proponent of revision, appears a little bit dubious about the usefulness of revision. In her book, ' Treatment of errors in second language student writing', she enumerates studies that corroborate the usefulness of revision as well as those that cast doubt upon the students' ability to ameliorate their writing due to correction or revision (see Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). She argues that there is scanty of evidence to substantiate that correction or revision makes a difference in the long run but it seems to moderately better the quality of the revised papers and augments the students' awareness of themselves as writers (cf. Truscott & Hsu, 2008).

One of the outcomes of the move from the product to the process of writing was an alteration in the way teachers assessed student writing. Prior to the commencement of the process approach, teachers thought revision as patch-up, a clean-up practice with the intention of purging students' paper of surface errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling and diction. The process approach, on the other hand, wheedled teachers into cooperating with their students in the exploration of how a piece of writing is created so as to become more expertly, by supplying feedback on content and offering revisions in

the course of drafting phase itself rather than at the finish of it (Peleg, 2011 cf. Faigley & Witte, 1981; Zamel, 1985). The acknowledged view was that stress on grammar and correctness in the drafting phase would bring to a halt the flux of ideas and thoughts, and further obstruct a student's endeavor to write. Thus, alertness and care to lower order issues was deferred until the final editing stage (Johns, 1990 in Peleg, 2011).
During the product approach, the processes of revising, editing, and proofreading are subsided and diminished to a single trifling activity (i.e. dealing with the mechanics of writing), and the students' misconception of revision process is strongly fortified by their teachers' comments (Sommers, 1982; cf. Dohrer, 1991; Keh, 1990; Zamel, 1985). That texts are regarded as fixed and end products is also approved by the overwhelming evidence that teachers give careful thought and consideration to the surface- level features or characteristics.

Teachers evidently find it difficult to respond to student writing unless they regarded it as an end product, and, thus, concentrated on issues of mechanics, usage, and style (Zamel, 1985). We read with preconception and obsession expecting to find errors and ambushing to catch the students red-handed. The result being that we find errors and misread our students' texts. We get what we crave for; in lieu of reading and responding to the meaning of a text, we correct our students' writing. This approach needs to be reversed. In lieu of finding errors and indicating students how to mend parts of their text, we need to raze our students' faith that the drafts they have scribbled are finished and coherent. Our comments should " offer students revision tasks of a different order of complexity and sophistication from the ones that they themselves identify, by forcing students back into chaos, back to the point where they are shaping and restructuring their meaning" (Sommers, 1982, p. 154 cf. Newell, 1994; Sommers, 1980; Zamel, 1985).

Students should be made cognizant of the fact that texts unfold, that revision is to be viewed as a process of re-visiting one's text, and that their revisiting is an integral and recursive part of writing. Thus, rather than responding to texts as finished and end products, we should guide students through the cycles of revision (Zamel, 1985 cf. Horning & Becker, 2006; Flower, 1981; Sommers, 1980; Sommers, 1982). By the same token, Newell (1994) states that rather than a superficial process of fixing or amending a draft, revision may be considered vital to and inseparable from the process of

discovering what to say and how to say it; and revision might find a more pleasant and cozier place in all meaning- based areas rather than remaining an addition or appendage to writing pedagogy that happens only in the English classroom.

Zamel (1985) contends that by rendering help before an essay is considered final, we expedite more writing and strengthen the idea that additional refinement and inspection may be called for prior to one's meaning pronouncement. Rather than confining our responses to written comments and reactions which are, in essence, disembodied remarks (to use Sommers', 1982 term) and making preconceptions as to the text, exerting control over it, and passing judgmental comments (Dohrer, 1991) that upset the balance of teacher-student equilibrium in a real learning situation, it is essential to set up a cooperative relationship with our students, by drawing their attention to problems, offering alternatives, and suggesting possibilities (Zamel,1985).

2.3.3. Comment on Content vs. on Form

Teachers' attending to local errors as opposed to global errors brings about in students a quite restricted concept of composing and consolidates the misconception that these concerns must be the ones to be treated first. This, however, does not follow that teachers do not believe that certain characteristics outweigh others, but their responses typically convey the impression that local errors are as significant as content-related concerns if not to say that they are more important. As Flower and Hayes (1981 in Zamel, 1985, p. 81) put it, " these writers are locked in by the myopia of their low level goals". Lee (2009) championing vigorously Flower and Hayes viewpoint states that teachers are caught in a conflict between their form-focused approach to feedback and their awareness that there is more to good writing than accuracy. Instructors seem to be gravitated irresistibly toward the correction of linguistic mistakes since these types of errors are definite, tangible, perceptible, concrete, quantifiable and measurable; thus allowing the instructor to comment objectively. This sentence- oriented approach mirrors the traditional grammar concept of language as a set of rules and language learning as acquiring correct forms. That is, it is based on whether language rules are violated or not and treats sentences as isolated pieces (see also Radecki & Swales, 1988).

Discourse-oriented feedback, conversely, mirrors the concept of language as a resource for meaning rather than a system of rules and language learning as extending resources for creating meaning. Within this perspective, learners' production is examined with a focus on knowledge about language beyond the word, clause, phrase and sentence i.e. at the level of a text. Thus, examiners' feedback focuses on the relationship between sentences in discourse and shifts from what learners cannot do to what learners can do (Mohan & Slater, 2004 in Paiva, 2011). Alamis (2010) conducted an experiment in which he indicated that students want to receive teacher comments on content rather than on form. His study reveals that students will improve their written performance if teachers shift their concern for errors on written product to concern for the evaluation of ideas in their texts. If writing teachers aim at really giving effective feedback, they must go beyond the traditional emphasis on the correction of grammar, sentence development, spelling, punctuation marks, and other concerns of form (see Keh, 1990). The response that a teacher gives to written compositions must encourage the students to find new ways of elaborating their thoughts.

Ferris (1999 cited in Bitchener, 2005) introduced a bifurcation of treatable and untreatable errors. Implying that the former (subject – verb agreement, article usage, plural and possessive noun endings, verb tense, and sentence fragments) are rule-bound, thus, learners can be directed to a grammar book or a set of rule to settle the error, this is while the latter (word choice, unidiomatic sentence structure) are idiosyncratic and so require learners to make use of acquired knowledge of language to correct the error. Ferris (ibid see also Hyland, 2003) found that learners made considerable headway over a semester in diminishing errors in verb tense and form (treatable), but negligible advance in diminishing lexical (untreatable) and noun ending errors (treatable), and even worse, their progress aggravated in the case of sentence structure (untreatable) and article errors categories (treatable).

What is specifically startling about teachers' responses is that teachers principally and fundamentally tend to deem themselves as language teachers rather than writing teachers and their students as language learners rather than developing writers. They are principally engaged with surface-level features of writing and seem to read and respond to a text as series of fragmented and separate sentences rather than as a coherent and connected whole of discourse (Zamel, 1985; Lee, 1997). Williams (1981

in Zamel, 1985, p. 86) in outlining the difference between reading for typological letters and reading for content says that " when we read for typos, letters constitute the field of attention; content becomes virtually inaccessible. When we read for content, semantic structures constitute the field of attention. Letters- for the most part- recede from our consciousness".

This, however, does not imply that issues of content and organization skip the teachers' attention and go unnoticed. Since mostly first drafts are treated as end products, students do not seem to display responsibility for attending to these significant features in writing. Besides, since teachers' comments for the problems of text organization, logic, and rhetoric are enclosed and wrapped in the same sort of vague, abstract and incongruous terms used for localized errors, it is unlikely that students could make substantial and sweeping revision even if they are impelled to do so (Zamel, 1985 see also Montgomery & Baker, 2007). This may, also, arise from teachers' simultaneous attending to surface-level features (local issues, to use Montgomery & Baker's term), or accidents of discourse (to use Sommers' term), or, better to say, minor infelicities and larger issues of content, organization and rhetoric in the same version of a text (see also Keh, 1990).

In the same vein, Radecki and Swales (1988) maintain that by juxtaposing comments that address usage errors adjacent to comments that call for text remodeling and development, the teachers impart a conflicting message: the text is fixed and finished yet also in a state of flux and agitation. Besides, whether addressing meaning or low level features of a text, the teachers' comments were so imprecise and directive that they could be easily applied to other texts (cf. Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1983, 1985).

Montgomery and Baker's (2007) study of the teachers' preferences and those of students for the type of feedback unearthed that teachers' comments addressed more local issues such as grammar and mechanics than global issues such as content and organization. Such an emphasis falsifies or perverts both the importance of these issues and the importance teachers lay on them. For example, they found that 64% of teachers' comments directed students' attention to local issues, and that when teachers brought these issues into focus, students did accordingly in their revisions. Little is known about whether teachers are wary of the fact that they are awarding more attention to local as

opposed to global issues (Montgomery & Baker, 2007 see also Radecki & Swales, 1988; Sommers, 1980, 1982; Zamel, 1985).

Teachers have been so disproportionately preoccupied with precision and correctness of low-level issues of writing that error identification has been viewed as the most frequently exercised technique in responding to student writing. Likewise, Zamel, 1987 cited in Peleg, 2011 reports that teachers are so inordinately obsessed with low level concerns that they often fix these without knowing that there is a much larger, meaning - related problem that they have given a miss (p. 29). Error identification sounds to be deeply fixed in the inveterate practices of second language teachers, who by reason of assuming their role merely as instructor of formal aspects of language, circumscribe their activities to maneuvers exclusively within the realm of formal training rather than that of cognitive maturity (Cumming, 1983 in Zamel, 1985 cf. Peleg, 2011). This is while Fathman and Whally (1990 in Dheram, 1995) found that learners' grammatical competence only improved when they received specific feedback on their grammar.

2.3.4. Comments and Initiative

A fundamental matter in giving feedback is text abdication or the notion that the authorship of the text can be held captive by teachers' comments (Hyland and Hyland, 2006 see also Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Dohrer, 1991; Greenhalgh, 1992; Hamid, 2007; Reid, 1994; Sommers, 1982). Teachers' comments rob the initiative or leadership from the students and train their attention to their (teachers) own purpose in commenting. Dohrer (1991) attempting to examine the effect of teachers' comments on students revising their write-ups, he found that students were reluctant to revise or even fearful to incorporate their own ideas fearing that they lest should not put the teachers in a particular state of mind or mood to grade their paper the way they like it to be graded. An outcome of this process of alienation of authority is that " eventually our means of testing the accuracy and effectiveness of our statements moves outside us. We wait for external, overt, crude, obvious corrections" (Dohrer, 1991, p. 10). Freedman by accounting Jody's case, a college freshman, luminously depicts the point in question (alienation of authority). Jody, a college freshman, asseverates her experience to her latest English teacher as to her former teachers' comments to her writing as follows:

…"And I like English, but I've had so many different English teachers, all saying different things about my writing, that I can't know what to believe. All teachers want different things, and it is hard to please all of them without changing my way of writing. You know, in your first paper or something you write, and they'll say, Oh, you should do this, or you should do this, and you go, Uhha, I know what they want, and then you just write the way they want, and they go, Great! Excellent writing. But then you end up in college, and you don't know how to write, for yourself. You just write for other people. Hopefully you won't try and change the way I write, but just try and help me on the things I do badly" (Freedman, 1987, p. 35 see also Radecki & Swales, 1988).

Jody's case denotes that teachers, while sustaining their role as an educational leader, should entrust the responsibility of communicating ideas and text mastership to their student writers and refrain from doing anything that gives rise to students just playing the school game and relinquishing text ownership (cf. Alamis, 2010; Dohrer, 1991; Lee, 2009).

Sommers' (1982 in Zamel, 1985) study of teachers' comments unveiled that they swerved students' mind away from their own purpose in writing a particular text towards teachers' end in commenting. Students focused on teachers' comments, relinquished ownership and authorship of their own writing, struggling only to do what they thought teachers wanted, not what matters to themselves (Dohrer, 1991 see also Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Flower, 1981; Greenhalgh, 1992; Neal et at., 2007; Reid, 1994; Sommers, 1980, 1982; Soori et al., 2012; Zamel, 1982, 1985). According to Murray (1984 cited in Zamel, 1985), we long our students to accomplish to the standards of other students, to study what we design for them to study and to learn from it what we or our teachers learned. The result being that students edit or re-examine according to the changes that teachers place on the text.

Radecki and Swales (1988) in their paper bearing the title of ' ESL student reaction to written comments on their written work ' while interviewing with a student on the value of teachers' comments, discover an instance of text appropriation by teachers' comments. *" I think what she (teacher) is trying to prove with her comments is that just tells me that I'm off the track… I'm not explaining my subject, I'm not explaining what I want to say and she's really stressing on that… She doesn't care what I'm writing about or what I'm doing unless she sees her own topics and format in my paper*" (p. 361 cf. Lee, 2009; Dohrer, 1991 see also Freedman, 1987) a student acknowledged.

Teachers should inscribe their comments in such a way to eschew from dictating or foisting their own perception or aim on the written composition. Instead, the stress should be on guiding the students' ideas and allowing them to make modifications with confidence and competence (Alamis, 2010). Teachers should issue comments in such a way that they (i.e. comments) must raise queries in students' minds that cause them to reappraise their own purposes, and not merely to conjecture about the teacher's purposes (Dohrer, 1991). Many researchers assert that writers might attend closely to teachers' comments and squander the moment or time to ameliorate their writing skills by rewriting their texts and applying their teachers' comments. Hence, the teachers should exercise sufficient circumspection to have beneficial mediation in students' writing in order not to adversely act on the learners' independence (see Lee, 2009).

Studies undertaken by researchers manifested that teachers took text ownership away from the student writers by deeming themselves as supremes or authorities. Teachers have been observed to utilize consistent, rigid and relentless norms to their students' texts and respond based on the degree to which these texts accord with or stray from these norms or criteria (Moran, 1981 in Zamel, 1985 cf. Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Greenhalgh, 1982; Neal et al., 2007; Reid, 1994; Robb et al., 1986; Soori et al., 2012). These teachers have been observed to bring important decision-making processes under control, and let their own imaginary and standard texts to ascertain options that are rightly possessed by student writers (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Soori et al., 2012; Zamel, 1985). The consequence of teachers' foisting their own ideas on student writers is that they (students) come to infer that what their teachers want them to say outweighs what they themselves long to say.

In short, though the strength and efficacy of teachers' error correction and comments in writing class has been called into question, several decades of research activity in this area has divulged that "we are virtually at square one" (Ferris, 2004, p. 49) since the current research repertoire is deficient, imperfect and replete with contradictory and incompatible statements, it would assuredly be too soon to arrive at any decisive conclusion about this issue (Ferris, 2004, see Binglan & Jia, 2010; Lee, 1997; Truscott, 1996, 1999).

2.3.5. Process vs. Product

Near the end of 20th century, a change from product approach to writing instruction has given rise to great betterment in both L1 and L2 composition instruction (Peleg, 2011). The process / product controversy persists in the field of writing pedagogy: should teachers emphasize the writing process in the classroom or lay stress on the momentousness of a correct end product in student writing? Over the last 30 years writing researchers have submerged deeper into the process of writing. The process approach views writing from a new perspective; it is wholly dissimilar to foregoing approaches to writing (Pelge, 2011). The process approach provides an assured, friendly, heartening, and cooperative setting within which students, with sufficient time and less intervention and mediation from teacher's side, can work through their composition processes. In process- based approach, writing is viewed as cyclical, recursive, discovery, and creative process by which writers uncover and reshape their ideas as they strive to approach meaning (Peleg, 2011 see Horning & Becker, 2006 Zamel, 1983).

This process comprises several stages or phases of composition development such as, planning, drafting, revising, editing, and evaluating. While in product-based writing education, evaluation consists of a single draft score or grade, process-based type of writing instruction is accompanied with multi - draft assignments, teacher-student conferences, and portfolio assessment which is now permeable in ESL writing education (Hedgecock & Lefkowitz, 1994 in Soori et al., 2012 see also Horning & Becker, 2006).

In addition to alteration and innovation in writing pedagogy, responding to students' texts has also been subjected to drastic metamorphosis. The teachers habitually dealt with and appraised the students' writing papers as final output. They offered comments to the final drafts seemed not adequate or seemed to have the opposite effect to that intended (Soori et al., 2012). While in process- oriented approach, the teacher is a mediating agent to respond to multi drafts during the student writing process. Current studies demonstrate that shifts in writing instruction have led to some shifts in teacher written feedback to students' composition and summative feedback, looking at writing as a product, has usually been superseded or supplemented by formative feedback which looks forward to the student's subsequent writing and to the

growth and unfolding of his or her writing processes (Hyland & Hyland, 2006 cited in Soori et al., 2012).

Most veteran and skillful writing teachers aver that providing feedback to student writing is the most arduous, cumbersome, and time consuming part of teaching writing, but it is often viewed as instructionally gainful, informational, and advice to accelerate advancement (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). Those who are engaged in the field of second language writing deem feedback as a critical and indispensable factor for fostering and strengthening learning, and an integral part of process-oriented instruction, where the students subdue their writing skill and are able to appraise their own writing and mediate to change their own processes and products where necessary, and the teachers would make use of " scaffolding learning techniques" (Soori et al., 2012, p. 85 see also Horning & Becker, 2006; Radecki & Swales, 1988).

Contrary to the product- oriented approach, the process approach brings into focus the writer's need for guidance and mediation through the writing process in lie of controlling lexical, syntactical and organizational patterns. The process approach advocates strive to eschew from untimely or hasty imposition of these patterns and instead hold the belief that content, ideas, and the need to communicate would ascertain form (Silva, 1990 in Soori et al., 2012). According to expressivists, like Elbow, Murray, Macrorie, William Coles, and Eming, providing student writers with linguistic feedback and correction is regarded as an interfering noxious factor in the tender and gentle process of their creative thinking and free- writing (in Soori et al., 2012 see also Sommers, 1098, 1982).

However, one principal issue that has preoccupied the scholars' minds is how to provide the students with productive feedback which will have a positive influence on students' writing processes, and so best helps to enhance the general, long term quality of their writing. Therefore, a teacher should adopt additional functions apart from the regular and traditional ones as inquirer, arbiter, and inspector, and instead should assume the function of reader, hearer, trainer, counselor, mentor, co-examiner and guide and shoulder the role of advisors, assistants, and partners of revisions by responding student writing as work in developing and unfolding state in stead of appraising it as an end effect or work (Soori et al., 2012 see also Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Zamel, 1985). Moreover, teachers are writing partners and strive not to asseverate their

feedback in a commanding or intimidating manner (Muncie, 2000 in Soori et al., 2012 see also Reid, 1994; Sommers, 1980, 1981, 1982; Zamel, 1985). Teachers as expert practitioners should issue feedback in a way that students feel potent, learn to gain authorship of their writing while at the same time take into account their readers, and behave in a way not to intercede with the students' writing or subdue or take control over their writing (Reid, 1994 see also Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Freedman, 1987; Horning & Becker, 2006; Soori et al., 2012; Zamel, 1985)

2.3.6. Debates For and Against Error Correction

Birdsong (1989, cited in Hashimoto, 2004 see also Lee, 2004) has speculated that error treatment is beneficial for adult learners who learn a second language in a formal situation. However, this contention is bitterly battered by a number of scholars who assert that students' need for error correction is not necessarily indicative of the effectiveness of such feedback (see Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2007). An overwhelming majority of teachers tend to employ comprehensive approach to error treatment. Many pro - error correction groups, however, cautioned against comprehensive error feedback owing to running risk of fatiguing teachers and overpowering students (Lee, 2004 see also Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). Ferris (1999 see also Hendrickson, 1978; Radecki & Swales, 1988), however, while acknowledging that provision of feedback is quite time devouring and an exhausting aspect of teacher's profession, averred that students do not become more proficient writers just by reading and writing, but they need some form of feedback to see how others think of their writing.

By the same token, most scholars assert that although a great deal of learning takes place through exposure to comprehensible input, learners may require negative evidence (i.e. information about grammaticality), in the form of either feedback on error or explicit instruction, when they are incapable of uncovering through exposure alone how their interlanguage varies from the L2 (Bley- Vroman, 1986 in Panova & Lyster, 2002). If the corrective feedback is adequately conspicuous to empower learners to discern or perceive the rift between their interlanguage construct and that of target language, the consequent cognitive collation may spark a disturbance and reformulation of the target grammar (Ellis, 1994 cited in Panova & Lyster, 2002). Although teacher feedback seems an ideal one and most preferred by many students in second language

instruction, its fruitfulness in developing students' writing is not so crystal clear (Hyland, 1998). However, several studies directly point to the students' ignorance, misunderstanding, or incapability in applying the teacher comments to their subsequent writing (Ferris, 1999).

Ferris (1999), on the other hand, notes that response to writing is arguably the teacher's most crucial task. It allows for a level of individualized attention and one-to one consultation or meaning negotiation that is scarcely possible in the day-to-day exchanges of a class, and it plays an indispensable part in inciting and encouraging students. In a similar token, Hendrickson (1978) argues that for adults, whom Krashen calls monitor users, error correction helps to discover the functions and limitations of the grammatical structures and lexical forms of the language they are studying.

Radecki and Swales (1988) conducted a study in which they sought to elicit students' ideas on the teachers' marking of their papers. They found that students were like-minded that they read and made mental note of their teachers' comments and even highly valued teachers' markings of their papers (cf. Truscott, 2007). They expressed the need to take cognizance of their goofs to repair them. An overwhelming majority of the students reported favorable or at least indifferent reactions upon receiving a paper replete with red ink, no matter what the nature of markings were (Radecki & Swales, 1988 see also Makino, 1993; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Salikin, 2001; Truscott, 1999).

Many linguists, however, assert that L2 learners should be emboldened to use the target language freely without having their errors fixed, so that they can put the linguistic hypotheses to the proof – very much similar to the way very young children tend to acquire their native language (Hammerly, 1991 cited in Hashimoto, 2004 see also Ellis, 2008). The contention among some process- oriented approach proponents that as learners are subjected to and practice more writing, many of the errors they commit will naturally fade away, certainly counteracts the experience of many teachers (Hinkel, 2004 cited in Peleg, 2011). Raimes (1991) warns that we impair important reader- writer relationship if we pick out in red all the mistakes we can find. Although teachers try to identify all kinds of errors, learners tend to ignore their error hunting. Given that errors are an inseparable part of language learning, and even teachers best efforts in error correction are doomed to failure, so why should teachers play the part of error hunters and set inaccessible objectives for students and themselves? (Lee, 2009).

Even though, it might be true that the use of correction codes is beneficial for learners, if they do not understand the codes, it is worthless. In a similar way, Myers (1997 cited in Hashimoto, 2004 p. 48 cf. Lee, 2004) made the following statement: " marking papers as (ab, dm, cs, empha, frog, agr, and the most dreaded epithet of all 'awk')" necessitates that ESL students learn a new technical system of signs, learn where to find them, learn to decode what they imply, and attempt to repair what they seem to refer to. All of these cumbersome and wearisome practices deviate the student more and more away from his or her text into more non- concrete, irrelevant business. Interestingly, a sound wisdom tends to tempt someone to jump hastily into conclusion that the students who got on well in comprehending their error feedback would be the most successful at incorporating the feedback into their second or subsequent drafts, and that students who did not fare well in understanding their error feedback, would have the least success at incorporating the feedback into their papers. While understanding the feedback seems pivotal to correction, it is not necessarily sufficient in enabling a student to carry out a successful revision (Hashimoto, 2004 cf. Truscott & Hsu, 2008).

While teachers are often not adept at giving feedback, students' responses to feedback are also problematic. In his research, Cohen (1987 in Naidu, 2007) demonstrates that many students have at their disposal restricted tactics to respond to the teachers' feedback on essays. Many students in his research simply committed the feedback to their memory. What is more, many a time, the students did not apprehend the teachers' comments, thus making the comments futile (see Fritz et al., 2000; Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1985).

Nunan and Lamb (1996) assert that marking errors and subsequent teacher corrections can provide the learners with worthy information in the target language. However, Semke (1984) concluded that the way to improve writing accuracy was through the continual practice of writing and that error correction may adversely impinge on students' perspectives, especially if they have to self - correct the errors (cf. Peleg, 2011). Since most studies, in which teachers corrected students' errors, do not compel students to compose a second draft of a composition; thus, the influence of error correction is minimized.

According to Wajots (1998), it is simply the grade that matters to the students, as a result, they pay scanty attention to feedback. Fritz et al (2000) added that feedback

does not ameliorate learning when provided this is because students do not understand feedback. Weaver (2006) surveyed business and design students on their understanding and perceptions of feedback, its use and helpfulness. Several themes emerged with students identifying unhelpful comments as those which were too vague, lacked guidance, focused on the negative or were unrelated to the assessment criterion. He recommended that tutors focus on the messages conveyed in the comments, provide feedback in the context of assessment criteria and learning outcomes and ensure it is always timely. Most students indicated that they were unhappy with the timeliness of feedback provided. The main reason was that after lapse of several weeks, the tutor moved onto other parts of the course, and hence, it was not an ideal time to reflect on previous work. It is interesting to note that some students felt they were respectful of lecturers to provide feedback in return for the hard work they had done, and wanted academics to be held accountable for marking assignments on time. Students felt that providing late feedback was particularly disrespectable, given that they were expected to meet deadlines when submitting an assignment.

The highly detailed feedback on sentence-level mechanics, may not worth the instructors' time and effort if the less salient feedback had the same effect as the comprehensive feedback (cf. Lee, 2004). While error correction feedback helps student writers reduce the number of errors on their revised texts, this improvement does not translate into improved accuracy on a new writing task performed one week later (Truscott & Hsu, 2008 cf. Radecki & Swales, 1988). Therefore, few errors on a revised text should not be considered as an indicator of learning (Truscott & Hsu, 2008 cited in Peleg, 2011).

Leki's (1991) survey of 100 ESL learners' preference for error correction carried out in 1991 unveiled that the learners were chiefly worried about producing flawless writing. Leki observed that perfect grammar, spelling, vocabulary choice, and punctuation were of paramount importance to the students. She, additionally, reported that students believed that good writing in English meant producing grammatically well - formed constructions; therefore, they wanted their teachers to correct every single error. While the teachers' written feedback on the grammatical errors of a student's essay often bettered the linguistic accuracy of the students' second draft irrespective of the feedback style, the revisions students made did not translate into a qualitatively

improved paper (Truscott & Hsu, 2008). They only resulted in a more grammatically accurate paper. And while, grammatical accuracy is clearly one objective in ESL writing classroom, an out of proportion stress on correction of language related problem may distract the attention of the teacher and students away from other important dimensions of composition that need to be addressed so as to prepare students for college writing, namely, the contents and ideas that are expressed, and the organization and flow of these ideas (Lee, 2004 see also Zamel, 1987 in Peleg, 2011; Zamel, 1985). More importantly, when teachers' minds are obsessed with language related concerns, they may fail to take a cognizance of other pivotal features of writing, such as ideas, rhetorical features, style and voice. As they continue working hard and steadily on this severe and exhausting aspect of their work, other more central tasks are often overlooked (Lee, 2009 cf. Peleg, 2011). Furthermore, Dohrer (1991) reviewing students' outlook of text revision observes that the teachers' emphasis on surface- level features was so vivid that students often readily disregarded information they had provided to the reader; they were just determined to polish or purify content and keep intact the correctness that they felt was most worthwhile to their teachers.

Elsewhere Zamel (1985) deduced that error correction practices of teachers tends to be arbitrary and capricious in lieu of applying any crystalline and systematic strategy (see also Peleg, 2011; Zamel, 1983).

Whether the use of feedback would actually help to improve students' written work, Truscott (1996 cited in Naidu, 2007) discards any possible benefits of employing feedback in ameliorating precision and he even criticizes it for disastrous consequences on learners' advancement in writing. In his research, he noticed that his respondents did not take advantage of feedback, therefore, he forms his staunch opposition of form feedback and concludes by advising all language teachers to completely abandon giving comments as regards mechanical errors (see also Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008).

Oddly, many researchers have withstood this suggestion and several research carried out by Ferris (2002) and Yessim (1999 in Naidu, 2007) who backed up the use of error feedback and rebutted Truscott's standpoint calling it extreme, naive, and premature. In her research, responding to Truscott (1996), Ferris (2002 see also Hendrickson, 1978; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998), on the other hand, calls into question the

theoretical and empirical foundation of Truscott's radical assertion and enumerates several evidences to corroborate her stance and to refute Truscott's at the same time.

Despite the seeming significance of error correction and the amount of emphasis that both teachers and students place on it, nevertheless, the usefulness of error correction is left in the midst of controversy owing to the fact that students keep committing the same mistakes even after being corrected many times.

A number of empirical studies substantiate such a phenomenon by yielding evidence that demonstrates the breakdown of teacher feedback to further student accuracy in writing (Shephard,1992 cited in Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010). This is while many writing teachers ordinarily conjecture that corrective feedback can enhance students' awareness of the rules and develop their writing skills by indicating problems and offering suggestions for improvements on rewrites. In a similar vein, a good number of research findings betoken that students crave for teacher corrections on their written errors and believe them helpful (Soori et al., 2012). This runs counter to Truscott's contention who opines that teachers should develop sundry of theory- rich techniques and strategies of providing feedback to L2 learners learning to write because a rationale- laden feedback can be gainful. Truscott who resists correcting students' errors holds that acquisition is a gradual and tardy process which can only occur when comprehensible input is accessible and it is unlikely to provide comprehensible input in the course of giving feedback to students' writing. (Truscott, 1999 in Chuang, 2012; see also Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Semke, 1984; Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). Many studies have proven that when done properly and effectively, corrective feedback can benefit students and produce a facilitating effect in language acquisition (Agudo, 2012; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Hendrickson, 1978).

In an experimental study by Fathman and Whalley (1990), students who received error feedback were found to have made significantly fewer errors on their re-writes than those who received no feedback. Despite the aforementioned findings that uphold grammar feedback, however, these studies focused only on revisions, not on subsequent essays; that is, students merely duplicated teacher corrections into re-writes. One criticism leveled against error correction practice is that students will become less creative and will curtail their writing if they are compelled to produce flawless piece of

discourse (Krashen ,1982 cited in Ellis, 2009; Semke,1984; Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008).

Dana Ferris (1999) being a zealous and ardent believer in revision, appears skeptic. In her book entitled ‘ treatment of errors in second language student writing ’ , she lists studies that ratify effectiveness of revision as well as those that are suspicious about the students’ ability to ameliorate their writing thanks to correction or revision. She maintains that there is no convincing evidence that correction makes difference in the long run but it seems, to a moderate extent, to improve the quality of revised papers and augment the students’ consciousness of themselves as writers (see also Agudo, 2012).

A good number of theoreticians, in particular, the liberal process orientation, do not believe that teacher feedback will necessarily lead to improved students texts. Teacher comments are often harshly reprimanded for being insufficient, incongruent and most often they are misconstrued by the student writers (Horning & Becker, 2006 cf. Semke, 1984; Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1985).

The most oft- cited study, carried out by Zamel (1985) found that teachers often give errors a miss, amend less serious errors while taking no cognizance of serious global issues, and give equivocal comments. While such findings, for sure, suggest a need for exercising extreme circumspection in how teachers reply to their students’ drafts (cf. Lee, 2004), suggestions that teachers’ feedback should be cast aside altogether appear greatly untimely or premature, particularly since research is inconclusive and often directly runs counter to this skepticism. While conceding that there is “ no one silver bullet approach to feedback” (Peleg, 2011, p. V) or “ ‘ no one-size-fits-all’ form of teacher commentary” (Horning & Becker, 2006, p. 71), Ferris (1999 cited in Horning & Becker, 2006) notes that most revisions influenced by the teacher feedback or correction have conduced to improved writing. On the other hand, Truscott (1996, 1999, 2007 cf. Truscott & Hsu, 2008) the most outspoken critic of teacher feedback and, in particular, grammatical correction, contends that grammar correction is, at best, ineffective, and, at worst, pernicious to student writers. Ardent process- oriented approach activists such as Zamel, Krashen, and Truscott, chief among others, maintain that excessive heed to or extreme preoccupation with students’ errors may cause students to curtail their writing and thinking process, making writing solely

an exercise in practicing grammar and vocabulary in lieu of a way to unearth and express meaning.

In radical disagreement with her colleagues advocating process approach to writing, Ferris (1999 in Horning & Becker, 2006) says well- construed error feedback, especially when combined with judiciously delivered strategy training and grammar mini-lessons is beneficial and highly appreciated by student writers, reasoning that student writers are still in the process of learning syntax, morphology, and lexicon of English, they need additional intervention (cf. Fathman & Whalley, 1990). Besides, the process activists' reasoning that corrections suppress students' creativity and eagerness to write, to take risks, are beguiling.

This study presents a bleak and gloomy picture of error correction feedback as a means to improve students' accuracy in their writing. However, it is evident that the studies used different student populations, applied different methodologies, and were narrow in scope. That studies utilizing the impact of written corrective feedback bore dissonant outcomes is that the discrepancies in research design and methodology, in fact, are at the bottom of dissimilar results procured (Guenette, 2007; Ferris, 2004; Peleg, 2011). As Russel and Spada (2006, cited in Guenette, 2007, p. 51) " remind us, researchers must investigate similar variables in a consistent manner so that they do not end up comparing apples and oranges (and pears, and grapes and nectarines)". In response to Ferris, Truscott (1999 in Ferris 2004) contends that making general statements is most logical when corresponding outcomes are arrived at under a range of different conditions, and least equitable when the circumstances are alike for all studies (see Lee, 2004; Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). Thus, no conclusive findings can be made.

To conclude, at a cursory glance, it becomes evident that the arguments for and against the teachers' corrective feedback are all square. In plain terms, at times, the balance is upset by the findings favoring corrective feedback, at other occasions, by the findings discrediting it. Only after thorough inspection, does it become evident that there are convincing arguments and examples abound in this research project that forcibly turn the scales in favor of non-corrective feedback group and render teachers' corrective feedback strategy as an activity of little or no avail. The body of this research project is rich in terms of arguments and examples against corrective feedback strategy

which will suffice for a language teacher to wash his or her hands of corrective feedback strategy.

2.4. Teacher and Student Preference

Responding to student writing in second language writing education and theory is a contentious topic. A good number of studies sought to explore the impact of corrective feedback on students' writing accuracy; to investigate how the learners who received corrective feedback differ from those who were deprived of it (see Agudo, 2012; Montgomery & Baker, 2007). The outcome was not so satisfactory, and in a lot of cases, the results were absolutely discouraging and disheartening (Hamouda, 2011; Semke, 1984; Truscott, 1996, 1999). But the point is not to argue whether providing corrective feedback yields fruitful results or not, for in the preceding chapters reasonable amount of evidence spawned against this vainly exercised activity that suffices in persuading a fair, impartial and unbiased scholar in casting votes in condemnation of this widely – exercised, yet untenable, activity. But the point is to investigate the part played by the under- researched topic i.e. students' and mentors' preferences.

Albeit the literature is abundant in arguments for and against the teachers' corrective feedback and comments, of course, with no apparent conclusive resolution, there exists paucity of arguments inquiring the preferences of students and teachers as far as corrective feedback is concerned. In plain English, the said issue has not been awarded due attention and consideration. But the preferences are worthwhile in that if the students and teachers have a common and reciprocal understanding of the objective behind a special kind of corrective feedback strategy or technique and come to terms in its use, the odds are that the feedback will bear productive results. The opposite is of sure possibility. Diab (2006 see also Brown, 2009; Diab, 2005; Lee, 2009) maintains that If teachers and students have reciprocally uncommon and dissimilar beliefs concerning correction techniques, the outcome will most probably be feedback that is inefficacious, in the worst case, disheartening for students learning to compose in their second language.

By the same token, Amrhein and Nassaji (2010 see also Brown, 2009; Diab, 2006; Ken, 2004; Lee, 2009) assert that If students' and teachers' conception of

schooling efficiency do not accord, it can result in students' dissatisfaction, and learning can deteriorated. Thus, it is of paramount importance to investigate students' preference for the type of teacher feedback on their writing to ascertain whether or not there exists any incongruity between the students' preference and expectation and that of teachers' (see Brown, 2009; Farrokhi, 2006; Qingmei, Wenhua & Yang, 2011).

The strife and doubt as to the helpfulness of various types and amounts of written corrective feedback (henceforth WCF), as well as the disparity between students' and teachers' perceptions regarding WCF are pedagogically puzzling and debatable. For example, teachers may be supplying a particular kind of WCF but students may not comply with it. As noted above, if students do not feel that a certain type of WCF is needed, then they will be reluctant to use it. Thus, it is momentous for both teachers and students to be transparent on what works for them and how. Thus, several researchers have proposed that in order for feedback to be effective, there needs to be a concordance between teachers and students, and perhaps students' expectations need to modify to better qualify what is most workable in developing their writing skills (Amehein & Nassaji, 2010; Brown, 2009; Dheram, 1995; Diab, 2005; Diab, 2006),

Oladejo (1993) gives a detailed account of findings of two studies attempting to inquire into the preferences and expectations of intermediate and advanced ESL learners for the error correction practice and seek to compare the students' preferences with the ideas of linguists and ESL teachers whose viewpoints rigidly take control of a typical error correction practice in the classroom. Some glaring discrepancies arise between learners' preferences and expectations on one hand, and the preferences and practice of linguists and teachers on the other. The author (i.e, Oladejo, 1993) springs to the conclusion that if the error correction practice were to be efficacious, the classroom practice cannot be stiffly based on the doctrine of some linguist or teacher who prescribes a particular manner of dealing with students errors in the classroom. Rather it ought to be pliable enough to embody the preferences and expectations of language learners as well (see also Brown, 2009; Diab, 2005, 2006; Hamouda, 2011; Melketo, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Radecki & Swales, 1988).

2.4.1. Background of the Study

Two overriding interests, or affairs of language learning and teaching profession in the 1950s and well into 1960s, were error hindrance and error correction. The time when the audio lingual approach was at the peak of its popularity and dominated foreign language teaching pedagogy, prescribed instant and comprehensive uprooting of errors from language learning and teaching setting so as to refrain them from being deeply seated or ingrained in the language repertoire or the language behavior of the learner (Agudo, 2012; Chastain,1998; Larsen Freeman, 2000; Keshavarz, 2008). The correction of errors, at any cost, was the prime concern of teachers, who were expected to display no mercy, or bearing, of errors. As Brooks (1960 cited in Keshavarz, 2008, p. 127 see also Oladejo, 1993) put it, " like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome, but its presence is to be expected ".

In the late 1960s, the world witnessed an instantaneous upsurge of arguments and developments in the second language studies (Brown, 2009), triggered by Skinner's initiation in the coinage of the revolutionary term 'interlanguage'. These developments gave rise to emergence of fresh contemplation and interpretation of errors, as a result, the former strong back up for audio lingual tenets gradually subsided (Keshavarz, 2008). Emphasis, since then, swung away from accuracy to fluency in foreign language classrooms, and not very long ago, communicative language teaching methodology dominance was strongly felt in great majority of foreign language teaching classrooms (Chastain, 1980). In lieu of persisting in error- free performance, an attempt was made to extend the learner's exposure to the language and to help the learner to communicate in the target language. As Chastain states more influential than flawless speech is building up an atmosphere where the students long to talk (Keshavarz, 2008 cf. Chastain, 1980).

The trend, nowadays, is that even though language teachers no longer view students' error as negatively as they used to, and even though today the emphasis has swung away from getting the students to produce flawless sentences to getting them to communicate in the target language as fluently as possible, as Wieczorek (1991 cited in Oladejo, 1993) rightly states, there is still strong inclination toward error correction as the main source of feedback to the students.

Thus, although the teachers' hue and cry over the learners' errors with the emergence of the term ' interlanguage' has, to a large degree, subsided, for they view errors as an unavoidable and integral part of second language learning, only a small fraction of teachers totally disregard students' errors in their language classrooms. It sounds that error correction and language classroom are inseparably and unavoidably wedded to notwithstanding a drastic change in ESL and EFL teachers attitudes or perspectives towards errors as well as despite the revolution brought about by communicative approach to language teaching pedagogy (Oladejo,1993).

In spite of a sort of partnership or association that holds between error correction and ESL/ EFL classroom, the literature in language teaching is plentiful of instances or evidence to substantiate the feebleness of error correction to guarantee that henceforth the learners will perform flawlessly (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Robb et al., 1986; Semke, 1984; Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). Some scholars categorically aver that providing learners with correct lexical and grammatical forms will play no significant part in ameliorating their writing proficiency. In fact, over-correction of learners errors, particularly, in the initial stages of language acquisition may not only be unproductive but it may also be disheartening, beguiling and bewildering to the learner (Oladejo, 1993 see also Krashen, 1982).

Notwithstanding the support for WCF in totality, the different types and amounts of WCF that work best are yet uncertain, research findings upholding the use of different types of WCF bear conflicting consequences. Therefore, error correction, today, has lost its former popularity, no longer is taken as a panacea to ensure correct and error- free performance in the target language. With growing body or wealth of research evidence appreciating or belittling the usefulness of written corrective feedback, researchers have sought for ways to account for why different amounts and types of WCF might be of no avail. Research has implied that one main problem is the perspective from which WCF is provided. For example, when teachers repair errors, they often alter students' production on the basis of what they assume learners want to or should say, but, sometimes, there is a disharmony between the point that a student wants to utter and one which a teacher thinks is correct (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010 cf. Qingmei et al., 2011; Zamel, 1985). At the bottom of the difficulty rests the misconception between teacher and student. Much research findings are reminiscent of

the fact that students have difficulty making sense of WCF on their papers and also have difficulty in finding out what their teachers expect them to do with the WCF (Zamel, 1985). Research has, also, demonstrated that students had problems understanding the WCF supplied to them and that often students' use of feedback did not completely correspond with the teachers' ends (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010).

If the error correction is to be efficacious as a leading source of revealing to the learners their deviations from the target language norms, and also as a means of prodding the learner to generate well- formed utterances in the target language, it requires that the linguists, language teaching scholars, and, in particular, classroom practitioners must be willing to do away with their stale perspectives as regards errors, classroom error practice, and momentously, their attitudes towards the learners.

Taking for granted that any language teaching is an endeavor to intervene in the language learning process so as to accelerate it , the pertinent query that linguists and language teachers should address is how well can this mediation be done for the complete interest of the learner? More especially, on error correction, the query that with much precision must be scrutinized is how can error correction be carried out so that the learner's capability for learning the target language is not hindered, but augmented? (Oladejo, 1993 cf. Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1985).

As Hendrickson (1978 cited in Oladejo, 1993) points out most answers, provided to the issues of errors and error correction by teachers and linguists, are conjectural and non-experimental (cf. Agudo, 2012). Most of the viewpoints, on techniques of implementing error correction, as they may appear theoretically sound, ooze out of the minds of language teachers and linguists only. They have turned a deaf ear to the viewpoints of learners, their preferences for error correction, and their views about different error correction strategies. Even where research has been launched to specify the learners' attitudes and preferences, it has been shown that, how the teacher ultimately treats students' errors is almost always independent of the findings of the research (Lee, 2004, 2008). Nonetheless, one would promptly acknowledge that it is momentous for learners " to feel that their perceived needs are being cared to if they are to develop a positive attitude toward what they are learning" (Oladejo, 1993, p. 73 see also Phipps & Borg, 2009; Melketo, 2012). This implies close interconnectedness between affective and cognitive factors. Research conducted by Talmage and Eash

(cited in Semke, 1984 cf. Diab, 2005, 2006) demonstrated that student achievement is closely tied up to student attitude. Anything which has a negative effect on attitude or runs counter to student preferences is likely to obstruct learning.

The helpfulness of WCF has also been shown to lie upon students' preferences for it. To put it differently, students' attitudes and preferences for particular types and amounts of WCF influence their use of it for learning (Hamouda, 2011). For example, if a student prefers or thinks that one type of WCF is more helpful, then the chances are that he or she may pay more heed and care to the correction and use it for learning than if he or she does not attach any importance to its effectiveness (McCargar, 1993 cited in Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010 cf. Brown, 2009; Corpuz, 2011; Diab, 2005, 2006; Farrokhi, 2007; Gabillon, 2012; Hamoud, 2011; Katayama, 2007; Khader, 2012; Leki, 1991). It implies that unless learners' needs are paid due care and heed, the way to learning may lead to impasse. On the contrary, how swiftly and efficaciously the goal of learning is obtained will mainly hinge on the degree of congruity and convergence of teachers' opinions and expectations and those of students.

The purpose of the chapter is to put forth the other side of the coin, the oft-oblivious issue (i.e. views and perspectives of learners to errors and error correction in language learning and to collate them with some widely –held, yet untenable, opinions of ESL / EFL teachers).

2.4.2. Teachers' Preferences vs. Students'

The efficacy of WCF (written corrective feedback) has also been demonstrated to rest upon students' preferences for it. In plain English, students' opinions and preferences for certain types and amounts of WCF influence their use of it for learning. For example, if a student feels that one kind of WCF is more beneficial, then, probably, he or she may take more heed of the correction and apply it for learning than if he or she does not have faith in its effects (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010).

Although one of the eventual aims of studies on error correction is to determine what sorts of error correction are more gainful in fostering the learners' interlanguage, there have been some researchers who hold that human perceptions, attitudes, and preferences are significant part of learning and teaching process (Farrokhi, 2007 see also Brown, 2009; Diab, 2005; Hamouda, 2011; Katayama, 2007; Qingmei et al., 2011).

Teachers and students bifurcate in perspectives as far as the issues of errors and error correction are concerned (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010 see also Brown, 2009; Katayama, 2007; Montgomery & Baker, 2007).

Teachers are more involved with how to treat errors than with what brings about them. Some of them think if we were to choose an excellent, spotless and immaculate teaching method, the errors would never be occurred in the first place, and, therefore, the emergence of errors is just an indication of the current deficiency in our teaching techniques (Corder, 1981). Therefore, the said teachers would employ every means to refrain their students, at any cost, from committing errors by constant correction which they believe would help students to be cognizant of their errors and not to repeat them. On the other extreme of continuum, there are teachers who are of the view that the learning of the foreign language may be disheartening if the teacher persists in correction and grammatical accuracy. They also believe that incessant correction can aggravate learners' level of restlessness, and that this curbs learning (Krashen, 1982; Oladejo, 1993; Zhu, 2010).

As with teachers, it is not startling to find that some students would like to be corrected, every now and then, by their teachers, for they feel that recurrent correction would help better the language they are learning. In a study on EL2 student writers, Leki (1991 in Zhu, 2010) finds that almost a great majority of these students wanted all their written errors corrected. On the other hand, he also finds that some students find recurrent correction very irritating, distracting and disheartening. They do not care about being corrected if the error is really remarkable but they abhor it whenever they commit it (Zhu, 2010). They detest being frequently interrupted and corrected whenever they are speaking and some of them would even cease taking part in the classroom interaction just because speaking alternates with interruption.

Research seeking students' preferences for WCF has unearthed that students' preferences for WCF diverge widely. A number of studies have suggested that students highly welcomed receiving massive amounts of different types of WCF regardless of the types of errors on which it is focused (Lee, 1997; Ferris, 2001; Lee, 2007; Ferris, 2002; Ferris, 2004; Robb et al., 1986). The students' yearning for unfocused or comprehensive error correction is in line with the findings obtained from Radecki and Swales' (1988 cited in Peleg, 2011 see also Lee, 2004; Radecki & Swales, 1988) survey

of 59 ESL students' perspectives towards feedback on their written work. Findings demonstrated that students seem to feel the pinch and await their teacher to fix all of their errors. The authors conjectured that ESL teachers could squander their reputation among their students unless they fix students' grammatical goofs thoroughly (cf. Lee, 2004). Likewise, Leki (1991 in Peleg, 2011) found that students considered good writing in English on a par with error free writing, and they both (i.e. teachers and students) awaited and wished all their errors in their written work to be repaired (see also Soori et al., 2012). Other studies have provided evidence suggesting that students like WCF in the form of comment and suggestion on content and ideas rather than on grammatical, structural and low level concerns (Semke, 1984; Zamel, 1985).

Still, some studies have found evidence that students yearn for WCF in the form of comments on content and ideas besides explicit WCF on their grammatical, structural, and surface level features. Lee (2005 cited in Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010) found that students preferred comprehensive or unfocused WCF rather than selective or focused WCF, and that students favored overt correction as well as indirect WCF such as coding. Sheen (2007 in Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010), for instance, observed that WCF on grammatical errors that addressed a sole linguistic characteristic furthered learners' accuracy. On the other hand, " the use of holistic WCF on meaning was more useful than surface-level WCF on form in increasing students' awareness of sentence boundaries" (p. 97). Due to these divergent perspectives, both teachers and students should adopt a rational approach to tackle the error correction problem efficiently and properly so as to adjust to their preferences in learning and teaching.

2.4.3. Teachers and Students Mismatches

To seek to identify the degree of parity of opinions and expectations of teachers and linguists on one hand, and those of the learners on the other, Oladejo (1993) conducted a study in which he required the students to frankly asseverate their opinions by filling out a questionnaire in the classroom. Analyzing the collected data, he found that there is a general tendency among language learners that their teachers should correct their errors in English so as to augment their fluency and accuracy in the language. Not only do the learners desire their errors to be corrected, but they also wish such correction to be comprehensive rather than selective. This finding runs counter to

the opinions of some scholars such as, Ellis (2008), Ellis (2009), Lee (1997), Ferris and Roberts (2001), Freedman (1987), Truscott (1996), Truscott (1999) and Valero, et al. (2008) who hold that teachers should be selective than comprehensive in their error correction strategy.

Lee (2008) avers that the scanty of research on teachers' beliefs has driven to the fringe the important part that teachers' beliefs and perspectives plays in actual classroom activities, written corrective feedback being the case in particular. Burt (1975 cited in Oladejo, 1993) with regard to existence of rift in teachers' and students' preferences contends that learners seem to call into question the validity of the current belief in applied linguistic circles about the selective or focused (to use Ellis term) error correction in order not to frustrate or dishearten learners.

Another area of disparity was that a good number of students ruled out the view that recurrent error correction could give way to negative feelings of irritation, distraction, frustration, and embarrassment (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010). Still another disconcerting area is divergence of opinions regarding the error type which should take precedence over the others. The findings of the study by Oladejo (1993) made it clear that students desire their teachers correct all the errors, this is while some teachers give priority to the content and serious errors ,or, better to say, high -level concerns in lieu of surface level errors, or, low- level concerns (Lee,1997; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1985).

Conducting a survey study on the teachers' and students' most preferred and least preferred activities in the ' Australian Adult Migrant Education Program ', Nunan (1988 cited in Farrokhi, 2007 see also Diab, 2005; Hamouda, 2011; Jalali & Abdeli, 2011; Radecki & Swales, 1988) stated that teachers' desire for error correction was low while students' desire for it was very high.

In contrast, teachers' preference for student self-discovery of errors was very high whereas students' preference for it was low. Teachers wanted to circumvent correcting students' errors and wanted students themselves to be held accountable for their own errors via self-discovery, this is while students evaded shouldering this responsibility and longed for their teachers to do the correction. This, Nunan (ibid) asserts, constitutes a dramatic instance of disparity between teachers' and students' perspective of error correction (see Lee, 2009; Melketo, 2012).

The pertinent query that needs to be posed here is that are the students' expectations and preferences satisfied by the actual WCF that teachers supply? While some researchers and scholars have indicated some degree of parity in a number of areas between students and teachers (Ferris, 2002, 2004; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Katayama, 2007) others speak of serious discrepancies (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Diab, 2005; Diab, 2006; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008).

2.4.4. Conflicts between Teachers' Actual Performance and Beliefs

The publication of a rebuttal by Truscott (1996) sparked hot debates between scholars on the inefficiency of error correction by suggesting its revocation. Ever since the circulation of the said article, the topic of written corrective feedback has gained unprecedented momentum in scientific circles among scholars from a great variety of fields.

A vast number of feedback- oriented studies address the act of teacher feedback solely to the approximate exclusion of teachers' beliefs that translate into practice (Lee, 2009 see also Farrokhi, 2007; Khader, 2012; Melketo, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009). Research on teachers' beliefs has indicated that teachers' beliefs are extremely effective on teachers' actual classroom performance as teachers are thoughtful and intelligent creatures who concoct their own personal and practicable philosophy of teaching (Lee, 2008 see also Farrel & Lim, 2005).

The study of teachers' beliefs has attracted much heed and care from many researchers, across the globe, in the area of language teaching. The bond between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices has been one strand of the work (Melketo, 2012 see also Phipps & Borg, 2009). Maxion (1996 as cited in Mansour, 2009) asseverates that teachers' beliefs are an inseparable part of classroom practice. When influential factors (extrinsic and intrinsic) pair up with teachers' beliefs, classroom practice and beliefs are congruous. When these factors clash or collide with teachers' beliefs, classroom practice and beliefs are dissociated. More specifically, researchers have been interested in the extent to which teachers' self- report beliefs accord with what they do in the classroom, and there is evidence that the two do not always harmonize (Melketo, 2012 cf. Cain & Cain, 2012; Farrokhi, 2007; Lee, 2008a;

Lee, 2009; Phipps & Borg, 2009). The assumption implicit in this study and the like is that individual teacher's beliefs or convictions are the major determiner of his / her instructional classroom practices. These beliefs are assumed as guiding tenets teachers assume to be true that act as spectacles through which fresh experiences can be perceived (Mansour, 2009 cf. Qingmei et al., 2011)

When people believe something is true, they perceive information supporting that belief. What teachers do in the classroom is said to be governed by what they believe, and these beliefs often serve to act as a filter through which instructional judgments and decisions are made (Khader, 2012 see also Farrel & Lim, 2005; Richards, Gallo & Renandya, 2001). Teachers' beliefs and actual classroom practices have a central role in the classroom, as they have a direct effect upon the teaching and learning process. Researchers have put forth abundance of evidence that teachers' beliefs influence their classroom performance (Melketo, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

Pajares (1992 cited in Khader, 2012 see also Melketo, 2012) gives a brief summary of the results of research on teachers' beliefs by demonstrating that there is a staunch bond between instructional beliefs of teachers, their planning for teaching, teaching decisions and classroom practices (see Farrel & Lim, 2005). Besides, he asserts that, the educational beliefs of teachers prior to the service play a pivotal role in the justification of knowledge and instructional behavior when entering into the teaching career. In his opinion, these beliefs are viewed as windows into the teaching behavior. Ernest (1998 in Khader, 2012 see also Mansour, 2009) also contends that teachers' beliefs can strongly influence the teaching practices by transforming those beliefs into a practical reality (cf. Truscott, 1996).

Investigation of teachers' beliefs has in the last 15 years or so appeared as a main domain of research in the field of language teaching. One thread of this work has paid attention to the bond between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices; more precisely, there has been interest in the degree to which teachers' declared beliefs agree with what they practice in the classroom, and the results indicate that the two do not always overlap. (Phipps & Borg, 2009 see also Melketo, 2012; Farrokhi, 2007). Such differences have been viewed as an undesirable or negative phenomenon (Brown, 2009) and described using terms such as incongruence, mismatch, inconsistency, and discrepancy (Phipps & Borg, 2009 see also Melketo, 2012)

This chapter inquires discrepancies between what English language teachers theoretically assert and practically practice in teaching language, and, by finding out the reasons for these, also gains insight into deeper conflicts among competing beliefs that teachers hold (Lee, 2009 cf. Melketo, 2012; Khader, 2012). Conflicts or clashes between what teachers declare and practice are a repercussion of their belief sub-categories, and of the variety of competing forces which impinge on their thinking and actions. Studying the reasons that underlie beneath such tensions can empower both researchers and teacher educators to better comprehend the process of teaching (Phipps & Borg, 2009 see also Melketo, 2012). This incompatibility between teachers' perceived belief and their classroom practice, as Qingmei et al., (2011) contend, may emanate from the distinction between technical and practical knowledge during the teachers' professional development. To put it differently, being interviewed, the teachers reformulated their answers based on their technical knowledge. Faced with actual classroom problems, however, they unconsciously utilize their practical knowledge about language learning.

Assuming that providing feedback is such a toilsome and yet momentous function for teachers, unveiling the belief or conviction that exists beneath teachers' classroom performance can uphold to identify the factors that contribute to effective feedback (Ferris, 2004; Lee, 1997; Lee, 2007; Lee, 2008; Sommers, 1982; Truscott, 1999).

Lee (2008) has written an article bearing the title of 'ten mismatches between teachers' beliefs and written feedback practice' in which he has probed the teachers' beliefs and actual classroom performance in written feedback from two sources: (1) A number of written papers obtained from teachers and analyzed for feedback and it is followed by an interview; (2) a survey questionnaire administered to a number of teachers with follow-up interviews with some of them. Whereas the data obtained from the former source intended to elicit information as to teachers' actual written feedback, the latter source aims to shed light on teachers' deeply- rooted beliefs. His outstanding findings in the fore mentioned article and other related studies probing areas of conflict between teachers' actual performance and their beliefs are briefed as follows:

2.4.4.1. Accuracy outweighs fluency

Scrutiny of feedback provided to the students' written papers revealed that there exists not only a big rift between students' preferences and those of teachers, but there also exists disparity between teachers' actual classroom performance and their perspectives and beliefs. Teachers mostly take heed of linguistic forms but they concede that " there is much more to good writing than accuracy" (Lee, 2009, p. 35 see also Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Lee, 2008a; Sommers, 1982; Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008; Zamel, 1985). The results of feedback analysis revealed that of the total number of feedback points marked on the students' write –ups, the teachers in responding to student writing brought language forms, or better to say, surface level features, immoderately under focus such that language forms received a high percentage of importance while content and organization of ideas and other high level issues only received a negligible fraction of percentage. However, being interviewed, they displayed a sharp contrast between what they did and said. In interview, they threw a heavy weight behind the text development and organization of ideas and content. Accuracy was the least favored option they indicated in interviews. The results are reminiscent of the fact that teachers are caught in a clash between their form-based approach to feedback and their understanding and conviction that fluency outweighs accuracy (Flower & Hayes 1981 in Zamel 1985; Lee, 2009).

A study was conducted by Phipps and Borg (2009 see also Farrokhi, 2007) in which they strove to ascertain the degree of go togetherness between the participating teachers' (who were Turkey-based) stated beliefs and their actual classroom practice. The teachers' actual classroom performance was audio-recorded, and it was followed by interviews. Upon juxtaposing the classroom performance beside their declared beliefs, especially in teaching grammar, some incongruities were surfaced. A blatant and striking disparity was the clash of ideas or preferences between the teacher and her students. Her highly competent students yearned for more detailed approach to grammar. This detailed and meticulous approach to grammar, however, runs counter to her perception of effective grammar teaching (revealed in follow-up interview), a tension she herself was aware of: *For me, the ideal scenario would be doing a communicative activity, having a conversation or role-play, then pulling out the*

language from that...and doing discovery. That would be my ideal, but I found it doesn't always work like that here (p. 384). In this particular case, then, the conflict in the teacher's work was between the standard and actual ways of teaching grammar. Her (i.e. teacher) approach towards grammar was expository not because she perceived it effective but rather she sensed that it was what her higher level students longed for (see Ferris, 1997; Ferris, 2004; Guenette, 2012; Lee, 2004, 2008, 2009; Melketo, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

In a similar vein Farrokhi (2007) conducted a study with the university students of a private institute in which he intended to explore the degree of divergence that exists between teachers' actual classroom performance and their self reported beliefs on the effectiveness of a particular sort of feedback. He claimed that collating teachers' self acknowledged belief with classroom practices in the employment of 'explicit correction' and 'negotiated feedback', one can find a sort of contradiction between what they preach and what they practice. That is, there exists a sort of incongruity between what they perceive as effective and what they actually put into practice in the classroom context. An inverse relationship holds between teachers' self reported beliefs and their classroom practices in this respect. That is, negotiated feedback and explicit correction with the highest percentage of perceived effectiveness have the lowest percentage of occurrence in actual performance (see also Lee, 2009; Melketo, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

Qingmei et al. (2011) conducted a study in which they intended to determine the degree to which the teachers' self acknowledged beliefs converge with their classroom practice. Their study focused on classroom practice of three teachers. To triangulate the obtained data, the study also involved classroom observation and follow-up interviews. The interviews comprised a focus on form episode and questions concerning beliefs about focus on form. A thorough scrutiny of classroom observation and their acknowledged beliefs it became evident that there existed a tenuous relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practice regarding focus on form. To begin with, one teacher stated that the time to deal with linguistic forms should be curtailed as much as possible, whereas in practice, she devoted massive amount of time to correcting linguistic errors. Another teacher, in her stated belief, laid no particular stress on linguistic aspects of language but rather she stated that fluency should take

precedence over accuracy. This is while in actual practice, her out of proportion attention to correction of linguistic forms stood out clearly against her stated beliefs.

Still, another teacher stated that learners' pronunciation errors should be corrected as soon as possible, but in practice, she gave priority to lexical errors in lieu of pronunciation. Interestingly, the researchers found that though they (i.e. participating teachers) underscored the need to set the speech in motion by restraining from obstructive error correction, whereas in their practice, there was a high percentage of error correction concerning language forms (cf. Brown, 2009; Farrokhi, 2007; Khader, 2012; Lee, 2008; Lee, 2009; Melketo, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

2.4.4.2. Comprehensive error correction outperforms selective one

Lee's (2008a) study revealed that, in the feedback analysis, approximately majority of teachers contended that comprehensive error feedback was the dominant error correction strategy employed in dealing with errors in the students' written texts. The actual examination of students' write-ups rather approved this, i.e. one out of every seven errors in the students' texts has caught the attention of the teacher (see also Jalali & Abdeli, 2011; Nourozian & Khomeijani Farahani, 2012). Thus, teachers have provided rather detailed and intensive feedback on errors. About 70 per cent of the teachers, in the questionnaire survey, stated they usually mark errors comprehensively. Such practice, however, is running counter to their belief, for a good number of teachers practicing comprehensive marking (12 out of 19) categorically expressed in the interview that they crave for selective marking. They also asseverated that if a great number of errors are marked, students, in particular, the poor ones, will be unable to manage successfully. One teacher alleged that I do reckon that if students bring into focus a great number of things at a time they cannot learn for their language base is not so solid (Lee, 2008a see also Lee, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009; Semke, 1984; Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008).

Oladejo (1993) presents the results of two studies seeking to show the preferences and perspectives of intermediate and advanced ESL learners as regards error correction. These are mapped against some viewpoints of linguists and ESL teachers which dominated error correction in the language classroom. Certain important

divergence of opinions is observed between learners' preferences and expectations on the one hand, and the opinions and practice of linguists/ teachers on the other. There was a consensus of opinions among language learners that teachers should correct their errors in order to augment their fluency and accuracy in the language. Not only do the learners want their errors fixed by their teachers, but they also, unlike their teachers, crave for comprehensive rather than selective error correction (see also Ellis, 2009; Lee, 2008; Jalali & Abdeli, 2011).

In a similar vein, Norouzian and Khomeijani Farahani (2012) conducting a study to explore the degree of go togetherness of teachers and students viewpoints, come across some inconsistencies in preferences and attitudes of teachers and students alike. They found that teachers' actual classroom practice runs counter to their perceived beliefs as well as the students' preferences. Teachers in follow up interviews expressed preference for the correction of grave and serious errors, turning a blind eye to those which do not block the flow of speech while in actual classroom practice they displayed otherwise (i.e. the comprehensive error correction technique took precedence over selective one). Also, teachers actual classroom practice was in sharp contrast with the students' preference. That is, an overwhelming majority of students, contrary to teachers' actual practice, longed for selective error correction strategy, which constitutes another area of misfit of which the teachers should be mindful.

Hamouda (2011), following the same line of argument, in his investigating the Saudi students' preference for selective versus comprehensive error correction found that majority of students (60%) investigated disagreed with the view that selective error correction should be put into practice, whereas 12 teachers (60%) like to give priority in correction to errors which occur repeatedly in students' writings. The reason put forward by the teachers for their preferring of selective correction is that it is impracticable for the teachers to correct all errors that learners committed because of the large size of the classes in which the respondents were enrolled (cf. Diab, 2005).

As far as comprehensive error correction feedback is concerned, Lee (2008a) found that a good number of students (70%) prefer their teachers to correct all errors in their write ups. This verifies Oladejo's (1993) findings in which students yearned for comprehensive error correction on the part of the teacher. Contrary to their students, reasonable number of teachers (65%) did not favor correcting all the errors. The reason

why teachers refrain from correcting all errors can be found in Katayama's (2007) study who alleged that fixing all the errors for students may have bad impression on the students' self- consciousness as they only reproduced what have been corrected by the teacher into the new drafts (Hamouda, 2011 see also Diab, 2005; Katayama, 2007; Lee, 2009; Melketo, 2012). This finding suggests that there is another mismatch between teachers' and students' preference for correcting all errors. Therefore, it is better for teachers to receive feedback on their feedback practices to modify, if necessary, their methods of marking and better accommodate them to learners' perceptions and preferences for it (Hamouda, 2011).

While the contention favoring repairing all written errors is of the importance to let students know of the mistakes they have committed, teachers have to come to their senses that, for the overwhelming majority of students, " their attitude to teacher feedback is one of tell them and they will forget" (Lee, 2009, p. 35 see also Lee, 2008; Lee, 2008a; Semke, 1984). This is especially so when there are a great number of errors awaiting the learner to attend to. This is while the viewpoints of teachers in Lee's (2008a) study appeared to be contradictory. The teachers in Lee study felt that students written errors should be pointed out and corrected, or else, they cannot learn from their mistakes. " Their belief was one of tell them, and they will learn" (Lee, 2008, p. 80 see also Lee, 2004; Lee, 2008a; Lee, 2009).

There is a reasonable wealth of feedback research evidence demonstrating that selective error feedback is desirable to comprehensive error feedback (Lee, 2009 see also Lee, 2008; Lee, 2008a), with the former being more focused (also referred to as focused corrective feedback; see also Ellis, 2009), less intimidating and more controllable for L2 learners. As teachers are slaving themselves and keep plugging away at determining, classifying and providing correct answers for students, or even copying or reproducing nearly the whole paragraph or the entire piece for students, they are appropriating the students' right to learn for themselves (Scrivener, 1998 in Lee, 2009) and robbing them of the occasion to foster self editing skills (see also Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Dohrer, 1991; Greenhalgh, 1992; Horning & Becker, 2006; Reid, 1994; Sommers, 1980; Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1982).

Lee (2009 see also 2008a), implicitly acceding to grueling task of teachers, asserts that not only is the drudgery act of carefully fixing students' written work time-

absorbing, labor intensive but the instant and immediate feedback a teacher gets is more often than not negative. The return of papers replete with the unavoidable red ink gives rise to looks of frustration, failure, intimidation and demoralization on the students' countenance (Semke, 1984: 195 see also Oladejo, 1993).

In a similar vein, Lee (2009) agreeing with Semke's viewpoints, opines that a paper replete with red ink suggests that there are likely far too many things for a student to take heed of them, while feedback that brings into focus the main problems in student papers can assist students to attend to definite areas, and the chances are that it will be tractable for students. So, why mark student writing so restlessly?

Lee also concludes that much of the incongruity between teachers' actual classroom performance and underlying belief originates from the policy dictated by the school authorities and parents (see also Farrokhi, 2007; Farrel & Lim, 2005; Mansour, 2009; Melketo, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009 and Qingmei et al., 2011 for similar imposed constraints). In other words, teachers notwithstanding their understanding of the merits of focused or selective feedback approach, and unlike their preferences for the selective error correction strategy, to comply with the policies of the school or parents, inevitably and unavoidably exercise the comprehensive strategy. In a similar vein, Khader (2012) holding relatively the same viewpoints as that of Lee (2009) asseverates that they (i.e. teachers) to abide by law, teach certain things which may be at odds with their beliefs. Sometimes, teachers have to make up for the contrast between their personal set of beliefs and the realities of the classroom limitations (for similar results see Melketo, 2012, Mansour, 2009).

An educational implication that can be drawn is that perceiving something right, teachers should not succumb to students' inappropriate and unwarranted expectations. If, all the time, in students' language learning process, their EFL/ESL instructors mark their errors comprehensively and offer the correct forms to them, learners may feel that these are the right things to do and that it is the teacher's responsibility to shoulder the task (i.e. correct errors). Unless teachers' philosophies and their actual practices are subjected to alteration and innovation, it would doubly be difficult for learners to reformulate their expectations, for students' preferences and perceptions are often or highly affected by their instructors' actual practices. Therefore, as, it is, implied by some feedback researchers, teachers should make students cognizant of the deleterious effect

of unfocused or comprehensive error marking. It is of prime concern that EFL teachers take necessary actions to turn learners into independent editors via less direct mediation (Nourozian & Khomeijani Farahani, 2012 cf. Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008).

2.4.4.3. Direct correction vs. ındirect correction

Lee's (2009) feedback analysis study indicates that a dominant strategy employed by the teachers in dealing with the students' errors is the direct locating and correcting of errors. But what they revealed as their underlying beliefs when they were interviewed oppose their actual classroom practice (cf. Farrokhi, 2007; Melketo, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009). In plain language, straightforward though teachers were in their strategy of dealing with their students' deviant forms, believed to help students to gain reasonable degree of competence in writing, they should be afforded time and opportunities to locate and repair their errors by themselves (Erel & Bulut, 2007; Semke, 1984). Likewise, Nourozian and Khomeijani Farahani's (2012) study of exploring the split in the perceptions of teachers and their classroom performance in the making use of two error correction strategies (i.e. direct vs. indirect) indicated that teachers' perception of the two error correction strategies contradicted their actual classroom practice. That is, an overwhelming majority of teachers (73.7%) made use of direct corrective feedback strategy while correcting errors whilst on the teachers' questionnaire only 40% of teachers favored direct correction. What is more striking in Nourozian and Khomeijani Farahani's study is that apart from two-sided inconsistencies, that is, inconsistencies between teachers' preference and that of students, and, inconsistencies between that of teachers' perceptions and their actual classroom performance, we find instances of multifaceted discordance. That is, where teachers' actual classroom practice is in complete harmony with their perceptions, there is almost a sharp contrast between students' preference and teachers' perception on one hand and between students' preference and teachers' actual classroom practice on the other hand. And where there exists a complete harmony between students' preferences and teachers' classroom performance, there exists discordance between teachers' perception and their actual classroom practice and the like (cf. Lee, 2009; Melketo, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009). " Contextual factors, such as a prescribed curriculum, time constraints, and high-stakes examinations, mediate the extent to which teachers can act

in accordance with their beliefs" (Phipps & Borg, 2009, P. 380). There is wealth of evidence of this mediation or intervention in language teaching; for example, Ng and Farrell (2003 cited in Phipps & Borg, 2009) observed that teachers directly and explicitly corrected students' errors because this marking strategy was quicker than indirectly eliciting these errors; they held that elicitation was theory- grounded and hence worthwhile but time-absorbing and impracticable in their context. Teachers opined that since students are incapable of locating and fixing errors themselves, teachers cannot help assisting them. One teacher opined that he prodded them into locating errors on their own, but the outcome was not so satisfactory. He (i.e. the teacher in the study) also compelled them to engage them in a peer - correction activity but they resisted teacher's determination. The results prove that teachers' error feedback practice is not compatible with their convictions. Though teachers hold that students should learn to find and repair errors themselves, this undertaking (i.e. getting students to correct their own errors) has actually been thwarted by teachers' written feedback practice (see also Dohrer, 1991; Farroki, 2007; Hamouda, 1993 ; Lee, 2004; Lee, 2008; Lee, 2008a; Lee, 2009; Melketo, 2012).

Oladejo (1993) study of language learners' preference vis - a- vis their teacher's for the type of corrective feedback, surfaced another area of inconsistencies between students and their teacher: for the teacher the most favored error correction method was the overt correction of errors and provision of the correct form whilst the students highly favored indirect and covert method of signaling errors via employing various sorts of cues or comments that would direct them towards self-repair. An overwhelming majority of students reasoned that this can arouse or provoke their inquisitiveness and sense of creativity and embolden them to hunt for goofs on their own (Jalali & Addeli, 2011). Obtaining the same results as Oladejo, Nourozian and Khomeijani Farahani's (2012) study revealed that providing students with indirect error feedback (i.e. highlighting errors without presenting the correct form) is more beneficial to learners' improvement than direct forms of it. There is ample evidence to indicate that impelling the learner to self-repair is effective in furthering acquisition (Ferris, 2006 in Ellis, 2009) and self- discovery (Jalali & Abdeli, 2011). Similarly, Block (1996 cited in Ellis, 2009) asserts that teacher - produced discourse is much readily forgotten than learner or self- produced discourse.

Brown (2009) study exploring teachers' and students' apprehension of ideal teaching practices as operationalized by the items incorporated into the Effective Teacher Questionnaire demonstrated dissimilar beliefs. The teachers were found to be more zealous " about having students use the L2 more frequently and earlier on than did their students" (Brown, 2009, p. 54). The students believed that assiduous L2 teachers should fix all mistakes with no deferment, whilst the teachers were far from convinced- a standpoint on error correction that is generally representative of communicative approaches to L2 instruction (cf. Melketo, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

2.4.4.4. Presenting grammar

Phipps and Borg's (2009) study, whose description went elsewhere in this chapter, was an attempt to determine the extent to which the participating teachers' stated beliefs and their actual classroom performance overlap. Mapping the teachers in question classroom performance against their stated beliefs, in particular, as regards grammar presentation, error correction and teaching writing, a glaring breach in belief and practice was unavoidable (see Lee, 2008a for similar incongruities). As a first case of mismatch, they found duality between the teacher's approach to presenting grammar and her follow-up contradictory assertions (cf. Lee, 2009). Her (participating teacher) typical and observed approach was supplying the students with formal detailing of grammatical structures and functions. As an example, in the first lesson presentation, she put some context-free sentences embracing simple past and past continuous on the board and made use of them to pull out the relevant rules for these forms. When commented upon this practice in the follow –up interviews, however, she opined that it was not something she was content with:

...*" I don't exploit grammar as much as I used to. Before I used to view grammar as a tool, 'we use second conditional to talk about hypothetical things; we use it in this situation'. Now, unfortunately, it's more traditional grammar-teaching, 'this is the form, this is how we use it, learn it because there's going to be a test'. It's a real shame that..."* (Phipps & Borg, 2009, p. 384 cf. Farrel & Lim, 2005; Lee, 2008; Lee, 2008a; Melketo, 2012).

Another source of teachers' beliefs and actual classroom practice clash can be traced to the second teacher's laying stress on context while teaching grammar. On being interviewed he opined that grammar presentation should be context-bound rather than context- free, but his actual classroom practice and later further discussion revealed

otherwise: a conflict between his held belief and his practice which he was not previously wary of:

Teacher: " I'd like to move away from rule-based presentations altogether.

Interviewer: Is that what you tend to do at the moment?

Teacher: Rule-based presentations, yes...today, for example, I just went right to the grammar" (Phipps & Borg, 2009, p. 385 see also Farrel & Lim 2005; Lee, 2008a; Lee, 2009). It would grab students' attention after working on a reading for hours. *" They were asking, ' why aren't we doing any grammar today?'...They didn't see the grammar work we were doing with the reading because it was in context...when we did a follow up in the last lesson, completely out of context, 'here's the rules, fill in the gaps', everybody paid attention then"* (Phipps & Borg, 2009, p. 385 see also Lee, 2008a). The teacher explained.

As stated elsewhere in this chapter, the literature is replete with instances of student- teacher preference clashes. Brown (2009) conducted a study whereby he obtained disparate ideas of effective teaching of grammar as far as students' and teachers' perspectives are concerned. He found that in response to an item in the questionnaire such as 'using activities to practice grammar rather than information exchange', students' preference differed significantly from that of teachers'. The teachers in this study highly valued communicative approach to language teaching where information exchange outweighed and took precedence over discrete point, de contextualized and grammar- focused presentation of grammatical points. This is while their respective students did not, or at least did not appear to, appreciate, it approximately the same (i.e. the students, on the whole, stated that formal grammar instruction should be given priority over communicative exchanges in the L2 classrooms (Brown, 2009 see Phipps & Borg, 2009).

Likewise, in Hamoud's (2011) study, yet another case of unlikeness between teachers' preference and that of students' was that of the low priority given to errors of paragraph construction and organization. This finding was astounding because it had been foreseen (by the teachers) that the students would award due care and attention to organization and content in lieu of grammar; however, it was, unexpectedly, found that the EFL students paid excessive attention to feedback on grammar than organization

and content (see also Diab, 2005; Katayama, 2007; Nourozian & Khomeijani Farahani, 2012).

As far as writing instruction, in general, and error correction, in particular, is concerned, Melketo (2012) conducted a study with three English writing teachers in the Ethiopian context to examine to what extent the participating teachers' pedagogical beliefs are in accord with their teaching practices. To this end, as a non- participant observer, the researcher made a close observation of the ongoing and current activities in those classes. He also conducted two interviews with each teacher; one prior to entering the class (henceforth, pre- observation interview) and another just when the observation phase came to its end (i.e. post-observation interview). Juxtaposing teachers' professed beliefs adjacent to their actual classroom practice, it was revealed that they were not aligned. The areas of misfit, in particular, related to three phases of writing, that is, 'pre-writing phase', 'writing phase itself' and finally 'revision and error correction phase'. As regards prewriting stage, one of the teachers in pre- observation interview commented on the strategies and procedures of dealing with writing. For example, he said that prior to abruptly plunging students into drafting a piece of writing, a reading text should be introduced to let the students generate new ideas and information via brainstorming and discussion, to let students use it as model to mimic, to use it as a source of information and the like. What the researcher observed in the classroom context was some teacher- oriented presentation and explanation about how to compose a piece of writing to the total exclusion of introducing reading text and brainstorming activities. The researcher, confronted with a rift in practice and belief, challenged teacher's contention further in later discussion and in post observation interview. The teacher, being aware of dissonance, declared that he didn't use the writing instruction as much as he believed and used to. Today, unfortunately, it is more traditional-teaching.

The most obvious evidence of disharmony between stated beliefs and practice was surfaced in the writing phase itself, where in pre- observation interview, the teacher claimed that students, throughout writing process, should be guided through spiral and recursive cycles of drafting and redrafting; writing should be viewed as a collaborative and creative activity in which students generate new ideas. The observation phase,

however, was totally different. That is, the whole writing phase was earmarked to controlled grammar practice and just one single draft of each individual student was submitted to the teacher for home checking. As regards the final stage, (that is, revision and error correction) in the pre-observation interview, the teacher said that students should be helped to edit the text content for grammatical and mechanical features and peer error correction should be encouraged. In the observation phase, the researcher found that revision was totally sidestepped and error correction was exercised by the teacher only.

To end this chapter, it is worth noting that, in all those studies, which are reviewed and mentioned in this research project, some glaring misfit was conspicuous between teachers' perceptions, preferences, beliefs and those of students'. Besides, a rift between teachers' self-report beliefs and their actual classroom performance was remarkable. The areas in which the dissonance either between teachers and their respective students or between teachers' stated beliefs and their actual classroom activities was dazzling were respectively as follows: 1) preference for indirect error correction versus direct error correction, 2) preference for fluency versus accuracy, 3) preference for selective error correction versus comprehensive error correction and 4) context- bound dealing of grammar versus discrete point and de contextualized presenting grammar. Numerous factors played a part in this discordance which not only bifurcated teachers and students as far as their preferences are concerned but also led teachers to teach in ways contrary to their stated beliefs. These factors were primarily time constraints, teachers' perceptions of students' expectations, classroom management issues, students lack of motivation, parents' and school management authorities' expectations, high – stake examinations, prescribed curriculum, to name a few (for further information see Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Diab, 2005; Diab, 2006; Farrokhi, 2006; Hamouda, 2011; Katayama, 2007; Lee, 2004; Lee, 2008; Lee, 2008a; Lee, 2009; Melketo, 2012; Nourozian & Khomeijani Farahani, 2012; Oladjo, 1993; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Qingmei et al., 2011). A final word that can be uttered is that an undertaking (i.e. error correction activity) which is speckled with so many blemishes, disharmonies or bifurcations of attitudes and preferences is not worth teachers' time, energy and trouble to make to slave themselves to provide timely feedback for the students which does not, in effect, pay off.

CHAPTER III

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

How teachers correct second or foreign language students' writing is a topic that has aroused interest in teachers as well as researchers. However, a recent review of feedback on L2 students' writing by Hyland and Hyland (2006 in Ellis, 2009) revealed that notwithstanding all the research, there is still no obvious response to the question 'what is the role of feedback?'.

Providing feedback is viewed both by teachers and students as an important part of writing instruction (Diab, 2005; Diab, 2006). One type of feedback that writing teachers provide is error correction. It is perhaps the most commonly used method for responding to student writing (see Ferris & Roberts, 2001). For teachers, it means the largest allocation of time they spend as writing instructors; and for students, error correction may be the most important component. The reason why this study attempts to render error correction treatment practices as a matter of worthless activity is because of some pitfalls associated with it.

Firstly, second language acquisition (SLA) literature is replete with studies exploring, yet, all in vain, the influence of teachers' written corrective feedback or comments on the betterment of students' writing accuracy. Though writing teachers burn the midnight oil to mark student writing, students who gained considerable improvement as a result of teacher feedback may be infrequent (Lee, 2009 cf. Lee, 2008a; Sommers, 1982; Truscott, 1999, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). Close scrutiny of university teachers' comments on the papers of student writers unveils that writing teachers inscribe, to some extent, general and common comments and treat with language –bound errors and problems. Hardly do they seem to expect the students to re-explore or re-visit the text beyond the surface level (Zamel, 1982, 1985, see also Sommers, 1982). Teachers' comments do not seem to convey or impart to the student writers the meaning of revision anything more than patching –up, editing or

proofreading. The result being that students did not seem to ascribe to revision any part more than tidying-up or copy-editing, intending to eradicate surface errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, diction and the like. This is the first research question this study aims to inquire and a qualitative approach is adopted to see to what extent teachers' comments can succeed in prodding or prompting students to actually revise their writing.

And secondly, most of the time, teachers do not understand the students' intention, or misinterpret their intentions, the result being that teachers by incorporating their perceived corrections and comments render, in the first place, the students' written texts incoherent (Zamel, 1985), in the second place, render error correction an act of no or little avail. Teachers view themselves as the authorities, intellectually mature, rhetorically more experienced than their apprentice writers (Flower, 1981). In classroom writing situations, the reader (i.e. teacher) "assumes primary control of the choices that writers make, feeling perfectly free to correct those choices any time an apprentice deviates from the teacher-reader's conception of what the developing text ought to look like or ought to be doing, thereby in effect appropriates the writer's text" (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982, p. 158 see also Dohrer, 1991; Greenhalgh, 1992; Lee, 2009; Neal et al., 2007; Reid, 1994; Sommers, 1981; Zamel, 1982, 1983). This is the second query that the study seeks to answer through a qualitative approach to see to what degree teachers are able to comprehend their students' intentions contained in the faulty and idiosyncratic utterances.

And finally, albeit the literature is abundant in arguments for and against the teachers' corrective feedback and comments, of course, with no apparent conclusive resolution, there exists paucity of arguments inquiring the preferences of students and teachers as far as corrective feedback is concerned (Diab, 2005, 2006; Hamouda, 2011; Qingmei et al., 2011; Radecki & Swales, 1988). But the preferences are worthwhile in that if the students and teachers have a mutual recognition of the purpose behind a particular type of corrective feedback strategy or technique and come to terms in its use, the chances are that the feedback will bear productive results (Diab, 2005). The opposite is of sure possibility. Diab (2006 see also Brown, 2009; Diab, 2005; Lee, 2009) maintains that If teachers and students have reciprocally uncommon and dissimilar beliefs concerning correction techniques, the outcome will most probably be feedback

that is inefficacious, in the worst case, disheartening for students learning to compose in their second language.

Thus, it is of paramount importance to investigate students' preference for the type of teacher feedback on their writing, and to ascertain whether or not there exists any incongruity between the students' preference and expectation and that of teachers' (see Brown, 2009; Farrokhi, 2007; Qingmei et al., 2011). This is the last research question this study intends to seek answer for it by taking a quantitative approach in which questionnaires are used in the survey of both teachers and students viewpoints as to the type of feedback the teachers provide and the type that students prefer. In short, in accordance with the purpose of the study, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected; therefore, the design of this research can be defined as a mixture of qualitative and quantitative.

The sections that follow, will see the detailed exposition of the participants, of the instruments used for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, and data analysis procedure.

3.2. Participants of the Study

This study is concerned with university teachers' written corrective feedback and comments on the students' papers for the purpose of helping students to ameliorate the quality of their writing. The participants, therefore, are chiefly and exclusively university English instructors and university students majoring in English. In so far as this study includes two qualitative studies and one quantitative study, each has its own unique participants and data collection procedures and data analysis which will be elaborated on separately in the sections that follow. Prior to elaboration of the participants of the current study, one more thing needs elucidation here. As stated above, since this study embodies two qualitative studies and one quantitative study, to avoid confusion, throughout this study, the two qualitative studies are labeled as qualitative study I and qualitative study II.

3.2.1. Participants of the Qualitative Study I

In this study, an attempt was made to investigate nearly 1200 marginal, interlinear and end comments inscribed on 32 first drafts of papers by university EFL

English students, exploring both the pragmatic objectives for and the linguistic characteristics of each comment. The selection of the participants was based on their convenience and willingness. Initially, it was intended to cast the net wide to include great numbers of students in the study. However, having found that an overwhelming majority of students are reluctant to take part in the study, in spite of the fact that they have already been made assure of anonymity and confidentiality of the information they provide, I could not force them to take part. Therefore, I was compelled to be content with the a few numbers volunteered to participate. One more thing needs clarifying here is that only those English students who have successfully passed the writing related courses such as ‘ advanced English writing’ and ‘ essay writing’ courses were the potential candidates of this study. This study was conducted with the participation of students studying in Azad and Payam-e- Noor universities located in the northern part of West Azerbayjan Province. The participants were 18 females and 14 males; their ages ranged from 22 to 27. They were majoring in English language teaching(ELT), English language and literature (ELL) and English translation (ET). The participating university instructors were 3 males and one female. The males were holding Ph.D. degrees and the female an MA degree. Their teaching experience ranged from 10 to 16 years. Their area or field of specialization was English language teaching. The instructors’ selection was also based on their willingness and convenience.

For the ease of attention and focus, the above information is briefed in the table 3.1.and 3.2. for participating teachers and students respectively.

Table 3.1.
Teachers’ Profile

Gender		**Degree**		**Affiliation**		**Field of Study**		
Male	Female	Ph.D.	MA	Azad	Payam Noor	ELT	ELL	ET
3	1	3	1	3	1	4	0	0

Table 3. 2
Students’ Profile

Gender		**Field of Study**			**Year of College**				**University**	
Male	Female	ELT	ELL	ET	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Azad	Payam Noor
14	18	21	7	4	0	0	0	32	23	9

3.2.2. Participants of the Qualitative Study II

The purpose of this study was to figure out to what extent teachers can succeed in capturing students' intentions in the faulty utterances. To this end, the participants in this study were nine university English language teachers, of whom one was female and eight males. Their teaching experience ranged from minimum five years to maximum thirty two. Their area of specialization was English language teaching, English language and literature and English language translation. Of the participants, six were holding Ph.D. degrees and three MA. They were teaching in the Azad and Payam-e- Noor Universities in the northern part of West Azerbaijan Province, Iran. Their selection was guided by their willingness and convenience to participate.

Also, present in this study were thirteen students of whom nine were males and four females. Their selection was based on their availability and willingness to participate. The participating students were in their final leg of their BA degrees. They had successfully passed writing related courses such as 'English grammar 1&2', 'advanced writing', 'essay writing' and 'reading comprehension courses'. Initially they supplied the researcher with samples of their in-class written composition assignments. The researcher avoided using in- class written assignments for being either error free or much too replete with errors of any sort that would actually make it impossible for the reader to make head or tail of them. On the researcher's request, they produced new drafts on the researcher-assigned topic of 'learning English helps me find a good job'. Guided by the knowledge that the more the number of the participants (i.e. teachers and students), the more reliable the generalizability of the results would be, there was a strong tendency and inclination to include a great number of teachers and students in the experiment. Upon perceiving their reluctance, notwithstanding the fact that they were in advance assured of the confidentiality and anonymity the data they produce (this trustworthy is well attested and best safeguarded in the 'demographic information' section where the participants are required to provide the needed information except for the name which was optional), I was coerced to be satisfied with those who voluntarily voiced their readiness to cooperate.

For the ease of observation, a general profile of participating teachers encapsulating their gender, university degree, their affiliation, and their field of study and participating students profile picture encompassing their gender, field of study, year

of the college and the university they attended to are depicted as in table 3.3. and table 3.4. respectively.

Table 3.3.
Teachers' Profile

Gender		**Degree**		**Affiliation**		**Field of Study**		
Male	Female	Ph.D.	MA	Azad	Payam- Noor	ELT	ELL	ET
8	1	6	3	7	2	5	2	2

Table 3.4.
Students' Profile

Gender		**Field of Study**			**Year of College**				**University**	
Male	Female	ELT	ELL	ET	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Azad	Payam Noor
9	4	6	3	4	0	0	0	13	8	5

3.2.3. Participants of the Quantitative Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to figure out whether there exists any misfit between teachers' preference for a particular type of feedback and technique of error correction and that of students. To this end, the participants in this study were both, as with the qualitative studies I and II, teachers and students. An attempt was made to include more participants in the study, however, owing to some constraints, the researcher's aspiration was not satisfactorily met.

One hundred students and thirty teachers took part in this study. Their selection was guided by their availability, willingness and convenience. The study was conducted with the participation of students and teachers studying and teaching respectively in the Azad and Payam-e- Noor Universities in the northern part of West Azerbaijan Province, Iran. The students' ages ranged from 18 to 51, with the fifty percent being between 24 and 29 and just a minimal number of students (5%) aged 51. An overwhelming number of students (58%) were studying English language teaching, the remainder were studying either English language and literature, or English translation. Ten percent of the students claimed to have TOEFL certificates and just one person said to have TOLIMO certificate (Iran's version of TOEFL). The participating students were from disparate native language backgrounds (i.e. Turkish, Persian, and Kurdish). The predominant gender were males with 58% as opposed to females with 42%.

As stated above, also present in this study were thirty teachers whose age range varied from 20 to 50. Their qualification degrees were as follows: six were holding Ph. D degrees (20 %), seven were Ph. D students (23.3%) and finally the predominate category belonged to teachers with MA qualifications (56.7%). Admittedly, 15 teachers possessed TOEFL, 4 IELTS and 4 TOLIMO certificates. As with the students, the teachers were also from disparate native language backgrounds but unlike the students, the predominant gender category as far as teachers are concerned were females with 56.75% vis-a-vis males with 43.3 %. Their teaching experience was from a minimum of one year to a maximum of thirty three years.

For brevity and ease of notice and attention, as with the qualitative studies, general demographic information of participating teachers encircling their gender, qualification, their course related certificate, and their field of study, and participating students general profile picture encompassing their gender, field of study, course related certificate and native language backgrounds are portrayed in table 3.5. and table 3.6. respectively.

Table 3.5.
Teachers' Profile

Gender		**Qualification**			**Certificate**			**Field of Study**		
Male	Female	Ph.D.	Ph.D.S	MA	TOEFL	IELTS	TOLIMO	ELT	ELL	ET
13	17	6	7	17	15	4	4	26	2	2

Table 3.6.
Students' Profile

Gender		**Field of Study**			**Course Related Certificate**			**Native Language Background**		
Male	Female	ELT	ELL	ET	TOEFL	IELTS	TOLIMO	Turkish	Persian	Kurdish
58	42	58	29	12	10	0	1	74	20	5

3.3. Instrumentation and Procedure

Depending on the design of the current dissertation which is fundamentally qualitative- oriented in nature, the answer to two questions out of three (i.e. the first question being: 'Do the teachers' comments on the students' papers help the students truly revise their papers?' and the second being 'Can the university teachers understand the students' intentions contained in the faulty and idiosyncratic utterances?') calls for qualitative study and only the third question ('What are the areas of mismatch between teachers and students as far as preference for the type of feedback and area of feedback

is concerned?') which this study intends to seek answer for it, is treated through quantitative study. Owing to the nature and design of the study- being an amalgamation of qualitative and quantitative in nature, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and appropriate data collecting procedures and instruments are used.

3.3.1. Procedures Followed and Instruments Used in the Collection of the Qualitative Data I

In the present study, the researcher examined four university instructors' marginal, interlinear and end comments written on first drafts of papers by university English students, exploring the pragmatic goals for and linguistic features of each comment. To this end, an attempt was made to subject the revised papers of students to thorough and careful scrutiny to observe the influence of instructors' commentary on the students' revisions and examine whether the changes brought about as a result of teachers' feedback actually give rise to improvements in the students' papers. For me serving as a visiting university teacher, the ignition for above research question of exploring teachers' comments and their impact on the amelioration of the students' writing quality was fueled by having to inscribe more or less the same comments for a great number of students' papers often with no or little pay off. That is why the study was conducted with the intention of investigating and surfacing the problem and offering ways for the improvement of comments that will hopefully trigger true revision in lieu of correction.

Data for this study obtained from students' first drafts of writing (the students were instructed to write short essays on one of the seven given topics), from students' papers on which four university instructors had written comments and assigned a score, from changes made by the students in response to the instructors' comments (the researcher deliberately applied the term 'changes' instead of 'revision', for in no way can the changes the students made in response to the teachers' comments be called revision), and finally from notes written by the students at the bottom of or on the overleaf the paper. The revised papers were, then, sent back to the teachers for the second time for evaluation and commenting on their quality and improvement. Serving as non- participant observer in the revising session, the researcher gained insightful information about students' motives to revise, about students' reactions to teachers'

comments, about strategies employed by the students to make changes and to process the comments, about students' attitudes towards the comments and scores assigned to their papers as well as about the difficulties students faced with while making revisions.

And finally, the most important pieces of information were elicited from questionnaires submitted to the participating students as soon as the revision session was over. It is worth noting that to gain in - depth insight into students' manner of dealing with the teachers' comments, their attitude towards the teachers' comments and to eye - witness their actual strategy of revision, the students were given a questionnaire containing sixteen open-ended questions revolving around the term 'revision', ' how it differs from editing and proofreading', 'the teachers' purpose of writing comments', 'comments and their influence on students' writing quality improvements', and so many relevant questions (see appendix A).

The analysis of the answers to the questions posed by the researcher more deepened the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. It is no exaggeration to claim that by exploring the answers to the questions by the students enclosed in the questionnaire, one can get a clear picture of the status-quo of writing process in Iranian universities, at least in the universities under investigation. That is why the questionnaires are regarded by some researchers as useful tools for gathering data that cannot be directly measured or observed. Since the questions in the questionnaire had been laden with technical knowledge or terms, most of the students answered the questions in Persian which are, then, translated into English. The saddening point is that the return rate of questionnaires was quite too low. Exactly one-fourth of the students (i.e. eight persons) despite my persistence, returned the questionnaires. Though no convincing reasons were put forward for declining to hand in their questionnaires, the point or message implicit in their reasoning, as anticipated, was technicality of the questions in the questionnaire and hence the difficulty of answering them. The students were given false identity or pseudonyms whenever necessity arises to quote words from them. Also, it is worth mentioning that the researcher made some modifications in the students' utterances for the purpose of making them understandable.

3.3.2. Instruments Used and Procedures Followed in the Collection of the Qualitative Data II

3.3.2.1. Instrumentation

The leading source of data in this qualitative study came from the students' write-ups. That is, the participating students besides putting at the researcher's disposal a good deal of their samples of classroom work (seventeen short essays and compositions written on different topics which clearly bear and carry the different teachers' correction and reconstruction of intelligibly impaired and grammatically deformed sentences), they willingly volunteered, upon researcher's refusal to make use of in- class written assignments owing to being either error free or much too replete with errors of any sort that would actually make it impossible for the reader to make head or tail of them, to produce new drafts on the topic assigned by the researcher. Since the aim of the current study was to measure the extent to which the university English teachers can manage to correctly guess the learners' intended meanings in the faulty and sometimes in the conceptually and grammatically ambiguous sentences, with this purpose in mind, the students' papers are collected and read with much care and precision with an eye on the segments of discourse (be it a sentence or a paragraph) which are believed will challenge the teacher- readers ability in unearthing the student-writers original intention masked in the unintelligible piece of discourse.

Because the assumption implicit in this study is that in many cases the teachers attempting to make head or tail of students' meaning contained in the idiosyncratic utterances, more often than not, missed the mark (at least this unfavorable experience has repeatedly occurred to the researcher). Taking the purpose of study into consideration, the researcher read the students' write-ups and chose three papers out of thirteen which served the researcher's purpose (i.e. papers having conceptually impaired and structurally deformed sentences and being structurally compound and complex). Then, the researcher, having produced a neater and fair copy of students' drafts, applied a colored pen to highlight, for the ease of attention and focus, thirty nine sentences serving the research purpose (i.e. being semantically and structurally unintelligible). It is worth noting that the researcher refused to subject the students' drafts to any further modifications or copy editing practices just to keep intact the naturalness and

authenticity of language produced. This is what rightly confirmed by Santos (1988) who asseverated that " artificially prepared passages allow for maximum control of the variables by the researcher, but they also sacrifice the natural quality of unaltered connected discourse" (p. 74 see also Khalil, 1985).

3.3.2.2. Procedure

Having identified problematic pieces of discourse, the researcher met with the student writers for the elucidation of their meaning embedded in those ill-formed utterances. Not being proficient enough in English to get their message across, they (students) were permitted to reiterate their original meaning in their mother tongue. The researcher, then, in close collaboration with a person proficient in English produced the L2 version of those L1 sentences. In cases where there was an atmosphere of uncertainty as to the standard English version of, say, a sentence, a phrase, the help of a tie breaking third person is sought. This procedure of reconstructing erroneous sentences and unmasking the writer's intention embedded in those idiosyncratic utterances at his or her presence is what Corder (1981 see also Hamid, 2007) technically calls authoritative reconstruction as opposed to plausible reconstruction.

Afterwards, those purposefully specified idiosyncratic sentences were submitted to the participating university teachers to seek the teachers' plausible interpretation, correction or reconstruction of these sentences.

Upon finding the teachers disinclined to tackle this rather overloaded task, despite their earlier agreement to render help whenever a necessity arises, the researcher gave several ways a try so as to lessen the burden of the work for the respondents (i.e. teachers). To begin with, the researcher decided to produce an alternative standard English version of the student's wrong sentence and seek the respondent's judgment on the rightness or wrongness of reconstructed sentence which is thought to capture the student intention in that erroneous sentence. Perceiving that in the respondent's mind there may exist other interpretations not thought by the researcher, the researcher put it aside. The idea of presenting the respondents with two or more alternatives of the student's erroneous sentence was another procedure or option the researcher inevitably has to test. Guided by the knowledge that different respondents may interpret differently a given idiosyncratic sentence, and infused by Bartholomae's (1980) reasoning that "

for any idiosyncratic sentence, there are often a variety of possible reconstructions, depending on the reader's sense of the larger meaning of which this individual sentence is only a part, but also depending upon the reader's ability to predict how this writer puts sentences together" (p. 265), this option was sidestepped as well.

Finally but inevitably, the students' write- ups, in which the erroneous sentences were highlighted and numbered, were sent back to the teachers for the interpretation or reconstruction of the students' intention masked in those faulty utterances. Upon submitting the paper, on one of the participants' demand calling for the additional background information as to the writer of the said paper (such as his or her name, educational background, and the university he or she attended to), the researcher was reminded of Corder's hypothesis which says that teachers who are familiar with the students and their native language are in vantage position to guess correctly the students' intended meaning from their erroneous sentences.

The result was that the idea of including in the study non-Persian speaking participants other than native speakers (Persian speakers) obsessed researcher's mind for some time. This idea, not finding non- Persian speakers cooperative, was soon superseded by seeking the effect of context in the interpretation of erroneous sentences.

In plain language, first, three papers each containing almost thirteen context-bound erroneous sentences which were highlighted for the ease of attention were given to the nine participating university teachers for the reconstruction of the ill- formed sentences. In the meantime, the researcher contacted with the student writers in person to restate their intention in their L1 and elucidate it to the researcher. The researcher captured their original intention by providing the L2 version of those erroneous sentences. Corder (1981) calls this type of reconstruction 'authoritative reconstruction. After a lapse of ten days, the researcher almost succeeded to collect the papers. The second phase of this data collection procedure was to give again those thirty nine erroneous and idiosyncratic sentences (see appendix B) but this time detached and uprooted from their immediate linguistic context to six university teachers (in the interval between two phases three teachers refused to cooperate, thus, left the second phase with six teachers) both to gauge the facilitative effect of context, if any, on the teachers' ability to unearth students' intention embedded in the erroneous utterances and

their ability in capturing the students' intentions through reconstruction in their absence. Corder's terms this type of reconstruction 'plausible reconstruction'.

In brief, this study is composed of two phases: In the first phase, nine university teachers were given thirty nine context–bound deformed sentences but in the second phase the same six teachers were given the same number of de - contextualized idiosyncratic sentences. It is worth noting that submitting of context- free erroneous sentences to the participating teachers was late enough to make sure of complete erosion of the effect of context from the teachers' minds.

Besides, attached to the students' write- ups was a questionnaire containing two general questions (see appendix C) aimed at gathering further information so as to deepen and sharpen researcher's understanding of teachers' ability in text interpretation, reconstruction and error detection. The questions were as follows:

1- Do you think context would be of help in reconstructing and interpreting the students' intention from the deviant utterances?

2-Which sentence is difficult to reconstruct: a semantically impaired sentence or a grammatically ill- formed sentence?

Juxtaposing teachers' plausible reconstructions with authoritative reconstructions, one can pass judgments on the teachers' ability in unearthing the students' intentions in the erroneous sentences. This discussion will move us to another chapter called data analysis.

3.3.3. Instruments Used in the Collection of the Quantitative Data

In seeking the degree of parity of teachers' and linguists' opinions and expectations, on the issue of their preference for particular corrective feedback, on the one hand, and those of students on the said issue, on the other hand, the researcher employed questionnaires to obtain data. To put it simply, the main bulk of information, in this quantitative study, was elicited through the use of questionnaires from the subjects (i.e. teachers and students). Similar but not exactly identical questionnaires were used. In other words, the questionnaire has two versions. The first one was designed for the teachers (see appendix D) while the second one was for the students (see appendix E). Except for addresses and reference conventions and one small section exclusive of students, the two versions were alike. The questionnaire items extracted

from instruments used in previous studies (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Diab, 2005, 2006; Hamouda, 2011). The researcher necessarily modified and added items to make the questionnaire relevant and appropriate for his purpose. Because the original questionnaire underwent some modifications, and to make sure that the questionnaire was ambiguity free, it was necessary that it should be pilot- tested with small number, yet, with more or less similar hypothetical group, of subjects before applying it to the target and actual group. Pilot testing of the questionnaire during which the researcher amended some difficulties in wording, was followed by testing the reliability of the questionnaire. Using Cronbach's alpha (the most common measure of internal consistency), the reliability of the questionnaire was determined and the reliability index of 0.719 was obtained. Of course, the reliability index of the questionnaire would have been higher, had the researcher omitted certain items intended to seek students viewpoints as to the teachers' comments. Nunnaly (1978) has indicated 0.70 to be an acceptable reliability coefficient but lower thresholds are sometimes used in the literature. Obtaining an acceptable internal consistency index of 0.719 further refrained the researcher to run the items in the survey through an exploratory factor analysis to weed out those variables that failed to show high correlation.

The questionnaires are composed of demographic information, multiple response items (the ones in which the respondents are allowed to check more than one option), closed items, such as yes / no and Likert-type items.

Respondents were asked to express their opinions freely by completing the questionnaire individually. This quality added to the reliability of the questionnaire, for the researcher along with two other persons got them filled out by the respondents individually whenever and wherever it was convenient for them, thus thwarting the cross-fertilization effect (see Hamouda, 2011; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010) which usually occurs when a group or a class of respondents fill out a questionnaire simultaneously in one place, say, in a classroom. So being the case, cross-fertilization of opinions will influence the results than if they were to be filled out individually.

Apart from questionnaires, the subjects (i.e. students and teachers), in this study, were given two closed questions which were thought to sharpen researcher's understanding of students / teachers preference for a particular type of corrective feedback or error correction technique (see appendix F). The rationale for employing

this supplementary information eliciting tool was to validate the results of questionnaires by citing evidence, reasons, or explanations from the subjects whenever necessary. The questions were as follows:

1-On what aspect(s) of language do you want to give or receive feedback? on text content and ideas? on vocabulary? on grammar? on text organization? on mechanical errors? etc. Please give your explanation.

2-What is your favorite technique of error correction? underlining and providing the correct answer? underlining and providing meta linguistic knowledge? no correction? circling the error and giving clues as to its correct form? etc. Please give reasons for your preference.

3.4. Conclusion

In the chapter known as ‘methodology’, the researcher briefly introduced two qualitative and one quantitative studies. The first qualitative study is ‘to what extent teachers’ written comments on students’ papers will be of help in revising their papers and in the amelioration of the quality of their write-ups’. The general profile of teachers and students, data gathering procedures and instruments employed for the purpose of eliciting information from the participants are detailed.

The second research question or, better to say, second qualitative study is ‘to what extent the university teachers are able to correctly guess and interpret the students’ original meaning in the faulty utterances (either conceptually or structurally) they have produced’. As with the first qualitative study, the instruments used in gathering data, the procedures followed in the course of gathering data, the characteristics of participating teachers and students are elucidated. The last study was a quantitative one in nature. As with other qualitative studies, the instruments used in the collection of data, procedures followed and characteristics of participants are detailed in the preceding sections.

CHAPTER IV

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

In the preceding chapter, the methodology of the study was explained. The participants, the procedure, strategy and the instruments used in the gathering of data were detailed. As stated elsewhere in the previous chapter, the data for this research project were collected through various types of instruments and data collection procedures. It is also worth reiterating that the present dissertation embodies two qualitative studies labeled as qualitative study I and qualitative study II and one quantitative study. In this chapter, the researcher will embark on analyzing the data relevant to the qualitative studies first and then move on to the quantitative study.

4.2. Data Analysis of the Qualitative Study I

As stated in the methodology section of the current dissertation, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the degree to which the teachers' feedback and comments on the students' papers result in the betterment of the students' writing quality. To this end, the bulk of data gathered from the teachers' written comments on the students' papers as well as from the scrutinizing the impact of teachers' comments on the students' papers. In other words, changes and revisions students made in response to the teachers' comments, strategies employed by the students, their reactions and attitudes to the comments, all helped the researcher to gain an in- depth insight into the status –quo of the writing process and the current educational trends prevalent in the universities, at least in the universities under investigation. Students answering 16 open-ended questions and the researcher himself serving as a non-participant observer witnessing the students' actual revision strategies all contributed to the bulk of data gathered and presented below. It is worth noting that some of the students answered the questions in the questionnaire using their native language. The researcher provided the

acceptable English version of these Persian sentences, though at times had to seek help from available proficient university professors.

In brief, the data gathered from various sources as mentioned above are presented and analyzed as follows:

4.2.1. Analysis of Teachers' Comments and Students' Textual Changes

For the purpose of determining the effect of teachers' comments on students' writing, a simple, yet vigorous, system for analyzing the effect of revision changes on meaning is sought. This need is met by the taxonomy provided by Faigley and Witte (1981). This taxonomy has two subdivisions: 'surface changes' "are changes that do not bring new information to a text or remove old information and 'text-based changes' involve the adding of new content or deletion of existing content" (Faigley & Witte, 1981, p. 402). The former (i.e. surface changes) is itself divided into 'formal changes' " include conventional copy- editing operations and 'meaning preserving changes' include changes that paraphrase the concepts in the text but do not alter them. The latter (text- based changes) is divided into 'microstructure changes' or changes which are simple adjustments or elaboration of existing text and 'macrostructure changes' which "make more sweeping alterations" (Faigley & Witte, 1981, p. 404) . This taxonomy embodies both those changes caused by teachers' comments and those which students make independent of teachers' comments. What is left outside of this taxonomy is a great number of comments (about 50) on the students' papers which do not call for the students to make textual changes, such as 'good', 'well - done', 'good English sentence', good handwriting 'ok' and the like, for the taxonomy in question is change - oriented there is no room for these types of comments. Thus, deleting these so - called neutral comments (i.e. 50) from the total number of comments (i.e. 1200) on the students' papers, it leaves us with approximately 1150 comments which require student-writers to make textual changes. Via independent classification of teachers' comments and students' textual changes by the researcher and another proficient university professor, the researcher obtained a higher degree of agreement (we more than ninety five percent of times agreed on the grouping of the teachers' comments and students textual changes under appropriate categories).

It needs mentioning that as with other classification systems, in this classification also an element of subjectivity is evident since one cannot place with one hundred percent of certainty revised changes under the appropriate groupings. This high degree of agreement is because of the fact that an overwhelming majority of teachers' comments, that is about 97 percent (1116 out of 1150) targeted and addressed surface changes of Faigley and Witte's system. Students' textual changes also, being nothing more than tidying – up or copy - editing activity- aimed at eradicating surface errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and diction-with much greater degree of certainty are grouped under the surface changes level as well. For ease of observation and classification, Faigley and Witte's taxonomy of revision changes is given below.

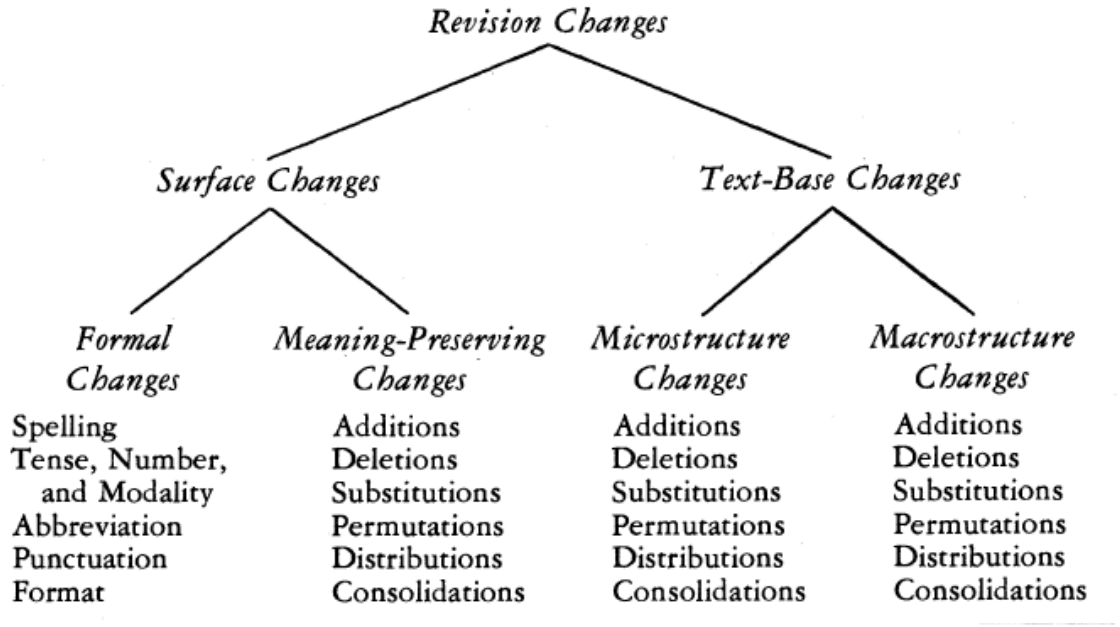

Figure 4.1. A taxonomy of revision changes (taken from Faigley & Witte, 1981, p. 403).

To illustrate how the researcher analyzed and tabulated the obtained data under appropriate levels based on Faigley and Witte's categorization system some examples are given:

1)Student's text: in my opinion, a good teacher should grant his or her students with opprtunities to ask questions.

Teacher's comments: **Capitalize every initial word** *in* / **wrongly spelled** *opprtunities*

Student's textual changes: ***In*** my opinion, a good teacher should grant his or her students with ***opportunities*** to ask questions.

Explanation: If care is taken, teacher's comments (i.e. capitalize, sp) are related to formal changes level (a level that involves conventional copy- editing operations) and so are student's textual changes.

2) Student's text: In this disease, blood vessels' parapets are closed by the fat stored in them.

Teacher's comment: **Clarify it.**

Student's textual change: In this disease, **the inside wall** of blood vessels are closed by fat **kept** in them.

Explanation: Both teacher's comment and student's textual change belong to micro structural level (a level which includes changes that paraphrase the concepts in the text but do not alter them).

3)Student's text: A five - paragraph essay

Teacher's end comment: **Your writing lacks in continuity or coherence:**

Student's textual change: Student left the comment unchallenged.

Explanation: Since the teacher's comment calls for substantial and sweeping modification in the student's essay, it should be placed under the macro structural changes level.

Using Faigley and Witte's classification system as a criteria, teachers' comments and students' textual changes can be tabulated as in the tables 4.1. and 4.2. respectively.

Table 4.1.
Teachers' Comments

Formal Changes	**F**	**%**	**Meaning Preserving Changes**	**F**	**%**
Capitalization	110	9.5 *	Reword	73	6.5
Spelling	74	6.5	Rewrite	87	7.5
Punctuation	63	5.5	Redundant	43	3.7
Wrong Word	91	8	Underlining	23	2
Grammatically Wrong	123	10.70	Circling	24	2
Wrong Tense	92	8	Add	27	2.5

Table 4.1. (*Continued*)

Wrong Word Order	**53**	**4.6**	**Delete**	**28**	**2.5**
Subject-Verb Agreement	41	3.5	Incomplete Sentence	30	2.6
Wrong Sentence	55	4.8	Non-Sense Word	17	1.5
Wrong Verb	44	3.8	Awkward Word	18	1.56
Total	746	65		370	32

Micro - Structural Changes	**F**	**%**
Ambiguous Sentences	11	0.95

Macro - Structural Changes	**F**	**%**
Not Clear Paragraph	10	0.87
No Conclusion	9	0.78
Not Good Paragraphing	4	0.35
Total	23	2

*Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, and thus may not add to 100.

The information contained in tables 4.1 can be briefed as follows: An analysis of teachers' comments reveals that a great majority of teachers' comments 1116 out 1150 (that is about %97) focused on surface changes. That is, while over 746 (about % 65) out of 1150 comments directed students' attention to formal changes (spelling, punctuation, tense, number, abbreviation, capitalization), only about 370 (about % 32) out of the total number of comments addressed meaning preserving changes (addition, deletion, substitution, permutation, distribution, consolidation). Almost a very negligible number of the comments, 11 (that is about %1) directed students' attention to micro-structural changes and just a very small fraction of comments 23 (that is about % 2) concentrated on the macro structural changes.

Table 4.2.
Students' Textual Changes

Formal Changes	**F**	**%**	**Meaning Preserving Changes**	**F**	**%**
Capitalization	109	10.5	Reword (addition)	70	6.75
Spelling	73	7	Rewrite (addition)	85	8.19
Punctuation	69	6.65	Redundant (deletion)	42	4.05
Grammatically Wrong	120	11.57	Wrong Word (substitution)	84	8.10
Wrong Tense (tense)	90	8.70	Underlining (permutation)	23	2.21
Subject-Verb Agreement (Number)	40	3.9	Circling (distribution)	24	2.31
Wrong Verb (modality)	43	4.15	Add (addition)	27	2.60
Wrong Tense (modality)	50	4.80	Delete (deletion)	28	2.70
			Incomplete Sentence (addition)	25	2.41
			Non-Sense Word (substitution)	15	1.44
			Awkward Word (substitution)	15	1.44
Total	594	57.27		438	42.23

Micro - Structural Changes	**F**	**%**
Ambiguous Sentences (addition)	5	0.05

Macro - Structural Changes	**F**	**%**
0	0	0

An analysis of students' revision changes shows that the most number of changes made by the students are related to the surface changes. That is, about 1032 (almost % 99.5) out of total number of changes (1037) are related to the surface changes level. Putting teachers' comments calling for surface changes (% 97) beside the students' changes carried out at that level (% 99.5), it becomes evident that students almost attempted all the teachers' comments (i.e. there is almost one- to one

correspondence between teachers' comments and students' changes). Again students' changes at the formal level is about % 57.27 and at the meaning preserving level is about % 42.23. The three categories of 'grammatically wrong' (% 11. 57), 'capitalization'(% 10.5) and 'wrong tense'(% 8.70) rated high among the changes students made at the surface changes level. Only 0.05 percent of changes (that is, 5 out of 1037) related to micro structural changes. Not even one student made macro structural changes.

4.2.2. Analysis of Students' Answers to Open- Ended Questions

As stated before, the students in this study other than making textual changes or revision in response to teachers' comments, also provided answers to 16 open- ended questions which helped the researcher to gain an in- depth understanding of the students' purpose of making textual changes and the strategy of their revision (see appendix A). Through careful scrutiny of the answers it becomes evident that a great majority of the answers revolve around eight themes as in the following table:

Table 4.3.
Students' Responses to Open-Ended Questions Pertaining to Various Themes

Theme	**Students' Responses**
1-Students' purpose of revision:	-Revision improves scores
2-Students' strategy of handling teachers' comments :	-Not reading the whole text, just correcting the errors in sequence.
3-Mistaking rewording, editing, or reviewing for revision :	-Our teacher never applied the term revision but rather it was the term editing, rewording, or reviewing that was frequently used. -Our teacher never asked us to revise in writing classes. -Our first draft was our final draft. -Our teacher just sends a paper back to us with some comments on it to justify the score not to help us improve its quality.

Table 4.3. (*Continued*)

	-To proofread is enough.
4-The relationship between the teachers' comments and students' responses:	-I would like to revise my writing but since my teacher's correction addressed low level concerns, I felt no need to make macro-structural changes. -I have my own doubts that my self-initiated changes will gain my teacher's approval.
5-Compliance with abstract rules:	-Nothing is wrong with this conditional sentence type 2.
6- To attach importance to surface level features:	-Teachers comment extensively on mechanical issues. -Making surface level changes leads to score improvement.
7- Text appropriation:	-I would like to revise, but fearing that my self-initiated changes may not gain the teacher's approval.
8- Difficulties students encountered:	- My paper was replete with comments such as awkward, reword, and rewrite.

4.2.3. Analysis of Researcher's Observation

The source of data for this qualitative study stems not only from the teachers' comments on students' papers, from the textual changes students render vis - a - vis teachers' comments, from the students' answers to open-ended questions, but rather the role of the researcher's own observation of the students' strategy of handling teachers' comments was undeniably important. As with students' answers to open-ended questions, the researcher's observation revolves around certain themes like the ones mentioned in the table below:

Table 4.4.
Researcher's Observation Pertaining to Various Themes

Theme	**Researcher's Observation**
1-Strategy of revision:	-In the revision session, students were observed jumping hastily from one comment to another without reading the whole text from beginning to end. -Students commenced with the first comment and proceeded through the paper in sequence or haphazardly from one comment to another ignoring macro structural changes. - Only a becoming word will suffice. - Students restricted revision to low level concerns.
2-Frequent use of synonymous words:	-They thumbed the dictionary to find alternative words for the words noted by the teacher.

4.3. Data Analysis of Qualitative Study II

English language teachers customarily write comments on students' papers or provide feedback to, and most of the time, reconstruct the students' deviant utterances, and so doing, they typically exert control over the writers' text, this is what Sommers (1980 see also Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Dohrer, 1991; Greenhalgh, 1992; Neal et al., 2007; Reid, 1994; Sommers 1981) calls text appropriation.

This qualitative study aims to gauge university English language teachers' ability in guessing and unearthing the students' intended meaning from conceptually and structurally impaired and deviant utterances.

4.3.1. Analysis of Context Bound and Context Free Sentences

As with the quantitative study I, the bulk of data for this study came from students' write-ups and university teachers' interpretation of these erroneous sentences

produced by the students. Given the vastness of interpretations, a categorization system is required whereby to group various interpretations under appropriate levels. This categorization system is devised by analogy from Khalil's (1985 see also Bartholomae, 1980 for a similar method of reconstructing students' deviant sentences) who applied it to subsume grammatically and semantically ill-formed sentences under appropriate classes or levels.

The procedure is by utilizing a classification system to map teachers' plausible reconstructions against authoritative reconstructions to pass judgments whether teachers can correctly guess students meaning from unintelligible utterances. This categorization system allows the researcher to place the teachers' reconstructed sentences along the continuum; on one extreme is the option of 'Not Captured' and on the far off extreme is the option of ' Totally Captured', and in between fall the options of 'Minimally Captured' and Considerably Captured' respectively. For brevity, the four scales are abbreviated and diagrammatically shown along the continuum as follows:

Not Captured (NC) Minimally Captured(MC) Considerably Captured(CC) Totally Captured(TC)

It is worth mentioning that as with other categorization systems one cannot with one hundred percent of certainty assign the reconstructed sentence to appropriate scales, in particular, whether the reconstructed sentence should be subsumed under MC or CC seems to be a personal decision. That's, the element of subjectivity is vivid in this categorization. To moderately overcome this problem, I sought the help of a proficient university teacher.

To find out to what degree teachers succeeded in understanding the students' intended meanings in the vague and unintelligible sentences, the table below puts the students' original sentences, teachers' reconstructed sentences (i.e. plausible reconstruction) and students' intended meanings (i.e. authoritative reconstruction) together whereby to pass judgments on their ability in reading their students' minds from the idiosyncratic sentences.

Table 4.5.
Students' Original Sentences, Authoritative Reconstructions and Plausible Reconstructions

Students' Original Sentences	Authoritative Reconstruction	Plausible Reconstruction *
1- Language is a system that the first year the school needs naturally learn.	Language is a system that children naturally learn it from early childhood without getting education.	Language has an important role in our life and from the early years of school, it's the means of teaching and communication.
2- Maybe learning languages so easily.	Learning languages may be so easy.	It's easy to learn different languages.
3- One of the adventures of language is that it is a sole language.	One of the wonders of language is that it is a single language.	One of the advantages of language is that it is a complete one.
4- Almost all nations have established their place.	Almost all countries have recognized the importance of The English language.	Almost all nations have established their status.
5- Can English speak the language called.	English can be called spoken language.	The language that is spoken called English.
6- Why it seems all the people who accepted to speak and use language to communicate with each other.	That is why all people use English to communicate with each other.	The question is that why people like to use the language in their conversations.
7- Do you have any idea that access to the information of others without profit how much fun can it be?	Do you have any idea how interesting it would be having access to the information of which others are denied?	Do you have any idea having access to others' information without paying money how fun it can be?
8- Or talk to interesting people that others can prevent to talk?	Or (what fun would it be) talking to famous people of whom others are denied?	Talking to interesting people can be forbidden.
9- And leaving behind a huge leap others pick up on the job?	(How interesting would it be) leaving others behind with big steps you take at your job?	And leaving behind a big chance that others get in the job.

Table 4.5. (*Continued*)

10- Entrance is missing and how to communicate with its people.	You are embarrassed and do not know how to communicate with people.	Entrance is prohibited and do not know how to communicate.
11- The problem which is opposite you.	The problem which you face.	My problem is different from your problem.
12- It is not necessary to spend much time out of their lives to learning and only a brief we can achieve this goal.	It is not necessary to spend much time learning English. A short time is enough to achieve this goal.	It is not necessary to spend much time on learning, by giving a brief explanation we can understand.
13- If you do not continue to learn English as professionals still have not lost, in the future we will see its effects.	If you do not continue to follow learning English professionally, you are still not a loser.	If you do not keep on learning English , you will have great difficulties in the future.
14- Assuming that your field does not interfere much English language.	Let's assume that your field of study has nothing to do with English.	Even though your field does not match with the English language.
15- If we learn the language to a target, we will follow it up this way to earn money.	If we set language learning as a goal for ourselves, we should follow it this way to earn money.	If we learn the target language , we will follow it up for earning money.
16- The unite language in the world that we can communicate is English.	The only(single) language in the world that we can communicate with is English.	English is an international language.
17- I hope this note that you are reading can depend your idea on me.	I hope my composition will draw your attention.	I hope this note will convey my point of view.
18- All of the shells of humans have languages.	All human races possess a language.	People use language to communicate each other.
19- Having relevance with unknown noises or drawing all that they were trying to say it were the ways of the first relations in the first times of the creation.	From the first days of creation, human beings were seeking ways to establish relationship among themselves through drawings and making noises.	These mishmash sounds and pictures show the first kinds of relations in the creation of human beings.

Table 4.5. (*Continued*)

20- With the going up of centuries and growing up human's mind and kinds of languages and talking ways created.	As time passed by and human mind grew, all kinds of spoken language and different way of communicating came into being.	With the passing of time, man created a systematic way of communication which is called language.
21- In important and effectual points, they are powerful.	They are powerful in vital and important issues.	They are powerful in terms of importance and influence in the world.
22- The environment of two powers of every branches can get a nation nervy.	The dominance of two superpowers on all fields can make every nation envious.	English is the dominant language because it is the language of the dominant countries.
23- The utilizable language is English.	The widely spoken language is English.	English is the most useful language in the world.
24- In all trains of science, politics, economy, commerce, and in one word, all parts of the worldly life, learning English and having gripe to English is a prerequisite.	In all aspects of science, politics, economy, and commerce, learning English and having a good command of English is a prerequisite.	English is a prerequisite if you want to learn science, politics, economy and commerce.
25- Reaching to the crest of universal lessons can be able when you gripe and wise to English.	Obtaining higher university degrees are only possible when you learn and have a good command of English.	Obtaining the universal ideas is possible only when we bring under control the English language.
26- Having useful universal script can help the person to have profitable job.	Having accredited university degree can help the person to have a profitable job.	Knowledge of the world can help the person to have a profitable job.
27- It can help the whom to create a future for him/ her.	It can help the person to have a better life in future.	This will help the person in his job.
28- Most of the universal serviceable idioms are in English.	The most widely- used idioms are in English.	The English language has very useful idioms.

Table 4.5. (*Continued*)

29- …and the prerequisite of uptake those idioms is in account, knowing, learning and finally in gripe to English.	… and the prerequisite to understand, know, learn those idioms is to have a good mastery of English.	Knowing and using idioms in English helps us to have a better understanding of them.
30- More efficiently work is overcoming to infirmity of knowing English.	More efficient work is to overcome your deficiency in English.	You need more work to overcome the difficulties of learning English.
31- …that English in the world says first and final word, is a crowbar to reach to top tips.	… that the English language in the world utters first and final word is a means to obtain higher degrees.	English play a vital role all over the world.
32- … and can deliver your wishes.	… can meet your wishes.	… can eliminate your wishes.
33- These training packages with attractive slogans can attract many students to do.	These training packages with attractive slogans attract the students' attention.	These training packages with attractive slogans can attract many students to register.
34- These applications typically considered conversations and exercises in the book to make multimedia presentations.	These packages make use of multimedia to present conversations and exercises in the book.	The applicants typically considered the conversations and exercises of the book to produce multimedia presentations.
35- So try with education to improve your English to get hired as a positive point in time to use it..	So along with your education, try to improve your English to make utmost use of its advantage in its due time.	Improve your English so that you can use it fluently and usefully in your job.
36- Proficiency in English and computer you will have a great impact on employment.	Being good at English and computer, your employment is at hand (guaranteed).	By gaining proficiency in English and computer, you will have a great impact on your interviewer at the time of employment.
37- How we view ourselves as servants food restaurants?	How can we make ourselves understood to servants in the restaurants?	What would our judgment be about restaurant food if we were there as a servant?

Table 4.5. (*Continued*)

38- It's information can get your mind job in even any international company.	Its knowledge can help you obtain your imaginary job even in an international company.	Its information can feed the needs of your mind in an international company.
39- People don't avoid taking challenging and fruitful overseas assignments these days.	People do not mind going on challenging and fruitful overseas missions these days.	People do not avoid having useful communications with overseas countries.

* Note: For each erroneous sentence there are at least nine, with a maximum of, fifteen plausible interpretations. Owing to space constraints, one plausible interpretation from the teachers is given as an example in the ' plausible section' of the table 4.5.

It is worth noting that in the plausible section, the researcher deliberately inserted teachers' reconstructions which were wide of the mark in comprehending students' meaning from those unintelligible and deformed sentences. It does not follow that the teachers failed in their attempt to discover the students' intentions. Rather, the present research has available instances of teachers' reconstructions which exhibit teachers' ability in complete capturing of the students intentions. For the sake of saving space, the researcher avoided inserting not only all those reconstructions that fall wide of the mark but also those which thinly escaped the mark as well as those which hit the nail on the head.

The table below details the teachers' reconstruction with respect to the four categories of Not Captured (which means that the teacher's reconstructed sentence did not at all capture the student's intention and hence NC), Minimally Captured (meaning that teacher's reconstructed sentence minimally captured the student's intention and abbreviated as MC), Considerably Captured (meaning that teacher's reconstructed sentence to a large extent captured the intended meaning and abbreviated as CC) and finally is the category of Totally Captured (meaning that teacher's reconstructed sentence totally overlaps with the student's intention and hence TC). As reiterated already, this qualitative study comprises two phases: in the first phase, nine teachers are given thirty nine context- bound faulty sentences to reconstruct, but the second phase concerns with submission of the same number of de-contextualized idiosyncratic sentences to six teachers not only to gauge the teachers' ability in guessing the students'

intentions from the idiosyncratic sentences but to measure the effect of context in rendering help to teachers in their undertaking.

Table 4.6.
Teachers' Reconstruction of Context-Bound Sentences.

Sentences	**NC**	**MC**	**CC**	**TC**
1	1	2	6	0
2	1	0	1	7
3	3	2	4	0
4	4	3	2	0
5	7	2	0	0
6	3	2	1	3
7	3	6	0	0
8	9	5	1	0
9	5	3	1	0
10	2	4	1	2
11	0	1	4	4
12	2	1	3	3
13	4	3	2	0
14	4	3	2	0
15	4	2	3	0
16	1	2	3	3
17	5	0	4	0
18	1	3	2	3
19	1	2	6	0
20	1	3	3	2
21	2	2	2	3
22	4	3	1	1
23	6	2	1	0
24	0	1	5	3
25	4	3	2	0
26	7	1	0	1

Table 4.6. (*Continued*)

27		1	4	2	2
28		1	5	3	0
29		3	3	3	0
30		2	3	2	2
31		4	3	2	0
32		2	2	0	5
33		1	2	2	4
34		3	3	0	3
35		3	3	2	1
36		0	0	4	5
37		6	0	0	5
38		3	3	3	0
39		5	3	1	0
Total	351	115 (32.76 %)	91 (25.92 %)	84 (23.93 %)	61 (17.38%)

Prior to analyzing teachers' reconstructions, a few points need to be elucidated about the above table. This table shows nine teachers' attempts at reconstructing contextualized erroneous sentences. So, the numbers opposite each sentence represent the number of teachers. If care is taken, we will notice that the number of teachers attempted each sentence is the same (that is 9). It does not, however, mean that all teachers attempted all sentences. In fact, some of the sentences were partially reconstructed (i.e. fifteen) and some were totally left unchallenged (i.e. nineteen). To rest assured, whether the partially reconstructed or totally unreconstructed sentences slipped teachers' attention or they proved to be difficult to interpret, the researcher sought the respondents' viewpoints as to the unchallenged sentences. They were unanimous in saying that partially reconstructed or unreconstructed sentences proved to be hard to construe. The result being that all unreconstructed sentences subsumed under the NC category, but the partially reconstructed sentences placed under either NC or MC depending on the degree to which they embraced the student- writers intended meaning in the erroneous sentences.

A cursory inspection of the results is reminiscent of the fact the teachers, as expected, fall wide of the mark in capturing the students' original intention. In this study, teachers, on the whole, attempted three hundred and fifty one sentences out of which one hundred and fifteen (that is about 32.76 %) displayed teachers' perfect inability in reading the students' minds. Ninety one reconstructions (that is about 25.92 %) only slightly scratched the students' intentions. Eighty four reconstructions (that is about 23.93 %) only thinly missed the target. Sixty one plausible reconstructions (that is about 17.38 %) out of the total number of plausible reconstructions displayed teachers' ability in perfectly covering the students' meaning from the unintelligible sentences. In brief, teachers were unsuccessful in guessing correctly the students' intention in two hundred and six reconstructions (that is about 58.68 %) and only proved to gain success in one hundred and forty five reconstructions (that is about 41.31 %).

There seems that three hundred and fifty one interpretations of the thirty nine sentences evenly distributed under four categories (i. e, NC, MC, CC, TC), the only exceptions are sentences 5, 7, 9, 23, 26, 29 and 39. That is, the interpretations and reconstructions of these sentences are unevenly accumulated under the categories of NC and MC. To put it differently, these sentences proved to be difficult for the teachers to reconstruct. In contrast, the reconstruction of sentences 2, 11, 24, and 36 are unevenly accumulated under the categories CC and TC. That is, these sentences proved to be easy for the teachers to reconstruct.

With this brief analysis of teachers' reconstructions of context-bound sentences, we move to the analysis of teachers' ability in reconstructing context-free sentences. As with the context- bound analysis of sentences, different reconstructions of these de-contextualized sentences are tabulated as in the table 4.7. below.

Table 4.7.
Teachers' Reconstruction of Context-Free Sentences.

Sentences	**NC**	**MC**	**CC**	**TC**
1	1	2	3	0
2	0	0	1	5
3	2	1	2	1
4	2	2	2	0
5	4	1	1	0
6	3	2	0	1
7	3	3	0	0
8	3	0	0	3
9	2	1	2	1
10	4	1	1	0
11	2	1	1	2
12	2	2	1	1
13	3	2	0	1
14	2	1	1	2
15	2	2	2	0
16	2	0	1	3
17	0	3	2	1
18	2	1	1	2
19	3	0	2	1
20	1	2	2	1
21	0	3	2	1
22	1	4	1	0
23	1	4	0	1
24	1	1	1	3
25	1	3	1	1
26	1	3	1	1
27	2	0	1	3
28	2	2	2	0
29	2	1	2	1
30	0	2	2	2
31	2	1	2	1
32	3	2	0	1

Table 4.7. (*Continued*)

33	3	1	0	2
34	2	2	1	1
35	2	2	1	1
36	2	1	1	2
37	3	2	0	1
38	2	2	1	1
39	4	1	1	1
Total 234	77 (32. 90 %)	64 (27. 35 %)	45 (19. 23 %)	48 (20. 51 %)

Unlike table 4.6. which shows reconstruction of thirty nine context bound sentences by nine teachers, table 4.7. briefs reconstruction of the same number of context free sentences by six teachers. An attempt was made to figure out whether 'context' makes a difference in teachers' ability to unearth the students' intended meaning from conceptually or structurally impaired utterances. To this end, an attempt was made to map context bound reconstructions against the context free reconstructions to value or discredit the part played by the context.

In this phase of this qualitative study, on the whole, two hundred and thirty four reconstructions and interpretations of thirty nine sentences with much care and precision assigned to the categories NC, MC, CC and TC. As with the reconstruction of context bound sentences, NC category included the most number of sentences. In plain terms, seventy seven reconstructions (that is about 32. 90 %) out of two hundred and thirty four belonged to the NC category. It means that about 32.90 percent of teachers' reconstructions of erroneous sentences were wide of the mark. Sixty four reconstructions (that is about 27.35 %) belonging to the MC category were also wide of the mark. Juxtaposing the reconstructions belonging to the categories NC and MC together, we find that one hundred and forty one reconstructions (that is about 60. 25 %) widely escaped the students' intended meaning. Just ninety three reconstructions (that is about 39.74 %, adding up the reconstructions belonging to the categories CC and TC together) captured students' intended meaning in those sentences. The sentences that proved to be hard for the teachers to reconstruct were items 5, 6, 7, 10, 13, 32, 37 and 39 and those that were easy was just item number 2.

Comparison of context bound and context free reconstructions tables did not reveal considerable differences. What comes as a surprising is the role downplayed by the context in this study. In the context bound table, about 58.68 percent of the reconstructions widely missed the mark, this is while in the context free table 60. 25 percent of the reconstructions were wide of the mark. The reconstructions which captured the students' intentions were 41.31 percent and 39.74 percent for the context bound and context free tables respectively. Therefore, there exists a very negligible difference between the context bound and context free reconstructions.

The results obtained in this phase of this study not only down played the part played by the context but also ran counter to the participating teachers' expectations. All of the teachers with respect to the role of the context categorically asseverated that context is very crucial in the discovering the students' intentions but the results turned out to be otherwise.

To end the analysis of context bound and context free reconstructions, we can say that the teachers fell wide of the mark in figuring out the students' intentions contained in the idiosyncratic sentences. Also, the context in this study owing to reasons that will be put forward in the 'discussion section' rendered no help to the teachers in guessing the students' intended meaning from the erroneous sentences.

Getting through the analysis of reconstruction of context bound and context free sentences, it is time to deal with the analysis of grammatically and semantically deviant sentences.

Table 4.8.
Teachers' Reconstruction of Grammatically and Semantically Deviant Sentences

Grammatically Deviant Sentences	F	%	Semantically Deviant Sentences	F	%
1	6	66.66	3	4	44.44
2	2	22.22	4	2	22.22
5	5	55.55	6	4	44.44
12	6	66.66	7	0	0
15	3	33.33	8	2	22.22
19	6	66.66	11	8	88.88
27	4	44.44	14	2	22.22
30	4	44.44	16	6	66.66

Table 4.8. (*Continued*)

31	2	22.22	17	4	44.44
34	3	33.33	18	5	55.55
36	9	100	21	5	55.55
37	3	33.33	22	2	22.22
			23	1	11.11
			24	8	88.88
			25	2	22.22
			26	1	11.11
			28	3	33.33
			29	3	33.33
			32	5	55.55
			33	6	66.66
			39	1	11.11
Total		49.7 %			39.14%

As stated in the data collection section, one of the two questions which was posed to the teachers to reply in this qualitative study was "which one is difficult to reconstruct, a grammatically deviant sentence or a semantically deviant sentence?"

To this end, all of the thirty nine sentences, in close collaboration with a friend of mine, with great care and precision were assigned to the 'Grammatically Deviant' and 'Semantically Deviant' categories. Six sentences being both grammatically and semantically deviant were excluded from the categories, thus, leaving the researcher with twelve purely grammatically deviant sentences and twenty one purely semantically deviant sentences. In the table 4.8. the numbers under the F and % columns represent the number and percentage of teachers attempted and reconstructed a given sentence correctly. For example, sentence 1 in the 'Grammatically Deviant' category is correctly reconstructed by six teachers out of nine and, thus, its percentage is 66.66.

The table 4.8 demonstrates that 49.7 % of the teachers gained success in correctly reconstructing grammatically erroneous sentences whereas the percentage for the same teachers who correctly reconstructed semantically deviant sentences is 39.14 % . It means that the obtained results are in line with the teachers' expectations and

contentions who were like- minded in uttering that a semantically deviant sentence is much more difficult to reconstruct than a grammatically deviant sentence.

4.3.2. Analysis of Teachers' Responses to Open – Ended Questions

Though the bulk of data, in this study, obtained from the students' write-ups and teachers' reconstruction of those ill-formed utterances, the teachers were also given two general questions evolving around the role of context and teachers' reconstruction of semantically deformed sentences as opposed to grammatically impaired ones, hoping to provide the researcher with an in – depth understanding of teachers' view of context, teachers' ability in text interpretation, reconstruction and error detection. The questions (see appendix C) were as follows:

1- Do you think context would be of help in reconstructing and interpreting the students' intention from the deviant utterances?

2-Which sentence is difficult to reconstruct: a semantically wrong sentence or a grammatically wrong sentence?

It is worth uttering that teachers are given labels as T1, T2,... instead of pseudonyms or false identity.

Table 4. 9.
Teachers' Responses to the Role of Context

Teachers	**Answers**
T1&T5	The immediate sentences that precede and follow that troublesome sentence may contain clues that help the reader to decode the intention enclosed in that troublesome sentence.
T2 & T4	The whole context of the discourse may provide hints as to the interpretation of that difficult sentence.
T3:	Context of a troublesome sentence undeniably contributes to its meaning-discovery.
T6:	Not only can the immediate preceding and following context be of help in arriving at the intended meaning of an ambiguous sentence, but the whole context of discourse can bring to light the meaning of an ambiguous sentence.

Table 4.9. (*Continued*)

T7:	It is utter naivety to seek the key for the solution of a problematic sentence always in the immediate context. Sometimes the key to the problem lies in the far - off context.
T8:	Context is an essential component of every meaning negotiation activity or process.
T9:	Meaning of a difficult piece of discourse-be it a word, a sentence, a paragraph, etc. unfolds in clearly- defined context.

Table 4.10.
Teachers' Answers to the Reconstruction of Semantically / Grammatically Deviant Sentences

Teachers	**Answers**
T1:	Grammatically or structurally deviant sentences are reconstructed with much ease, compared to their semantically impaired counterparts. The reason is that the writer may use a far less frequent meaning of a content word. As such, it may prove to be difficult for the reader to decipher its meaning.
T2:	Semantical sentences are difficult to reconstruct. This is because content words rather than functional words are the meaning - bearing elements in the sentences.
T3:	Intelligibility is blocked more by the wrong use of content or lexical words than structural words. Therefore, the former are difficult to reconstruct.
T7:	Meaning negotiation or meaning exchange process may come to a halt by the improper use of a lexical word by any of interlocutors than by the misuse of a grammatical, say, a word, a sentence. The implication is that it is difficult to reconstruct semantically impaired sentences.

4.4. Data Analysis of Quantitative Study

As stated before, the purpose of this quantitative study is to determine the extent to which teachers' preferences, reactions, attitudes to a particular corrective feedback and aspects of language to be emphasized while giving feedback and techniques of error correction, overlap with those of students. To this end, all the information obtained from the participants is fed into the SPSS for statistical analysis. Based on the nature of items in the questionnaires, SPSS yielded miscellaneous sorts of data. For multiple response items- items in which the respondents can choose more than one option, frequency of

participants attempted each item or option and their percentages are provided. For the Liker type items, frequency, mean of the students' and teachers' responses, standard deviation, standard error mean, Levene's test for equality of variances, t-test for equality of means, and p-value (i.e. level of significance) are computed, whereby the researcher can pass judgments on the convergence of or lack thereof students' and teachers' preferences and attitudes. For closed items such as yes / no, frequency and percentage of participants as well as Pearson's Chi-Square test ($X^{2)}$ are computed. The data obtained from the participants are presented as in the tables below.

4.4.1. Analysis of Teachers' and Students' Responses to the Items Included in the Questionnaires

As mentioned earlier, research question 3 is treated quantitatively through the application of two identical questionnaires to teachers and students to compare their preferences for particular corrective feedback types, techniques of error marking, etc. Tables 4.11 through 4.25 detail and depict teachers' and students' responses to various numbers of items included in the questionnaires which are intended to explore teachers' preferences for various types of corrective feedback and techniques of error correction vis-a-vis those of students.

Table 4.11.
Teachers' / Students' Responses to Amount of Corrective Feedback

Choices	**Teachers**		**Students**		**Total**
	F	%	F	%	
-Teacher should mark all the errors.	12	40	29	29	41
-Teacher should mark all the major errors but not the minor ones.	4	13.3	23	23	27
-Teacher should mark most of the major errors, but not necessarily all of them.	7	23.3	26	26	33
-Teacher should mark only a few of the major errors.	2	6.7	6	6	8
-Teacher should mark only the errors that interfere with communicating ideas.	22	73.3	18	18	40

Table 4.11. (*Continued*)

-Teacher should mark no errors and respond only to the ideas and content.	16	53.3	5	5	21
-Teacher should not mark any errors.	0	0	23	23	23
*Total	63	209.9	130	130	193

*participants are allowed to make as many choices as they like. So, the total exceeds 100 %.

The first type of items in the questionnaire (see appendix D & E) are multiple response items in which the respondents can make as many choices as they wish and as the table 4.11 shows, both teachers and students have dissimilar and divergent opinions as far as the correction of errors is concerned. As to the first item, for instance, 12 teachers out of 30 (40 %) stated that teachers should mark all the errors in the students' papers, this is while, just 29 students out of 100 (29 %) expressed their preference for the teachers' correction of all the errors. The most favored option for the teachers was *teacher should mark only the errors that interfere with communicating ideas* (73.3 %), the next most favored option in the descending order for teachers is *teacher should mark no errors and only respond to the ideas and* content (53.3 %) and the least preferred option which did not draw the attention of any teacher is *teacher should not mark any errors* (0 %). As the table reveals, there exists a striking contrast between teachers' and students' preferences. That is, the option that is highly preferred by the teachers (73.3%) just grabbed the attention of 18 % of students. The teachers' next preferred option (53.3%) was the students' least favored option (5 %). Just more importantly, the option *teacher should not mark any errors* that did not draw the attention of any teachers, favored by 23% of students. From careful inspection and scrutiny of table, one can detect that teachers' behavior is influenced by certain pattern of thought or consideration while this pattern is non-existent in the students' behavior. To put it simply, teachers mostly prefer correction of content errors but students' preference is the indiscriminate correction of all errors whether they are major or minor, grammatical or non- grammatical, excluding 23 % who reported that teacher should not mark any errors.

Table 4.12.
Teachers' / Students' Preference for the Correction of Different Types of Errors

	Teachers			**Students**		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Organization errors	30	4.47	1.042	100	3.26	1.544
Grammatical errors	29	3.07	1.280	100	4.35	0.833
Content or ideas errors	30	4.43	1.037	99	2.98	1.407
Punctuation errors	29	1.90	1.235	99	2.85	1.281
Spelling errors	30	1.87	1.224	99	2.93	1.264
Vocabulary errors	30	2.73	1.264	99	4.17	0.990

The second type of items in the questionnaire (see appendix D & E) are Likert type items in which the respondents show their preference or opinion by circling one of the scales (1= not useful at all, 2= not useful, 3= doesn't matter, 4= quite useful and 5= very useful). As shown in table 12, the mean responses for *organization* and *content or ideas* errors for both teachers and students are 4.47, 4.43 and 3.26, 2.98 respectively. Teachers' responses showed that teachers were more positively inclined to provide feedback on *organization* and *content* errors whereas students' mean responses showed that students preference for the correction of *organization* errors was slightly positive (3.26) and for *content or ideas* errors was negative (2.98). In contrast, the comparison of mean responses of teachers for *grammatical errors* (3.07) and *vocabulary errors* (2.73) with mean responses of students for *grammatical errors* (4.35) and *vocabulary errors* (4.17), showed that students held an overall positive opinions towards the correction of grammatical and vocabulary errors, whereas teachers displayed an overall neutral preference for the correction of grammatical errors and negative attitude towards the correction of vocabulary errors. The mean responses of teachers for the correction of *punctuation errors* (1.90) and *spelling errors* (1.87) are negative whereas the mean responses of students for the correction of *punctuation errors* (2.85) and *spelling errors* (2.93) are slightly negative. Not only is there a difference between teachers and students as regards the relative importance of various features of writing listed in the above table, there exists slight variation amongst students as well.

It is worth noting that the information contained in the table 4.12 was not comprehensive enough to place the researcher in a position to pass judgments on the

differences in participants' preferences or to say definitely whether there exists significant difference between the teachers and students as to the correction of different types of errors. The only piece of information which table 4.12 provides is that through looking at the mean responses of participants, one can say whether the participants held positive, neutral or negative opinions towards the correction of different types of errors. Therefore, further information is required whereby to compare the performance of the two groups of participants. The comparison requires that Levene's test for the equality of variances and t- test for the equality of means to be computed. Table 4.13 details this information.

Table 4.13.
Independent Groups Comparison on Various Aspects of Language

Options / items	**Levene's test for the equality of variances**			**T- test for the equality of means**				
		F	Sig	T-test	Df	Sig(2-tailed	Mean difference	Standard error difference
121*	Equal variance not assumed	16.028	.000	5.041	66.176	.000	1.207	.239
122	Equal variance not assumed	26.466	.000	-5.087	35.158	.000	-1.281	.252
123	Equal variance not assumed	8.329	.005	6.018	62.118	.000	1.454	.242
124	Equal variance assumed	.453	.502	-3.548	126	.001	-.952	.268
125	Equal variance assumed	.236	.628	-4.063	127	.000	-1.063	.262
126	Equal variance assumed	3.576	.061	-6.720	127	.000	-1.438	.214

*For space constraints, the options / items are first coded and then entered into the table:

121 (Correction of organization errors), 122 (Correction of grammatical errors), 123 (Correction of content / ideas errors), 124 (Correction of punctuation errors), 125 (Correction of spelling errors), 126 (Correction of vocabulary errors).

As shown in table 4.13, since the level of significance (.000) for item 121(correction of organization errors), is smaller than .05 on the Levene's test, equal variance is not assumed. And because t- test value (5.041) is larger than $\pm$1.96 and p-value (.000) is smaller than .05, there is a significant difference between teachers and students on the correction of organization errors. The mean difference of (1.207) indicates that teachers have more positive opinion for the correction of organization errors than the students. For the item 122 (correction of grammatical errors), since p-value(.000) $<$ .05, again equal variance is not assumed. Since t- test value (-5.087) exceeds $\pm$1.96 and p-value (.000) $<$ .05, there is also a significant difference between teachers and students as to the correction of grammatical errors. But unlike the first item, the mean difference of -1.281 demonstrates that students more than teachers have positive opinion for the correction of grammatical errors. Since for item 123 (correction of content / ideas errors) the p-value (.005) $<$ .05, the variances are not homogenous across groups either. T-test value (6.018) $>$ $\pm$1.96 and p-value (.000) $<$ .05, are indications of the fact that there is a significant difference between teachers and students as far as the correction of content or ideas errors is concerned. Mean difference of 1.454 demonstrates that teachers more than the students are inclined to correct content or ideas errors.

But for the item 124 (correction of punctuation errors), item 125 (correction of spelling errors) and item 126 (correction of vocabulary errors) homogeneity of variances is assumed, for the p – values of items 124, 125, and 126 (.502, .628 and .061) respectively exceed .05. Though there is a difference between teachers and students as far as the correction of punctuation errors is concerned, for the t value (-3.548) $>$ $\pm$1.96 and p – value (.001) $<$ .05., but the mean difference of - .952 shows that both teachers and students have overall slightly negative opinion towards the correction of punctuation errors. As with item 124, in item125 (correction of spelling errors) p- value (.000) $<$ .05 and t- value (- 4.063) $>$ $\pm$1.96, so there is a difference between the two groups under investigation. The difference of – 1.063 shows that both teachers and students have overall negative opinion toward the correction of spelling errors. And

finally, since the p – value (.000) $<$ .05. and t-test value (- 6.720) $>$ $\pm$1.96, there exists significant difference between teachers and students as to the correction of vocabulary errors. The mean difference of – 1.438 indicates that students have positive opinion but teachers have negative opinion toward the correction of vocabulary errors.

Table 4.14.
Students' / Teachers' Evaluation of Various Correction Techniques

	Teachers			**Students**		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Clues on how to fix an error	30	1.77	1.305	96	2.76	1.628
Error identification	30	1.97	1.450	91	2.66	1.477
Error correction with a comment	30	4.37	.718	93	4.10	.910
Comment with no correction	30	3.93	.640	91	3.48	1.129
Overt correction with no comment	30	4.27	.828	90	4.24	.865
Error ignored	29	1.72	1.131	88	1.94	1.299
Personal comment	30	1.67	1.295	92	2.11	1.305

The third types of items in the questionnaire are Likert type items and examine teachers' and students' preference for various error correction techniques (see appendix D & E). Table 4.14 briefs information on the number of participants attempted each item, mean responses of teachers and students and standard deviation (the extent to which the scores deviate from the mean). The mean responses of teachers and students for *clues on how to fix an error* are 1.77 and 2.76 respectively suggesting that both groups held negative opinion or attitude toward the technique in question though students' opinion is slightly negative. *Error identification* technique is also negatively favored by both teachers and students, for the mean responses of teachers and students for that technique are 1.97 and 2.66 respectively. *Error correction with a comment* and *error correction with no comment* are the options that are positively favored by both teachers and students, for teachers' and students' mean responses for the two options are 4.37, 4.27 and 4.10, 4.24 respectively. Of surprise is the option of *comment with no correction* which considerably attracted the attention of both teachers and students and the mean responses for teachers and students are 3.93 and 3.48 respectively. *Error ignored* and *personal comment* were negatively received by both teachers and students

and the mean responses (1.72 and 1.67 for teachers and 1.94 and 2.11 for students) endorse this contention.

The striking point about this table is the teachers' and students' convergence of preference and opinion on the various error marking techniques. In other words, the options *error correction with a comment, comment with no correction* and *overt correction with no comment* were positively preferred by both teachers and students and the remainder four options (i.e. *clues on how to fix an error, error identification, error ignored* and *personal comment*) were negatively received by both groups though some negligible slight differences in preference or opinion between the groups are sure to exist.

It is also worth stating that one may, through looking at the information included in the table 4.14, claim that whether teachers' or students' preference or opinion to a particular technique of marking errors is negative, neutral or positive, but one may not claim if there is a difference between the two groups. To elaborate on the differences between the two groups further information is needed which is met by the table 4.15.

Table 4.15.
Independent Groups Comparison on the Various Error Correction Marks

Options / items	**Levene's test for the equality of variances**			**T- test for the equality of means**				
		F	Sig.	T-test	df.	Sig(2-tailed	Mean difference	Std.error difference
131*	Equal variance not assumed	12.625	.001	-3.529	59.772	.001	-1.025	.290
132	Equal variance assumed	.730	.395	-2.237	119	.027	-.693	.310

Table 4.15. (*Continued*)

133	Equal variance assumed	.165	.686	1.481	121	.141	.270	.128
134	Equal variance not assumed	36.834	.000	2.705	88.929	.008	.450	.166
135	Equal variance assumed	.234	.630	.123	118	.902	.022	.180
136	Equal variance assumed	1.021	.315	-.812	115	.418	-.219	.270
137	Equal variance assumed	.019	.889	-1.614	120	.109	-.442	.274

* For space constraints, the options / items are first coded and then entered into the table.

131(Clues or directions on how to fix an error), 132 (Error identification), 133 (Overt error correction with a comment), 134 (Comment with no correction), 135 (Overt error correction), 136 (Error ignored), and 137 (Personal comment).

As shown in table 4.15, since the p-value (.001) $<$ .05 on the Levene's test for the item 131(clues on how to fix an error), variances are not homogeneous across the groups. In so far as t-test value (-3.529) $> \pm$ 1.96 and p-value (.001) $<$ .05, one may claim that there is a significant difference between the teachers and students in their preference for this method of feedback. Mean differences, however, show that both teachers and students hold negative opinion towards this type of feedback. For the item 132 (error identification), since the p-value (.395) $>$ .05, equal variances are assumed across the groups on the Levene's test. There is also difference between the groups under comparison since t-test value (-2.237) $> \pm$ 1.96 and p- value (.027) $<$ .05. Mean

difference of -.693 is indicative of the fact the teachers and students both negatively received the *error identification* feedback and students slightly more than teachers favored this technique.

As with item 132, for item 133(overt correction with a comment) homogeneity of variances is assumed (p-value .686 > .05). There is, however, no significant difference between teachers and students as far as overt correction of errors is concerned since p-value (.141) > .05, and t-test (1.481) < ± 1.96. Mean difference of .270 confirms non-existence of a difference between groups and teachers slightly more than students preferred this technique. For item 134 (comment with no correction) there is also difference between teachers and students on the this technique of providing feedback, for p-value (.008) < .05 and t- test value 2.705 > ± 1.96. There is no difference between teachers and students on the item135 (overt correction) since p-value (.902) > .05 and t-test (.123) < ± 1.96. Equal variances are assumed on the Levene's test since p-value (.630) > .05. As regards item 136 (error ignored) there is a convergence of opinions between teachers and students. In other words, there is no significant difference between teachers and students on the uselessness of this technique of error correction since the p-value (.418) > .05 and t-test value (-.812) < ± 1.96. The last item in the table is personal comment coded as 137. Homogeneity of variances on the Levene's test is assumed for the p-value (.889) > .05. There is also no significant difference between teachers and students, for p-value (.109) > .05 and t- test value (-1.614) < ± 1.96.

Table 4.16.
Participants' Responses to the Correction of a Repeated Error

Teachers					**Students**				
Yes	%	No	%	Total	Yes	%	No	%	Total
4	13.8	25	86	29 / 100%	66	69.5	29	30.5	95 / 100%

The fourth type of item in the questionnaire (*whether an error should be corrected every time it occurs*) is a closed item in which the respondents show their preference / reaction for a repeated error in the students' compositions by choosing either 'Yes' or 'No'(see appendix D & E). As table 4.16 shows, an overwhelming

majority of teachers (86 %) responded that a frequently occurring error should not be corrected, this is while only 30.5 % of the students stated that it should not be corrected. From mere percentages, however, one may not be able to say whether there exists a difference between the groups under comparison. One needs to compute a Chi- Square test to comment on the differences.

Table 4.17.
Using a Chi-Square Test to Comment on Participants' Differences

	Value	**df**	**Sig (2- sided)**
Pearson's Chi- Square	28.019	1	.000

As the table 4.17 shows, a Chi- Square test (P- value .000 < .05) shows that there is a significant difference between the participants as far as the correction of a repeated error is concerned.

Table 4.18.
Teachers' / Students' Preference on When to Give / Get Feedback

	Teachers		**Students**	
	F	%	F	%
I prefer to give / get feedback at the pre writing stage	2	6.7	18	18
I prefer to give / get feedback at the drafting stage	7	23.3	41	41
I prefer to give / get feedback at the revising stage	23	76.7	31	31
I prefer to give / get feedback at the evaluation stage	16	53.3	20	20
Total	48	160	110	110

The first type of items in the second section of the questionnaire (see appendix D & E), which examine teachers' / students' preference on when to give / get feedback, are again multiple response items in which the respondents can make as many choices as they wish. That is why the frequency of respondents goes beyond the actual number of respondents (teachers=30 and students= 100) and so does the percentage.

The most favored option for the teachers is to *give feedback at the revising stage* (76.7 %) and the next most favored option in the descending order of popularity is to *give feedback at the evaluation stage* (53.3%). This is while to *get feedback at the drafting stage* is the most preferred option for the students (41 %). Unlike teachers who

overwhelmingly prefer to give feedback at the revising and evaluation stages, students' preference is spread over the four options, more or less, evenly.

Table 4.19.
Teachers'/ Students' Views Regarding the Amount of Written Correction

	Teachers		**Students**	
	F	%	F	%
I like / I' like my teacher *to correct all the errors*	16	53.3	43	43.3
I like / I' like my teacher *to correct some errors*	14	46.7	28	28.9
I like / I' like my teacher *not to correct any errors*	0	0	26	26.8
Total	30	100	97	100

As can be seen in the table 4.19, items are close- ended in nature (see appendix D & E), meaning that respondents cannot make multiple choices. The options *to correct all the errors* and *to correct some errors* are favorably preferred by 53.3% and 46.7 of teachers respectively. Not even one teacher chose *not to correct any errors* option. This means that teachers are like-minded that all the students' errors should be corrected. In contrast, the option *not to correct any errors* has attracted the attention of 26.8 % of students, though approximately more than 70% of the students are in the favor of correcting all or some of the errors. Though the difference between teachers and students in terms of their preference for the amount of written correction is obvious, one needs to compute Chi-Square tests to comment professionally and statistically whether there exists any difference between teachers and students.

Table 4.20.
Chi-Square Tests on the Amount of Written Correction

	Value	**df**	**Sig (2- sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	10.636	2	.005
Likelihood Ratio	16.427	2	.000
Linear- by Linear Association	4.844	1	.028

As revealed by the table 4.20, since p- value .005 $<$ .05, the difference between teachers and students as regards the amount of written correction is confirmed as was anticipated before.

Table 4.21.
Teachers' / Students' Views on the Color of Pen

	Teachers		**Students**	
	F	%	F	%
I Like / I'd like my teacher *to use the red pen*	6	20	72	76.6
I Like / I'd like my teacher *to use the pencil*	24	80	22	23.4
Total	30	100	94	100

The items in the table 4.21 are closed items (see appendix D & E) in which the participants are required to choose either *the red pen* or *the pencil* on giving or getting corrective feedback. There is a sharp contrast in the preferences of respondents as to the color of pen. 24 teachers out of 30 (that is 80 %) prefer to use pencil while giving feedback, this is while only a small minority of students (23.4 %) want to receive feedback in pencil. As with most of the items above, though the difference between the respondents is conspicuous, a Chi-Square test will reveal whether there is a significant difference between the teachers and students as regards the color of the pen.

Table 4.22.
Chi-Square Test on the Color of Pen

	Value	**Df.**	**Sig (2- sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	31270	1	.000

As the level of significance .000 < .05 (the difference was anticipated before), so there is a significant difference between the teachers and students as to the color of pen while giving or receiving feedback.

Table 4.23.
Teachers' / Students' Views on Teachers' Comments and Corrections

*Options / Items	Teachers		Students	
	F	%	F	%
241	11	36.7	75	75
242	3	10	33	33
243	8	26.7	16	16
244	25	83.3	3	3
245	14	46.7	0	0
Total	61	203.4	127	127

*For space constraints, the options / items are first coded and then entered into the table.

241(Reading carefully every mark/comment the teacher writes on their' piece of work)

242(Paying attention to feedback on vocabulary and grammar in their piece of work)

243(Paying attention to feedback or comment on content and organization of their writing)

244(Concerning about the grade and paying no attention to the comments or feedback)

245(Not reading the entire composition again after the teacher has marked it)

The items included in the table 4.23 are multiple type items in which teachers and students can choose as many options as they wish (see appendix D & E). That is why the frequency of teachers (61) and students (127) attempted items is much greater than the actual number of teachers (30) and students (100). Percentages, in the table, go beyond 100 % for the same reason.

As the table 4.23 shows, 83.3 % of teachers reported that students are mainly concerned about the grade and pay no attention to the comments or feedback offered by the teachers, whereas a great majority of students (75 %) think otherwise. In other words, there is a wide gap in the opinion of teachers and students as regards paying attention to the comments or feedback given by the teacher. Teachers and students opinion clashes are also blatant in a number of cases. In option 241 (*Reading carefully every mark / comment the teacher writes on their piece of work*), only 36.7 % of teachers reported that students carefully read comments teachers write on the students' papers whereas this figure is 75 %. for the students. Another area of opinion clashes relates to the item 245 (*Not reading the entire composition again after the teacher has marked it*). Approximately half of the teachers (46.7 %) hold the viewpoint that students

do not read again the entire composition after the teacher has marked it. The striking point is that this viewpoint is not supported by even a single student(0 %). Opinion gap is also apparent in item 242 (*Paying attention to feedback on vocabulary and grammar in their piece of work*) where only 10 % of teachers report that students pay attention to feedback on vocabulary and grammar in their piece of work, while this figure is 33% for students.

Table 4.24.
Students' Views on Teachers' Comments

	Yes	%	No	%	Total (F)	Total (%)
Do you understand teachers' corrections?	24	24.7	73	75.3	97	100

The last item type in the questionnaire is exclusive of students and is a closed item which intends to explore students' views on the teachers' corrections or comments written on the students' piece of work (see appendix E). As the table 4.24 reveals, 73 students out of 97 (that is about 75.3 %) stated that they had difficulty in making sense of teachers' corrections or comments. Just one fourth of the students (24.7 %) said that they understood teachers' corrections or comments. To further explore the reason why they do not understand the teachers' comments or corrections, the researcher sought the students' viewpoints as to the items given in table 4.25.

Table 4.25.
Students' Reasons for not Understanding Teachers' Comments or Corrections

	F	**%**
I cannot understand teachers' handwriting	51	70.8
The comments are too general	35	48.6
I do not understand the comments on organization and ideas	26	36.1
I do not understand grammar terms and symbols	33	45.8
Total	145	201.3

From a cursory inspection of data in the table 4.25, one can readily see that the total observed number of students attempted the items (145) is greater than the actual number of respondents participated in the study (73) and total observed percentage (201.3)

exceeds the actual percentage (73.3), this is because the items are multiple response in nature and respondents can choose as many options as they can (see appendix E).

One more thing needs to be elucidated here. The point is that the total number of students answered the items in the table 4.25 cannot be larger than 73. The reason is that those who said that they had no problem understanding the teachers' corrections and comments (24 students) should be docked off the whole number of participants (97). Thus, this leaves us with not more than 73 participants in the table 4.25.

As the table shows 70.8 % of students stated that they had difficulty in deciphering teachers' handwriting. The second and third disfavored options in the descending order were *the comments are too general* and *I do not understand grammar terms and symbols* with 48.6 % and 45.8 % each respectively. A moderately disfavored option is *I do not understand the comments on organization and ideas* with 36.1 % .

4.4.2. Analysis of Teachers' Responses to Open- Ended Questions

As stated in the methodology section of the current dissertation, the participants (i.e. teachers and students) apart from answering the items in the questionnaires, were given two general open- ended questions which are hoped to provide the researcher with an in -depth understanding of the reason or explanation for their preferences. The questions are as follows (see appendix F):

1-What features of language (i.e. organization, content, vocabulary, grammar, spelling, punctuation) would you like to emphasize while marking the students' papers? Why?

2-What is your favorite technique of error correction? Underlining and providing the correct answer? underlining and providing meta linguistic knowledge? no correction? circling the error and giving clues as to its correct form? etc. Please give reasons for your preference.

It is worth noting that a very small number of the both groups of participants provided answers to the aforementioned questions. An overwhelming majority of participants either returned the open-ended questions of the questionnaires unanswered or provided telegraphic one- word responses that were barely rewarding. One more thing needs to be uttered: both teachers and students are given labels as T1, T2, ... and S1, S2, ... respectively, instead of pseudonyms or false identity.

Table 4.26.
Teachers' Responses to *Open-Ended Question 1*

Teachers	Answers
T1:	I would like to provide feedback on the errors of ideas and content than on grammar, or on surface level errors. My reasoning is that too much emphasis on grammatical accuracy at the expense of the quality of ideas may implant in the student writers the mistaken idea that good writing just entails error free writing. This is while Lee (2009) contends that there is much more to good writing than grammatical accuracy or error free writing.
T2:	With less competent students, the teacher should give the priority to the development of ideas than to purging the students' paper of the mechanical errors. Doing so, the students will be encouraged in their attempt to produce more language and will not curtail their writing to avoid committing more errors. With more advanced and proficient student writers, however, the teacher can fine tune- make minor corrections.
T3:	Teachers by placing too much emphasis on the mechanical errors to the total exclusion of ideas, content or text organization, they often lose sight of important aspects or features of language such as idea development. After all, writing is not a means to practice language.
T4:	The preference should be given to the correction of grammatical errors, for if the teachers treat them with much lenience, they may deeply be seated in the student writer's interlanguage repertoire which, later, will prove to be difficult for students to get rid of them. Additionally, these (grammatical errors) are the first to be noticed at the first and glimpse glance by every reader. They belittle or detract the value of students' work.
T5:	All the students' errors should be dealt with in depth, but features of the language (such as wrong use of lexical items) which impede the process of meaning negotiation should take precedence over other features such as spelling, punctuation and grammar. It does not follow that the teacher should disregard some. It means that the teacher should devise a hierarchy of importance in his or her error correction undertaking. The teachers may lose their credibility with the students if they do not correct all the errors.

Table 4.26. (*Continued*)

T6:	I think all the errors should be corrected, but some errors should take precedence over the others. For example, correction of content errors should be of teachers' top concern, for any content gap may well result in meaning destitution.
T7:	With constructive and positive written commentary focusing on various aspects of writing rather than just on grammatical accuracy, the student writers can be encouraged to examine their work more critically and revise their writing to improve its quality. An excessive concern for correctness may stifle the generation and development of ideas.

Table 4.27.
Teachers' Responses to Open-Ended Question 2

Teachers	Answers
T1:	My favorite technique of error correction is locating the error and giving cues as to its correction (such as 'tense'). I believe that the teacher should avoid correcting students' errors, instead, the teacher should train them to self or peer correct.
T2:	I prefer explicitly showing them the right answer to their errors, believing that students may not be able to figure out the teacher's cue for the particular type of the error.
T3:	Hardly ever do I use a particular type error correction technique consistently even throughout a single paper. I employ miscellaneous techniques such as explicit provision of the right answer, using cues, circling, underlining, and placing question mark above the errors.
T4:	Explicitly showing the students what the correct answer is, is the optimal error correction technique employed by the great majority of teachers. I, personally, think that if the above technique is coupled with comment or explanation about the correct answer, it may prove to be more powerful or effective.
T5:	The students themselves should shoulder the responsibility of learning from their errors. Teachers by correcting all the students' errors practically develop them as dependent learners. All the teachers should do is to provide general end comments on the quality of writing and underline the most major errors.
T6:	The teachers should refrain from correcting students' errors themselves. They can emancipate themselves from this laborious, time consuming and painstaking undertaking through entrusting the responsibility of error correction to the students themselves. There is a wealth of evidence in the literature which demonstrates that students who make significant progress as a result of teacher feedback may be few and far between. Students learn most when they themselves embark on fixing their errors. Besides, teacher generated discourse may not have the same influence as student generated discourse. The teachers can lend their students a hand by letting the students know not only where the error is but also by indicating the type of errors by using symbols.

Table 4.28.
Students' Responses to Open- Ended Question 1

Students	Answers
S1:	I hold positive attitudes for error correction and highly favor teachers correcting all errors. I have a strong preference for the correction of grammatical errors rather than lexical and semantic errors. I also hold favorable attitudes towards having my errors corrected in explicit ways for the sake of clear understanding. I also appreciate implicit techniques of error correction on the condition that they are geared appropriately to my ability and need.
S2:	I hold the comments on the writing style and ideas/content in high regard, at the same time, I have the preference for the correction of all the errors. In other words, all the errors should be corrected but the emphasis should be on the writing style and content, rather than only on surface level errors.
S3:	My preference is for comprehensive as opposed to selective error correction. I also prefer correction of grammatical errors to be overlooked in favor of lexical errors which may inhibit meaning negotiation.
S4:	I do not want my teachers to correct my errors. Error correction frustrates me and inhibits my willingness to perform in the language. I just want my teacher to write comments on the quality of my writing.

Table 4.29.
Students' Responses to Open- Ended Question 2

Students	Answers
S1:	I do not expect my teacher to correct all my errors explicitly. Rather, I expect him or her to correct one or two as an example and let me follow his example for the rest, especially if an error occurs repeatedly. I think I learn most and remember long when I correct my errors myself than if they are corrected by the teacher.
S2:	I prefer my teacher to correct all my errors, also to provide comment and explanation as to its correct use. To put it differently, explicit correction of my errors and letting me know what was wrong with my writing helps me learn from my mistakes.
S3:	Circling or underlining an error and coupling it with cues about its correction is my favored technique which I crave for. This technique, however, is not always free from trouble. This is because sometimes students have difficulty in decoding the teacher's code or cue.
S4:	I do not care at all what sort of error correction technique my teacher employs. I just look at the grade at the top or bottom of the page and do not read the comments the teacher writes. Sometime I cannot read the teacher's comment or understand them.
S5:	If only my teacher would give comments on the development of ideas and text organization and leave the mechanical errors (such as spelling, punctuation, grammatical and lexical errors) to the students themselves to foster autonomy and self reliance in the students. Besides, seeing my paper replete with red ink, a sense of frustration and discouragement sweeps me over.
S6:	I would rather my teacher help me in pre writing phase especially with brainstorming or in revising phase than in the final stage. My justification is that in the two above mentioned stages the teacher can play a significant role in reformulating or reshaping my arguments or ideas. But when he or she comments on my errors in the evaluation stage, the comments would not help me improve the quality of my writing, for the teacher often does not require the students to produce second or multiple drafts after assigning the score.

Table 4.29. (*Continued*)

S7:	Students usually benefit from all the techniques teachers employ while responding to errors. But I, personally, prefer the one which is explicit and straightforward. The reason is obvious because when the teacher provides the correct form of the errors, one can easily produce a neat and tidy copy of the composition without painstakingly searching for the correct form of errors from, say, a grammar book.
S8:	I would like my teacher to provide students with signals facilitating or accelerating peer- or self-correction, rather than immediately correcting their non - target like form(s) in their compositions.
S9:	I would like my teacher just to tell me why something is incorrect the way it is. Teachers' correction might not have long term effectiveness unless it is coupled with further meta linguistic comments and explanations.
S10:	I like my teacher help me self correct my errors, because this technique of error correction helps me learn from my mistakes and activate my knowledge and have more lasting effect on my learning.
S11:	If the student corrects his or her own error, learning will be more effective. Providing the student with an opportunity to self- correct is an effective way of encouraging him to think about his or her own error and correct it himself or herself. This will activate his or her knowledge, increase his or her self-confidence and enable him or her use the target structure correctly both in the same lesson and in the subsequent sessions.
S12:	Reading other students' paper is good because it boosts one's knowledge but not correcting. Correction is the teacher's function.

CHAPTER V

5. DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Introduction

Having terminated data collection procedures and data analysis procedures for the qualitative studies I and II and quantitative study in the preceding chapters of three and four respectively, it is time to discuss the results obtained through different data gathering instruments such as students' write-ups, teachers' comments written on the students' papers, students textual changes in response to teachers' feedback or comments, interviews conducted with the students, the researcher's observation, teachers' reconstruction of students' idiosyncratic utterances and finally through questionnaires surveying the teachers and students viewpoints about the type of feedback and area of feedback they prefer to receive.

The hopes are that through discussion of the results, the answers to three research questions of this dissertation will be sought. It needs to be reiterated that the first two research questions (the first being as 'do the teachers' comments help the students to actually revise their writing?' and the second being, 'do the teachers' read their students' mind in the idiosyncratic utterances?') are treated as qualitative studies and the third question 'what are the areas of mismatch between the students and teachers as far as the type and area of feedback is concerned?' is treated as a quantitative study.

5.2. Discussion of the Qualitative Study I

Having analyzed the teachers' comments and students' textual revisions brought about in response to the teachers' comments, it is time to see what conclusions or results emerge from this qualitative study. The results embrace general themes that will be explained in the following pages. In the course of explanation of the results of the study, whenever necessity arises some extracts (in italic type) from the students participating in the study and from the researcher will be given for further elucidation of the issue.

For, as reiterated before, the source of data for this study emanates not only from the teachers' comments and students' subsequent textual changes, but the considerable part of the data comes from the interviews conducted with the students and from the direct observation of the researcher as well.

5.2.1. Students' Purposes in Making Revision

Prior to dealing with students strategies in making textual changes in response to the teachers' comments, it seems essential to articulate a few words about their intentions. The university students in this experiment, in response to the teachers' comments which called for textual changes (1150), made a total of 1037 changes. In plain terms, students responded to all of the teachers' comments, the only exception being the comments calling for micro structural and macro structural changes (i.e. 34 comments addressed high order concerns). There seems to exist an almost one-to- one correspondence between teachers' comments and students' changes. In studying students' responses to teachers' comments and feedback on their papers, they reported that they attended to and highly valued teachers' comments on their errors in writing. They were almost unanimous in thinking that teachers' aim was to help them become more efficient writers in the future, ameliorate their writing, learn from their mistakes and, more momentously, to incorporate these comments into their subsequent drafts of writing. Sad to say, their view of 'revision', the phraseology they used to describe it, strategies they employed to make textual changes all seem to run counter to aforementioned aims. It has been demonstrated that students welcome teachers' comments and feedback and earnestly pursue them simply not to learn about their goofs or to better their writing skills but to improve their grades. *Hossein* in response to the role of revision said:

" if we do revise, we will get higher score". This finding corroborates Dohrer's (1991) in which he inquired the influence of teachers' comments on students' papers on succeeding drafts of papers and discovered that students' revision in response to teachers' comments were accompanied with considerably higher quality assessment. Besides, sensing that teachers attach much importance to the low- level concerns, the students gave priority to these concerns while making changes, the result being that these concerns overshadow other aspects of writing and enclosed the writer in the

position of writing solely or fundamentally for the confirmation of teachers (Perl, 1980 see also Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Bridwell, 1980; Perl, 1980 ; Zamel, 1985).

5.2.2. Students' Strategy in Dealing with Teachers' Comments

The dominant strategy employed by students for revising was reminiscent of the fact that their prevalent and outstanding purpose was to focus on and fix the deviant forms which their teachers had highlighted on their papers. Though the students promulgated that they incorporated their self- initiated changes besides those of teachers, in actual revision session and while scrutinizing the revised papers, it became evident that students' incorporation of self- initiated changes was nothing more than sheer assertion, but just responded directly and hastily to comments calling for low level concerns. Making surface level alterations alone, sad to say, aggravated, let alone ameliorate the original quality of their writing. This is because

" ... in the revision session they were observed jumping hastily from one comment to another without reading the whole text from beginning to the very end and were hounding and assessing relentlessly and energetically teachers' comments. The revision that they do make seem restricted to sentence level or below: modifying phrases or words; substituting more powerful lexical items; at times reordering sentence constituents. They seldom wrote more than one draft and they were least disposed to stop a draft and start from afresh, to add or trim the great or weighty part of their draft , or to rearrange or reformulate what they have inscribed ..." (researcher's own observation)**.** *Hossein* in describing his strategy of revision says,

"I did not read the whole text from beginning to the end. I just corrected the errors in sequence noted by the teacher. I hope these changes would be desirable and enough". They often

commence with the first comment and continue through the paper by hopping from one comment to the other in sequence or haphazardly from one to another, often turning a blind eye to large parts of the text and articulating **(**researcher's observation) ,

" nothing is wrong with this sentence", what it needs is a better word" (*Masoumeh* murmured slowly while making textual changes) . The findings of this study confirm those of Keh who found that students actually went through majority of, if not all, comments inscribed on their papers (1990). In contrast, Bardine Bardine &

Deegan, (2000) found that nine times out of ten, students admit to not really reading or thinking about the comments.

Due to paying attention to those parts of the text highlighted by the teacher, students did not demonstrate vivid, global concepts of their work. Their view of a text as composed of isolated parts rather than a unified whole may somewhat account for their reluctance to make global changes as opposed to local changes (Dohrer, 1991; Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1985).

Assuredly, all students were tracing teachers' comments in red ink without exploring the preceding and succeeding chunks of discourse.

"The students were observed to revise from a limited perspective, concentrating their revision on low level concerns in lieu of high level concerns of organization and logic" (researcher's observation, for similar results see Flower, 1981; Perl, 1980; Sommers, 1980, 1981, 1982; Sze, 2002; Zamel, 1982, 1983).

5.2.3. The Effect of Teachers' Comments

The nature of teachers' strategies and criteria for evaluation of students' writing may explain and justify students' revision practices (Sze, 2002). It is postulated that these strategies and criteria act to consolidate the traditional views of what makes good writing and revision, giving rise to students paying inordinate attention to surface features in revision (Sommers, 1980, 1981, 1982; Zamel, 1982, 1983, 1985; Perl, 1980; Sze, 2002). Therefore, as posited by Yagelski (1995 in Sze, 2002, p. 23) " the process writing orientation of a composition classroom with its prewriting activities , multiple drafts, and peer editing can be offset by the teacher's grading practices that focus on linguistic accuracy and form rather than content and organization". Sommers, in an analysis of the responses of thirty-five experienced teachers on three student papers, uncovered that although her subjects aimed to accelerate revision, their feedback thwarted their intentions. By juxtaposing comments calling for usage errors adjacent to comments requiring reformulation and expansion, the teachers conveyed a contradictory message: that the text was finished yet also in a state of flux and agitation (Sommers, 1982 cited in Radecki & Swales, 1988). The results of this study also confirm the findings of Radecki and Swales (1988) who cast doubt on the usefulness of the teachers' marking techniques and comments and appraised them inefficacious in accelerating and

expediting revision. That is, the comments proved to be useless in helping students to make changes in content or macrostructure of a piece of writing.

5.2.4. Students Purpose was to Improve their Grade

Despite the fact that students asseverated repeatedly that they made sense of the objective behind teachers' comments, they in no time relinquished the objective of ameliorating their own writing skills so as to get a higher grade. This is because students have sensed that their superficial tactics of revising such as 'rewording, avoiding repetition, fixing spelling, capitalization' and the like, in the absence of macro structural changes, to use Faigley & Witte's (1981) term, have always resulted in higher grades. That is why the students do not seem to bother to challenge teachers' comments calling for in-depth revision. The findings of this study upholds Straub's (1997 cited in Bardine et al., 2000) standpoint who avers that students generally tend to evade making substantial and sweeping alterations to their writing. That is, they do not want to level to the ground their already made plans and start a new one from afresh. They just want to make smaller sentence or paragraph level modifications. The reason is what Sommers (1981, 1982) rightly put it, Teachers' comments seemed to dictate a standard for students' extent of revision. The findings of this study are concordant with those of Radecki and Swales (1988) who reported that students expressed satisfaction over teachers' comments but, in the meantime, they reported that students first glanced at the grade on their returned paper rather than the comments, implying that grades are the chief concern for students. They also found that students preferred "short evaluative adjectives and a grade, or a grade alone" (Radecki & Swales, 1988, p. 358, see also Bardine et al., 2000). The results of this study are also corroborated by Lee and Schallert (2008) who found that students just followed those parts of their discourse on which the teacher had commented and left many problematic sections untouched because they were just repairing the sections highlighted by the teacher to improve their score.

5.2.5. Mistaking Rewording, Editing or Reviewing for Revision

An overwhelming majority of the students who were studied did not use the terms 'revision' or 'rewriting'. Indeed, they did not sound convenient applying the word

revision, and reasoned that *"it was not the term they applied but the one that their teacher most frequently used was editing, rewording, or reviewing* (*Maryam* and *Amir* said).

Not only do they in the actual revision session seem to mistake 'editing' for 'revision', but while being interviewed at the end of revision session, their repeated use of editing for revision consolidated this misconception. This finding confirms Sommers'(1982) argument that students' inability to make substantial revision may be due to textbooks wrong approaches and faulty instruction provided. From what these students said and did, one can build a thorough picture of what is going on in composition classes and what the dominant endorsed approach to writing is. The classroom context must play a part in the revision strategies of these EFL students. Contrary to expectations, below is what a student named *Behnam* actually articulated while being interviewed:

> *"Never did my teacher ask me to revise in writing classes in university. Never did the writing teacher give my paper back for second or third drafts. Your first draft is your final draft. When you finish writing an essay, you hand in. The teacher assigns a score on and sends it back to you with some comments on it just to justify your score not to require you to revise it or improve its quality".*

Another student named *Javad* in response to the question 'do you think revision is an integral part of any writing activity', says

" it is not necessary to revise the whole writing. To proofread, I think, is enough. Because my mistakes are related to vocabulary and grammatical usage". This line of thought is rightly confirmed by Spandel who said that " not all students live for revision. Some will say of a first draft, I'm happy with my writing just the way it is. I don't want to change a thing " (Spandel, 2005, p. 68).

The present study confirms the findings of earlier studies. Zamel (1982, 1983) posits that though teachers propose revision, they do not ask for further revision. Radecki and Swales (1988) reported that students displayed disinclination, hatred and aversion toward revision. " Most of them saw no redeeming value in rewriting, some

viewing it as punishment: rewrite is only a way of penalty in elementary school" (p. 358). Emig (1971 in Sze, 2002) related that students did make any sweeping and substantial textual changes in their school- sponsored writing drafts unless they are compelled to do so. Hardly ever were students prodded to do any kind of revision, nor were they awarded the enticement of a higher quality if they did (Wall & Petrosky, 1981 see Sommers, 1982 ; Zamel, 1985).

5.2.6. Frequent Use of Synonymous Words while Making Changes

Use of synonymous words and lexical repetition avoidance were another chief revision strategies of the students which only became evident when the students original papers with comments on them were mapped against their revised papers. Students were constantly asking themselves while revising**:**

" can I find a becoming word or phrase"? (a student named *Masoumeh* said to herself)**.**

" They thumbed the dictionary to find alternative words for the words noted by their teacher on their paper" (researcher observation)**.**

This is what Sommers (1980, p. 381) labeled as " a thesaurus philosophy of writing". Student writers, finding that they have duplicated the same word or phrase frequently, do away with the repetition, by replacing it with other words or phrases or deleting the words and leaving them with zero substitution. While it is the case that they presumably come up with the solution to their immediate problem by avoiding repetition, they grappled with the larger conceptual problem. To put it differently, although they are not making use of identical words, they are simply paraphrasing the same concept, not maturing and unfolding it (Sommers, 1981 see Perl, 1980; Sommers, 1980; Zamel, 1983). This widely-rehearsed, yet untenable, strategy of making textual changes (i.e. the use of synonyms) by the student- writers is scarcely welcomed by academicians. McGee, chief among them, expresses his dissatisfaction with this strategy by saying that merely enticing students to apply synonyms for key words in their writing, rather than reiterating them, is in effect, " an invitation to commit semantic suicide" (McGee, 2008, p. 215).

5.2.7. The Relationship between Teachers' Comments and Students' Responses

What is more astonishing about these teachers' comments is that a significant proportion of teachers' comments, 1116 out of 1150 (about 97 percent), did not appear to direct students' attention to substantive revision, for teachers' comments concentrated on or addressed surface level concerns in the students compositions. Therefore, students revised them accordingly. That is, teachers' comments seemed to dictate a standard for students' extent of revision (Perl, 1979; Perl, 1980; Raimes, 1991 Sommers, 1981; Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1983). That teachers' comments dictate a criterion or standard for students' depth of revision is well reflected in the words of one teacher in Lee's (2008a) study of teachers' feedback. He (a teacher in Lee's study) lays stress on the importance of content and organization but his prime importance is the accuracy of basic elements. It is the matter of precedence- grammar being more serious and weightier than other features of language (Lee, 2008a). The results of this study corroborate those of Lee (2008). He conducted a study on the teachers' written feedback on students' papers and found that 94.1% of teacher feedback focused on form (grammar and vocabulary), 3.8% on content, 0.4% on organization and 1.7% on other aspects. Some researchers investigated the classroom context for explanations for ineffective revision or lack thereof (see also Lee, 2008a). " They explored the connection between particular features of instructional approach and teaching strategies and revision patterns of the students in terms of frequency and types of revision" (Sze, 2002, p. 23). The nature and type of teachers' strategies and the standard for evaluation of students' writing may explain student revision practices.

That is why *Morteza* said:

> *" I would like to revise my writing, but since my teacher's corrections just addressed superficial matters in my writing such as spelling, punctuation, subject- verb agreement and the like, I, therefore, feel no need to make macro structural changes".*

Amir commenting on the relationship between teachers' comments and students' depth of revision says: *Besides wasting time on something not requested by the teacher,*

I have my own doubts that these self- initiated changes will place the teacher in a state of mind to appreciate them". It is, perhaps, because students accord unlimited power to their teachers, they hesitate to revise anything not commented on by their teachers. Consequently, they may not critically read their writing or make self-initiated revisions about where their texts can be strengthened (Goldstein, 2004).

That is why Sommers (1982) articulates that revision always entails a peril or risk. More often than not, revision may serve as an act of equilibrium for students in which they make the changes that are requested but do not run risks of altering anything that was not commented on, even if the students perceive that other changes are essential.

5.2.8. Compliance with Abstract Rules

A close and thorough inspection of the participants' papers sheds light on the sort of the problems these participants, in particular, and EFL English learners in Iranian universities, in general, suffer is that they are compelled, by unwritten canon, to abide by abstract rules while writing. In plain terms, they were mainly concerned with deliberate and conscious practice of the rules they had learned. The changes they made in response to the teachers' comments were in absolute agreement with the rigid and abstract rules they had acquired. The above students perceived writing as a set of techniques and pursued the rules even when some of them are opportune for the peculiar and unique text they are producing. Besides, since there is not a single rule which regulates the writing and revising of a whole text, immature and inexperienced writers usually get stuck into their text, revise it word by word, sentence by sentence, rule by rule (Sommers, 1981). This became conspicuous when one of the teachers had underlined one of the sentences in a student's paper as being incorrect in terms of its tense. This is while *Amir* disagreed with the teacher on the issue in question, reasoning that

"I am sure there is nothing wrong with this sentence tense. You know we use conditional sentences type 2 for expressing unreal present situations, and we use 'were' with all the subject pronouns", he declared. This is what rightly addressed by Sommers (1980) who asseverated that students tend to " subordinate the specific problems of their text to the demands of the rules" (p. 383). " The tyranny of 'shoulds' dictates to

unskilled writers what they should or should not do when revising" (Sommers, 1981, p. 44 see also Perl, 1980; Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1983; Zamel, 1985).

Therefore, the problem is not that the students are reluctant to make substantive changes; conversely, they are willing to revise but they just do what they have been taught in a narrow and predictable manner and bring revision to a halt when they find that nothing in their paper violates or breaks arbitrary rules. Students decide to cease or discontinue revising when they perceive that they have not broken any of the rules for revising such as *never begin a sentence with a conjunction* or *never end a sentence with a preposition* (Sommers, 1980). Therefore, it is a complete compliance with these abstract rules that students fix mechanical errors and revision remains on the surface. Flower (1980 in Zamel, 1983) has pointed out that these early determinations to advance in a certain path may tempt writers into a precipitate solution prior to approaching the problem (see also Zamel,1985) .

The problem (i.e. compliance with abstract rules) has its roots in the educational system of Iranian universities where the English students upon entering the university for the first two consecutive terms are given 8 or 12- credit English grammar courses in which the textbooks and instructors meticulously deal with construction of English sentences applying rigid and abstract rules in the total absence of context of use. That is why students in our experiment do not perceive writing and revision anything more than abiding by the abstract rules they have internalized.

A case in point is an ESL textbook bearing the title of 'The Process of Composition'. Unlike what its title implies, the book " presumes to teach students to write according to a nearly mathematical set of rules, to write in a very specific format, according to a formula" (Zamel, 1983, p. 167), not knowing that writing and revision " rarely arrives by room-service, all neatly laid out on the tray" (Murray, 1981, p. 33 see Perl, 1979; Sommers, 1981).

5.2.9. Students Attach Importance to Surface Level Features

Not only did the students spend an enormous amount of time on surface level changes noted and requested by the teacher, they were also on the whole in absolute agreement with their teachers as regards the priorities given to the different aspects of language. It is, after all, not unreasonable for the students to discern that some sort of

relationship holds between the heavy weight given to a particular issue and the amount and the number of times the teacher using red ink highlights that issue. Teachers' comments on students' writing clearly reflect the hierarchy of their concerns about the paper. More momentously, when focusing on surface level concerns, other important dimensions of writing such as ideas, rhetorical features, style and voice may slip their attention. Writing is not a sheer medium whereby language is exercised. To emancipate themselves of this dogmatic doctrine, teachers have to recall to their memory that there is much more to good writing than grammatical accuracy (Lee, 2009). When being asked in the interview session, how do you know what your teachers' priorities are in evaluating your paper? *Maryam* said:

> *"if they comment extensively on grammatical or mechanical issues, we can infer that such issues are among their main concern with the paper".*

Masoumeh, another student, drawing on her own experience, put forward a convincing proof reasoning that

" making surface level changes such capitalization, spelling, subject-verb agreement, commas and the like at the teachers' request always lead to obtaining higher scores. Therefore, it is not difficult to know that these are the matters that count". Yet another student named *Maryam* puts forth a somewhat different and interesting reason for attempting just mechanical issues and says that " *all sorts of errors should be eliminated but surface level errors should take precedence over the others because they are the felicities that at first glance catch the reader's attention".*

Besides, so sturdily did the teachers lay stress on grammatical and mechanical issues and on accuracy that the students, in the first place, for the purpose of attracting the teacher's approval of changes and ultimately to improve their grades, were seen to be ready to omit problematic words and phrases and even larger segments of a text just to guarantee the accuracy and precision of the written material no matter how the deleted material adversely affects the whole text conceptually. The students' revised papers are abundant in evidence of deleted information from the original. The students

in our experiment, for sure, were ignorant of the fact that what they were doing was ‘rewording’ not revising.

The consequence was that they followed every comment and purged the text of mechanical errors at the teachers’ requests, but the revision was not observed or thought about. The structure and meaning of the text itself did not ameliorate at all and it sometimes got worse. Our perception of our students’ view of revision is that they do not regard revision as an occasion to create or develop a piece of writing but as an evidence of their failure to do it right the first time. To them, revision means correction. Revision, however, is the core of writing process- the means by which ideas unfold and expand and meanings are purified (Lehr, 1995). The findings are in contrast with Radecki and Swales’ (1988) finding who found that revision is viewed differently by teachers and students. Also, it is perceived differently by experienced and inexperienced writers. While teachers in Radecki and Swales’ study regarded it as an opportunity whereby to reformulate their writing and reevaluate the meaning and reshape the text, students even surprisingly teachers, in the present study, perceived it primarily as a process of purging the text of mechanical errors.

5.2.10. Text Appropriation

Last but not least saddening and adverse feature of teachers’ comments was ‘text ownership robbery’ (to use Sommers’ term). This simply means that the teachers’ comments prompt the students to revise or to make changes to gain the teachers’ approval, to make changes that teachers want rather than the changes that students themselves assume are indispensable, for the teachers’ concerns laid on the text produce the purpose for the succeeding changes (Flower, 1981; Keh, 1990; Sommers, 1980 Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1983; Goldstein, 2004). Teachers appeared to appropriate or take the control of students texts, distorting student meaning, and consequently bewildering students via their written comments (Lee, 2008). *Morteza,* one of our students in the experiment who said that

“ I would like to revise my writing, but fearing that my self –initiated changes may not gain the teacher’s approval, or may not help me to improve my grade” is a

vivid instance of what Sommers (1982 see Flower, 1981; Zamel, 1985) calls text authorship robbery or text appropriation.

5.2.11. Difficulties Students Encountered

One of the leading problems the students, in this study, have to grapple with was the great number of comments on their papers. The average number of comments per each paper was about 40, and, of course, it varied from paper to paper. The minimum number was 12 and the maximum was 56. The students' papers replete with written comments, as we noticed, firstly gave rise to the feeling of frustration and discouragement in the students at the sight of the amount of red ink poured on their papers; secondly, it was accountable for the students' unfocused activity.

It was thought that it was due to great number of comments on the students' papers that students were observed hopping hastily from one comment to the other in no predictable pattern or scheme and cursorily attempting them without reading the whole text from beginning to the end. To cope with the time allotted for the revision of the paper, the students were found to leave some of the comments unchallenged. Making exhaustive comments, it appears, does more harm than good. Frustration and dissatisfaction brought about as a result of great numbers of comments on the students' papers are well attested in the words of *Maryam* who frankly asseverated that

" *it was not necessary for the teacher to write more comments, a few ones, I think, would be sufficient to put me in the right track".* Not only does it take up most of the teacher's time, it leaves the students with no sense of priority among them (see Perl, 1980; Murray, 1981; Sommers, 1980, 1981, 1982; Zamel, 1983, 1985).

The papers under scrutiny were replete with comments such as 'reword', 'rewrite' and 'awkward'. Students' responses with respect to these comments are indicative of the fact that these comments are not fully grasped by the students. Teacher's actual comment gives no direction to the student about how to enact a revision in response to the comment. The student may wonder what it means to 'consider' and then what actually to do after 'reconsidering' (Goldstein, 2004, p. 77, see also Lee, 2008a). More often than not, the comment 'reword' for the students meant

‘synonym’. Therefore, students’ strategy for dealing with ‘reword’ was either to find a becoming synonymous word or structure or delete the word labeled as ‘reword’.

To illustrate the case in point, an example and its respective change by one student named *Maryam* is given: *“Home foods are made up of safe things like fresh vegetables and meat”.* She responded to the comment ‘reword’ just by replacing ‘safe’ with the word ‘good’ so she rewrote the sentence as *“home foods are made up of ‘good’ things like fresh vegetables and meat”.* As stated above, an alternative way of dealing with this comment (i.e. reword) was to delete the problematic word. Again an example from *Maryam’s* paper will make the point clear: *“ In this disease, the blood vessels’ parapet is closed by the fat stored in them”*. In the above example the word ‘parapet’ is labeled as ‘reword’ by the teacher. In the revised version, the student got rid of the problematic word by deleting it, as a result she rewrote the sentence as “ in this disease, the blood vessels are closed by the fat stored in them”. These findings demonstrate that teachers’ comments on students ‘written drafts tend to become obscure or vague. Because of this, “ students’ revisions show inadequate response to the comments, and some essays even seem to ignore the comments completely” (Sugita, 2006, p. 35).

The comment ‘rewrite’ was also problematic. The strategy for dealing with the comment ‘rewrite’ was not dissimilar from ‘reword’, but in one amazing case, one student in response to the teacher’s ‘rewrite’ comment has just reproduced a neater and fairer copy of the original text without making any trivial changes.

The comment ‘awkward’ was also not properly understood: “*The comment ‘awkward’ especially in its contracted form (awk.) was the most problematic comment for the students”, Morteza* declared. The students had great difficulty in figuring out whether the sentence marked as ‘awkward’ was structurally or conceptually ill-formed. Based on their perception, some challenged the awkward sentence structurally and some conceptually. This finding is in complete concordance with the results of the studies which claimed that teachers’ comments are sometimes worded in such a way that revising or re-examining becomes a guessing game (Sommers, 1982; see Dohrer, 1991). Zamel (1985; Agudo, 2012; Raimes, 1979; Raimes, 1985) found that marks and comments are often perplexing, arbitrary, and inaccurate. He, further, argues that

teachers' marks and comments are usually in the form of impractical and imprecise commands, instructions or directives that are unintelligible to the students (see Treglia, 2008). These vague directives, while teachers may imagine that they have widely-known definitions, are in the form of marks and comments that typify complicated meanings "which remain locked in the teachers' head" (Butler, 1980 cited in Zamel, 1985, p. 83, see also Goldstein, 2004). The findings of this study champion the findings of Bardine et al., (2000, p. 94). They conducted a study investigating the effect of teachers' comments on students' writing. They found that their students, as with the students of the present study, found it difficult to decipher the code 'awk' in particular and decoding most of teachers' obscure and equivocal comments in general. The authors vividly make a picture of the point in case as follows*: Setting: A high school English classroom. Mrs. Thomash as just returned the class's papers as the bell rings. Students file out of the classroom with their essays. As the last of them leaves, Mr. Bell, another English teacher, enters. Mr. Bell: Sue, how are things going? Mrs. Thomas: Okay, I guess. I'm just getting frustrated with these kids. I'm making the same comments on their writing with every paper- we've been working on thesis statements and supporting details all semester, and they just aren't getting it. That's all I seem to respond to. I don't know what else to do.*

> *Setting: Hallway, outside of Mrs. Thomas's class. Two students head toward the cafeteria, having just gotten their papers back from Mrs. Thomas. Tom: Hey, how'd you do? Trish: A "C" like always. She says the same thing on every paper."* Unclear thesis." *What the heck is a thesis anyway? Tom: Yeah, I know what you mean. She's been writing" support" next to my paragraphs most of the year, but look how long this paragraph is -it has lots of support. She's never really gone over any of this stuff with us. And what does "awk" mean any way?*

5.2.12. Conclusion

The participants in this qualitative study do not appear to know that writing is a recursive, non-linear, cyclical, exploratory, and generative process which requires

multiple drafts of a piece of writing and which consists of different cycles whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they go through these cycles. Rather, they viewed it as a linear, intuitive and spontaneous process which through compliance with a set of rigid and abstract rules leads to a neat, ready-made and finished product-text. They do not seem to know that revision is an integral component of writing process, nor do they know that revision is an ongoing process of rethinking the paper, reconsidering your arguments, reviewing your evidence, refining your purpose, recognizing your presentation and revising state prose (Horning & Becker, 2006). They did not seem to ascribe to revision any part more than tidying-up or copy-editing, aimed at eliminating surface errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and diction. Their idea of revision as correcting mechanical errors is also strengthened by the teachers' comments mainly by focusing on or addressing these low level concerns and by drawing on their experience that fixing these superficial issues counts or always leads to improvements in their grade. Besides, their long years of experience with the red ink made them feel that their writing is being corrected rather than responded to.

More inquiry into the above problems revealed that the aforementioned problems have their origin in our inefficient educational system. We found that our participants were innocuous victims or sufferers of feeble and ineffectual instructional or educational system. An overwhelming majority of the participants frankly acknowledged that they had not taken straight composition courses, nor had they taken any writing courses except for 'advanced writing' and 'essay writing'. What is more, they had not had sequenced assignments requiring multiple drafts of a piece of writing, nor had they been given a grade only after a set or series of assignments had been completed, nor did they have any real audience other than the teacher. In a nutshell, It is felt that the instruction that the participants have been receiving in the universities is, to a larger degree, lagging behind the current research in the field.

5.3. Discussion of the Qualitative Study II

Getting through the analysis of teachers' reconstruction and interpretation of deformed and impaired sentences of students and tabulating the relevant information, for the ease of observation and understanding, in the respective tables, the time is ripe to

see what conclusions or results emerge from this qualitative study. The results embrace general themes that will be expounded in the sections that follow.

5.3.1. Not confirming the Supportive Role of L1

Corder (1981) hypothesized that acquaintance with the learners and, in particular, their native language plays a crucial part in the process of interpreting and reconstructing a deformed sentence. He holds the view that in case of not having direct access to the student writers for the authoritative interpretation and reconstruction of idiosyncratic utterances, we have to recourse to the students' native language so as to place a plausible interpretation upon it in the context. Based on the above hypothesis, he argues, if the native language of the writer is not known, the reconstruction or interpretation of the problematic sentence should be suspended temporarily and postponed to later times until we have learned something about the idiosyncratic dialect of the writer. However, if the native language is known, by the process of literal translation we can arrive at the interpreting the sentence plausibly. Then, by translating the native language sentence back into well-formed target language, we can have available the reconstructed sentence.

The researcher, already being respectful of and believing in the hypothesis, provided the teachers with the needed information as to the student writers such as their native language, the universities they attended to, the courses they had taken and so on in order to help them to facilitate the process of plausible reconstruction. The results are indicative of the fact that this information proved to be of no or little avail, for the teachers failed to interpret plausibly more than sixty percent of students' utterances despite the fact that they were familiar with the students' native language.

The results of this study confirm the results of a study undertaken by Hamid (2007) in which he sought to compare the ability of teachers from disparate backgrounds in interpreting students' deviant utterances. He jumped to the conclusion that there was no considerable difference in the ability of native and non- native teachers to interpret the students errors. To my best knowledge, the assumption implicit in the above hypothesis is that all the writer's idiosyncratic utterances or intended meaning can be plausibly reconstructed or guessed at by having an eye on cross language interference, this is while not all the deformed sentences have their roots in the

writer's first language interference but rather, as it is the case with writers in this qualitative study, intra lingual transfer holds accountable to an overwhelming majority of student writers deviant forms.

It is worth mentioning that the aforementioned hypothesis may be of effect or success in environments such as an EFL where students' native language has dominance over target language and when the writers are not proficient enough in the target language. This hypothesis effect, therefore, wears away in ESL environments where target language and native language stand side by side and when the writers are proficient enough in L2 to overcome the habits of native language.

5.3.2. The Context Role Downplayed

As stated before, this qualitative study embodies two phases. In the first phase, the teachers were given context bound deviant and erroneous sentences to reconstruct to arrive at the student writers intended meaning . In the second phase, the same erroneous sentences, detached from their immediate linguistic context, are presented to the said teachers to unearth their intention via reconstructing them. But the results came as a surprise to the researcher and were certainly at odds with participating teachers' expectations who categorically and harmoniously replied positively, while being interviewed, to the role of context in the intelligibility of deviant sentences. This is because there was no significant difference between the performance of context- bound and context - free teachers. To illustrate the contradiction, examples of teachers responses to the role of context are cited as an evidence.

T1&T5: *The immediate sentences that precede and follow that troublesome sentence may contain clues that help the reader to decode the intention enclosed in that troublesome sentence.*

T2 & T4: *The whole context of the discourse may provide hints as to the interpretation of that difficult sentence*.

T3: *Context of a troublesome sentence undeniably contributes to its meaning-discovery.*

The results of this study corroborate those of Khalil (1985) who sought to gain an understanding of native speaker teachers' ability to pass judgment on intelligibility and naturalness of sentences produced by non- native speakers (NNS). In his study a

number of grammatically and semantically impaired sentences presented to the native speaker (NS) teachers both in context and out of context. The obtained results underestimated the role of context. He found that erroneous utterances were rated more comprehensible when they did not accompany the immediate linguistic context. In bald term, the existence of context did not influence native speakers' ability to interpret the writer's intent.

The results obtained from Khalil's and those of this qualitative study when put together apparently bear some resemblance (i. e. context does not have a facilitative role). Great circumspection and prudence should be exercised not to be beguiled by apparent superficial similarities. This is because the situation, and, in particular, the nature of activity involved in both studies notwithstanding their similarities are quite different. In Khalil's study the respondents were just asked to indicate the degree to which they *think* they make sense of the deviant sentences. They were not asked to indicate their understanding by reconstructing the erroneous sentences. Just telling that the sentence is intelligible or not does not guarantee that the he or she has understood the writer's intended meaning, for he or she might be wrong in his/ her hunches.

Championing this idea, Khalil (1985, p. 345) categorically states that " the intelligibility judgments obtained should not be assumed to reflect native speakers' actual understanding of the writer's intent. That is to say, these judgments are not predictors of utterance interpretability". By the same token, many a time a teacher thinking that he makes sense of the student's intention, reconstructs the deviant sentence, the result being that the imposed reconstruction disrupts the coherence of the draft (see also Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010). The incoherence brought about as a result of this intrusion functions as a signpost signaling the teacher's inability in correctly guessing the learner's intent.

Coming back to the issue of context, it should be uttered that whenever we speak of context, it not only includes the immediate linguistic context but also it involves the situational context. The linguistic context of a sentence entails not only immediate preceding and following sentences and paragraphs but rather the whole discourse serves as an enabling factor in rendering help for the reader to put a plausible interpretation on that particular sentence. The above statement is well echoed in the words one of participating teachers who said that *it is utter naivety to seek the key for*

the solution of a problematic sentence always in the immediate context. Sometimes the key to the problem lies in the far - off context (T7). Khalil (1985, p. 347 see Corder, 1981; Chastain, 1980) contends that " research in pragmatics and discourse analysis has shown how the interpretation of an utterance may depend on linguistic clues found in the surrounding utterances- the universe of discourse for that utterance" . Corder (1981) aptly averred that we should envisage the whole universe of discourse into consideration while attempting to interpret a given sentence. Guided by this knowledge, this prerequisite was materialized when participating teachers are equipped with students' write-ups to make use of context in the process of meaning discovery.

In a similar vein, Chastain (1980) states that the more one has a full understanding of the context and the universe of discourse, the more odds are that he / she will comprehend the writer's intent.

The role of the context in the interpretation of utterances has been so unquestionable that few studies attempted to inquire its effect. All linguists and non-linguists are like-minded that the existence of accompanying immediate linguistic context is incontestable for the interpretation of utterances. However, this study in which the inter-sentential context is viewed as an independent variable yields precursory evidence that the accompanying immediate linguistic context does not influence the teachers' ability to reconstruct or interpret the writers' intentions contained in the idiosyncratic utterances and yields results that fly in the face of all-agreed upon fact.

This pattern of little or no association between context and intelligibility evokes the query of 'what was wrong with students' write-ups in this qualitative study that undo the effect of context?' Or better to say, 'what features should a piece of discourse possess to qualify it for the context effect?'

A close inspection and scrutiny of the write- ups of the student writers of this qualitative study unveils that the discourse produced is not knitted well to qualify it as a coherent discourse. The discourse produced seems more like being composed of isolated sentences than a unified whole. Even through a cursory inspection, you can find a number of impertinent sentences penetrated into the students' write-ups. Intrusion of a good number of isolated and irrelevant sentences are enough to offset the influence of context in the interpretation of sentences and render a coherent text as a disintegrated

unit in which textual constituents such as sentences or paragraphs are apparently placed together without being coherently and cohesively tied up together. The case in point is well championed by Khalil (1985, p. 347) who avers that the coherence of the discourse should be taken into consideration in analyzing the contribution of context to the interpretation of utterances. The discourse of non- native speakers may be scanty in coherence; " such context would therefore not contribute to successful interpretation of meaning to the same extent as might coherent discourse produced by native speakers".

One further observation of this qualitative study is that the researcher, and the participating teachers ascribed unconditional role to the context as a facilitating factor but being ignorant of the fact that context works under conditions that the produced piece of discourse is a unified whole. Khalil (1985) claims that not only the quantity of context but rather the quality of context in which the utterances are embedded is of paramount importance. To put it differently, in order for a context to be of effect in the interpretation of a given sentence, the surrounding utterances not only should be in abundance but also they should form a well- knitted whole.

5.3.3. Semantically Deviant Sentences are more Difficult to Reconstruct than Grammatically Deviant Ones.

The results of this study revealed that teachers found reconstruction of lexically deviant sentences more difficult compared to their grammatical counterparts. The degree of success for the teachers as regards the reconstruction of the semantically and grammatically deviant sentences was 49.7 % and 39.14 % respectively. This consequence was not unexpected and it is well mirrored in the perspectives and views of teachers being interviewed. A teacher, being interviewed, pointed out that *Grammatically or structurally deviant sentences are reconstructed with much ease, compared to their semantically impaired counterparts. The reason is that the writer may use a far less frequent meaning of a content word. As such, it may prove to be difficult for the reader to decipher its* meaning (T1).

The results of this study also give support to the findings of earlier studies. Chastain (1980), for instance, in his study of native speakers reactions to students errors asserted that intelligibility is severely blocked by the use of wrong word or the addition and omission of words. The forms of the words, he reasoned, seem to be of lesser

degree of significance in the meaning negotiation process than the proper use of the words. Santos (1988) acceding to the viewpoints of Chastain, on one hand, and supporting the findings of this study, on the other hand, says that it is precisely this type of error (i.e. lexical error) that " language impinges directly on content. When the wrong word is used, the meaning is very likely to be obscured" (p. 84). Santos' and Chastain's position is well confirmed by one of the participating teachers who averred that *semantical sentences are difficult to reconstruct. This is because content words rather than functional words are the meaning - bearing elements in the sentences* (T2).

An example sentence from the write-ups of the students of this qualitative study makes the case in point crystal clear. The sentence is:

'Do you have any idea that access to the information of others without profit how much fun it can be?'

Considering the plausible reconstruction of this sentence, it becomes conspicuous that none of the nine teachers successfully attempted the sentence. The authoritative reconstruction of this sentence (i.e. Do you have any idea what fun it would be having access to the information of *which* others are *denied?*) makes it clear that the problem lies in the omission of 'which' and improper use of the word 'profit' , thus, endorsing Chastain and Santos contention.

The findings of this qualitative study also uphold Khalil's (1985) study of native speakers' evaluation and interpretation of Arab EFL learners' written errors and several others. He found that utterances containing grammatical errors were corrected and interpreted with much accuracy and judged to be more intelligible compared to utterances containing semantic errors that were corrected and interpreted less accurately and judged to be less intelligible. In plain terms, semantic errors, he argued, were more likely to reduce the intelligibility of utterances than were grammatical errors. Khalil's stance is championed by teachers taking part in the study who said that

semantical sentences are difficult to reconstruct. This is because content words rather than functional words are the meaning - bearing elements in the sentences (T2). *Intelligibility is blocked more by the wrong use of content or lexical words than structural words. Therefore, the former are difficult to reconstruct* (T3).

Meaning negotiation or meaning exchange process may come to a halt by the improper use of a lexical word by any of interlocutors than by the misuse of a

grammatical component, say, a word, a sentence. The implication is that it is difficult to reconstruct semantically impaired sentences (T7).

The implications of these findings for the teaching of writing ,especially, in the EFL settings are quite clear. When meaning negotiation is the purpose of writing, the student writers should be made wary of the significance of semantic as well as formal features of language. It is, therefore, incumbent on writing instructors to lay due stress on the development of these skills in the writing process and in the sequencing of materials so that the students could effectively communicate their meaning.

5.3.4. Text Ownership Abdication

Teachers customarily give feedback, or write comments on the students' papers to revise their writing, and, at times, they embark on reconstructing and providing the correct form of the segment of the discourse they feel needs repairing. However, the outcome has always not been favorable. This means that many a time teachers make interpretations and reconstruction of the student idiosyncratic utterances just based on their hunches, and they often fall wide of the mark in their surmise, at least the results of this study endorses this contention. To put it differently, More often than not, teachers, not making head or tail of students' intent embedded in those erroneous sentences, engage in reconstructing students' erroneous utterances based on their sheer intuition. As Hendrickson (1978 cited in Oladejo, 1993) points out most answers provided to the issues of errors and error correction, by teachers and linguists are conjectural and non-experimental (cf. Agudo, 2012). The result being that teachers write comments or reconstruct the sentences in such a way that prompt the students to relinquish their purpose in order to follow the teacher's purpose or line of thought. The consequence of teachers' imposing their own ideas on student writers is that they (students) come to conclude that what their teachers want them to say outweighs what they themselves long to say. This Phenomenon is termed as 'text appropriation', 'text authorship or ownership usurping' by some scholars and hence the title 'text ownership abdication' devised by analogy by the researcher (see Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Greenhalgh, 1992; Neal, et al., 2007; Sommers, 1980, 1981, Soori, et al., 2012).

As teachers work laboriously at fixing, classifying and providing correct answers for students, or even writing nearly the whole paragraph or the whole piece for students,

they are arrogating the students' right to learn for themselves and denying them of the chance to develop self - editing skills (Lee, 2009).

Freedman by accounting Jody's case, a college freshman, luminously depicts the point in question. Jody, a college freshman, asseverates her experience to her latest English teacher as to her former teachers' comments to her writing as follows:

> …*"And I like English, but I've had so many different English teachers, all saying different things about my writing, that I can't know what to believe. All teachers want different things, and it is hard to please all of them without changing my way of writing. You know, in your first paper or something you write, and they'll say, Oh, you should do this, or you should do this, and you go, Uhha, I know what they want, and then you just write the way they want, and they go, Great! Excellent writing. But then you end up in college, and you don't know how to write, for yourself. You just write for other people. Hopefully you won't try and change the way I write, but just try and help me on the things I do badly*" (Freedman, 1987, p. 35).

Jody's case denotes that teachers, while sustaining their role as an educational leader, should entrust the responsibility of communicating ideas and text ownership to their student writers and refrain from doing anything that gives rise to students just playing the school game and relinquishing text ownership (cf. Alamis, 2010; Lee, 2009).

Teachers regard themselves as the authorities, intellectually wise, rhetorically master-minded, technically stand head and shoulders above their novice writers (Sommers, 1982).

Wonderfully, in classroom writing situations, the reader (i.e. teacher) usurps the primary control of writer's choices, enjoying absolute freedom to amend those choices any time a novice is off the track from the teacher-reader's assumption of what the emerging text ought to look like (Brannon and Knoblauch, 1982). Hence, the teacher more than the student determines what the writing will be about, the form it will take, and the criteria that will determine its success. Student writers, then, are put into the difficult position of having to incorporate, not only the personal intentions that direct their choice-making, but also the teacher-reader's prospect about how the assignment

should be completed. “The teacher's role, it is supposed, is to tell the writers how to do a better job than they could do alone, thereby in effect appropriating the writers' texts. In reading those texts and commenting on them, the teacher-evaluator " fixes" the writing in ways that appear to approximate the Platonic Discourse” (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982, p. 158).

The findings of this qualitative study are in accord with those of Sommers (1980, 1982), Brannon and Knoblauch (1982), Hyland and Hyland (2006), Radecki and Swales (1988) and Greenhalgh (1992). Greenhalgh argues that when teachers use their responses to guide or superintend writing, they, in fact, hold captive the voice of the student writer. Instead, teachers should encourage students to take control of their own writing. “ To do this, teachers must take note of shifts in their own voice in their responses, talk to students about the power dynamic in response, and help students hear their own voices as they take or relinquish control of their writing” (Greenhalgh, 1992 cited in Neal et al., 2007, p. 64 see also Bardine et al., 2000).

Radecki and Swales (1988) in their paper bearing the title of ‘ESL student reaction to written comments on their written work’ while interviewing with a student on the value of teachers’ comments, discover an instance of text appropriation by teachers’ comments.

> *“ I think what she (teacher) is trying to prove with her comments is that just tells me that I’m off the track… I’m not explaining my subject, I’m not explaining what I want to say and she’s really stressing on that… She doesn’t care what I’m writing about or what I’m doing unless she sees her own topics and format in my paper*” (p. 362 cf. Lee, 2009; Dohrer, 1991), acknowledged a student.

Reid (1994) in his article entitled ‘Responding to ESL students' Texts: The myths of appropriation’, however, adopts an opposite position. Because writing is an act of building self- reliance, we must help students to see both the potential and the problems in their writing, and we must be able, through our intervention, to send our students back into the writing process with a solid plan for ameliorating their writing. He, therefore, shows his students ways to meet audience expectations, but “ I remind them again and again that I am providing only a skeleton for effective communication.

The muscles, the ligaments, the filling out of the skeleton comes only with experience, practice, and additional intervention" (p. 286).

5.3.5. Conclusion

This qualitative study bears results that can be briefed as follows:

The findings of this study did not uphold Corder's hypothesis maintaining that teachers being acquainted with students' native language are better off or in a vantage point of conjecturing exact or near exact intent of students enclosed in idiosyncratic utterances.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that not any context of a deviant and erroneous utterance conduces to the reconstruction or interpretation of that utterance. Not only should the context of a deviant utterance be rich enough in terms of quantity of utterances preceding and following that utterance, but it should also be coherent in terms of its quality.

Yet another conclusion is that teachers, assuming themselves as authorities in the classroom setting, grant themselves unlimited right to intervene at any time they feel students go awry from teacher's ideal text. Teachers, more often than not, mistakenly presuming or taking for granted that they can understand students' intentions embedded in the erroneous and idiosyncratic utterances, embark on reconstructing students' deviant sentences just based on their intuition or sheer hunches. So doing, they not only disrupt the unity of the students' produced discourse, but rather usurp the student- writer's voice and train their effort and thought towards meeting their own purpose in lieu of students purpose in writing (see also Bardine et al., 2000).

The research results are indicative of the fact that teachers' reconstruction or interpretation of learners' intent enclosed in the erroneous utterances are not always free from errors and hence unreliable. It is not unlikely that teachers may impose their self - perceived subjective interpretations in lieu of actually discovering learners' intentions in idiosyncratic utterances (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010). Given the small corpus of this study, great circumspection should be exercised in generalizing its findings (Hamid, 2007 see also Dheram, 1995). Additional research is required to validate and verify its findings. This deficiency notwithstanding, the study has the potential of providing

teachers and researchers with insightful look into the nature of error correction and feedback.

5.4. Discussion of Quantitative Study

Getting through the analysis of data gathered chiefly through the utilization of two identical questionnaires administered to 30 teachers and 100 students participated in this quantitative study, the time is ripe to see what conclusions or results emerge from this quantitative study. The results embody general themes or topics that will be expounded in the pages that follow. While explaining the results of the study, if / whenever necessity arises some extracts (in italic type) from the students participated in the study and from the teachers for further illustration and interpretation of the issue under discussion will be given. For, as stated repeatedly before, though the leading source of data for this study emanates from the teachers' and students' responses to the items included in the questionnaires (i.e. self- report data), the data obtained from the interviews conducted with the students and teachers with respect to two open-ended questions are noteworthy as well.

Believing that deficiencies of one method of data collection could be removed by the strengths of another method and the other way round, combing methods could lead to a deeper insight into the understanding of the issue under investigation (Farrokhi, 2007). To gain an in depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, the self- report data was used in conjunction with open- ended questions.

Prior to dealing with students' and teachers' preferences as to the various features of language, it needs to be uttered that there are dearth of studies which have dealt with studying students' preferences and viewpoints with respect to relative importance of various features of language. Students' preferences, however, are important. " It is important for learners to feel that their perceived needs are being catered to, if they are to develop a positive attitude toward what they are learning" (Oladejo, 1993, p. 73 see also Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Brown, 2009; Diab, 2005; Diab, 2006; Hamouda, 2011; Lee, 2009; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Salikin, 2001; Santos, 1988; Valero et al., 2008; Weaver, 2006).

It is generally accepted that teachers' job does not only entail having necessary competence or / and the necessary teaching skills or / and having necessary experience,

but also entails understanding non- linguistic aspects of teaching and learning such as understanding the learners, their psychological needs and their beliefs. Today, learners are no longer viewed as empty vessels to be filled with information, but as individuals who have their own personal understanding of the world around them (Chuang, 2012). Understanding learners' beliefs is indispensable in order to be able to adopt appropriate language education policies and plan and fulfill congruous language instruction. Preferences are important in that if the students and teachers have a common and reciprocal understanding of the objective behind a special kind of corrective feedback strategy or technique and come to terms in its use, the odds are that the feedback will bear productive results (Diab, 2006 see also Brown, 2009; Diab, 2005; Gabillon, 2012; Lee, 2009). The opposite is of sure possibility. He (Diab, 2006) maintains that if teachers and students have reciprocally uncommon and dissimilar beliefs concerning correction techniques, the outcome will most probably be feedback that is inefficacious, in the worst case, disheartening for students learning to compose in their second language.

Horwitz (1988 in Gabillon, 2007) avers that classroom realities that run counter to learners' anticipations about learning may give rise to looks of frustration and learning hindrance (see also Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010). If the correction is to be efficacious, classroom practice cannot be grounded stiffly on any model practice oozed out of the perspectives of linguists and teachers alone, but it must be pliable enough to embody the preferences and needs of the language learners (Oladego, 1993). The discord and uncertainty about the usefulness of various types of and amounts of corrective feedback and the discrepancy between students' and teachers' conceptions considering corrective feedback are not pedagogically without problems. Teachers, for instance, may be providing a certain type of corrective feedback but students may not accede to it. If students do not accede to particular type of corrective feedback, they will hardly be inclined to use it. It is, therefore, essential to be an agreement between teachers and students about what constitutes to be an effective feedback (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010). In this study, an attempt is made to bring the oft- neglected side of the issue – students' preferences and viewpoints- to light and to collate them with some widely accepted opinions of teachers.

5.4.1. The Amount of Corrective Feedback Students and Teachers Think is Useful

Although the results of this study demonstrate that both teachers and students are optimistic about the effects brought about as a result of teachers' employing corrective feedback, there is some considerable discrepancy between students and teachers as to areas or features of language should be emphasized. The saddening news is that there exist attitudinal differences between teachers and students themselves in their preferences for error correction and in their beliefs regarding the relative importance of various features in students' writing.

Whereas teachers, in this study, give priority to providing feedback on errors of content or ideas and on errors that bring meaning negotiation process to a halt, students indiscriminately prefer to get feedback on all errors, be it major or minor. The findings of this study corroborate the results of the study conducted by a number of writers. Amrhein and Nassaji (2010), for example, found that students gave priority to larger quantities of error correction on all types of errors, while most teachers were selective and tended to focus on meaning negotiation and accuracy. As with this study, they also found that students, unlike teachers, crave for receiving feedback on as many errors as possible. Students dislike or disregard the options in which the teacher marks only errors that interfere with communication, responds only to content and ideas, or does not repeatedly mark a repeated error.

Radecki and Swales, (1988) verifying the viewpoints of students in this study and the stance adopted by Amrhein and Nassaji (2010), believe that if teachers do not correct all errors whether they are mechanical or surface level errors or major ones, the students might lose their faith in their teachers. In a similar vein, Leki (1991) concludes that students regard good writing in English on a par with error - free writing and that they await and wish all errors in their papers to be corrected. Leki's viewpoints are endorsed by a student and a teacher respectively, while being interviewed:

I hold positive attitudes for error correction and highly favor teachers correcting all errors. I have a strong preference for the correction of grammatical errors rather than lexical and semantic errors. I also hold favorable attitudes towards having my errors corrected in explicit ways for the sake of clear understanding. I also

appreciate implicit techniques of error correction on the condition that they are geared appropriately to my ability and need (S1).

All the students' errors should be dealt with in depth, but features of the language (such as wrong use of lexical items) which impede the process of meaning negotiation should take precedence over other features such as spelling, punctuation and grammar. It does not follow that the teacher should disregard some. It means that the teacher should devise a hierarchy of importance in his or her error correction undertaking. The teachers may lose their credibility with the students if they do not correct all the errors (T5).

This is while another teacher believes otherwise:

Teachers by placing too much emphasis on the mechanical errors to the total exclusion of ideas, content or text organization, they often lose sight of important aspects or features of language such as idea development. After all, writing is not a means to practice language (T3).

The above teacher's stance (i.e. T3) is well supported by a student on being interviewed who opined that *I do not want my teachers to correct my errors. Error correction frustrates me and inhibits my willingness to perform in the language. I just want my teacher to write comments on the quality of my writing* (S4). Oladejo (1993) is at odds with T3 and S4 viewpoints and found that an overwhelming majority of students disagreed with the view that frequent error correction could baffle the learner and restrain his or her yearn to perform in the language.

Research findings have proposed that learners wish their errors corrected more often than teachers think, thus endorsing the viewpoints of students in this study. Oladejo (1993), for example, found that students were like - minded in their thinking that their errors should be corrected so as to gain fluency and accuracy in the language. Not only did the learners wish their errors corrected, but also they crave for comprehensive as opposed to selective error correction. As with the findings of this study, students in Oladejo's study strongly disagreed with the idea that grammatical errors should be disregarded in favor of errors that break down the exchange of meaning. Unlike Oladejo's students' viewpoints, one teacher and one student, in this study, on being interviewed, remarked, to a slight degree, opposing viewpoints.

The preference should be given to the correction of grammatical errors, for if the teachers treat them with much lenience, they may deeply be seated in the student writer's interlanguage repertoire which, later, will prove difficult for students to get rid of them. Additionally, these (grammatical errors) are the first to be noticed at the first and glimpse glance by every reader. They belittle or detract the value of students' work (T4).

I hold positive attitudes for error correction and highly favor teachers correcting all errors. I have a strong preference for the correction of grammatical errors rather than lexical and semantic errors. I also hold favorable attitudes towards having my errors corrected in explicit ways for the sake of clear understanding. I also appreciate implicit techniques of error correction on the condition that they are geared appropriately to my ability and need (S1).

The results of this study are also in line with those of Diab (2006). About 73.3 % of teachers in this study stated that they preferred correcting errors that interfere with communication. In Diab study, 8 out of 14 teachers held the same belief. Likewise, students' viewpoints in this study were not dissimilar to the ideas of students in Diab study. In this study, just 18 % of students wanted their teachers to correct errors that interfere with communication and in Diab study only 10 % of the students wanted their teachers to focus exclusively on errors that interfere with communication.

5.4.2. Teachers' / Students' Preference for the Correction of Different Types of Errors

Not only is there a wide rift between teachers' and students' beliefs about the amount of errors teachers should mark, there exists discordance or variation between teachers and students as to the features of language should receive due attention by the teachers. Whereas teachers, in this study, strongly uphold paying attention to the errors of content / idea and organization errors, the students gave superiority to errors of grammar and vocabulary choice. The preferences of students in this study, however, are inconsistent with Diab's (2005) study of students' beliefs about the importance of various features of their writing. Unlike the results of this study in which students attached more importance to grammar and vocabulary choice, he found that students preferred comments on the writing style and idea / content as the most important teacher

marks they longed for; fewer students chose organization, vocabulary choice and grammar. He also found that despite the fact that students showed a stronger inclination for the correction of all errors, it is promising that a great majority of them lay stress on the importance of comments on the writing style and content, in lieu of surface level errors. Diab's study of students' preferences for various features of language were in absolute agreement with the teachers' preferences in this study where teachers gave heavy weight to content and organization errors instead of vocabulary and grammar. Therefore, not only is there discrepancy between teachers and students as far as their preferences for features of language are concerned, the students viewpoints run counter to those of Diab.

Huntley (1992, in Diab, 2006), on the other hand, agreeing with the teachers' stance in this study, upholds that feedback on content and organization should be given to the students while feedback on form should be shunned. Huntley's assertion is in opposition with an overwhelming majority of students' viewpoints, for they favor indiscriminate correction of all types of errors whether they are minor or major and they favorably prefer correction of grammatical errors and vocabulary choice over errors of content and ideas. Nevertheless, one student, in this study, backs Huntley's position by saying that *I hold the comments on the writing style and ideas / content in high regard, at the same time, I have the preference for the correction of all the errors. In other words, all the errors should be corrected but the emphasis should be on the writing style and content, rather than only on surface level errors* (S2).

As with Amrhein and Nassaji's (2010) finding, students, in this study, positively valued corrective feedback on form – focused errors such as grammatical errors, and vocabulary errors. However, they displayed negative or neutral opinions about the effectiveness of corrective feedback on ideas and content of the writing. Amrhein and Nassaji found that students were anxious to perfect their English, and that rather than focusing on conveying interesting and coherent ideas, they considered error free writing to be their goal. This concern for accuracy rather than coherence of ideas is also well resounded in the words a student participating in this study who stated that *I hold positive attitudes for error correction and highly favor teachers correcting all errors. I have a strong preference for the correction of grammatical errors rather than lexical and semantic errors* (S1). By the same token, teachers viewpoints, in this study, as to

relative importance of various features of language, were not dissimilar to teachers' viewpoints in Amrhein and Nassaji study. They found that teachers believed that corrective feedback should "focus as much on comprehensibility of the content as on form – focused correction" (p. 115). As with the results of this study, Amrhein and Nassaji found that teachers demonstrated positive opinions towards the correction of organization errors, content or ideas errors as well as grammatical errors.

The findings of this study are irreconcilable with those of Semke (1984) and Zamel (1985) who have found evidence indicating that students long for corrective feedback in the form of comments on content and ideas rather than on grammatical, structural and surface errors.

The preferences of students in this study, on the other hand, are in harmony with Lee (2005 cited in Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010) who found that students preferred comprehensive corrective feedback rather than selective corrective feedback, and that students approved of overt correction.

5.4.3. Students' / Teachers' Evaluation of Various Error Correction Techniques

Not only was there a sharp contrast or dissonance between teachers' and students' opinions and preferences on the amount of error correction should be done by the teachers but there was a wide gap in the preferences and opinions of the groups under investigation on the degree of importance should be attached to various features of language in the students' writing such as content / idea, text organization, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and so on. There is, however, convergence of opinions and preferences between teachers and students as far as the employment of various error correction techniques is concerned. Both teachers and students hold the error corrections techniques of *error correction with a comment, overt correction with no comment* and *comment with no correction* in high regard. Similarly, other error marking techniques such as *clues on how to fix an error, error identification, error ignored* and *personal comment* are negatively treated by teachers and students alike, though, admittedly, there are some subtle and slight differences between the said groups.

The results of this study accord with those of Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) who found that students thought it was chiefly the responsibility of teachers to do the correction and as with this study, students in Amrhein and Nassaji study favorably approved teachers correcting their errors explicitly with *error correction with comment* and *overt correction* ranking high. The explanation put forward by a student in Amrhein and Nassaji study for the explicit error marking technique was that explicit types of written corrective feedback help them remember their errors and understand how to fix them. More or less similar explanations were put forward by a student and two teachers respectively, in this study, who opined:

I prefer my teacher to correct all my errors, also to provide comment and explanation as to its correct use. To put it differently, explicit correction of my errors and letting me know what was wrong with my writing helps me learn from my mistakes (S2),

Explicitly showing the students what the correct answer is, is the optimal error correction technique employed by the great majority of teachers. I, personally, think that if the above technique is coupled with comment or explanation about the correct answer, it may prove to be more powerful or effective (T4),

I prefer explicitly showing them the right answer to their errors, believing that students may not be able to figure out the teacher's cue for the particular type of the error (T2), hence endorsing the viewpoints of students in Amrhein and Nassaji study.

As with students in this study, teachers preferred more explicit techniques of error correction which runs counter to teachers' preference in Amrhein and Nassaji study in which teachers unlike students favored less explicit techniques of error correction.

Students' and teachers' preference for more explicit error correction techniques, in this study and preferably students' preference in Amrhein and Nassaji, may imply that they prefer explicit and explanatory error marking techniques than being let to self-correct or peer – correct. Self or peer correction has been found to be useful in some pervious research notwithstanding (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Makino, 1993).

Though an overwhelming majority of students in this study held *explicit correction of errors* in high regard, a small number of teachers and students in this study and preferably teachers in Amrhein and Nassaji study also showed that they

valued *clues on how to fix an* error. The explanations, put forward by some students on letting the students self correct, are noteworthy and thus giving support to previous research findings on the importance of self or peer correction. They opined:

I would like my teacher to provide students with signals facilitating or accelerating peer- or self-correction, rather than immediately correcting their non - target like form(s) in their compositions (S8),

I would like my teacher just to tell me why something is incorrect the way it is. Teachers' correction might not have long term effectiveness unless it is coupled with further meta linguistic comments and explanations (S9),

I like my teacher help me self correct my errors, because this technique of error correction helps me learn from my mistakes and activate my knowledge and it has more lasting effect on my learning (S10) and

If the student corrects his or her own error, learning will be more effective. Providing the student with an opportunity to self- correct is an effective way of encouraging him or her to think about his or her own error and correct it himself or herself. This will activate his or her knowledge, increase his or her self- confidence and enable him or her use the target structure correctly both in the same lesson and in the subsequent sessions (S11).

The preferences of students in this study are in agreement with the preferences of students in Nunan's (1988 in Farrokhi, 2007) study in which students preference for teacher's error correction was high but teachers' preference for it was considerably low which contradicts the findings of this study. Contrary to teachers' preference for explicit error correction in this study, teachers in Nunan's (1988 in Farrokhi, 2007) displayed great tendency to help prepare students for role reversal- transferring the responsibility of error correction to students which is the overall goal of language pedagogy. In plain language, the preference for teachers, in Farrokhi's study, was students' self – discovery of errors. Teachers wanted to avoid correcting the students' errors and wanted to involve the students in self correction whereas students wanted to evade this responsibility. According to Nunan (1988 cited in Farrokhi, 2007) who observes that " in a learner – centered curriculum, methodology, as much as any other element in the curriculum, must be informed by the attitudes of the learner" (p. 93). This shows a dramatic misfit between teachers' and students' views of error correction.

Nunan's reasoning stands to reason and seems theoretically sound, for error correction is time - absorbing and painstaking activity and it sounds that students' sanction of corrective feedback that demands less of their endeavor to correct, shows their shrewdness and keenness on transferring the responsibility of error correction to teachers. There should be role reversal. This responsibility (i.e. error correction) should be shouldered by the students themselves to foster student autonomy (Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010). Teachers' stance in Farrokhi's study and Amrhein and Nassaji's contention is well echoed in the remarks of one teacher in this study who said:

The teachers should refrain from correcting students' errors themselves. They can emancipate themselves from this laborious, time consuming and painstaking undertaking through entrusting the responsibility of error correction to the students themselves. There is a wealth of evidence in the literature which demonstrates that students who make significant progress as a result of teacher feedback may be few and far between. Students learn most when they themselves embark on fixing their errors. Besides, teacher generated discourse may not have the same influence as student generated discourse. The teachers can lend their students a hand by letting the students know not only where the error is but also by indicating the type of errors by using symbols (T6), which corresponds with teachers' viewpoints in Amrhein and Nassaji and Farrokhi's study.

5.4.4. Participants' Responses to the Correction of a Repeated Error

An overwhelming majority of teachers (86 %) responded that a frequently occurring error should not be corrected, this is while only 30.5 % of the students stated that it should not be corrected. Therefore, students' viewpoints are inconsistent with those of teachers as far as the correction of a repeated error is concerned. The teachers seem to value student autonomy and a teacher explained that

the students themselves should shoulder the responsibility of learning from their errors. Teachers by correcting all the students' errors practically develop them as dependent learners. All the teachers should do is to provide general end comments on the quality of writing and underline the most major errors to let them self correct and thereby to foster learner autonomy (T5).

Though the viewpoints of students in this study accord with the viewpoints of students in Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) study, the teachers' viewpoints in this study run counter to the viewpoints of teachers in Amrhein and Nassaji study in which both teachers and students saw corrective feedback as a learning tool and thought that a repeated error should be marked each time it occurs. The most common justification from both groups (i.e. teachers and students) was that repeatedly marking a repeated error lets the students to be informed and an get an overview to see pattern. This is while Leki (1991) contends that expecting students to produce an entirely error free piece of discourse is an unrealistic goal, for certain errors will persist in writing and will never vanish notwithstanding immense allotment of effort to do away with them. The teachers' stance in this study are in line with previous research findings such as Ferris and Roberts (2001) and Makino (1993) who support students' self discovery of their own errors, and " if teacher marks a repeated error every time it occurs, it leaves little room for self correction as students would not be held responsible for seeking out and correcting their own errors" (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010, p. 114). In support of Ferris and Roberts and Makino contention a student, in this study, opined: *I do not expect my teacher to correct all my errors explicitly. Rather, I expect him or her to correct one or two as an example and let me follow his example for the rest, especially if an error occurs repeatedly. I think I learn most and remember long when I correct my errors myself than if they are corrected by the teacher (S1).*

5.4.5. Teachers' / Students' Preference on When to Give / Get Feedback

The most favored option for the teachers is to *give feedback at the revising stage* and the next most favored option in the descending order of popularity is to *give feedback at the evaluation stage*. This is while to *get feedback at the drafting stage* is the most preferred option for the students. Unlike teachers who overwhelmingly prefer to give feedback at the revising and evaluation stages, the group of students present a somewhat disjointed front and their preference is spread over the four options, more or less, evenly. The students' preference, in this study, to receive feedback during all stages of writing process accords with the preference of students in Hamouda (2011) study. So being the case, the students, Hamouda (2011) asserts, can receive excessive help from teachers through the process of writing; therefore, their advancement or

improvement can be assessed through a number of stages instead of the only final products.

There is also another similarity between the preferences of students in this study and those of Hamouda. The students in both studies were reluctant to get feedback at the drafting and revising stages. Their preference stands to reason since they can seek help from their friends while drafting and revising their papers and can turn to their teachers for the final but most serious support. However, a student, in this study, put forward an amazing idea and said:

I would rather my teacher help me in pre writing phase especially with brainstorming or in revising phase than in the final stage. My justification is that in the two above mentioned stages the teacher can play a significant role in reformulating or reshaping my arguments or ideas. But when he or she comments on my errors in the evaluation stage, the comments would not help me improve the quality of my writing, for the teacher often does not require the students to produce second or multiple drafts after assigning the score (S6). This is while the majority of students in Hamouda study were unwilling to get feedback at the early stage of writing. They did not like their teacher to intervene at the pre writing stage when they were brainstorming and starting to write their first draft. Students in Hamouda study, unlike this study in which they prefer to get feedback during all stages of process of writing, prefer to get feedback in the evaluation stage because, as Hamouda asserts, their main concern is grade or to avoid mistakes in the next assignments.

The teachers, in this study, are not dissimilar to those in Hamouda as far as the preference for giving feedback is concerned. Both groups of teachers prefer to provide feedback at the revising stage. The teachers, in both studies, preferably, the teachers in this study, want to provide feedback at the evaluating stage, for they want to justify the score by providing feedback and writing comments on the errors students made. *Our teacher just sends a paper back to us with some comments on it to justify the score not to help us improve its quality, a student opined* (the sentence / quotation is taken from the Qualitative study 1). But unlike this study, the teachers in Hamouda study are mainly reluctant to provide feedback at the evaluation stage. They would like to provide feedback during the drafting and revising stages reasoning that when “corrections on compositions made after the process has finished, they seem not to be helpful in

improving students' writing" (Stanley, 2003 cited in Hamouda, 2011, p. 130). Stanley's contention is well echoed in the words of a student who said: ... *when he or she comments on my errors in the evaluation stage, the comments would not help me improve the quality of my writing, for the teacher often does not require the students to produce second or multiple drafts after assigning the score* (S6).

5.4.6. Teachers' / Students' Views on the Color of Pen

Contrary to Hamouda (2011) study where the students and teachers are in harmony as to the color of pen to give feedback, there is a sharp contrast in the preferences of respondents as to the color of pen in this study. An overwhelming majority of teachers prefer to use pencil while giving feedback, this is while only a small minority of students want to receive feedback in pencil. Students, in both studies, prefer to receive feedback in red pen whereas there is a divergence of opinions between the teachers in the aforementioned studies. Teachers and students preference for the red pen in Hamouda study which is conducted in Saudi Arabia context is understandable since the red pen is " the symbol of the teachers in the belief of the Saudi" (Hamouda, 2011, p. 130). Besides, Hamouda asserts that red- inked notes easily draw the attention of the students than if they were in pencil. The teachers' stance in this study is backed, and Hamouda's assertion is challenged, by Oladejo (1993) and Semke (1984). People feel abhorrent to be reminded permanently that they have been wrong, in particular, to be reminded ceaselessly that they have gone astray in producing a given language structure. Even students viewing error correction an integral part of learning do not feel like seeing the sight of red ink on the writing papers and more likely find the experience disheartening (Oladejo, 1993).

The return of papers embellished by unavoidable red marks, gives rise to looks of frustration and despair in the students' countenance (Semke, 1984; see also Oladejo, 1993;; Truscott & Hsu, 2008; Wang, 2010). In a similar vein, Lee (2009) agreeing with Semke's viewpoints, opines that a paper replenished with red ink alludes that there are likely far too many things for a student to pay attention to.

The preferences of teachers and students in this study are in agreement with the preferences of teachers and students in Diab (2006) study where only 2 teachers out of 14 agree that using a red – colored pen is necessary in responding to either a first or a

final draft, which contrasts with students' preference. Students in the present study slightly more than the students in Diab study stated that teachers should use red ink to comment on their writing. Students' preferences notwithstanding, Wang contends that " It is very disconcerting for students to see many words crossed out, new words added, and an array of marginal comments - all usually written in blood red letters" (Lake, 2002 cited in Wang, 2010, p. 195)

Semke (1984), Oladejo (1993), Lee (2009) and Wang (2010) all cast doubt on the soundness of students' preferences and it seems that students preference, contrary to that of teachers, has no theoretical foundation or logical plausibility.

5.4.7. Teachers' / Students' Views on Teachers' Comments and Corrections

An overwhelming majority of teachers reported that students are mainly *concerned about the grade and pay no attention to the comments or feedback* offered by the teachers, whereas a great majority of students think otherwise. In other words, there is a wide gap in the opinion of teachers and students as regards paying attention to the comments or feedback given by the teacher. Comparison of students' preferences in current study with the preferences of students in Radecki and Swales (1988) on the option of *concerning about the grade and paying no attention to the comments or feedback,* reveals a minimum measure of consensus. That is, most of the students in Radecki and Swales study, contrary to the students in the present study, stated that they first take a look at the score on their returned paper rather than the comments, suggesting that grade is their top priority and they are initially concerned and motivated about the grade. In a similar vein, Leki (1991 cited in Hamouda 2011) states that if there is a score on a paper, students first take a look at the score and simply disown the paper.

In option *reading carefully every mark / comment the teacher writes on their piece of work,* there is a clash of opinions between teachers and students in the present study. Only a small number of teachers did report that students carefully read comments which teachers write on the students' papers whereas an overwhelming majority of students thought otherwise. There is, however, a consensus of opinions between the students of the current study and the students of Radecki and Swales study in which most of the students showed positive or at least neutral reactions upon receiving a paper heavily replete with red-inked notes. They also declared that they would read the

comments and even expressed content that their teacher had marked their papers (Radecki and Swales, 1988). The preferences of teachers and students, in the present study, about the above option (i.e. carefully reading teacher's comment), to a lesser degree corresponds with the preferences of teachers and students in the study conducted by Diab (2006) where about half of the teachers and a plurality of students stated that they read every mark or comment carefully.

The obtained results, in the current study, are not dissimilar to what obtained by Hamouda (2011) who found that more than half of the teachers and students agreed that learners like to read every mark or comment their teachers wrote on their piece of work carefully.

Not reading the entire composition again after the teacher has marked it is another area where there is a divergence of opinions between teachers and students. None of the students do support the viewpoint that students do not read again the entire composition after the teacher has marked it whereas approximately half of the teachers see the opposite. This finding is in line with teachers' and students' preference in Hamouda (2011) study where a very small number of students ignore the comments because they do not know how to make the corrections whereas fifty percent of teachers believe otherwise. In plain terms, a small minority of students replied that they did not read over their composition, a great majority of students answered that they liked to read the entire composition again after their teacher had marked it.

The preference of the students in the current study goes in contrast with preference of students in Radecki and Swales (1988) where the second group and third group of students (i.e. Semi-resisters and Resisters) expressed hatred and disinclination toward revision. " Most of them saw no redeeming value in rewriting, some view it as punishment" (p. 358 see also Brown, 2009; Diab, 2005, 2006). The preferences of the students in the current study are also in harmony with the preferences of students in Hamouda (2011) study in which they found that nearly all students reviewed their newly returned and corrected work only one or two times, immediately upon receiving it or before an examination.

The opinions of students in the current study also goes in contrast with the viewpoints of students in the qualitative study (I) where *Hossein* in describing his strategy of revision says,

"I did not read the whole text from beginning to the end. I just corrected the errors in sequence noted by the teacher. I hope these changes would be desirable and enough". They often *commence with the first comment and continue through the paper by hopping from one comment to the other in sequence or haphazardly from one to another, often turning a blind eye to large parts of the text and articulating* **(**researcher's observation) ,

"nothing is wrong with this sentence", what it needs is a better word" (*Masoumeh* murmured slowly while making textual changes).

Lack of opinion consensus is also apparent in *paying attention to feedback on vocabulary and grammar in their piece of work* where only a negligible number of teachers reported that students paid attention to feedback on vocabulary and grammar in their piece of work, while this figure was remarkable for students. The students' preference in the present study goes in contrast with the preference of students in Hamouda study in which a great number of learners believe that errors pertaining to grammatical errors should be given the top priority and paramount importance for correction. " Grammar was still needed feedback since some kinds of grammar were considered hard to overcome like run-on or fragment" (Hamouda, 2011, p. 132). Learners' preference, however, for the errors of vocabulary in the current study accords with the preference of students in the Hamouda study where majority of the learners would like errors of vocabulary receive the least priority for correction.

Considerable amount of discrepancy is revealed in the preference of students in the present study and that of Diab (2005) students' preference for receiving feedback on vocabulary and grammar errors.

5.4.8. Students' Reasons for not Understanding Teachers' Comments or Corrections

There is a wealth of evidence indicating that teachers' feedback or comments written on the students' papers do not always yield beneficial outcomes. First, in most cases, teachers' preference for a particular type of feedback, the type of error correction techniques they employ, features of language they emphasize and the amount of correction they do, go in contrast with the preferences of students for the aforementioned items. That is, there is mismatch between the pedagogical agenda of the

teacher and that of the learner (Nunan,1995 cited in Gabillon, 2007see also Diab, 2005, 2006; Lee, 2008, 2008a, 2009). Just as importantly, there is also some variation between the students themselves in their preferences. More specifically, the group of students participated in this study present a somewhat disjointed front (Lee, 2006).

Of the students participated in the present study, a great majority stated that they had difficulty in deciphering teachers' feedback, just a small fraction said that they understood teachers' feedback (see table 24). Teacher's written feedback is not always useful when it is ambiguous and obscure and students cannot figure out these comments and suggestions (Hamouda, 2011 see also Agudo, 2012; Carol, 2005; Lee, 1997, Lee, 2004, 2009; Sommers, 1981, 1982; Zamel, 1985). Three fourths of the students stated that they had difficulty in decoding teachers' handwriting. This finding is, to some degree, in an agreement with Ken (2004) who found that students had difficulty in reading teacher's handwriting, and that students had difficulty in deciphering grammar terms and codes, and that they had difficulty in making sense of teachers' comments because the comments were too general (see also Lee, 2004; Lee, 2009; Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). Zamel (1985) remarked that marks and comments are often perplexing, arbitrary, and inaccurate. He, further, argues that teachers' marks and comments are usually in the form of impractical and imprecise commands, instructions or directives that are unintelligible to the students (see also Treglia, 2008). These vague directives, while teachers may take for granted that they have widely-known definitions, are in the form of marks and comments that typify complicated meanings " which remain locked in the teachers' head" (Butler, 1980 cited in Zamel, 1985, p. 83).

Sommers (1982) commenting on the vanity of feedback states that we, all, as teachers, have witnessed our baffled student complaining about unintelligibility of our comments: *I don't know how you want me to change this*, or, *Tell me what you want me to do* (p. 150 see also Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Guenette, 2007).

A good number of the students lament that they have trouble making sense of their teachers' comments and written corrections while revising their paper (Dohrer, 1991).

5.4.9. Conclusion

Careful scrutiny of the teachers and students responses to the items included in the questionnaires, reveals some glaring discrepancies in the preferences, attitudes and opinions of teachers and students alike. More importantly, both groups presented a somewhat disjointed front. In plain language, there was some variation between teachers themselves and students as well, as far as their preferences, attitudes and opinions for error correction techniques and various features of language are concerned. Teachers, however, should keep in mind that students' preferences and opinions are weighty and influential because any incongruity between students' and teachers' opinions can curb or hinder the effectiveness of corrective feedback (Hamouda, 2011). Pedagogically, the findings suggest that teachers should frankly discuss the use of WCF with students and ensure that students understand the purpose of WCF. Thus, it is a good idea for teachers to communicate with students regarding corrective feedback practices as well as adapt their WCF practices to promote learner autonomy, and at the same time, consider students' preferences so as to motivate and encourage students to be in command of their learning. When circumstances do not allow teachers to modify their classroom practices, they should explain their rationale to their students. Such explanations could at least partially minimize conflict in expectations between teachers and students (Hamouda, 2011, see also Diab, 2005, 2006).

The findings of this study back the common and universal contention that students appear to crave for surface –level error correction from their teachers and think that such feedback is useful, research evidence albeit arguing otherwise. Students' need for error correction does not necessarily imply the usefulness of such feedback (Radecki & Swales, 1988). Some students may " hold unrealistic beliefs about writing, usually based on limited knowledge or experience . Therefore, in addition to exploring students' beliefs, teachers can try to modify students' unrealistic expectations about error correction and reinforce realistic ones" (Diab, 2006, p. 6 see also Hamouda, 2011; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Diab, 2005). Clearly, teachers must mediate and intervene to modify students beliefs patterns and help them understand how feedback is supposed to influence their writing and why it is given the way it is (Diab, 2005).

Since error correction is a time - absorbing and painstaking activity, it sounds that students' sanction of corrective feedback that demands less of their endeavor to

correct, shows their shrewdness and keenness on transferring the responsibility of error correction to teachers. The desire to shift responsibility to teachers contradicts the overall goal of language pedagogy. There should be role reversal. This responsibility (i.e. error correction) should be shouldered by the students themselves to foster student autonomy (Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010)

Having said that students' preferences are important, it does not follow that they should be " idealized because they are not necessarily more effective for being preferred" (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010, p. 117 cf. Hamouda, 2011). Therefore, rather than right away complying with the preferences of students, it is vital that teachers take a cognizance of the possible outcomes of the misfit between their students' expectations and their own expectations. Sparing students' expectations may dishearten students. Teacher's immediate yielding to students' preferences and expectations, however, may give rise to student over- dependence on the teacher and beguile students' expectations (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010 cf. Hamouda, 2011).

5.5. Pedagogical Implications

Hopefully, the implications of this dissertation, which are grounded on findings obtained from this study, the design and the procedure of the study itself and finally what was observed of learning and teaching, would be of great effect in EFL situations where teachers and students alike are grown accustomed to using a more traditional, product-oriented approach to writing. The implications are as follows on the following themes:

5.5.1. Composing Illimitable Comments Disheartens Student- Writers

There are teachers who use comments to excess. Composing illimitable comments can cause the students to become disaffected with the teaching process and disconcerted with their work. Likewise, there are teachers who over mark which runs counter to prioritizing learners errors and is based on the mistaken premise that " the greater the number of the corrections they (teachers) do themselves, the quicker their students will learn to write better English" (Lee, 1997, p. 467 cf. Khalil, 1985; Valero et al., 2008). Too many comments on too many aspects of writing can bewilder and overpower students as well as it can squander teacher's time and energy. Though " well-

intentioned teachers may provide elaborate forms of corrective feedback, time might be more profitably spent in responding to more important aspects of student writing" (Robb et al., 1986, p. 91). Making exhaustive comments not only robs teachers of the time and energy, they leave the students with no sense of priority among them.

" For the majority of students, their attitude to teacher feedback is one of *tell them and they will forget*. This is particularly so when they have a large number of errors to attend to" (Lee, 2009, p. 35 cf. Lee, 2008a). Your comments on students writing should clearly mirror the hierarchy of your concerns about the paper. Major issues should be treated more prominently and at a greater depth or length; minor issues, on the contrary, should be superficially scratched or not at all. Many veteran readers find the experience of responding to student writing to be one of constantly deciding not to comment on less important issues. Such constraint allows you to focus your energy on just a few important points. If you comment exhaustively and elaborately on grammatical or mechanical issues, you should expect students to deduce that these are the matters that count. It is, after all, not unreasonable for students to assume that the amount of ink you spill on an issue bears some relationship to the issue's importance.

More importantly, when teachers keep plugging away at surface-level concerns, " they lose sight of other important dimensions of writing, such as ideas, rhetorical features, style and voice. Writing is not a mere vehicle for language practice" (Lee, 2009, p. 35). When everything students write is evaluated, they learn to be careful. They write to please the evaluator. They keep their writing short so there will be less to assess and write in generalities so no one will find fault. They use words they can spell and avoid punctuation that they feel unsure of. " If policing students' papers for mistakes means alienating young writers from the language we expect them to master, then the exercise is self defeating" (Spandel, 2005, p. 77 see ; Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Dheram, 1995; Lee, 2008a).

5.5.2. Supportive Comments Outperform Corrections

If the students conceive that they are communicating and someone is making sense of the message, there remains no doubt that they will be quick at welcoming the suggestions, and even seek admonition on how to better the mechanics of their writing.

Research by Rinderer (1978 cited in Semke, 1984) upholds the theory that, at minimum in the teaching of English, a teacher's written, supportive comments tend to have a positive impact on students' motive toward writing amelioration, whereas corrections tend to still motivation (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). Thus, "giving supportive comments in lieu of corrections appear to have a positive effect on students' attitudes towards writing and toward target language in general" (Semke, 1984, p. 201 cf. Alamis, 2010). The above statement is rightly confirmed by Corder (1991 cited in Valero et al., 2008, p. 27) who averred that "nothing ruins the students' credibility except humiliating comments, offences, continual and boring correction".

5.5.3. Pick Battle of Fight

It is in teacher's favor and his/her students as well, to pick his or her battle of fight when supplying feedback. It might be painful to bridle the drive to fix the errors we see in our students' writing and move on. We can suggest that teachers should correct errors which hinder the flow of speech and block meaning negotiation, for in everyday activities " it is more important to communicate successfully than to communicate perfectly" (Martinez, 2006, p. 6). Once you read an essay, decide what areas merit to be paid much heed. Try focusing on higher order concerns first, such as focus, development, text coherence, and logic. To this end, try reading through the entire paper first without marking it at all to help you get a good idea of what the primary issues are.

5.5.4. Students Have Rights to Go off

Spandel (2005) informs us of the significance of honoring the rights of student writers, such as the right to go off the topic and to write badly. To free themselves from the arduous and drudgery task of marking student writing, teachers can respect student writing wearing new glasses, treating it as an artifact produced and possessed by the student writer (rather than the teacher) and showing it greater respect. Conceding to Spandel's viewpoints, Hamid categorically contends that teachers who provide written feedback to students and often reconstruct their idiosyncratic constructions in their absence, need to practice caution and sensitivity to make sure that they do not impose

their own meanings on students' writing and thus colonize their thoughts (Hamid, 2007).

Rather than labeling student writers' drafts as poor writing or replenishing it with red ink, teachers should figure out what the writing tells them about students' personal perspectives, what their abilities or weaknesses in writing are, their worldviews, their idiosyncrasies and, above all, who they are as people and as writers (Murray 1985 cited in Spandel, 2005). Rather than acting on the behalf of the students by re-writing student texts (and altering their meanings) mistakenly pretending to be extremely devoted and committed, they could talk to students to find out what exactly they want to say.

5.5.5. Students can be Trained to Appreciate Revision

The common misconception among student writers is that their first draft is their final draft and once they finished their writing, that is the end of their responsibility. They hand in their papers to teachers and wash their hands of them. Then it is the teachers' turn to demonstrate their talents by responding to the papers laboriously. Teachers become key players of the game. But why is it so? Who should be held accountable for doing the error correction and editing? And who should be learning? It is the students, not the teachers. There should be role reversal: teachers need to instill into their students the idea that when they finish writing, their responsibility is not over. They should be held accountable for their own writing. They should be taught that except for those rare moments of inspiration or genius when the perfect ideas expressed in the perfect words in the perfect order, all experienced writers revise their work. Students often see revision not an opportunity to develop and improve a piece of writing but as an indication that they have failed to do it right the first time. To them revision is on a par with correction or editing.

They should, however, be taught that revision is the heart of writing process- the means by which ideas emerge and evolve and meanings are clarified. Revision is a process of making changes throughout the writing of a draft, changes that work to make the draft congruent with a writer's changing intentions (Lehr, 1995 see Lee 2009). In school, writers hardly ever produce more than two drafts. We may call the second draft a final and this is misleading, for it is almost impossible, unless you should be very,

very lucky and unless you keep yourself busy with your topic in your head for a long, long while, to go straight from first thinking to working draft in just two shooting. " A writer may rework a draft for publication three or four times, put it away for a while, and then rework it three or four more. Sometimes, this process goes through several cycles, each of them a combination of rehearsing, drafting, and revision" (Spandel, 2005, p. 68). There is no time for this in school, not for a single draft, but we could do this: first, let the students know how extended true revision really is, so that they know what they are doing is usually an approximation of such revision; and second, encourage extensive revision on at least one draft produced during the year so that they could see and feel the difference.

5.5.6. Bridging the Gap between Teachers' Preferences and those of Students

It is strongly advised that teachers help students understand how feedback is supposed to influence their writing. If not, students may have a hard time to interpret the teacher's feedback or act on it based on teacher's intention. Teachers should make an endeavor to examine the students' beliefs and opinions about writing, feedback, and error correction to minimize the existing discrepancies between their own and the students. It is teachers' responsibility to be cognizant of their students' conception of what helps them ameliorate their writing and to somehow include these conceptions in their teaching (Diab, 2005).

Research has shown that students prior language learning experiences shape students' preferences and expectations, and these experiences have not, of necessity, been beneficial. Thus, it is vital for teachers to intervene and explain the use of effective types of corrective feedback, especially those which do not initially appeal to students (Hamouda, 2011). Such explanations could at least, to some extent, lessen the discord in expectations between teachers and students (Katayama, 2007), and, in part, can possibly help teachers "vindicate their methods and reputation" (Radecki & Swales, 1988, p. 364).

5.6. Limitations and Further Study

Given the small corpus of the study, limited research area in which this study was conducted, small number of participants (overall 43 teachers and 145 students participated in two qualitative studies and one quantitative study) and participation of one particular class (i.e. English teachers and English students) all contribute to the limitations of the study. The result being that great care and circumspection should be exercised in generalizing the results of the small sample to the wide variety of contexts. Therefore, a research which enjoys larger number of participants and is conducted in a wider area with larger corpus is earnestly craved for.

Another limitation of which the present study suffers is that the results of this study are grounded on self- report data. The chances are there may be conflicts between the participants' preference in self report data and their preference in actual classroom context. A research is needed to elaborate on discrepancies of teachers' and students' attitudes, opinions and preferences obtained through self - report data and their attitudes, opinions and preferences in actual classroom context.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: 16 Open - Ended Questions Used in the Qualitative Study I

Dear Respondent,

Below are a number of questions. Please read them carefully and answer them in whatever language you feel you are competent and comfortable. The language you use does not matter. What matters here is that you communicate your ideas completely and clearly. Any bothering is regretted and so many thanks are due to you for your valuable time spent on answering the questions.

1 – Do you agree with the teachers' comments? Why?

2- What is the purpose of teachers' in writing comments on students' papers?

3-What is your idea of revision? Do you consider it as an opportunity to improve the quality of your writing?

4- Do you consider revision as an activity in correcting errors to get higher marks?

5-Do you consider the teacher, primarily as an evaluator, one who gives grades or as the person who should help students to write better?

6- Were you unwilling to introduce your own ideas for the fear that the teacher might not agree?

7- What were your strategies in incorporating the suggested changes into your paper?

8-Did you find it necessary to read the whole text from beginning to the end while responding to the teachers' comments calling for the changes in the writing, or you could make the desired changes without reading from the very start to the end? Describe your strategy. What did you do?

9-What was your purpose by making changes in the text, whether you wanted to improve the quality of your writing or to get higher grade?

10- Why did you just make the surface- level changes such as correct tense, appropriate word, spelling, capitalization, and the like?

11- Did your changes address logical and organizational matters?

12- Did you make changes in the text not suggested by teachers' comments? If so, what kind?

13- What kind of comments did you find most helpful? (for example, one- word comments, phrasal comments , paragraph comments, and question comments).

14- What problems did you face with? Did you have any difficulty in making sense of teachers' comments?

15- Did you try to incorporate (i.e. insert) your own ideas or you just corrected the sentence in a way that to meet your teachers' expectations?

16- Do you think that revision is at all necessary? Or are editing and proofreading enough?

Appendix B: Erroneous Sentences Used in the Qualitative Study II

1-Language is a system that the first year that the school needs naturally learn.

2-Maybe learning languages so easily.

3- One of the adventures of language is that it is a sole language.

4- And almost all nations have established their place.

5- English can speak the language called.

6-Why it seems like all the people who accepted to speak and use language to communicate with each other.

7- Do you have any idea that access to the information of others without profit, how much fun can it be?

8- Or talk to interesting people that others can prevent to talk?

9- And leaving behind a huge leap that others pick up on the job?

10- Entrance is missing and how to communicate with its people.

11- The problem which is opposite you.

12- But it is not necessary to spend much time out of their lives to learning.

13- And only given a brief we can achieve this goal.

14- If you do not continue to learn English as professionals still have not lost, in the future we will see its effects.

15- Assuming that your field does not interfere much with the English language.

16- If we learn the language to a target, we will follow it up this way to earn money.

17- To learn it is to continue his work as the best large scale as a translator, editor, etc.

18-The unite language in the world that we can communicate is English.

19-These packages can deliver to your wishes.

20- These training packages with attractive slogans can attract many students to do.

21-These applications typically considered conversations and exercises in the book to make multimedia presentations.

22-So try with education to improve their English to get hired as a positive point in time to use it.

23-Proficiency in English and computer you will have a great impact on employment.

24- How we view ourselves as servants food restaurant?

25-Its information can get your mind job in even any international company.

26- People do not avoid taking challenging and fruitful overseas assignments these days.

27- I hope this note that you are reading, can depend your idea on me.

28- All of the shells of the humans have languages.

29- Having relevance with unknown noises or drawings all that they was in trying to say it were the ways of the first relations in the first times of the creation.

30-With going up of centuries and growing up humans' mind and kinds of languages and talking ways created.

31-But today the world has changed and big powers created, and in important and effectual points, they are powerful.

32-Today the reason that the English is the first and more efficient language in world, is environment of two power of every branches that can get a nation nervy.

33-Today the utilizable language is English.

34- And in all of the trains of science, politics, economy, commerce, and in one word, all parts of the worldly life, learning English and having gripe to English is a prerequisite.

35-Reaching to the crest of universal lessons can be able when you gripe and wise to English.

36-In our government having useful universal script can help the person who wants to have a profitable job.

37-It can help the whom to create a future for him or her.

38- Most of the universal serviceable idioms are in English language,

39- And the prerequisite of uptake those idioms is in account, knowing, learning and finally in gripe to English .

Appendix C: Two General Questions Used in Qualitative Study II

1-Do you think context would be of help in reconstructing and interpreting the students' intention from the deviant utterances?

2-Which sentence is difficult to reconstruct: a semantically wrong sentence or a grammatically wrong sentence?

Appendix D: Teachers' Questionnaire Used in Quantitative Study

Dear respondent,

The present questionnaire contains some general statements about teachers' giving corrective feedback on students' written work. Please read the sentences carefully and indicate your opinion or choice in each case as you are required. It is worth mentioning that your answers will certainly influence the results obtained. Therefore, it is incumbent that your answers are true and careful. You can also be sure of anonymity and confidentiality of responses you provide. In advance, so many thanks are due to you for your invaluable time spent on filling out the questionnaire.

Age:

☐20-25 ☐26-30 ☐31-35 ☐36- 40 ☐41-45 ☐46- 50 ☐50 and above

Field of study:

☐ELT ☐English Literature ☐English Translation ☐Other (specify)……

Other course related certificate:

☐TOEFL ☐IELTS ☐TOLIMO ☐Other (specify)……

Years of teaching experience:

☐1-5 ☐6-10 ☐11-15 ☐16- 20 ☐21-25 ☐26-33 ☐30 and above

First language background:

☐Turkish ☐Farsi ☐Kurdish ☐Other (specify)……

Qualification:

☐BA ☐MA ☐Ph. D student ☐Ph. D

Gender: ☐Male ☐Female

Section 1: Error Correction

1-If there are many errors in your students' writing, what do you think an English teacher should do? You can check more than one!

☐ Teacher should mark all errors.

☐Teacher should mark all major errors but not the minor ones.

☐Teacher should mark most of the major errors, but not necessarily all of them.

☐Teacher should mark only a few of the major errors.

☐Teacher should mark only the errors that interfere with communicating your ideas.

☐Teacher should mark no errors and respond only to the ideas and content.

☐Teacher should not mark any errors.

2-If there are many errors in your students' written work, which type(s) of errors do you want to point out most? (Circle one number that best describes each statement).

1= not useful at all 2= not useful 3= doesn't matter 4= quite useful 5= very useful

a.Teacher points out organization errors. 1 2 3 4 5

(Example: Paragraph structure, sentence order)

b.Teacher points out grammatical errors. 1 2 3 4 5

(Example: tense, word order, sentence structure)

c.Teacher points out content / idea errors. 1 2 3 4 5

(Example: comments on your ideas)

d.Teacher points out punctuation errors. 1 2 3 4 5

(Example: , . ? !)

e. Teacher points out spelling errors. 1 2 3 4 5

(Example: word is spelled wrongly)

f. Teacher points out vocabulary errors. 1 2 3 4 5

(Example: wrong word choice, wrong meaning)

g.Other._____

3-The following sentence, which has an error in English Grammar, has been responded to in various ways by different teachers. Look over the different possible responses and circle the number that best describes how useful the feedback is.

1= not useful at all 2= not useful 3= doesn't matter 4= quite useful 5= very useful

see section in grammar handbook

a.Since I arrived here, I ~~am~~ very lonely. 1 2 3 4 5

b. Since I arrived here, I am very lonely. 1 2 3 4 5

have been (wrong tense)

c..Since I arrived here, I ~~am~~ very lonely. 1 2 3 4 5

wrong tense

d. Since I arrived here, I am very lonely. 1 2 3 4 5

have been

e. Since I arrived here, I ~~am~~ very lonely. 1 2 3 4 5

f.Since I arrived here, I am very lonely. 1 2 3 4 5

I am sorry to hear that

g.Since I arrived here, I am very lonely. 1 2 3 4 5

4- If your student repeats an error in a writing assignment more than once, do you think it is useful to mark it every time it occurs?

☐Yes ☐No (Please explain the reason for your answer)

Section 2: Preferences

State your preference by putting a cross (×) in the box that represents your preference (you can choose more than one option).

1.Teacher's preference on when to give feedback. I prefer to give feedback

a.☐ at the pre writing stage

b.☐ at the drafting stage

c.☐ at the revising stage

d.☐ at the evaluation stage

2. Teacher's views regarding the amount of written correction. I prefer

a.☐ to correct all the errors

b.☐ to correct some errors

c.☐ not to correct any error

3. Color of pen that teachers would like to give feedback. I like to use---------- to give feedback.

a.☐ the red pen

b.☐ the pencil

4.Teacher's views on how their students view teacher's comments and corrections:

a.☐ Students read carefully every mark/comment the teacher writes on their piece of work.

b.☐ Students pay attention to feedback on vocabulary and grammar in their piece of writing.

c.☐ Students pay attention to feedback or comments on content and organization of their writing.

d.☐ They are mostly concerned about the grade and pay no attention to the comments or feedback.

e.☐ They do not like to read the entire composition again after the teacher has marked it.

Appendix E: Students' Questionnaire Used in Quantitative Study

Dear respondent,

The present questionnaire contains some general statements about teachers' giving corrective feedback on students' written work. Please read the sentences carefully and indicate your opinion or choice in each case as you are required. It is worth mentioning that your answers will certainly influence the results obtained. Therefore, it is incumbent that your answers are true and careful. You can also be sure of anonymity and confidentiality of responses you provide. In advance, so many thanks are due to you for your invaluable time spent on filling out the questionnaire.

Age:

☐18-23 ☐24-29 ☐30-35 ☐36- 40 ☐41-45 ☐46- 50 ☐51 and above

Field of study:

☐English Language Teaching ☐English Literature ☐English Translation ☐Other (specify)……

Other course related certificate:

☐TOEFL ☐IELTS ☐TOLIMO ☐Other (specify)……

First language background:

☐Turkish ☐Farsi ☐Kurdish ☐Other (specify)…….

Gender ☐Male ☐Female

Section 1: Error Correction

1-If there are many errors in your writing, what do you think your English teacher should do? You can check more than one!

☐ Teacher should mark all errors.

☐Teacher should mark all major errors but not the minor ones.

☐Teacher should mark most of the major errors, but not necessarily all of them.

☐Teacher should mark only a few of the major errors.

☐Teacher should mark only the errors that interfere with communicating your ideas.

☐Teacher should mark no errors and respond only to the ideas and content.

☐Teacher should not mark any errors.

2-If there are many errors in your written work, which type(s) of errors do you want your English teacher to point out most? (Circle one number that best describes each statement).

1= not useful at all 2= not useful 3= doesn't matter 4= quite useful 5= very useful

a.Teacher points out organization errors. 1 2 3 4 5
(Example: Paragraph structure, sentence order)

b.Teacher points out grammatical errors. 1 2 3 4 5
(Example: tense, word order, sentence structure)

c.Teacher points out content / idea errors. 1 2 3 4 5
(Example: comments on your ideas)

d.Teacher points out punctuation errors. 1 2 3 4 5
(Example: , . ? !)

e. Teacher points out spelling errors. 1 2 3 4 5
(Example: word is spelled wrongly)

f. Teacher points out vocabulary errors. 1 2 3 4 5
(Example: wrong word choice, wrong meaning)

g.Other._____

3-The following sentence, which has an error in English Grammar, has been responded to in various ways by different teachers. Look over the different possible responses and circle the number that best describes how useful the feedback is.

1= not useful at all 2= not useful 3= doesn't matter 4= quite useful 5= very useful

see section in grammar handbook

a.Since I arrived here, I ~~am~~ very lonely. 1 2 3 4 5

b. Since I arrived here, I am very lonely. 1 2 3 4 5

have been (wrong tense)

c.Since I arrived here, I ~~am~~ very lonely. 1 2 3 4 5

wrong tense

d. Since I arrived here, I am very lonely. 1 2 3 4 5

have been

e. Since I arrived here, I ~~am~~ very lonely. 1 2 3 4 5

f.Since I arrived here, I am very lonely. 1 2 3 4 5

I am sorry to hear that

g.Since I arrived here, I am very lonely. 1 2 3 4 5

4- If you repeat an error in a writing assignment more than once, do you think it is useful for your teacher to mark it every time it occurs?

☐Yes ☐No (Please explain the reason for your answer)

Section 2: Preferences

State your preference by putting a cross (×) in the box that represents your preference (you can choose more than one option in one and four).

1-Students' preference on when to give feedback. I prefer to get feedback

a.☐ at the pre writing stage

b.☐ at the drafting stage

c.☐ at the revising stage

d.☐ at the evaluation stage

2- Students' views regarding the amount of teacher's written correction. It would be better if my teacher

a.☐ to correct all the errors

b.☐ to correct some errors

c.☐ not to correct any error

3- Color of pen that students would like teacher to give feedback. Iprefer my teacher to use---------- to give feedback.

a.☐ the red pen

b.☐ the pencil

4-Students' views regarding what students usually do after they read their teacher's comments and corrections:

a.☐ I like to read every mark/comment my teacher writes on my piece of work carefully.

b.☐ I like to pay attention to feedback on vocabulary and grammar in my piece of writing

c.☐ I would like to pay close attention to feedback or comments on content and organization of my writing.

d.☐ I am mostly concerned about the grade and pay no attention to the comments or feedback.

e.☐ I do not like to read the entire composition again after my teacher has marked it.

Section 3: Students' views on teacher's comments:

Are there any comments or corrections that you do not understand?

Yes. ☐ No. ☐

if yes, what is the reason

a.because I cannot understand teacher's handwriting

b.because the comments are too general

c.because I do not understand the comments on organization and ideas

d.because I do not understand grammar terms and symbols

e.others (specify)…

Appendix F: Two Open- Ended Questions Used in Quantitative Study

1-On what aspect(s) of language do you want to give or receive feedback, on text content and ideas, on vocabulary, on grammar, on text organization, on mechanical errors, etc.? Please give your explanation.

2-What is your favorite technique of error correction, underlining and providing the correct answer, underlining and providing meta linguistic knowledge, no correction, circling the error and giving clues as to its correct form, etc? Please give reasons for your preference.

CURRICULUM VITAE

He was born in 1966 in the suburb of Ghareziaaddin, in Salteh, hence, his family name Alizadeh Salteh. He completed his primary and high school education in Ghareziaadin. In 1968, he was admitted to associate language teaching program in Tabriz. Having obtained an associate degree in English language teaching, he started teaching English in guidance school. Two years later, he was admitted to BA program in English language teaching in Tabriz. Upon finishing his BA program, he was succeeded to enter MA program in English language teaching. He completed his MA studies in 1998 and the title of his thesis was *A discoursal approach to a pedagogy of reading comprehension to undergraduate English majors in Iran.* He has taught in Khoy and Makou Azad and Payam-e- Noor Universities as a visiting instructor for years. Having insatiable desire for learning, he decided to pursue his studies at Ph.D level in Erzurum Ataturk University. His Ph.D dissertation is entitled *A study of the questionable effect of teachers' corrective feedback on university English students' compositions.* His areas of interest are teachers' feedback, students' revision strategies and a discoursal approach to a pedagogy of reading comprehension.