

**WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK AT A  
SAUDI UNIVERSITY: ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
TEACHERS' BELIEFS, STUDENTS'  
PREFERENCES, AND TEACHERS'  
PRACTICES**

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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July 2015

## **Abstract**

This study investigates the beliefs and practices of writing tutors regarding written corrective feedback (WCF) in a Saudi Arabian university. The central focus of this work is threefold: (a) the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the provision of WCF on students' L2 writing, (b) the factors that prevent teachers from enacting their beliefs into practices, and (c) the relationship between students' preferences and teachers' practices regarding WCF.

Ten writing tutors and their thirty students at the English language and Literature department at the University of Dammam participated in this study. Semi-structured interviews were utilized to understand teachers' beliefs and students' preferences. In order to understand teachers' actual WCF practices, teachers were observed while teaching writing over almost a full semester. The think-aloud protocols of teachers while providing feedback on their students' writing were examined and teachers' feedback on student writing was analysed. Finally, stimulated-recall interviews were conducted to understand the factors that influence teachers' WCF practices.

The study showed both congruence and tensions between teachers' beliefs and practices. Teachers' beliefs were greatly congruent with their practices regarding the amount and focus of WCF. Conversely, teachers' beliefs were incongruent concerning the explicitness of WCF, the use of positive feedback, and the source of WCF. Several contextual factors related to the university overall context (e.g. time allocated to cover the syllabus), teachers (e.g. teaching experience), and students (e.g. proficiency levels) were found to affect teachers' practices. As for the relationship between students' preferences and teachers' practices, complete congruence was found in terms of teachers being the key providers of feedback. Conversely, students' preferences were incongruent with teachers' practices regarding the explicitness of WCF, the focus of WCF, and the provision of positive feedback. Finally, although students valued teachers' WCF and placed a great importance to it, they faced difficulties understanding some of their teachers' comments.

This study concludes by providing some implications which could serve more than one purpose by creating knowledge which will be useful for researchers in the field of language teacher cognition and WCF.

## **Acknowledgements**

All praise, appreciation and gratitude is due to almighty ALLAH for giving me the strength and perseverance during this journey.

First, I wish to thank my academic supervisor Dr. Bojana Petrić, whose support, guidance, and encouragement has helped me throughout the dissertation process. I sincerely appreciate all the time and attention she has devoted to my work and my inquiries. Words are not enough to express my gratitude to her. I extend my thanks to Dr. Phil Scholfield, Dr. Nigel Harwood, Dr. Dana Ferris, and Dr. Icy Lee for guiding me in the right direction whenever I faced any difficulty.

On a more personal note, I am extremely grateful to my beloved parents, Ibrahim and Nadiah, who have inspired my determination and drive for success in life and whose prayers and sacrifices have fuelled my PhD journey. Without their patience and prayers, I would have not made it through to the end. A heartfelt ‘Thank you’ goes to my beloved husband, Abdulaziz Alfahaid, who has finished his PhD in applied linguistics and who was a great listener and provided valuable insights during the twists and turns of this process. I also cannot forget my beloved sister and brothers who took care of my parents during the years of my absence.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to those who have shown great support for me at the University of Dammam. Special thanks go to the Head of the English Language and Literature department Dr. Nesreen Nawwab for all the assistance and support provided throughout these years. Words of thanks also go to Mrs. Amneh Es-Saleh, Mrs. Nedaa Azzam, Mrs. Laila Alhasan, Miss. Shomoukh Alfeyadh, Mrs. Batool Bukhari, Mrs.

Vasanthi, Mrs. Yusra Yaseen, Miss Hamdah Alabdullah, Miss. Huda Arrar, and the other members of staff in the English Language and Literature department. I am forever grateful to the subjects who participated in my study; without your participation, this work would not have been completed.

Last but not least, I am so grateful to all the friends who have surrounded me with their love, prayers, advice and support during this long journey. First, I am indebted to Najla Alghamdi and her family who have supported me during every step of my educational journey. Huge gratitude also goes to my friends in Colchester, Manal Alghannam, Maha Alsayegh, and Shorouq Alhooti, who have filled my life with happiness and support. Finally, special thanks also go to my dearest friends Maryam Aldhalaan and Aseel Aljaber who have provided comfort at times when I needed it most. Without you, little would have been accomplished.

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>EFL</b>	English as a foreign language
<b>ESL</b>	English as a second language
<b>ELL</b>	English Language and Literature
<b>FA</b>	Feedback analysis
<b>L1</b>	First language or mother tongue
<b>L2</b>	Second language
<b>MA</b>	Master of Arts
<b>PhD</b>	Philosophy Doctorate
<b>RQs</b>	Research Questions
<b>SLA</b>	Second language acquisition
<b>UD</b>	University of Dammam
<b>TAP</b>	Think-aloud protocol
<b>TEFL</b>	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
<b>WCF</b>	Written corrective feedback

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the study

Written corrective feedback (WCF) in second language (L2) writing, otherwise known as error correction or grammar correction, has had a long and controversial history in the fields of L2 writing and second language acquisition (SLA) over the past several decades. After a dormant period in the 1980s, the beginning of the 1990s witnessed a flurry of research activity on the topic of WCF, when Truscott (1996, 1997) called for the abandonment of error correction, as it takes teachers' and students' attention away from more important concerns. Nonetheless, teachers continue with their "recalcitrant response[s] to error in student writing" (Santa, 2006: 104). As noted by Ferris and Hedgcock (1998), Hairston (1986), and Leki (1990a), composition instructors invest a great deal of time in annotating student papers with their feedback:

Writing teachers and students alike do intuit that written responses can have a great effect on student writing and attitude toward writing . . . Written comments are time consuming, but teachers continue to write comments on student papers because we sense that our comments help writers improve (Leki, 1990a: 57-58).

The questions now for most writing teachers are not whether to provide WCF but how to provide it in an effective way (Evans et al., 2010). As a result, researchers began to examine ways in which writing instructors respond to L2 students' writing and the effect of these interventions. These studies focused on the short- and long-term effects of error correction on students' accuracy (e.g., Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 1995a, 1997, 2006; Polio et al., 1998), the impact of different correction techniques on immediate student revision (Fathman and Whalley, 1990; Ashwell, 2000; Sheppard, 1992), and students' views of teachers' responses (Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Leki, 1990a; Montgomery and Baker, 2007).

However, few studies have explored what teachers, in practice, do as to WCF, the alignment of teachers' beliefs and their actual practices (Junqueira and Payant, 2015; Furneaux et al., 2007; Jodaie and Farrokhi, 2012; Lee, 2009), or what are the beliefs and preferences of teachers and students of WCF in an L2 context. Research on language pedagogy has demonstrated that teachers' practices are greatly affected by personal theories and beliefs (Borg, 2003). However, as recently as early 2015, Junqueira and Payant (2015) emphasised that the relationship between L2 writing instructors' beliefs and practices when responding to L2 students' writing is an area that remains under-investigated and deserves more attention. Studying teachers' beliefs and practices is important since, as Bazerman (1994: 29) claimed, "it is within students, of course, that the learning occurs, but it is within the teacher, who sits at the juncture of forces above, below and sideways that the learning situations are framed." The present study, therefore, aims to delve deeper into this issue, by examining the congruence between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF and also by exploring the extent to which students' preferences mismatch teachers' actual WCF practices.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Writing as a skill is essential to ESL students' academic success. However, having acted as the writing course tutor for three years in the English language and literature Department at the University of Dammam, I have noticed that students were not reaching the intended writing assessment goals by the end of the course. In addition, I have observed that students had critical problems during the writing course. It was not uncommon to find many students who could not construct meaningful and grammatically correct sentences or well-written paragraphs and essays. One possible reason for this was that most teachers tended to address writing as a product rather than a process. Instead of engaging students in an extensive practice of writing through process approach activities, such as generating ideas, redrafting, and reviewing others' writing (Hedge



2005), teachers expected students to produce a piece of written product for evaluation. This kind of writing does not replicate real-life writing; rather it is writing meant for learning, not for communication (Hedge 2005). Another reason might be related to teachers' inappropriate feedback on students' writing. They tend to give little feedback, which might be based on their previous teaching experience and their beliefs about how WCF should be given on students' writing, rather than following a standard WCF policy provided by the department. As Williams (2003) pointed out, if teachers' WCF includes vague comments or the inconsistent marking of errors, it may negatively affect the learners' abilities in writing, making them frustrated, passive, and confused.

The difficulties that students face in writing classes have been previously observed at several Saudi Universities. AbuSeileek (2006), who carried out a study at the Umm Al-Qura University in Saudi Arabia, concluded that students find writing to be the most 'problematic' of all their language skills. Moreover, Alhaysony's (2008) study at the King Abdul-Aziz University in Saudi Arabia also indicated that students do not learn effective writing skills, because their teachers do not respond properly to their texts. In another study, Alhazmi and Schofield (2007) discussed the difficulties that Saudi ESL undergraduate students in their third year of a four-year program encounter with various aspects of writing. They found that the major problem was the dominance of traditional approaches in teaching writing.

The authorities have also recognised this problem. In order to improve the instruction of writing skills in the last few years, the 'standards for quality assurance and accreditation' of higher education programs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been trying to improve students' writing skills (Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs, 2015). This requires teachers to develop a rubric for giving appropriate feedback on students' writing in order to trace their performance and assessments. This feedback should be advisory, that is, aiming at helping

student writers build awareness, knowledge, and strategic competence so that they can strengthen their writing skills in the future.

However, no attention has been paid to teachers' beliefs and thinking or how they made sense of teaching writing which is essential for understanding the reasons behind teachers' inappropriate WCF practices and designing pedagogical improvements. Harste and Burke (1977) argued that teachers plan their instruction in the light of the beliefs they have about learning and teaching. The existence of the contextual factors, such as the institution policies and requirements, curriculum mandates, examination influence, and the students' needs and preferences, appeared to play a significant role in determining whether teachers are capable of implementing instructions congruent with their beliefs (Graden 1996; Gebel and Schrier 2002; Feryok, 2008). Therefore, determining how teachers' beliefs about WCF are reflected in their practices, the examination of the constraints that prevent teachers from enacting their beliefs, and the extent to which students' preferences are met by their teachers' WCF practices are important topics for further inquiries.

### **1.3 Study rationale**

It has been widely reported that teachers hold certain beliefs about language teaching and learning, and that those beliefs shape their instructional practices (Richardson et al., 1991; Johnson, 1992; Woods, 1996; Gebel and Schrier, 2002). While significant attempts have been made to understand the congruity between teachers' beliefs and practices in the L1 context, the studies examining teachers' beliefs in the EFL university context have been limited (Borg, 2006). Moreover, it has become obvious that the available literature on beliefs and practices in WCF has looked only at one type of participants (i.e., either teachers or students). However, the present study examines and compares both parties, which provides a new insight into teachers'

beliefs and practices and students' preferences. Understanding what both parties (teachers and students) know and think, and how that influences teachers' instructional practices, can offer better understanding of the problems teachers face (in providing feedback) and students have (in understanding their teacher's comments). This may also help to develop better support for teachers in terms of training and development, the design of teacher-friendly materials, and so forth—thus ultimately producing more effective teachers and teaching. This will also help us understand whether any mismatches exist between students' preferences and teachers' perceptions of students' needs, which in turn could be useful for designing a 'needs analysis' procedure, to avoid any potential misunderstanding between both parties.

In addition, WCF has usually been studied as an isolated phenomenon (Bitchener and Ferris, 2012) while in reality it occurs alongside many other interacting elements of a writing course. Studies in which teachers' WCF are simply collected and analysed may fall short of seeing the big picture (Bitchener and Ferris, 2012). The present study, through the use of classroom observations, think-aloud protocols, and the collection of classroom artefacts, such as the syllabus, grading rubric, and class handouts, aims at examining the issue of how teachers' WCF practices intersect with their writing instruction. Moreover, the present study goes beyond teachers' practices of WCF and also examines other types of classroom activities (e.g., peer feedback, grammar instruction) that can support students' language and writing development (Ferris, 2002).

Finally, the present study provides recent scrutiny of an under-researched topic in a totally virgin context (i.e., university of Dammam). What distinguishes the research spectrum is the fact that the participating teachers come from a range of **contexts** (e.g. Asia, Africa, America, and Europe), which could provide a clearer picture of the complex nature of teachers' beliefs (Mansour, 2009). Moreover, the lack of comprehensive training in writing instruction in the

Saudi context suggests that teachers may not have received appropriate training in providing WCF for university students. Thus, it is likely that effective professional development programs will lead to instructional improvement as they help teachers to evaluate their existing beliefs and practices through reflections and to adapt new methods to WCF practices. This study highlights these issues and suggests new techniques for providing WCF and assessing the relationship between the new methods and teachers' beliefs and practices.

#### **1.4 Aims of the study**

This study aims at fulfilling the following major objectives:

1. To further understanding of Saudi university writing teachers' beliefs regarding providing WCF on student writing.
2. To investigate the writing teachers' actual practices regarding providing WCF on students' writing.
3. To examine the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their actual practices with respect to providing WCF on student writing.
4. To examine the students' beliefs about the best practices of WCF and to compare that with their teachers' actual instructional practices.
5. To explore the impact of the contextual, institutional, experiential, situational factors, as well as other wider issues, informing teachers' WCF behaviours in a Saudi university.

#### **1.5 Definition of terms**

This study will use the following terms as they have been defined in the literature. Some

definitions combine different parts from different authors. Other definitions have also been adapted to suit this study:

**Written corrective feedback:** includes all reactions to writing, formal or informal, from teacher or peer, to a draft or a final version (Ferris, 2002).

**Teachers' beliefs:** a set of assumptions, values, knowledge, feelings, and attitudes that might be consciously held by writing teachers, which are evaluative in nature and which can be expressed in the statement of what 'should be done' and what 'is preferable' in teaching writing in general and in giving WCF on students' writing (Pajares, 1992; Borg, 1999b, 2006; Basturkmen, Loewen and Ellis, 2004).

**Teachers' practices:** the actions that teachers take to organise what they know and to map out what is possible, which can also be affected by new beliefs and situations (Freeman, 1992).

**Core beliefs:** beliefs established through practical instructional experience (Phipps and Borg, 2009).

**Peripheral beliefs:** newly acquired beliefs through, for example, training programs, which represent ideal practices not yet transferred to real instructional practices (Pajares, 1992; Phipps and Borg, 2009).

## **1.6 Organisation of the thesis**

This thesis consists of nine chapters. Chapter **one** provides an overview of the research and its aims. Chapter **two** reviews the relevant literature. It addresses two main interlinked topics, the history of the existing research about teachers' beliefs and the literature on students' preferences and teachers' practices concerning WCF. Chapter **three** concerns the research methodology.

This chapter extensively presents the theoretical framework of the study and provides a detailed account of the data collection process. It also explains the data analysis process. Chapters **four**, **five**, **six**, and **seven** are concerned with the results of the study. They provide a detailed analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from a triangulation of methods (semi-structured teacher and student interviews, think-aloud protocols, analysis of teachers' feedback, classroom observations, and stimulated recall interviews). Chapter **eight** discusses the key findings of each RQ from different perspectives. In brief, it discusses the issues of the relationship between teachers' WCF beliefs and practices, the contextual factors that prevent teachers from enacting their beliefs into practices, and the relationship between students' preferences and teachers' actual practices. Chapter **nine** summarizes the study as a whole and presents the implications and the main contributions of the study. The limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are also identified and presented.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to this study from two main and interrelated perspectives. The first is theoretical in nature and discusses the literature regarding teachers' beliefs and practices (section 2.1). The second (section 2.2) is the literature regarding WCF, with the focus on studies about students' preference, teachers' beliefs, and teachers' actual practices. The final section (2.3) reviews the previous research on teachers' stated beliefs and/or practices and the students' views regarding teacher WCF. The chapter ends by stating the research questions for the present study.

### **2.1 Teachers beliefs and practices**

This part of the literature review looks at three areas related to the issues of teachers' beliefs and practices. The first area presents the different definitions and terms of teachers' beliefs (section 2.1.1). The second area focuses on the importance of studying teachers' beliefs and practices (section 2.1.2). The third and last area (section 2.1.3) examines the nature of the relationship between beliefs and practices, by highlighting the factors that influence teachers' practices and which prevent them from enacting their beliefs (section 2.1.3.1) and the tensions within their belief systems (section 2.1.3.2). This section will end by referring to previous research into teachers' beliefs and practices and by addressing the gap in the literature that the present study will fill (section 2.1.4).

#### **2.1.1 Definition of 'beliefs'**

The term 'belief' is one of the most complex concepts to be defined (Mansour, 2009). According to Pajares (1992: 307), "the difficulty in studying teachers' beliefs has occurred due to definitional problems, poor conceptualizations, and differing understandings of beliefs and belief

structures.” When discussing conceptualizations, researchers used different terms to refer to the term ‘belief’. While for some researchers, beliefs differ from knowledge (Roehler et al., 1988; Calderhead, 1996; Shavelson and Stern, 1981), for the majority (e.g. Kagan, 1990; Thompson, 1992; Meijer, Verloop and Beijaard, 2001; Woods, 1996; Pajares, 1992; Borg, 2006) knowledge and beliefs are closely intertwined. One argument supporting the claim that beliefs differ from knowledge is that while beliefs remain the same in the teachers’ minds, knowledge changes with the new experience (Roehler et al., 1988). It has further been argued that teachers rely on beliefs only when knowledge is not available (Shavelson and Stern, 1981). The distinction between beliefs and knowledge is rather vague. However, according to Issa, (2011), knowledge and beliefs can be considered the same when the knowledge is personal and related to specific contexts. Issa’s (2011) argument can be applied in the present study as it examines writing teachers’ personal knowledge/beliefs about teaching and writing which have been shaped –at least in part- by the teachers’ previous teaching experiences in a specific Saudi university context. Because of that, this study views these terms as synonyms.

As well as the beliefs and knowledge controversy, researchers have used other terms to refer to beliefs such as ‘teacher perspectives’ (e.g. Thompson, 1992), ‘implicit theories’, ‘implicit knowledge’, ‘maxims’ (Richards; 1996, 1998), and personal theories (Olson, 1980). However, Borg (1999b: 95, 2006: 49; 2003: 83) has used the term ‘teacher cognition’ as an overarching term that encompasses “teachers’ beliefs, knowledge, theories, assumptions and attitudes”, stating that all these terms are just superficial artefacts producing more confusion than clarity, but which nonetheless reflect only the overlap in meanings. Following Borg (2001, 2003, 2006), this study uses the term ‘cognition’ to refer to teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, theories, and assumptions.

Green (1971: 204) has defined the term belief “as [a] proposition that is accepted as true by the individual holding the belief”. This psychological nature of beliefs makes them “neither easily



defined nor studied” (Johnson, 1994: 439). As a result, researchers defined this term differently depending on the purpose of each study. Pajares (1992), for example, defined beliefs as “attitudes and values about teaching, students, and the educational process”. Moreover, Basturkmen et al. (2004:224) argued that beliefs are “statements teachers made about their ideas, thoughts and knowledge that are expressed as evaluation of what should be done, should be the case and is preferable”. In addition, Borg (2001: 186) conceptualized the term as that of a “proposition which may be consciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further it serves as a guide to thought and behaviour”. The differences in these definitions are attributed to many reasons. One reason is that definitions are context-specific; they differ from one researcher to another and from one study to another (Pajares, 1992: 326-327). Another reason is related to whether the researcher considers beliefs to be different from knowledge.

The present study develops a definition that combines elements from the previously mentioned definitions. It defines teachers’ beliefs as a set of assumptions, values, knowledge, feelings, and attitudes that might be consciously held by writing teachers, which are evaluative in nature and which can be expressed in the statement of what ‘should be done’, and what ‘is preferable’ in teaching writing in general and in giving WCF on students’ writing. The reason for adopting this definition is that it covers all major terms (e.g. thoughts, assumptions, feelings, knowledge, attitudes, values and ideas) used by researchers to define the term. It also emphasizes the difference between ‘what should be done’ (i.e. teachers’ beliefs) and what is really done (i.e. teachers’ practices), it considers beliefs as a guide to teacher practice, and also highlights the interrelationship between beliefs and practices. In addition, the teacher is not viewed as a mere reporter of ‘what should be done’ only but also as an ‘evaluator’ of his own work, which means that this definition sheds light on the distinction between teachers’ beliefs about ‘what should be done’ and their evaluation of what they actually do (i.e. the teachers’ self-reported practices).

Lastly, this definition distinguishes between the conscious and the unconscious beliefs by maintaining that teachers might be conscious or unconscious of their beliefs.

### **2.1.2 The importance of studying beliefs and practices**

As early as the 1970s, the developments in cognitive psychology highlighted the importance of thinking and its influence on behaviour (Borg, 2006). Until then, learning was viewed as a product of teaching or as what is termed as the ‘process-product’ approach. During the mid-1970s and early 1980s, the interest in teachers’ thinking became a topic of interest not just in psychology but also in education studies, focusing mainly on teacher decision-making (Borg, 2006). The teacher started to be viewed as the planner, judge and decision-maker within the teaching context (Shulman and Elstein, 1975; Clark and Yinger, 1977). However, the research on teachers’ decision-making was criticized as it ignored teachers’ beliefs (Munby, 1984). In the late 1980s and 1990s, the study of teachers’ beliefs marked an important step in teacher thinking research. Researchers (e.g. Borg, 1999a, 1999b, 2006; Kagan, 1992; Lin et al., 1999; Pajares, 1992) started to recognize the importance of studying beliefs not only with regard to their influence on behaviours but also for improving teachers’ professional development and practices. Consequently, teaching is no more viewed as applying predetermined principles and rules, but rather as a thinking activity where teachers construct their own workable and personal theories of teaching (Borg, 2003).

According to Phipps and Borg (2009: 381), while beliefs act as filters through which teachers interpret new experiences and information, they are not always manifested in what teachers do inside their classrooms. As a result, studies about teachers’ beliefs highlighted the importance of studying teachers’ practices through their beliefs as “a more realistic understanding of the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and practices can emerge when the analysis of what teachers do is the basis of eliciting and understanding the beliefs” (Phipps and Borg, 2009: 382).

This indicates that eliciting teachers' beliefs through their practices (e.g. by means of classroom observations) provides researchers with a view of what beliefs are (i.e. in reality) rather than what they could be (i.e. ideally) which can enrich our understanding of teachers and teaching, rather than describing in theoretical terms what teachers believe and know (Borg, 2006: 273). Such argument helps us understand and interpret the teacher 'belief system' which will be discussed in section 2.1.3.2. The present study attempts to understand writing teachers' beliefs through their practices, which will help to uncover their different belief systems and reveal the diverse factors that stand behind their practices.

### **2.1.3 The relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices**

Many researchers have drawn attention to the relationship between beliefs and practices (e.g., Andrews 2003; Elbaz 1983; Woods 1996; Borg, 2006; Kennedy and Kennedy, 1996; Karavas-Doukas, 1996). This relationship has been described as a highly complex one, neither linear nor causal (Fang, 1996), but rather dialectic (Clark and Peterson, 1986), symbiotic (Foss and Kleinsasser, 1996) and interactive. While teachers' beliefs influence what teachers do in the classroom, teacher classroom practices are not always reflected in their stated beliefs (Almarza, 1996). In other words, teachers' stated beliefs are not always manifested in their actual practices (Kennedy and Kennedy, 1996; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Richards, 1996).

Therefore, there are two conflicting findings, consistency and inconsistency (i.e. match or mismatch / congruence and incongruence) encountered in the literature with regard to the relationship between beliefs and practices in general (Fang, 1996). While some studies (Woods, 1991; Johnson, 1992; Maiklad, 2001; Mori, 2002; Bai and Ertmer, 2008; Farrell and Kum, 2008) noted that there is a congruent relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices, other studies (Christ and Makarani, 2009; Gahin, 2001; Hiep, 2007; Philips and Borg, 2009), discovered several instances of incongruence between teachers' beliefs and their practices. However, it is

important to note that these studies were conducted in different contexts, with different target populations, different research methods, and for different research purposes, all of which could account for the differences observed in the findings. The following studies present the two different findings on the relationship between beliefs and practices in the area of teachers' feedback.

By employing qualitative data, Mori (2002) explored two ESL teachers' corrective feedback behaviour. He found that teachers offer corrective feedback in accordance with their beliefs. For instance, one teacher believed that the structure of the language is important in L2 acquisition, hence, the purpose of the teacher's correction was mostly focused on the linguistic aspects. Conversely, the other teacher did not believe in enhancing the students' linguistic outcome. Her goals were philosophical (e.g. students should take initiative and express their ideas) rather than linguistic (e.g. focusing on language structure). As a result, her feedback focused on content, while giving students the chance to self-edit their errors. In another study, Farrell and Kun (2008) conducted a case study to examine three primary teachers' beliefs and practices in Singapore about the teachers' role in providing feedback and correcting students when they used Singlish in English classrooms. The findings revealed that the teachers' conceptions were mostly manifested in their practices. For example, one teacher believed that teachers should not correct their students' writing whenever they used Singlish. Similarly, the classroom observation of the same teacher showed that s/he rarely provided feedback when Singlish was used.

In contrast to the alignment between beliefs and practices in the two studies presented above, Basturkmen (2012) reviewed several empirical studies within this topic and found that there is a limited congruence between teachers' beliefs and their practices. Phipps and Borg (2009), for example, interviewed and observed three experienced EFL teachers over 18 months regarding their beliefs and practices about grammar instruction in the Turkish context. They reported several mismatches between teachers' beliefs and their practices regarding grammar instruction

and the use of group-works. One tutor, for instance, applied controlled grammar practice activities in the lesson although not believing in their effectiveness. The teacher ascribed her practices to maintaining student discipline when they got unruly in class and to fulfilling student expectations. In another study, Lee (2009) examined the secondary school teachers' beliefs and practices in the use of WCF (see section 2.3.1). She analysed 174 texts gathered from 26 teachers and interviewed 7 of them. In addition, she surveyed 206 teachers and interviewed 19 of them. She revealed 10 mismatches between teachers' beliefs and practices in the use of WCF. For example, teachers asked students to write one draft only despite being aware of the benefits of the process approach that requires students to produce many drafts. Such incongruence was mostly attributed to constraints imposed by institutional contexts such as the pressure of the exam and school policies that highly value error feedback.

To conclude, when examining the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices, the picture remains unclear regarding the state of in/congruence that occurs between teachers' beliefs and practices. The different findings in these studies might be attributed to the differences in the research methods employed since the "theoretical profiling instruments may elicit beliefs about what should be the case, while less structured interviews, perhaps grounded in concrete classroom events, may be better able to elicit beliefs about instruction as it actually unfolds" (Borg, 2006: 141) (this will be discussed in the following chapter). Other possible reasons may be ascribed to differences in the institutional context (e.g. teaching methods, exam effects), differences in the target populations (e.g., teacher education, teacher practical experience, workload), and/or the students (e.g. proficiency level, cultural background). In addition to the influence of the context, the teachers, and/or the students, the mismatch between teachers' beliefs and their practices could also be attributed to the tension between core and peripheral beliefs for instance. The contextual factors as well as the tensions between core and peripheral beliefs will be examined in the two following sections (section 2.1.3.1 and section 2.1.3.2).

### 2.1.3.1 Factors influencing teachers' practices

One reason why teachers' beliefs might or might not be mirrored in their practices can be ascribed to different contextual factors. Magno and Amarles (2011: 21) noted that previous studies on feedback “posed that teachers' feedback practices are not just dictated by the perceived difficulties or needs of the students in their writing classes but also by the existing external factors such as teachers' beliefs on feedback, cultural, and institutional contexts, among others”. Since the type of influencing factors that prevent teachers from enacting their beliefs into their actual classroom practices are diverse and may involve aspects inside or outside the classroom's borders, these factors will be divided into context-related, teacher-related, and student-related constraints.

Factors related to the **institutional context** include large classes, mandated syllabus, instructional materials, insufficient instruction time, institutional requirements, scheduling, pressure of the exams and the culture (e.g. Feryok, 2008; Lu, 2003; Gahin, 2001; Hiep, 2007). Studies found that the exam pressure affects teachers' practices negatively. Such an effect is called the ‘negative washback effect’, that is, focusing on test preparation and ignoring certain activities because they never contribute to passing the exams (Alderson and Wall, 1993: 115). Lee (2008a) found that the pervasive examination culture in Hong Kong posed some obstacles to teachers' practices, obliging teachers to focus mostly on developing the students' examination performance. In addition, most of Lee's (2009) participants attributed this state of incongruence between their WCF beliefs and practices to the fact that they have to focus on preparing students for their exams. The exam phenomenon in the Arab world and its role in affecting teachers' practices have also been emphasized by researchers. For example, Issa (2011) who explored the beliefs and practices of ESP (English for specific purposes) and EGP (English for general purposes) teaching methodology in Syria, noted that exam requirements, or what teachers described as teaching and testing, can play a pivotal role in determining the consistency

between some teachers' beliefs and behaviours. Moreover, Othman (2009) who explored Learner autonomy in a Syrian language institute reported that teachers' beliefs and practices in selecting activities and choosing teaching styles were shaped by the requirements of final exams.

The cultural system that teachers work in exerts a great influence on their practices as well (Kennedy, 1988). Hyland and Hyland (2006: 10), who examined teacher written feedback in second language writing, argued that "like all acts of communication, (feedback) occurs in particular cultural, institutional and personal contexts, between people enacting and negotiating particular social identities and relationships, and is mediated by various types of delivery". In other words, feedback can not be separated from the context in which it is received and given. To provide an example, Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers (1997), who investigated 60 ESL university instructors at two different contexts (USA and Puerto Rico) found that while most teachers believed that L2 students should be taught grammar because it improves language proficiency, teachers in Puerto Rico believed that it should be taught explicitly unlike their counterparts in the USA. This finding led researchers to claim that while students' preferences and expectations, syllabus and material requirements, prior learning and professional experiences might influence teachers' beliefs and practices, culture appeared to be by far the strongest influence. In another study, Lee (2009) found that although some teachers in her study believed in the importance of applying the selective marking and the multiple-drafts approaches, they were frustrated and constrained by the culture which did not accept the idea of having learner-autonomy contexts. The above-mentioned studies suggest that changing teachers' WCF practices entails changing not only the teachers' knowledge and beliefs (Ferguson, 1993), but also the political and cultural systems that shape their work.

Another three related contextual factors are the time limitations, the need to cover the syllabus/text-books, and the heavy teaching loads. For example, teachers in Lee's (2009) study did not let students write another draft, despite believing that students should go through multiple

drafting, because teachers did not have enough time as they had to cover more writing types of topics which were part of their syllabus. Lee (2013) concluded that giving WCF is a difficult task for EFL teachers as it requires hard work and time and gives teachers extra pressure when teachers face other challenges like heavy workloads. When exploring teachers' beliefs and practices in a Saudi context, Alghamdi (2013) found that while both Content Area Teachers (CATs) and English for Specific Purposes Teachers (ESPTs) believed that dictionary use is a good way to lower the students' dependence on their teacher, teachers could not ask students to use dictionaries due to time limitations.

**Teacher-related factors** form another factor on teachers' beliefs and practices. These factors include the effect of the previous learning and teaching experiences, the lack of training, and lack of subject-specific knowledge. Knowledge of the subject, personal knowledge, academic background, and practical experience have been reported by Borg (2003) as causing a big influence on teachers' beliefs and practices. As far as the effect of previous learning goes, Issa (2011), for example, found that previous learning influences teachers' beliefs and practices, making one of her teachers –for example- employ his L1 in translating some texts following the practices of his own teachers.

Teachers' beliefs and practices are influenced not only by the teachers' past learning experiences at school, but also by their teaching experiences and training. Practical experiences have been reported by many researchers as exerting an influence on teachers' beliefs and practices. Using a questionnaire, interviews and classroom observations, Gahin (2001) conducted a study in Egypt and found that in-service teachers are more likely to exhibit “form-based” views of language teaching (e.g. teaching the grammar of language), while less-experienced teachers were more likely to show communicative views of language teaching. Moreover, Golombek (1998), who examined how the personal practical knowledge of two in-service ESL teachers informed their



practices, showed how practical teaching experience informed teachers' practices in the Hong Kong context. For example, one teacher wanted to focus on accuracy and fluency together, but because she had a negative experience of language learning, she could not concentrate on accuracy as much because she was worried that students would get frustrated. In addition, Issa (2011) found that both EGP and ESP teaching experience has a profound impact in shaping teachers' practices in a Syrian university. For example one of the teachers in her study developed certain beliefs about her role in the classroom – by assuming the role of the controller instead of being the spoon feeder- based on her teaching experiences since she benefited from taking control over the class and because her supervisor had advised her to do so. In a Saudi college, Alghamdi (2013) also found that some of his participants used guessing words and flash cards when teaching vocabulary instead of pictures due to their practical experience as they found that these two techniques helped students remember those words.

As for the lack of training, many researchers (e.g. Lee, 2008a; Norouzian and Farahani, 2012; Ferris et al., 2011) found that the fact that teachers had not attended any training sessions, seminars, workshops on writing instruction and/or giving WCF on students' writing are issues that have also influenced the way they responded to their students' texts. Teachers' in Lee's (2008a) study, for example, confessed that the lack of training with regard to teacher feedback made them continue with their conventional feedback practices rather than adhering to the school recommended principles. In another study, Norouzian and Farahani (2012) found that having a clear coding framework and receiving more training would yield better results and help decrease the mismatches between teachers' practices and their self-reported practices. In addition, due to the fact that most of the teachers in Issa's (2011) study were not trained for delivering ESP courses, teachers faced difficulties in teaching ESP courses and they followed different teaching methodologies. Ferris et al. (2011: 222-223) concluded that the lack of training with regard to responding to students' writing -that some teachers reported- suggests "the need for changes in

teacher preparation programs, in hiring practices, and in in-service support and supervision”.

Teachers’ lack of subject-specific knowledge has been reported by teachers as constraining their practices. Due to lack of subject-specific knowledge in Engineering, ESP teachers in Issa’s (2011) study have reported seeking clarification from students or responding to their L1 to explain difficult ideas. With reference to WCF studies, Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) who examined the relationship between teachers’ self-reported practices and students’ preferences found that the teacher who was specialized in the field of English language form-focused mostly on students’ grammatical forms while the other one who was specialized in content area subjects focused on the content and the organisation of the essay. Related to the lack of subject knowledge is the teachers’ level of academic qualifications which has been reported by some studies as influencing teachers’ beliefs and practices. Lockhart (2008), for example, reported that teachers’ beliefs regarding writing instruction differed depending on the teachers’ academic qualifications; teachers with lower professional qualifications held different beliefs from teachers with post-graduate qualifications. Teachers who had a bachelor degree only were more likely to hold form-oriented beliefs while those who had completed their post-graduate studies were more likely to hold a process or social orientation.

Finally, **student-related constraints** are those which emerge mainly from students and result sometimes in teachers’ beliefs not being reflected in their instructional practices. These factors include the students’ low proficiency level, large class sizes, and the students’ discipline in class. Teachers may also change their instruction depending on the proficiency level of the students they teach. For example, Snow and Lohman (1984) revealed that low-achieving students benefited more from structured and teacher-centred instruction unlike high-achieving students who benefited more from the more complex and less structured instruction. Issa (2011) showed how students’ low proficiency level resulted in fewer communicative activities, in less participation, and in a change in teachers’ roles. Studies investigating teachers’ beliefs and

practices in WCF have also found that teachers change their practices when responding to students of different proficiency levels. This issue will be discussed in more depth in section 2.2.2.7.

In addition to their proficiency levels, teachers might also change their practices due to students' preferences and expectations. Issa (2011), for example, found that teachers tend to use their L1 (i.e. Arabic) in the English class despite believing that teachers should avoid using it. This is only because the teachers believe that the students expect their teacher to discuss certain issues in their native language. Phipps and Borg (2009: 385) found that fulfilling students' preferences can affect the teachers' grammar instruction practices. For example, one teacher used fill-in the gap exercises from the textbook to practice the use of past tenses although she believed that it is "a very mechanical exercise" because students wanted to have more exercises on grammar. With reference to WCF studies, Lee (2003) found that despite teachers' beliefs in the benefits of the selective approach, they tended to use choppy phrases in written comments (e.g., correct the grammar) as students demanded to have their feedback in complete sentences. Other studies that discuss the influence of students' preferences on teachers' WCF practices will be reviewed in sections 2.3 and 2.4.

In addition to the above, student-related factors, such as maintaining student discipline in class, oblige teachers sometimes to change their practices. Phipps and Borg (2009: 385) presented two examples which reveal the need to control discipline in the classroom and how it caused incongruence between teachers' beliefs and practices. The teacher in the first example used controlled grammar activities, that is grammar gap-fills, despite doubting the usefulness of the exercise. In the follow-up interview, the teacher justified **that** her use of "controlled practice with worksheets just sort of calms them down ...because maybe the students were getting on my nerves and maybe they were always talking and if they can do the worksheet they'll just sit there and do it... I think that they've become classroom management tools because of that" (p. 385).

In the second example, the teacher stated that s/he used some management tools just to maintain discipline in class.

In conclusion, the review of some of the factors that affect teachers' practices demonstrates that some of these factors may probably provide interpretation(s) of the incongruences that may occur in teacher feedback practices in the present study. According to Borg (2006), studying the language teachers' cognition in isolation of the context in which it occurs provides flawed and imperfect information about teachers and teaching. As a result, the present study aims at carefully examining the complex network of different factors that affect teachers' WCF beliefs and/or practices and which sometimes prevent teachers from enacting their beliefs.

#### **2.1.3.2 Tension within the belief systems**

The complex nature of the relationship between beliefs and practices extends beyond their connection; it might stem from the connections among beliefs subsystems (Pajares, 1992). In other words, the idea that teachers have a consistent set of beliefs, which regulates what they do in a consistent manner, is very simplistic. Some beliefs are resistant to change as they are more central in the beliefs system while other beliefs are changeable as they have a weaker effect on people's behaviour (Phipps and Borg, 2009). The former are called 'core beliefs' while the latter 'peripheral beliefs' (e.g. Green, 1971; Pajares, 1992; Borg, 1998; Sendan and Roberts 1998; Bums, 2003; Richards et al. 2001; Phipps and Borg, 2009). Phipps and Borg (2009: 388) stated that: "where core and peripheral beliefs can be implemented harmoniously, teachers' practices will be characterised by fewer tensions; where, though, the actions implied by core and peripheral beliefs are at odds, ... peripheral beliefs will not necessarily be reflected in practice".

Examples of the tension within teachers' beliefs systems have been found in a range of studies (e.g. Phipps and Borg: 2009; Richards 1996; Richards and Pennington, 1998). In Phipps and

Borg's (2009) study, for example, one teacher believed that teachers should speak English most of the time. However, this teacher also believed that the student was perhaps more reassured when the teacher was able to explain grammar in the L1, where teachers and students shared an L1. In that case, the core belief is the importance of reassuring students, keeping them happy while the peripheral belief is the importance of using L1. When those two are put in tension, it is the core beliefs that seem to be more powerful. Hence, in practice, the teacher did not try to minimise the use of L1, although she said she did. In addition, some studies (Johnson, 1994; Richards 1996; Richards and Pennington, 1998) reported that teachers' concerns with maintaining class control and order, the flow of the lesson and student involvement are issues that reflect their core beliefs. These may prevent teachers from experimenting with new practices (i.e. their peripheral beliefs) which they find to be important as well.

In another study, Basturkmen et al. (2004) examined the beliefs and practices of three ESL teachers about 'focus on form', that is, when the students pay unintentional attention to form while they should actually focus on meaning. The findings revealed the inconsistencies within teachers' beliefs. One of the teachers, for example, believed that they should not recast the students' erroneous utterances, but this peripheral belief was outweighed by the core belief that teachers should not correct their students' errors until after the completion of the task. This was another example of a mismatch between 'core' and 'peripheral' beliefs in that teachers were seen to attend to students' grammatical forms even though communication problems occurred. The teachers attributed this inconsistency to the importance of assisting learners to learn the language, which they saw as more important than maintaining communicative flow in class and which was their 'peripheral' belief.

In a more recent study, Alghamdi (2013) found both congruence and tension between the English for specific purposes and content area teachers' beliefs and practices when teaching English technical vocabulary items, with the teachers' core beliefs (rather than their peripheral

ones) having a stronger impact upon their actual practices. He found that the decisions about different teaching practices emerged from their vast teaching experience rather than from the acquired theoretical notions. Therefore, some of their peripheral beliefs were easily outweighed by other stronger core beliefs. For example, some teachers opted to prioritise time-effective strategies, which is a core belief ingrained from the teachers' experiences in teaching vocabulary, over encouraging students to look up new ETV items in the dictionary, which is a peripheral belief.

As can be seen, the complex and implicit nature of teachers' beliefs might be attributed to the distinctions between core and peripheral beliefs. As a result, it is necessary to understand what constitutes the teachers' core and peripheral beliefs and how they enact these beliefs when teaching. Examining the relationship among the beliefs within the teachers' belief systems will be taken into account in the present study as this might help in understanding the reason behind the incongruence that may occur between teachers' WCF beliefs and practices.

#### **2.1.4 Trends and gaps in studies of teachers' beliefs**

Significant contributions to understanding teacher cognition have been made in mainstream educational research. This area has been concerned with the generic processes such as the impact of teacher education, of interactive decision-making, and the nature of expertise. There is, also, a significant body of work which has examined language teacher cognition in relation to specific curricular domains, for example, language teachers' beliefs about the use of technology (e.g. Lam, 2000; Lawrence, 2001; Jung and Chuang, 2006; Yang and Huang, 2008; Ihmeideh, 2010; Li and Ni, 2011; Sardegna and Dugartsyrenova, 2014), Mathematics (e.g. Grable and Park, 2002; Tan, 2011; Borko et al., 2000), and Science (e.g. Tan, 2011; Grable and Park, 2002). In addition, two curricular domains within language studies in an L1 and L2 context have attracted

significant research attention, namely: grammar teaching and literacy instruction. As for grammar teaching studies, researchers focused on three issues: the teachers' declarative knowledge about grammar (e.g. Andrews, 1994, 1999; Bloor, 1986, Wray, 1993; Chandler et al., 1988; Williamson and Hardman, 1995), beliefs about teaching grammar (e.g. Eisenstein et al., 1997; Berry: 1997: Schulz, 1996, 2001; Burgess and Etherington, 2002; Andrews, 2003; Chia, 2003) and the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices concerning grammar instruction (e.g. Andrews and McNeil, 2005; Andrews, 1997, 2001; Basturkmen et al., 2004; Borg, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 2001, 2003b, 2005; Burns and Knox, 2005; Farrell and Lim, 2005; Farrell, 1999).

Despite the fact that there has been significant contribution to the study of teacher cognition in literacy instruction (reading and writing), most of these studies targeted the first language (L1) education context while few studies have been conducted in an FL/L2 context (Borg, 2003, 2006). The range of studies available on L2 reading (Graden, 1996; Johnson, 1992, Meijer et al., 1999, 2001; Kuzborska, 2011) and L2 writing instruction (Burns, 1992; Cumming, 1990; Shi and Cumming, 1995; Tsui, 1996; Lee, 2009) is limited. To give some examples of the studies that examined the L2 teachers' beliefs in writing, Burns (1992) has studied 6 ESL teachers' beliefs and practices with regard to writing instruction, including: the nature of language, the relationship between written and spoken language, and the teacher's role. In addition, Cumming (1990) examined the decision-making of novice and expert teachers in rating written compositions. In another study, Tsui (1996) investigated the change in a teacher's approach to writing instruction.

However, while a considerable amount of recent studies have investigated the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices in L2 writing, little is known about WCF. Until recently, most research on WCF has examined teachers' beliefs (Jodaie and Farrokhi, 2012), teachers' practices (Ferris et al., 1997), and teachers' practices in comparison to their self-reported

practices (Montgomery and Baker, 2007). They also extended to topics such as teachers' beliefs in comparison to their self-reported practices (Lee, 2003), teachers' beliefs in comparison to students' preferences (Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010) and teachers' practices in comparison to students' preferences (Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990). However, only one study (Lee, 2009) –to the best of my knowledge- has looked at the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices when responding to students' writing. Lee (2009) pointed out that while there is a large amount of studies on teachers' beliefs regarding WCF and on L2 students' attitudes about, reactions to, and strategies to deal with teachers' WCF, none attempted to examine the link between teachers' beliefs and their actual WCF practices. Many other studies (Magno and Amarles, 2011; Ferris et al., 2011; Norouzian and Farahani, 2012; Lee, 2009) have also highlighted the gap in studying the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their actual practices regarding WCF. The present study aims at filling this gap, by examining the complex relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF. Moreover, since students are part of the learning-to-write process, the study also aims at examining students' preferences in comparison to teacher WCF practices.

The following part discusses the relevant literature into teachers' beliefs, teachers' practices, and students' preferences regarding WCF.

## **2.2 Written corrective feedback in L2 writing**

This part discusses the practical applications of the theory and research on giving WCF for the L2 writing classroom in particular. However, in order to fully understand the literature on WCF, it is important to begin with a consideration of the wider approaches to teaching writing and to see how teachers' WCF fits into the writing process (section 2.2.1). Then, the literature on teachers' beliefs, students' preference, and teachers' practices regarding WCF will be presented (section 2.2.2).



### **2.2.1 Approaches to the teaching of L2 writing**

There are three major approaches to teaching writing; namely, the product-, process-, and genre-approaches. The question regarding the most beneficial approach has been heavily debated in the literature. As a result, teachers are still searching for a comprehensive approach to teaching writing (Cumming, 1998; Matsuda, 1998). As the present study aims at examining teachers' beliefs and practices with a focus on writing instruction (i.e. content, form, and/or organisation) and the use of various techniques for teaching writing (e.g. the use of multiple-draft writing), this section will look at the three previously mentioned approaches. It will also examine the role played by the teacher written feedback in each approach. Moreover, by presenting the writing approaches, an understanding of the role of WCF will be achieved and of the way in which the teachers' approach to writing instruction intersects with their use of WCF.

#### **2.2.1.1 Product approach: history and characteristics**

The product approach, which started in the 1950's and early 1960's, is dominated by form-focused techniques. As its name implies, the product approach focuses on the final product of the students' writing (Richards, 1990). It is "concerned with the knowledge about the structure of language, and writing development is mainly the result of the imitation of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher" (Badger and White, 2000: 154). It supports the teacher centred-approach since the teacher takes the authority in the class. Badger and White (2000: 153) have reviewed four stages in a product approaches class: (1)- familiarization: where the teachers present a model to illustrate grammatical points; (2) controlled writing: where the students practice short writing using the target grammar and vocabulary; (3)- guided writing: where the students practice writing longer pieces using the target grammar and vocabulary; and (4)- free writing where the focus is still on form and usage.

The product approach has many advantages, such as enhancing the students' vocabulary and

improving their grammatical accuracy which can be learned through imitation (Badger and White, 2000; McDonough and Shaw, 2003). Myles (2002: 7) claimed that, “if students are not exposed to native-like models of written texts, their errors in writing are more likely to persist”. Nevertheless, this approach has received much criticism for several reasons. First, it ignores the students’ actual processes while composing a text, such as planning the text (Badger and White, 2000). Secondly, students might get frustrated or de-motivated when they receive constant error correction and/or when they compare their writing with the models. Moreover, this approach, which obliges students to follow a set of rules, does not prepare students to practice writing in real-life situation (Hairston, 1982; Pincas, 1962). In addition, Escholz (1980: 24) stated that concentrating on form and ignoring the content have the effect of “stultifying and inhibiting writers rather than empowering them or liberating them”. The above mentioned limitations led Prodromou (1995: 21) to claim that the product approach devalues “the learners’ potential, both linguistic and personal.” Finally, it restricts the students’ creativity as it relies on imitation (Hyland, 2003).

Product-oriented feedback is mainly form-focused, by emphasizing grammatical correctness while neglecting other aspects such as the discovery and construction of meaning in the writing process. In other words, teachers’ feedback focuses on specific parts (i.e. words, sentences, and paragraphs) but not on the whole text with meaning and ideas (Sommers, 1982). The main purpose of teachers’ feedback is for grading, or testing (Raimes, 1983). Bitchener and Ferris (2012) have maintained that the product becomes important only when language accuracy is an important criterion for final assessment or when students are writing texts that are going to be seen by real-world audiences. Moreover, according to this approach, teachers’ WCF pays no attention to reader-based approaches that focus on the connection between reading and writing, let alone the essential features of the feedback process such as peer response and self-editing (Flower and Hayes, 1981). Teachers who follow the product-based approach tend to focus on

correcting the inefficient forms without providing feedback that encourages students to revise their texts. According to this approach, teachers are the only source of feedback that the students' receive. By depriving students of the chance to redraft and reassess, students are rendered passive recipients of feedback (Zamel, 1983).

### **2.2.1.2 Process approach: history and characteristics**

In the late 1970s and 1980s, the 'Process Approach' to writing started as a reaction against product-based approaches. Rather than emphasizing correct forms, students are encouraged to focus on discovering and reformulating ideas and developing organisation (Gibbons, 2002; Matsuda, 2003). Process approach views writing as a complex, cognitive process that requires recursive procedures of prewriting (e.g. brainstorming, outlining), drafting, evaluating and revising (White and Arndt, 1991). White and Arndt (1991) highlighted a typical sequence of process-based activities in the writing class:

<p><b>Stage One:</b> Generating ideas by brainstorming.</p> <p><b>Stage Two:</b> Extending ideas into note form, and assess the usefulness and quality of ideas.</p> <p><b>Stage Three:</b> Organising ideas into a spider gram or mind map.</p> <p><b>Stage Four:</b> Writing the first draft.</p> <p><b>Stage Five:</b> Exchanging drafts, so each student becomes the reader of the other student's text.</p> <p><b>Stage Six:</b> Revising the text based upon peer review.</p> <p><b>Stage Seven:</b> Writing the final draft.</p> <p><b>Stage Eight:</b> Exchanging once again, each other's writing.</p>
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**Figure 2.1 White and Arndt (1991) model of process approach instruction**

As seen in Figure 2.1, the process approach involves the use of collaborative activities (e.g. brainstorming). It also ensures that students do take part in the process through the use of peer review and self-editing. Hence, process-writing is learner-centred, where the teacher becomes the facilitator who helps learners realize their potential and provides students with encouragement

and cooperation (Tyson, 1999: 6).

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) and Hutchinson and Waters (1987) advocated the use of the learner-centred approach where teachers take the students fully into account at every stage of the course design process. This is achieved by identifying the learners' attitudes, their subjective needs, and the constraints of the learning and teaching situation (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

Freeman and Freeman (2004) identified a number of advantages for the process approach. Firstly, it motivates students to be creative and deliver their own ideas. Secondly, it involves both the teacher and the students in responding to writing through peer feedback and discussions. Thirdly, it moves writing from invention to convention (i.e. writing becomes a practice for a set of cognitive processes instead of a demonstration of linguistic knowledge). Finally, it helps individual students to overcome certain difficulties in writing through teacher-student conferencing.

However, this approach has been criticised by some researchers. Firstly, it is time-consuming, especially with large classes and it causes heavy-teaching loads as it requires a great deal of marking. According to Keh (1990), this approach is not suitable for exam-driven contexts such as Asia where teachers are busy preparing students for the exams. Secondly, developing students to become editors when they are not fully prepared to be L2 writers leads to a negative result (Johns, 1995). Thirdly, this approach does not place much emphasis on linguistic knowledge, which is a necessary aspect of effective writing (Badger and White, 2000). Finally, it may discourage learners who are unfamiliar with the process approach to writing and who may consider revision as a failure (Corpuz, 2011). The above-mentioned limitations have led many researchers to think about another approach; the "genre approach".

The emergence of the process-oriented approach renders a new perspective in providing feedback on students' writing. Instead of highlighting the surface-level mechanics as with the

traditional form of feedback, teacher feedback in this approach attends to various writing aspects (e.g. content, organisation, language form, style), with the aim of helping students to produce meaningful, coherent and creative texts. As the emphasis of writing was on the whole text, the focus of feedback is then directed on functions rather than on form and on the use of language rather than on its usage (i.e. the set of conventions governing the use of a language) (Stewart, 1988). Moreover, as a recursive model, this approach emphasizes revision and encourages students to work collaboratively in groups, by allowing students to get multiple feedback opportunities (e.g. teacher feedback, peer feedback, self-editing, and teacher-student conferences) (Hyland and Hyland, 2006; Badger and White, 2000). Teachers –in this approach– no longer act as the only source of authority on writing, but rather as assistants and consultants who encourage students to take responsibility over their writing. The focus on the process approach is on how to give “reader-based” feedback (Elbow, 1981), and the editing of grammatical accuracy is postponed till the final stage. Feedback in the process approach is defined by Keh (1990) as input from the reader to the writer, which usually demands for further revisions.

### **2.2.1.3 Genre approach: history and characteristics**

The genre approach, which emerged in the 1980’s, is defined by Derewianka (1992) as the schematic structure of a text which helps it to achieve its purpose. This definition suggests that there are certain rules or conventions which are related to the writer’s aims. The genre approach is considered to be an extended version of the product approach as they both focus on linguistic knowledge as an input to text creation (Badger and White, 2000). In addition, similar to the product approach, the genre-based instruction takes place through exploration and imitation of different kinds of models. As a result, in order to improve the students’ abilities in writing a particular genre, they must be exposed to some texts of the same genre. By doing so, students will be able to activate their prior reading and writing experiences when they encounter the task

of writing a new text in a similar genre, and they will also notice the specialized configurations of that genre (Badger and White, 2000). However, what distinguishes the genre approach from the product approach is that the knowledge of language is linked to a social and cultural purpose, and that the focus is mostly directed to the reader's viewpoint rather than to that of the writers. (Badger and White, 2000). Moreover, the genre approach tends to categorize writing into different kinds of text, such as research proposals, articles, business memos, and legal reports (Flowerdew, 1993).

The structural features of genres include both linguistic features and organisational structure (i.e. how texts are sequenced). With regard to organisational structure, Hammond (1992: 240) gave an example of the structure followed in writing a formal letter as follows: "sender's address, receiver's address, greeting, identification of complaint, justification of complaint, demand action, sign-off, and sender's name". Hammond (1992) proposed a model for the genre approach writing which consists of three stages: modeling, joint negotiation of the writing by the teacher and students, and the students' construction of the text. Modeling is the time when the target genre is presented to learners. The discussion in this phase centres around the social and educational role of the genre, and the language form of the text. The second phase, which is the joint negotiation of writing, involves student-teacher negotiation about language, form exercises, reading, and circulating information. The final stage is the independent construction of texts where each student produces actual text through activities (e.g., researching, choosing a topic, and practice writing).

As with the previous approaches, the genre approach has many advantages and limitations. On the positive side, this approach is more effective for improving L2 student writing skills than the process approach since it helps students not to worry over their writing and it shows them what they have to write through examples (Kay and Dudley-Evans, 1998). It helps students understand the different styles of communication as it has a social purpose (Kim, 2007). The rhetorical

structure that genre-based instruction advocates helps to improve students' writing as it ties together the functional and formal properties of the language (Swales, 1990). According to Bhatia (1993) bringing these two language properties together enables students to comprehend why and how the conventions of language are used. Moreover, this approach encourages students to view writing as a tool that they can employ and to become more flexible in their thoughts and finally to recognize the way in which writers manage content to promote logical organisation. In addition to the previous advantages, Hyland (2004) pointed out a number of benefits of the genre-based L2 writing instruction, which are:

- Explicitness: stating very clearly the purpose of the lesson.
- Needs-based: tailoring the course objectives to fulfil students' needs.
- Systematic: establishing a systematic plan which focuses on context as well as language.
- Empowering: helping students to be aware of the social usage of the English language in the discourse group.
- Support: enhancing students' creativity through building their confidence.
- Critical: equipping learners with resources that help them understand and challenge valued types of discourse.

However, the genre-based approach is not free from limitations. According to some researchers (e.g. Coe et al., 2002; Benesch, 2001), the genre-based instruction has simply reinforced dominant discourses since students are encouraged to produce an existing disciplinary discourse. This approach suppresses the students' creativity and does not allow them to express their own ideas freely as the teacher is responsible for selecting the models (Caudery, 1998). Moreover, it devalues students' writing abilities and skills and hence, it turns students into passive writers (Badgers and White, 2000).

In the genre-based approach, teachers' WCF focuses on genre conventions and knowledge which

are associated with the community. Teachers do not respond just to grammar issues, but also to whole texts and to all aspects of student writing, including language form, organisation, content, style, and presentation. Feedback, in the genre-based instruction, is provided to support students' writing development in systematic ways, by reinforcing genre knowledge, community conventions, and suggestions for improvement. Teachers may also use group discussions of students' texts which involve the same text features and terminology (Hyland, 2004). Genre-based feedback does not mainly provide grades on students' writing, but also justifies it and explains what has to be done for improvement (Hyland, 2004). Instead of simply providing decontextualized and ad hoc reactions to errors, teachers' feedback tends to highlight what the writing requires (Hyland, 2004). Teachers may highlight previous strategies and deal with students' writing from a position of shared knowledge. Because they are targeting the same key features and using the same terminology that was presented to the students, teachers are confident that learners will understand and utilize their comments and suggestions. Moreover, teachers may also report in detail what students know and can do with language.

A brief review of the major approaches demonstrates that these approaches are interrelated and that it is hard to make a clear-cut definition for each approach. In addition, each approach has some drawbacks. Hence, teachers may not choose one approach to follow but they might rather integrate two or three approaches as these complement each other (Badger and White, 2003). However, studies conducted in the Arab world reveal the domination of the product-oriented writing strategies (Krapels, 1990; Al-Semari, 1993; El-Mortaji, 2001; El-Aswad, 2002; Al-Hazmi, 2003; Fageeh, 2003; Grami, 2004).

To give an example of studies that have been conducted in a Saudi context, Al-Hazmi (2003), who examined the trends and challenges of a preparation program for teachers in Saudi Arabia, classified the writing instruction as product-focused in which teachers were viewed as the



utilizers of top-down curriculums, and learners were described as having low language proficiency. Moreover, Grami (2010), who conducted a study on the influence of integrating peer responses into university-level writing, has revealed the teachers' tendency to follow the product-based approach in writing instruction<sup>1</sup>. This is achieved by focusing on the language form through the imitation of model writing, by not giving students the opportunity to write multiple drafts or receiving feedback from sources other than the teacher. The present study, which is conducted in a Saudi university context might yield similar results, in that teachers may concentrate on the product approach activities in their writing instruction. Such a focus may also influence their WCF beliefs, which will be discussed in the following section.

### **2.2.2 Research on teachers' beliefs, students' preference, and teachers' practices regarding WCF**

Studies investigating the controversy regarding the effectiveness of WCF in improving students' L2 writing, started by Truscott (1996) and refuted by Ferris (1999, 2004, 2006), and then resumed by Sheen (2011), Bitchener (2008) and many others (e.g. Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, and Takashima, 2008; Chandler, 2003, 2009), have continued to attract a number of studies in the field of SLA and L2 writing (e.g. Sheen 2007; Evans et al. 2010). Despite Truscott's (1997; 2010) ongoing calls for the abandonment of 'error correction', there is a large body of research (e.g. Lalande, 1982; Fathman and Whalley, 1990; Chandler, 2003; Sheen 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Van Beuningen 2010; Storch and Wigglesworth, 2010; Bitchener and Knoch 2008) which revealed that WCF is beneficial for the development of students' writing.

However, studies on the effectiveness of WCF stand in contrast to the scarcity of research which examined teachers' WCF beliefs and practices in actual classroom contexts (Lee, 2013).

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<sup>1</sup> My personal observation as a writing teacher in the context of the study also revealed teachers' tendency towards the product approach instruction.

Norouzian and Farahani (2012: 11) argued that “several aspects of written error feedback contexts have been simply overlooked or have remained on the sidelines, partly due to controversies over its long-lasting efficacy”. Truscott (1999) himself acknowledged that research has shown that students want and expect to receive written feedback from their teacher and the teachers are still providing feedback on their students’ writing. This led many researchers (Bruton. 2009; Evans et al., 2010; Hartshorn et al., 2010) to state that if teachers are providing WCF to their student writers, perhaps it is most important for researchers to turn their primary attention to discovering teachers’ beliefs and student opinion regarding teacher feedback.

Therefore, the present study investigates teachers’ beliefs, students’ preferences, and teachers’ actual practices regarding WCF in L2 writing. It is also necessary to indicate that since this study examines L2 writing teachers, research on WCF for language acquisition purposes (SLA) will not be tackled. As stated by Bitchener and Ferris (2012: 138): “one of the problems with the mixing of studies conducted in language learning contexts and those undertaken in writing classrooms is that the narrowly focused approach of the SLA-focused studies of WCF can yield findings that seem unrealistic to writing instructors”.

The following sections cover the main issues in WCF research, namely the purpose of WCF, its focus, the necessary amount of WCF, its explicitness, the source of feedback, the variation in teachers’ WCF, and the positive versus negative feedback.

### **2.2.2.1 Purpose of WCF**

Despite the inconclusive research on the effectiveness of WCF, there is a large amount of research which proved the usefulness of WCF for the improvement of students’ written accuracy (Ferris, 1997, 2002; Ferris et al., 2011; Van Beuningen, 2010; Hyland and Hyland, 2001). Of particular interest to the present study are the research findings which show that WCF helps

student writers build awareness, knowledge, and strategic competence and thus enables them to evaluate their writing, notice possible points of weaknesses, and understand the level of their performance. Even though the issue on the effectiveness of WCF is out of the scope of the present study, Bartram and Walton (1991) noted that many problems will arise if teachers do not provide feedback on students' texts: students will be less motivated and more anxious, and the instructors will feel guilty and fear that they will be thought of as being incapable, lacking responsibility, and lazy.

However, many teachers experience confusion over the purpose of feedback since the distinctions between feedback that provides advice (formative) and feedback that offers evaluation (summative) are unclear (Black and Wiliam, 1998; Burke and Pieterick, 2010). Wiggins (1997), who defined both types, argued that the purpose of evaluative feedback is to make sure the student clearly understands what the mark is for a task or assignment. Conversely, the purpose of the advisory feedback is threefold; to provide learners with information about their performance in the task, to identify aspects which need improvement or support, and to aid the students' progress by telling what steps to take in order to move forward and to improve their writing in the future. The two studies (Bailey and Garner, 2010; Lee, 2003) that have investigated teachers' beliefs about the purpose of WCF revealed different findings. Bailey and Garner (2010), who interviewed 48 teachers in one university regarding the purpose and utility of WCF, reported the teachers' emphasis on the developmental and formative role of feedback. However, teachers' beliefs go against their institutional policies which look at teachers' feedback as a way of explaining to learners how their writing has been assessed and graded. In contrast to Bailey and Garner's finding, Lee (2003), who surveyed and interviewed secondary English instructors in Hong Kong, found that teachers viewed WCF as a way of helping students notice their errors and to help teachers mark students' papers. This finding led Lee (2003) to conclude that teachers are more concerned with the immediate short-term goals of helping learners avoid

the same errors than with the more long-term goals of preparing learners with the necessary tools to be able to proofread and edit their texts independently. One reason for these two different findings might be attributed to the context of the study as teachers in university contexts might have different aims for feedback than those who teach in school contexts. The present study which is conducted in a university context might yield similar results to those in Bailey and Garner (2010), where teachers may view the feedback as a way of improving students' written performance.

On the other hand, previous literature on students' attitudes towards WCF (Cohen, 1987; Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990; Leki, 1990a; Ferris, 1995b; Lee, 2004; Grami, 2005; Diab, 2005; Montgomery and Baker, 2007; Hamouda, 2011) reached the same conclusion by mentioning that students valued teacher WCF and attached great importance to it. This finding may suggest that teacher feedback addresses students' individual needs. According to Hyland and Hyland (2006), students tend mostly to view teacher WCF as effective when it engages their thinking and when it is contextualized (i.e. consider students' individual needs). Therefore, in addition to finding out their attitudes towards their teacher WCF, the present study examines students' needs and expectations concerning how to receive WCF on their writing.

Regardless of the students' agreement on the usefulness of WCF, students – as revealed by many previous studies- seem to have different opinions regarding the purpose of WCF depending on their proficiency levels. Many advanced L2 learners, like the graduate learners in Riazi's (1997) and Leki's (2006) studies, looked at their teacher's WCF as an effective tool which helps them improve specific disciplinary literacy. Conversely, less advanced students viewed teacher WCF as a means of helping them get better grades and eventually pass the course (Zacharias, 2007). This shows that individual differences might have a direct influence on learners' attitudes and preferences towards teachers' WCF (Lee, 2004). As a result, the present study will take into account the students' proficiency levels when investigating students' attitudes towards WCF (see

section 3.5.3).

While previous research studies were consistent in their finding that students found teacher feedback useful, many studies (Cohen, 1987; Zacharias, 2007; Ferris, 1995b; Ferris et al, 1997; Leki, 1990a. Lee, 2004, 2008; Zamel, 1985; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010) revealed that teachers' feedback can be difficult to understand due to the teachers' illegible, inconsistent, and/or inaccurate feedback and confusing symbols. Researchers attributed students' reactions to teacher's WCF to the influence of classroom context in which teachers' WCF is delivered. Most studies that were conducted in a multiple-draft context found that students generally attended to teacher feedback and tried to edit all of their errors (Hedgcock and Lefkowitz, 1994; Ferris, 2003; Diab, 2005). Conversely, studies on single-draft contexts (Cohen, 1987; Zamel 1985; Cohen and Robbins, 1976; Ferris, 2002) found that students do not try to deal with their teachers' WCF when it becomes frustrating, confusing, inconsistent, and/or inaccurate. Ferris (2003) argued that when feedback is provided to a single draft that they have produced, the learners tend to react differently than when it is provided to one of multiple drafts. In a single-draft classroom, unclear and vague comments tend to be overlooked as students do not have to understand, deal with, and edit them, and thus they are less likely to worry about them than when similar feedback is provided on one of multiple drafts (Cohen, 1987). Being conducted in a single-draft context, students in the present study may also choose to ignore their teachers' unclear and vague comments.

#### **2.2.2.2 Amount of WCF provision**

One important decision a writing teacher must make is whether to mark a few specific error categories in a focused manner (i.e. selective WCF) or to mark all errors (i.e. comprehensive WCF) in an unfocused manner (Ferris, 2002). There is an argument in favour of selective WCF and a counter argument in favour of comprehensive WCF. Advocates of selective correction

(e.g. Lee, 2013; Bitchener and Ferris, 2012; Storch and Wigglesworth 2010; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Leki, 1990a; Hendrickson, 1980) warn against marking all student errors because they believe that improving the students' self-editing strategies, that is process-writing, is more important than the form of the final product. They further argue that the selective approach is less overwhelming for the students and less exhausting for teachers to process, analyse, and apply (Bitchener and Ferris, 2012). However, an important counterargument in favour of the comprehensive WCF was recently made by Evans et al. (2010) and Hartshorn et al. (2010) who stated their reason that, in the real world, accuracy is valued and perfection is expected. Students thus need to learn to edit their entire texts, not only for two or three selected error patterns, and the teachers' comprehensive error feedback can help to focus the writers' attention on the range of problems and issues that their texts may present. Moreover, Van Beuningen (2010) argued that focusing teachers' feedback on one error type is not effective as students should notice at the same time the different types of errors they made. Such controversy led many researchers (Lee, 2013; Ferris 2010; Storch 2010) to advocate a middle ground, in which teachers correct specific but several error categories, instead of a few errors.

Despite the fact that studies which argued for the effectiveness of comprehensive WCF over selective WCF are inconclusive (Lee. 2013; Truscott and Hsu 2008; Van Beuningen, 2010), many EFL studies on teachers' beliefs (e.g. Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Lee, 2003, 2008a; 2009; Hamouda, 2011) revealed teachers' beliefs with regard to the selective approach. Teachers in these studies explained that selecting a few errors to correct makes it more manageable for students. In contrast to these studies, Jodaie and Farrokhi (2012) found the opposite, that is, teachers favoured the comprehensive approach, believing that too much feedback is motivating while little feedback makes students feel depressed. One reason for the fact that Jodaie and Farrokhi's (2012) study yielded different results is that it examined college and university teachers who are teaching a writing course to students while participants in the other studies,

which report teachers' beliefs about the selective approach, are language teachers in secondary schools.

In practice (e.g. Lee, 2004, 2008a, 2009; Ferris et al., 2011), teachers tend to correct all students' errors comprehensively whatever the level of the student (Lee, 2013). For example, teachers in Lee's (2008a) study felt they were accountable to school administrators and believed that using selective feedback would be advantageous for students. However, because it was mandatory by their schools to correct all writing errors, the teachers did not apply what they believed to be beneficial for their students. Some teachers also were accountable to parents and students to give detailed feedback, otherwise they felt they would have been considered lazy. In another study, Lee (2009) found that teachers correct errors comprehensively despite believing in the selective correction approach. According to Lee (2009), this might be attributed to the teachers' lack of training or to their willingness to prove their hard work, or to satisfy student and parent needs and expectations. Teachers may also worry that students will not notice all the errors if they left some errors unmarked. In addition, giving one shot of feedback in single-draft writing seems to be one of the reasons that makes teachers more willing to provide feedback in a comprehensive manner. The teachers' tendency towards correcting all errors comprehensively may also be found in the present study, where students are expected to write one draft only.

Similar to teachers' practices, in studies where students have been asked about their views on comprehensive or selective error correction, a substantial percentage always indicates that they want all of their errors marked or corrected by the teacher (e.g. Diab, 2005; Radecki and Swales, 1988; Leki, 1990a; Ferris and Robert, 2001; Lee, 2004; Hamouda, 2011; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Norouzian and Farahani, 2012). Most of them were afraid that they will not be able to notice errors on their own if the teacher does not mark them; and that these uncorrected errors will affect their marks and future development (Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Leki, 1990a). This finding led Hamouda (2011) to conclude that teachers might lose their credibility among their

students if they did not correct all student errors. Teachers, in turn, worried that students would complain about unfair practices if errors were left unmarked by the teacher (Bitchener and Ferris, 2012).

### **2.2.2.3 Focus of WCF**

Another important question writing teachers face is the type(s) of errors they should focus on. One distinction that should be mentioned is the one between serious and minor errors (Bates et al., 1993; Corder, 1967; Hendrickson, 1978, 1980). Serious errors are those that cause communication breakdowns (e.g. conveying vague or unclear ideas). Conversely, minor errors do not obscure the comprehensibility of the text (e.g. morphological errors) (Ferris, 2003: 51). Another common distinction is the one between frequent errors (i.e. errors that individual students make frequently), and infrequent errors (Ferris, 2011). Research has also looked at “stigmatizing errors”, that is, “the type of error[s] that might label the student as a less proficient writer” (Bitchener and Ferris, 2012: 146). Lee (2013) claimed that most teachers focus more on high-frequency and stigmatizing errors.

Apart from these distinctions, the question of whether L2 writing teachers should focus on local errors which relate to language form more or less than the global ones -related to the content and organisation- has been heavily debated. In most studies (Lee, 2003, 2004, 2009; Ferris et al., 1997), researchers defined content as ‘the information you provide in your essay’, organisation as ‘the way in which these ideas are organised’, and language form as the ‘correct use of mechanics’ (Ferris et al., 1997: 23). While these definitions are clear, they are difficult to apply in practice, due to certain overlapping areas. In an investigation of the focus of the supervisors’ feedback on thesis/dissertation students, Bitchener et al. (2010) attempted to provide an accurate and detailed account of the definitions of these terms (see table 2.1). Therefore, Bitchener et al.’s



(2010) definitions will be adopted throughout the present study.

Type of error	Definition
<b>Content</b>	The ideas provided in the essay, including the unity of the ideas (i.e. all sentences are about one main topic), coherence of the ideas (i.e. the clear movement thought in the essay), development of ideas (i.e. the ideas expressed are not enough), and clarity of ideas (i.e. the idea(s) are not vague).
<b>Language form</b>	The correct use of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.
<b>Organisation</b>	Following the basic guidelines for the essay structure: the introduction (where the thesis is clearly presented), the body (each paragraph of the body should include a topic sentence which is related to the thesis and supporting details, examples, and or evidence to back up the thesis); or the conclusion (which can be a summary, recommendation, or question).

**Table 2.1 Basics elements in essay writing (adapted from Bitchener et al., 2010)**

Research findings about students' preference of WCF (Cohen, 1987; Leki 1990a; Radecki and Swales, 1988; Ferris, 1995b) were mostly consistent with the findings that students expect more corrections and advice about grammar and language use. Radecki and Swales (1988), for example, reported that ESL teachers might lose their credibility among their students if they do not correct all surface errors. In addition, Leki (1990a) revealed that learners equated excellent writing with error-free texts and that they want and expect their teacher to correct all errors in their writing. Despite the fact that the majority of the previous studies on L2 students' preferences showed that they were placing a high premium on language accuracy, some researchers (Norton, 1990; Ferris, 2002) explained that in advanced and discipline-based courses students tend to place more emphasis on errors related to content than accuracy. Norton (1990) argued that most students do not enrol in higher education to learn how to write but to study a particular subject. He continued by arguing that university students, especially those who are enrolled in discipline-based courses, expect most of their teachers' comments to focus on subject content and their ideas. Norton's (1990) claim is true for some of the studies that have been conducted in a university context. For example, the university students in Diab's (2005) study

believed that teachers should focus on various aspects of their writing, especially on their ideas. Moreover, Leki (2006), who examined L2 graduate students' response to discipline-based WCF, reported the students' concerns with problems related to the content of their writing. Gabinete (2013) also found that students on language-based courses prefer to receive feedback on language while non-language based courses students (e.g. engineering students) opt to receive less feedback on language. In addition, Celce-Murcia (1985) found that advanced EFL students who are literate and well-educated can benefit most from the feedback on content. Similar scenarios are also expected to take place in the context of the present study, where students, who are studying for disciplinary studies (i.e. English literature), might believe that focusing on good content is more important than language accuracy in writing.

While most students favoured receiving more comments on language form, the studies on teachers' beliefs reported inconsistent findings. Whereas some studies (e.g. Lee, 2003, 2009; Zacharias, 2007) reported teachers' beliefs according to which there is more to good writing than language form, other studies (e.g. Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Jodaie and Farrokhi, 2012) found the opposite, by indicating that teachers placed more emphasis on language form and believed that there should be as few language errors as possible. Moreover, in other studies (e.g., Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990; Lee, 2003), teachers had two opposing beliefs regarding the focus of WCF. For example, Lee (2003) found that one teacher in her study believed that language should be given priority in teachers' WCF while the other believed in the superiority of the organisation. Such inconsistent findings in the same study seem to be related to the differences in teachers' previous learning, academic degrees, and/or teaching experiences. Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990), for example, found that the language institute believed that language should be given priority in teachers' WCF while the other two teachers who teach writing in a university context believed in the superiority of the content and organisation. This is potentially of importance to the present study, because the teachers in my study context come from a variety of educational systems, hold

different academic degrees, and have different teaching experiences (see section 3.5.3). Therefore, we can expect that this difference will be reflected in different beliefs as well.

While studies yielded inconsistent findings regarding teachers' beliefs regarding the focus of WCF, studies on teachers' actual practices (Montgomery and Baker, 2007; Lee, 2004, 2008a, 2009) reached a similar finding, showing that teachers' feedback usually addressed errors in the language. According to Ferris (2003), such a finding gives an indication of teacher feedback as being overly directive and controlling. It might also suggest that a broader range of writing teachers follow a form-focused feedback in order to fulfil their students' needs and expectations.

#### 2.2.2.4 Explicitness of WCF

When discussing the way in which WCF may be provided, the literature has divided the discussion into two main types of delivery: direct and indirect. Bitchener and Ferris (2012: 148) define direct WCF as a “correction that not only calls attention to the error but also provides a specific solution to the problem”. Here is an example of a text that has been corrected directly:

---

Has at least lives

“Everyone ~~have~~ been a liar^ once in their ~~life~~. People who lie intentionally to harm

,

others are bad people^ and their lies are harmful too. However, there are lies that are

told

~~done~~ with good intentions”.

---

**Figure 2.2 Sample student text excerpt with direct correction. Source: Ferris (2008: 102).**

Conversely, indirect feedback is defined as “indicating an error through circling, underlining, highlighting, or otherwise marking it at its location in a text, with or without a verbal rule reminder or an error code, and asking students to mark corrections themselves” (Ferris, 2002: 63). Below is an example of a student's original text that has been corrected indirectly:

<p>“Everyone <u>have</u> been a liar once in their <u>life</u>. People who lie intentionally to harm others are bad</p> <p>People and their lies are harmful too. However, there are lies that are done with good <u>intentions</u>.”</p>
---

**Figure 2.3 Sample student text excerpt with indirect (uncoded) correction. Source: Ferris (2008: 103).**

The short texts excerpts above (figure 2.2 and figure 2.3) reveal that in the indirect correction, the teacher simply underlines (or encircles) the errors without attempting to correct them. Conversely, different methods of corrections can be used in the direct correction, such as providing correct answers to erroneous parts, crossing out unnecessary items, and adding missing forms.

Moreover, WCF research addresses the amount of explicitness that should accompany indirect feedback (e.g. Ferris, 2006; Robb et al., 1986, Bitchener and Ferris, 2012; Lalande, 1982), that is, coded feedback in which the type of errors is indicated, by either writing the cause of the errors (e.g. spelling) or by using the error codes (e.g. “sp” for spelling, "vt" for *verb tense* or "ro" for *run on*) versus uncoded feedback, that is, when the teacher circles or underlines an error only without solving the problem. Here is an example of a student’s writing that has been corrected using coded indirect feedback:

<hr/>	
wt (wrong tense)	sp (spelling error)
“Everyone <u>have</u> been a liar once in their <u>life</u> . People who lie intentionally to harm others are bad	
p (punctuation error)	wc (wrong word choice)
People_and their lies are harmful too. However, there are lies that are <u>done</u> with good <u>intentions</u> ”.	

**Figure 2.4 Sample student text excerpt with indirect (coded) correction. Source: Ferris (2008).**

Most researchers investigating the effectiveness of the choice of WCF strategies (Storch, 2010; Van Beuningen, 2010; Ferris, 2002; Lalande, 1982; Van Beuningen, 2010) argued that the indirect approach correction is more appropriate, especially with advanced learners, as it encourages students to be more reflective and analytical about their errors, which in turn

improves their self-editing strategy skills (i.e. the main goal of any writing course). In addition, Belcher and Liu (2004) found that once students give up the power to their teacher, they become over dependent on their teachers and they cannot take initiative to direct their process of learning. Moreover, Ferris (2002: 67) argued that identifying errors directly can be “cumbersome for the teacher and confusing for the student”. However, Hendrickson (1980) suggested that if indirect correction was used as the sole form of WCF, students would be discouraged (e.g. when they do not understand the reason behind the error) and teachers would be frustrated (e.g. when the same errors appear by the same student repeatedly). The use of the direct approach, on the other hand, has been recommended by other researchers (e.g. Sheen, 2010), who claimed that students do not have the linguistic competence to correct all of their errors. Amrhein and Nassaji (2010), for example, recommended the use of the direct approach, arguing that a higher degree of explicitness is more conducive for the students’ reflection and cognitive engagement. In addition, Lee (2013) argued that a clue (i.e. code) without correction is not beneficial as students need more specific and explicit advice. Many other studies (e.g. Ferris, 1999, 2002; Frodesen, 2001; Brown, 2007; Lee, 2008a) found that the explicitness of teachers’ WCF depends on the type of the error and the students’ proficiency levels. The discussion of the variation in teachers’ WCF depending on the students’ proficiency levels is presented in section 2.2.2.7. As for the type of the errors, teachers preferred the direct feedback when the error was difficult for students to self-correct like correcting serious errors related to the content and/ or the organisation, while the indirect one was preferred with local errors (i.e. errors in the language form) to develop learners’ self-editing skills (Ferris, 1999; Frodesen, 2001). Conversely, the indirect approach should be employed when teachers try to engage learners in problem-solving activities in order to improve their editing strategies (Lalande, 1982; Ferris, 2002; Ferris and Hedgcok, 2005).

The findings about teachers’ preferences regarding the explicitness of WCF are not consistent. While some studies (Lee, 2003; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Jodaie and Farrokhi, 2012) reported

teachers' preference for the explicit WCF, other studies (Lee, 2009; Hamouda, 2011) found the opposite, i.e., teachers believe in the indirect approach. One reason for these two different findings with regard to teachers' beliefs might be that teachers, in practice, could not follow one particular level of explicitness in their feedback. For example, Lee (2009) revealed that 70% of the feedback is direct although 96% of the teachers believed that students should learn to locate and correct errors. Teachers in Lee's (2009) study explained that they could not merely provide their feedback in an indirect manner as many of their students are unable to recognize and correct the errors themselves. Thus, teachers used both techniques instead of relying on one method. In addition, other studies (e.g., Ferris et al., 1997; Lee, 2004, 2008) revealed that teachers used a combination of indirect and direct WCF. Such a finding led researchers to claim that EFL teachers' use of WCF was haphazard as it did not follow previous research or any theoretical principles (Lee, 2004, 2013; Bitchener and Ferris, 2012). According to Lee (2013: 31), teachers tended to use the direct and the indirect feedback "without being aware of what benefits students or what methods to use for different types of errors, or how to fulfil the different students' needs". Therefore, it is expected that teachers in the present study will be using both techniques, direct and indirect WCF, instead of relying on one level of explicitness.

Unlike research on teachers' beliefs and practices, the studies on students' preferences (e.g. Leki, 1990a; Radecki and Swales, 1988; Ferris, 1995b; Hedgcok and Lefkowitz, 1994, 1996; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Diab, 2005; Lee, 2004, Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010) were almost consistent, showing that students dislike indirect feedback, especially the uncoded type, as it obliges them to find, diagnose, and solve problems by themselves. Rather, they preferred the direct method of correcting which gives them the right answers. This finding suggests that students prefer to rely on their teachers in getting the correct form instead of looking for it themselves. Such a finding is also expected in the context of the present study (i.e. Saudi Arabia) where the teacher-centred approach is mostly dominant in the writing instruction (see section 1.2).

### **2.2.2.5 Source of WCF**

Despite acknowledging that the feedback provided by teachers is the most common and important way of responding to the students' writing (e.g. Coffin et al., 2003; Leki, 1990b; Bartram and Walton, 1991; Williams, 2003; Hyland and Hyland, 2006), many researchers advocated the use of peer feedback. Liu and Hansen (2002: 1) defined peer feedback as using students "as sources of information and interactions for each other" in a way that makes students adopt the role and responsibility of a teacher or editor as they comment on and criticize each other's writing in both forms (i.e. written and oral). Peer feedback takes many formats including: (1) enhancing the pre-writing stage by asking other students to comment on each others' outlines, or to carry out a brainstorming session; (2) organising students in groups and ask them to exchange their first drafts and give comments on each others' drafts before making final versions; and (3) letting students read their own essays aloud, while the other classmates listen and provide feedback, either written or oral, on the work that they have just heard (Hyland, 2003).

Many researchers (e.g. Lundstorm and Baker, 2009; Min, 2008; Rollinson, 2005; Storch, 2004; Saito and Fujita, 2004; Hinkel, 2004) reported the effectiveness of peer feedback, arguing that it develops the critical analysis and reading strategies students need to later examine their own writing. As Ferris (1995b: 19) noted, "it seems to be true that it is easier to find errors in others' work than in one's own". Lundstorm and Baker (2009) claimed that peer feedback is more authentic and honest than a teacher's response as it gives students the opportunity to realize that other students experience similar difficulties to their own, and this can also lead to less writing apprehension and more confidence, which in turn, encourages student writers to produce 'reader-oriented' texts. In spite of the strong pedagogical benefits of peer feedback, many researchers (e.g. Goldstein and Conrad, 1990; Hyland, 2000; Storch, 2004; Bitchener and Ferris, 2012)

argued that the use of peer feedback in the classroom is quite limited. Those researchers doubted the usefulness of peer review for L2 students who might not have either the formal knowledge or the acquired intuitions to spot their classmates' errors and to provide accurate and clear feedback about them.

Regardless of the importance of peer feedback in L1 and L2 research, there are some differences between L1 and L2 writing teachers' beliefs regarding preferences for teacher versus non-teacher WCF. While L2 writing teachers have acknowledged the importance of peer feedback (Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Zacharias, 2007; Jodaie and Farrokhi, 2012), they have also argued for the superiority of teachers' over non-teachers' WCF. Conversely, studies on L1 writing teachers (e.g., Hairston, 1986; Moxley, 1989) have shown their preferences for peer feedback over teachers' WCF. The present study may obtain similar results to the previous studies conducted in an L2 writing context, in which teachers may prefer the use of teacher feedback over peer feedback.

Similar to L2 writing teachers' beliefs, research on L2 students (e.g. Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990; Hedgcock and lefkowitz, 1994; Ferris and Roberts, 2001) revealed that students feel that receiving comments from classmates whose English is at a lower level or even at the same as theirs will be of no value. For example, Hedgcock and Lefkowitz's (1994) study on L2 student writers' opinion revealed their strong beliefs about their needs for expert corrective feedback, and if the job is turned over to their peers in the classroom, they may feel anxious about not receiving adequate or accurate input. They reported that some students found it difficult to provide honest feedback because they prioritized positive group relations rather than improving their writing. Such consistent findings in the previous studies seem to indicate that a similar scenario may occur in the present study where students may feel less confident about their peers' language proficiency abilities to comment on their papers.



One reason that can account for the finding that most L2 teachers and students prioritized teacher over non-teacher WCF is the fact that peer feedback is rarely implemented in an L2 writing context. This is evident in most studies in L2 writing practices (Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990; Montgomery and Baker, 2007; Ferris et al., 2011; Norouzian and Farahani, 2012) which reported that teachers tend to avoid using other methods like peer feedback or self-editing strategies and rely on themselves as the only source of feedback. As Zhang (1995) noted, there is no evidence in any study to suggest that students prefer peer feedback over any forms of response, but they would rather have peer feedback than not to have it. Conversely, in studies where peer feedback was implemented (Nelson and Murphy, 1993; Caulk, 1994), it was found to be useful. Nelson and Murphy (1993), for example, found that students who implemented a low percentage of peer feedback viewed their teacher as the only source of knowledge and that they had no confidence in their classmates whom they considered unable to provide good quality feedback. However, students who incorporated a high percentage of peer feedback believed in the usefulness of peer feedback in spite of their doubts regarding their L2 peers' linguistic abilities. In addition, Caulk (1994), who compared L2 teacher WCF, peer feedback, and students' self-editing of their own text, found that 89% of students were capable of offering valid comments as viewed by the teacher and 60% offered appropriate feedback that was not mentioned by their teacher and offered more localized and specific comments than the comments of their teacher.

#### **2.2.2.6 Positive versus negative feedback**

Teachers' feedback has been divided into two major categories: positive or negative. Positive feedback affirms that a student's writing (e.g. content, form, organisation) is correct (e.g., "Good" or "Yes"). Ellis (2009) maintained that students should receive positive feedback as it provides them with the affective support and fosters their motivation. On the other hand, negative feedback intends to be corrective (i.e. with the purpose of fixing the errors), indicating

that there is an error in a student's writing. Negative feedback might extend to providing harsh criticism (e.g. poor writing), signalling a total disapproval from the teacher (Hyland and Hyland, 2006).

Both teachers and scholars agreed that praising and encouraging comments are essential in improving students' writing abilities (Connors and Lunsford, 1993; Bates et al., 1993; Ferris, 1995b). Earlier studies (e.g. Cardelle and Corno, 1981; Cohen, 1987) explored the emotional impact of feedback on students. These studies revealed that students tend to view their teachers' corrective feedback on their errors as negative points, and that students may be inclined not to read the feedback if it is perceived to be too negative (i.e. using harsh words) as it hurts their feelings and suppresses their motivation. However, they found that too much praise might mislead, confuse, and/or demotivate the student. This led those researchers to suggest ways to prepare students to cope with teachers' feedback, advising teachers to use a balance between praise and constructive criticism as it is the best means of encouraging quality writing.

Most studies on teacher WCF beliefs (e.g. Lee, 2009; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Zacharias, 2007; Jodaie and Farrokhi, 2012) reported that teachers considered praise to be more useful in facilitating students' development when compared to criticism. Teachers in Zacharias' (2007) study, for example, thought that praising the students' writing affects the students' positive feelings, fosters their self-esteem, and develops the students' writing level as students start to view their writing ability as something that can be improved. Similar to teachers' beliefs, surveys of L2 student opinion about teachers' WCF (e.g. Cohen, 1987; Lee, 2004; Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990; Ferris, 1995b) have reached the same finding that students want and expect to receive praising and encouraging comments on their writing. Ferris (1995b) found that students welcomed praise and constructive criticism while receiving negative criticism demotivates them and affects their reaction to WCF. Following these previous studies, both teachers and students in the present study may have similar attitudes regarding the importance of providing positive

comments on students' writing.

Despite the fact that most L1 and L2 research found that teachers stress the importance of praising and encouraging terms in developing their students' writing and even though students want and expect their teachers to praise their work, teachers' positive feedback is scarce (Connors and Lunsford, 1993). Research on teacher WCF practices (Ferris et al., 1997; Cohen, 1987; Lee, 2009) revealed that teachers are missing the opportunity to motivate students by increasing the extent of praise. Cohen and Cavalcanti's (1990) study revealed that none of the three teachers used any praising terms despite the fact that students, specially the weak ones, were quite anxious to receive at least some feedback as to what they were doing right. Moreover, Lee (2009) reported that although the interview findings revealed teachers' beliefs that feedback should cover both strengths and constructive criticism, teacher's feedback analysis showed that 91% of teachers' feedback was directed to the errors marked in the students' writing, with 6% of the comments being harsh criticism, and only 3% being positive comments. In other studies, teachers were found to give positive comments only to advanced students. Ferris et al. (1997), who analysed the feedback whose sole purpose was to offer positive views, found that teachers give empowering and positive comments only to high-achieving students and directive, mechanical, and negative comments to the poor ones.

#### **2.2.2.7 Variation in teachers' WCF**

Another issue in WCF research arises from the body of work on the students' preference of WCF, suggesting that student writers should be offered a range of feedback types depending on their levels (e.g. Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990). Other lines of research on WCF in SLA also indicate that there is a great deal of individual variation in students' ability to process teacher WCF and utilize it for their writing development.

According to researchers (Ferris, 2002; Storch, 2010; Van Beuningen, 2010), teachers need to realize that differences in students' levels of proficiency will affect both the amount of errors that they make as well as the explicitness of feedback. As for the explicitness of WCF, Ferris (2002) argued that direct feedback is more appropriate for less proficient students. For advanced EFL students, a cryptic code marked above an error (e.g. "vt") might be sufficient to elicit an entire system of formally learned terms and rules. Beginners, however, who are not very far along in either formal knowledge or language acquisition might be bewildered by such a mark, and if they do not understand it, they are unable to successfully correct the error. For students at lower proficiency levels, it may not be effective to simply locate an error (with or without a code) and ask the students to figure out the correct form. Instead, students may benefit from direct correction- the teacher providing the correct forms- and the opportunity to revise or recopy text with the corrections instead. Similar to Ferris's (2002) suggestion, Ferris et al. (1997) found that teachers tend to give indirect feedback to high-achieving students as they have the ability to self-correct, while giving direct correction to low-achieving students as they are unable to correct their errors themselves.

According to Bitchener and Ferris (2012) and Lee (2013), the teacher's choice of the amount of WCF is governed by many wider factors such as the purpose of marking and the students' proficiency levels. For example, if the teacher's aim is helping learners identify and learn to edit their most pervasive error patterns, they may provide selective correction strategies. Similarly, selective WCF is more effective with beginner students who are at an early stage of developing a text and teachers may focus their feedback primarily on language rather than content. Conversely, teachers may give comprehensive feedback with advanced students to enable them notice all of their errors which in turn helps them to produce an error-free text. Ferris (2002) has also argued that students' feelings depend on the amount of teacher feedback; too much WCF is irritating especially for beginner students who suffer from a large number of errors on their

writing.

Variation in teachers' WCF in response to different students has not been investigated from teachers' beliefs and/or practices perspective (Ferris et al., 2011). Such studies can help us to understand better why some teachers distinguish between students of different levels. As a result, the present study aims at investigating teachers' beliefs and their actual practices regarding WCF.

### **2.3 Previous research on teachers' beliefs, students' views, and teachers' practices regarding WCF**

Until recently, most studies about teachers' WCF in L2 writing focused primarily on two types of inquiries. The first tackles teachers' WCF beliefs and/or practices, and the second consists of research assessing student reactions to or preferences toward teachers' WCF. These two types of studies are reviewed in the following two sections (2.3.1 and 2.3.2).

#### **2.3.1 Teachers' beliefs and practices about WCF**

Studies that have investigated teachers' beliefs and practices about teachers' WCF and which have also examined the alignment between these two are scarce. Studies on L2 teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF can be classified into two groups. The first group of studies examines beliefs (Jodaie and Farrokhi, 2012), practices (Ferris et al., 1997), and teachers' self-reported practices and their actual practices (Ferris et al., 2011) separately without trying to compare them (see table 2.2). The second group of studies, in table 2.3, aims at comparing teachers' actual practices and their self-reported practices (Montgomery and Baker; 2007; Lee, 2008a; Norouzian and Farahani, 2012), teachers' beliefs and their self-reported practices (Lee, 2003), and teachers' beliefs and their actual practices (Lee, 2009).

Study	Aim(s)	Subjects and Methods	Main Findings
Ferris et al. (1997)	They explored both the linguistic forms and pragmatic aims of teachers' WCF. They also tackled the variations that may exist in teacher's WCF practices across the students' different proficiency levels.	They analysed one teacher's comments on a sample of 111 essays by 47 ESL advanced learners at an American University.	It was found that the teacher responded somewhat differently to students of varying ability levels. For example, she gave empowering and positive comments only to good students while giving directive, mechanical, and negative comments to the poor ones.
Jodaie and Farrokhi (2012)	They aimed at finding out how teachers should correct grammatical errors, the types of grammatical errors that should be corrected, and the amount of grammar feedback.	30 EFL university teachers on intermediate level students in Iran were surveyed to find out their beliefs about WCF.	They found that 100% of the teachers believe that there should be as few grammatical errors as possible. In addition, most teachers preferred comprehensive feedback. As for the explicitness of feedback, while 70% of the teachers preferred the direct approach, the other teachers believe in combining both direct feedback and indirect feedback.
Ferris et al. (2011)	They examined teachers' self-reported practices and their actual practices.	129 ESL college writing teachers -from two universities and six community colleges in the U.S were surveyed, from which 23 were interviewed, about their self-reported WCF practices. Moreover, samples of the teachers' comments on students' texts were analysed to get their actual practices.	They found that teachers tend to correct all student errors comprehensively and that they rely on themselves as the only source of feedback.

**Table 2.2 Studies on teachers' beliefs or practices regarding WCF**

However, studying teachers' beliefs or practices in isolation may give an incomplete picture of the real situation (Borg, 2006). In addition, the data reported in Ferris et al.'s (1997) study were based on the analysis of one teacher's practices and it is difficult for the results to be generalised to teachers in other contexts.

Study	Aim(s)	Subjects and Methods	Main Findings
Montgomery and Baker (2007)	They compared teachers' actual practices and their self-reported practices (i.e. teachers' assessment about their practices) in respect to their WCF. They also examined the misfits between teachers' actual practices and students' perceptions of their teachers' practices.	98 students and 15 ESL writing teachers in an English Language institute in the US were surveyed to examine teachers' self-reported practices and students' perceptions of their teachers' WCF. To find out teachers' actual practices, the researchers collected 12 students' texts from the portfolios of six of the teachers' students and the frequencies of teachers' feedback comments given in different categories in the 12 texts were calculated.	The researchers found that teachers' practices of giving written feedback were very different to their self-reported practices. For example, they found that teachers overestimated the amount of the feedback they gave on global issues (i.e., organisation) and underestimated the feedback they gave on local issues (i.e., language form). The researchers noted that when the teachers were told about this discrepancy, they were very surprised. This indicates that teachers clearly are not always aware of their actual practices of feedback.
Norouzian and Farahani (2012)	They examined the potential areas of mismatch between teachers' self-reported practices and their actual feedback practices. They also explored the possible misfits between teachers' beliefs and students' preferences of WCF.	15 L2 teachers and 45 students at the University of Tehran, Iran were surveyed to find out teachers' self-reported practices and students' preferences. Moreover, teachers' WCF on students' text were analysed to find out their practices.	The findings revealed the misfits between teachers' actual practices and their self-reported practices and between teachers' beliefs and students' preferences regarding the amount of WCF (comprehensive vs. selective) and the explicitness of WCF (direct vs. indirect). Most teachers stated that they followed the comprehensive approach of WCF which was in accordance with students' preferences and with teachers' actual practices. As far as the explicitness of WCF goes, a majority of teachers stated that they marked indirectly by using error codes, which does not align with their real practices and students' preferences for the direct WCF.

Lee (2003)	She compared teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices.	She administered a questionnaire to 206 secondary English instructors in Hong Kong followed by interviews with 19 of them to understand their views about WCF.	Results indicated that teachers' purpose of WCF is to help students recognize their errors and to fix them. Moreover, the majority of teachers preferred the comprehensive WCF and using the indirect feedback by providing marking codes. In addition, after commenting on students' texts, most of the teachers stated that they tend to discuss students' common errors in class.
Lee (2008b)	She examined mismatches between teachers' actual practices and the school recommended principles.	She analysed the feedback by 26 English instructors in Hong Kong to 174 students' texts, followed up by interviews with 6 of the instructors to examine the factors that have affected their WCF practices.	She found that teachers tend to give feedback on single-draft classrooms. In addition, regardless to students' proficiency level, all students want to receive WCF from teachers and favoured the more explicit WCF. However, students faced difficulty understanding some of their teacher WCF, which could be due to its illegibility of feedback. The results also indicated that teachers' WCF, which was teacher-centred, made students passive reliant on teachers. Lee finally concluded that teachers' WCF practices are influenced by a myriad of contextual factors including the institutional and cultural context, such as the influence of the exams and schools policy.
Lee (2009)	She explored the mismatches between teachers' beliefs and their actual practices.	She surveyed 206 English instructors in Hong Kong and interviewed 19 of them. She also analysed 26 teachers' WCF practices on 174 texts which were followed by interviews with seven of them.	Lee discovered ten mismatches between teachers' beliefs and practices. In particular, she found that teachers give a disproportionate amount of attention to language error in their feedback; that they primarily utilize comprehensive, direct error feedback rather than selective indirect feedback; and that they respond only to final, graded student papers, rather than preliminary drafts. Lee (2009) also noted that the teachers in her study wanted to follow their beliefs but felt constrained from doing so by a range of external factors.

**Table 2.3 Studies comparing between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF**



However, the studies in Table 2.3 were not free from limitations. Most importantly, some of these studies did not examine teachers' beliefs, which is an important issue in understanding their WCF practices. Studies investigating teachers' beliefs in other instructional domains have consistently shown that beliefs have a significant influence on teachers' practices (Burns 1992; Borg 2001), since teachers "construct their own personal and workable theories of teaching" (Basturkmen et al., 2004: 244). Besides, studies (e.g. Lee, 2003) which yielded evidence about what teachers think that they do in the classroom regarding WCF provision, i.e., their self-reported practices, do not provide a clear picture on how teachers in reality respond to student writing. Lee (2009) was able to avoid this limitation by examining teachers' actual WCF practices through the analysis of teachers' feedback comments. However, Lee's (2009) study was also limited in that she did not explain in her article the procedure that she followed in analysing the teachers' commentary and on what basis she drew her conclusions.

In sum, this section presented previous studies about teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF, and the limitations of these studies. More in-depth critical analysis of these studies will be presented in section 2.3.3.

### **2.3.2 Students' views about WCF**

Studies on students' views on teachers' WCF have typically investigated one or more of the following issues: students' preferences about the types of WCF they would like to receive, students' reactions to teachers' WCF they have received, the problems students have with their WCF, and how seriously students take teachers' WCF. Similar to teachers' beliefs and practices research, studies on students' views can be classified into three groups: the first group, which constitutes the majority of the studies (Cohen, 1987; Leki, 1991; Ferris 1995b; Hedgcock and Lefkowitz, 1994; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Diab, 2005), examined students' preferences in isolation of teachers' actual practices (see table 2.4). The second group of research, presented

in table 2.5 (Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990; Lee, 2004), investigated the relationship between the students' beliefs and their preferences about their WCF and teachers' actual practices. The last group (Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Zacharias, 2012; Grami, 2005; Hamouda, 2011) compared teachers' beliefs and students' preferences towards WCF (see table 2.6). A summary of the studies covering these issues is provided in the following tables (2.4, 2.5, and 2.6).

Study	Aim(s)	Subjects and Methods	Main findings
Cohen (1987)	He explored students' attitudes, reaction, and problems regarding WCF.	217 college students at a U.S university were surveyed.	Although students reported that they read and attended to teacher's WCF, they had trouble understanding or using teacher comments when they were cryptic such as 'confusing' or 'not clear'. Cohen concluded that "the activity of teacher feedback as currently constituted and realized may have more limited impact on the learners than teachers would desire" (p. 66).
Leki (1991)	He investigated two major issues: students' concerns with errors in their writing, and the best ways –in students' opinion- for teachers to give error feedback.	100 university ESL writers were surveyed.	The findings reveal that students were very concerned about errors in their writing and aimed to have as few errors as possible. Students also reported that teachers should concentrate mostly on their language form errors. Moreover, students favoured the comprehensive approach of WCF over the selective one, and 67% of students preferred the teacher to correct their errors explicitly.
Ferris (1995b)	She looked at students' attitudes, preferences, and reaction regarding WCF.	155 ESL college students in a U.S. university were surveyed.	She found that students read, benefited, and attended to their teachers' WCF. Students reported that their teachers gave them feedback on the various writing aspects, but like students in other studies, they believed that feedback on language form was the most important to them. The students stated that they experience a few problems in comprehending teachers' WCF. Moreover, although students reported that they appreciate positive comments of praise, they expressed strong preference for a mixture of praise and constructive criticism.

Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1994)	They investigated the differences in writing contexts and students' motivation by comparing the responses between FL classes and ESL students at a U.S. university.	They surveyed 247 students about their attitudes to teacher WCF and how teacher WCF affected their views of text quality and their writing processes.	As with previous studies, students were more concerned with issues of grammatical accuracy. Both group of students expressed occasional confusion about interpreting teachers' marks and corrections. Hedgcock and lefkowitz concluded that "instructors reported response habits may exert a strong influence on the views of L2 writers about the priority of formal accuracy over the transmission of meaning, and vice versa" (p. 299).
Ferris and Roberts (2001)	They examined students' preferences regarding WCF.	63 university ESL students were surveyed.	They found students' preference to receive WCF on local issues and that students considered errors in language form as serious and negatively affected their writing. However, unlike most previous studies, students favoured the indirect WCF with error codes attached to other types of feedback.
Diab (2005)	He explored students' opinion about what constitutes effective WCF.	156 EFL university students' preferences at the American University of Beirut (AUB) were surveyed.	The findings revealed that most students wanted to have as few errors as possible in their text. As for the focus of WCF, students believe that teachers' WCF should cover a whole range of writing issues including language form, organisation, the ideas expressed in the text, and the writing style. Moreover, as with most previous studies, most students believed in the explicit WCF, believing that teachers should locate the errors and give correction or clue about how to correct. In addition, most students (63%) stated that they read all teachers' feedback on their writing carefully.

**Table 2.4 Studies on students' preferences regarding WCF**

Table 2.4 shows that studies on students' preferences towards WCF suffer from some limitations. For example, although Cohen's study broke new ground and posed important questions, it is limited in several important ways. First, his subjects were drawn from ESL writers, English-speaking students in foreign language classes, and native English-speaking writers in freshman composition classes. There is no discussion of the possible impact of differing subject characteristics and writing contexts on the results (Ferris, 1999b; Hedgcock and Lefkowitz, 1994). Moreover, Cohen's comments about the "limited impact" of the activity of teacher feedback as

currently realized does not adequately reflect the fact that his study does not explain what the activity of teacher feedback consists of. It merely refers to the degree to which students say they consider and utilize feedback in their writing.

Study	Aim(s)	Subjects and Methods	Main findings
Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990)	They investigated the relationship between students' beliefs and preferences about their WCF and teachers' actual practices.	The researchers obtained the data through triangulation of data collection methods by interviewing 9 Brazilian EFL students and 3 teachers, analysing teachers' feedback on students' texts, and implementing think-aloud protocols to observe teachers' WCF practices.	They found that students' beliefs about WCF were generally consistent with teachers' observed practices. In line with most studies (e.g. Cohen, 1987), students in this study preferred their teacher to prioritize errors related to language form and want to receive comprehensive WCF. Moreover, students reported their desire to receive positive feedback on their writing. On the other hand, results on teachers' practices revealed some differences regarding the focus of WCF. While the EFL language institute teacher focused on language issues in students' writing, the EFL university teacher focused on the organisation. Teachers also believe that they should fulfil students' needs and expectations and that they should modify their feedback to suit students' proficiency levels.
Lee (2004)	She compared between students' preferences and teachers' actual practices.	She surveyed 320 secondary school students in Hong Kong and had follow up interviews with 27 of them. In addition, to analyse teachers' actual WCF practices, she asked 58 teachers to correct one written text developed by her.	The findings demonstrated that students' preferences aligned strongly with their teachers' WCF practices. Similar to teachers' actual practices, most (83%) of the students preferred the comprehensive WCF, most of them (76%) favoured the direct approach on their errors, and that most of them reported that they face difficulty in understanding some of their teachers' WCF especially the coded feedback (e.g. 'SP' for spelling), and most students believed that it is their teachers' job to give WCF on their text while a fewer number of students thought that teachers should also employ other methods such as peer feedback and self-editing.

**Table 2.5 Studies on the relationship between students' preferences and teachers' practices**

Table 2.5 reveals that the two studies on the relationship between students' preferences and

teachers' practices are not free from limitations. Cohen and Cavalcanti's (1990) study has certain limitations in that there were few participants and that these student participants had different teachers who were drawn from three distinct institutions. In addition, teachers' practices in Lee's (2004) study were revealed from the analysis of teacher comments on one students' writing. While analysing teachers' WCF on the same piece of writing is easier than analysing all the students' authentic papers, the latter provides more natural and valid data for a fully ethnographic kind of qualitative study (Scholfield, 2012; personal communication). Therefore, in the main study, the researcher aims at analysing teachers' WCF through collecting the students' actual texts.

Study	Aim(s)	Subjects and Methods	Main findings
Amrhein and Nassaji (2010)	They compared teachers' beliefs and students' preferences towards WCF.	Questionnaires were administered to 33 ESL students and 31 ESL teachers at two different private English-language schools in Canada.	The findings revealed both similarities and differences between students and teachers. Both students and teachers shared the same beliefs concerning the amount of WCF, believing that it is most useful for teachers to provide feedback on as many errors as possible. However, teachers and students disagreed regarding the focus of WCF. While students showed preference for the various aspects in writing, most teachers were opted to attend to language form.
Zacharias (2012)	He compared between teachers' beliefs and students' preferences towards WCF.	He surveyed 100 students and made a follow-up interviews with 21 of them. Moreover, 20 teachers were also surveyed and 10 of them were interviewed.	The results confirmed to the previous findings which show that students and teachers believed in the importance of WCF. Moreover, both students and teachers stated that teachers' WCF should be specific, believing that this kind of feedback would facilitate the students' revision process. As with most previous studies, students wanted their teacher to focus mostly on language form errors. In addition, data obtained from the interviews revealed that teachers' WCF contribute greatly to students' motivation and attitudes towards writing.
Grami (2005)	He explored students' preferences about their teachers' WCF.	He surveyed 33 Saudi university students.	The findings showed that the students viewed teachers' WCF as effective and also believed that feedback on language form is of great importance in improving their subsequent writing accuracy. The results also demonstrated the students' preference in peer feedback.

Hamouda (2011)	He examined students' preferences and teachers beliefs and identified the difficulties that they faced in the process of feedback.	He Surveyed 200 first-year Saudi EFL students and 20 of their teachers about WCF.	The data suggested that both teachers and students believed in the effectiveness of teachers' WCF. In addition, both teachers and students shared similar beliefs regarding giving constructive criticism and the use of red pen for marking. However, there were a few discrepancies concerning the focus and the amount of WCF. While students believe that teachers' WCF should be direct, teachers believe that they should provide some indirect feedback as to help students think of the correct form. As for the amount of WCF, whereas most students preferred receiving feedback in a comprehensive way, teachers believed that they should adopt the selective approach.
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**Table 2.6 Studies on students' preferences and teachers' beliefs regarding WCF**

The findings of studies on students' preferences and teachers' beliefs regarding WCF, as demonstrated in Table 2.6, were based on self-report data from teachers and students with no reference to the teachers' actual WCF practices. Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) argued that studies on teachers' actual WCF practices are an important means for measuring the extent to which teachers' beliefs are mirrored in their actual practices and also to examine the extent to which students' preferences for WCF are fulfilled by teachers' actual practices. Therefore, the present study aims at examining these issues by comparing teachers' beliefs to their practices and also by comparing students' preferences to teachers' actual practices.

The following section presents a critical analysis of all the aforementioned studies in section 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 and it also highlights the rationale for the present study.

### **2.3.3 Critique of studies on L2 teachers' beliefs and practices and/or students' preferences in WCF**

A review of the existing literature on ESL/EFL writing teachers' beliefs and practices and students' preferences reveals two issues. One relates to the focus of these studies, and the other tackles the methodology used to examine these studies.

As for the focus of WCF studies, the review above shows that studies that have investigated both teachers' beliefs and practices and students' preferences are scarce. The majority of WCF research "has relied too heavily on either student reports or researchers descriptions and judgments without adequately consulting teachers themselves as informants about what they do with feedback and why" (Ferris et al., 2011: 19). Few studies have investigated teachers' beliefs and their actual WCF practices. Even those studies - except for Lee (2009b)- failed to discuss the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices. As a result, not much is known about the extent to which teachers' WCF beliefs are mirrored in their actual practices (Lee, 2009, 2013). According to Norouzian and Farahani (2012), comparing teachers' beliefs to their practices can be essential for a comprehensive investigation of the effectiveness of WCF. Moreover, teachers' beliefs and practices play an important role in writing instruction, as they have an impact on the learning and teaching processes (Griffiths, 2007).

Furthermore, none of the studies conducted in Saudi Arabia so far has investigated the actual feedback provided by teachers and examined to what extent these practices are aligned with their beliefs and students' preferences. Hamouda (2011) maintained that little is known about why writing instructors in SA respond to students' text in the ways they do, and whether any incongruences exist between teachers' stated beliefs and their WCF practices or the reason(s) that might account for that discrepancy. Therefore, the present study is one of the few studies that have attempted to compare the L2 teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF in ESL/EFL contexts in general and in a Saudi setting in particular. Such studies are important given that teachers in Saudi universities come from different ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Arabs, Africans, Asians and European) while students tend to be all Saudi. Studying the different beliefs those different teachers hold and the influence of the Saudi context on those teachers is important since beliefs and practices may vary across individuals as well as across contexts (Richardson, 1996;

Thompson, 1992).

In addition to the scarcity of teachers' WCF beliefs and practices research, studies, except for Lee (2009), did not examine the factors that might have influenced teachers' beliefs and/ or practices. Straub (1997), however, claimed that WCF can not be isolated from the classroom context. Therefore, the present study attempts to uncover the reason(s) behind teachers' practices and the contextual factors that prevented teachers from enacting their beliefs.

As for the students' WCF research, while many studies have been conducted on students' attitudes and perceptions of teachers' WCF, only three studies (Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990; Lee, 2004; Montgomery and Baker, 2007) that investigated the mismatch(s) between students' preferences and teachers' actual WCF practices, have explored the preference of EFL university students' for WCF and their beliefs regarding feedback. The present study extends the findings of these three studies by identifying the possible mis/matches between students' preferences and teachers' actual practices. Such a comparison helps to "provide EFL teachers with more insights into giving effective feedback" (Chiang, 2004: 110). In addition to examining the potential mis/matches between students' preferences and teachers' actual practices, the present study also aims at finding out students' attitudes and their reaction to their teachers' WCF. As Straub (1997: 113) noted, "future studies might take up a number of questions, such as how students react to comments made on their own writing in actual classroom settings".

Methodologically, most studies on L2 teachers' beliefs and/or practices "tended to focus on necessarily limited perspective of a particular group of informants, often without any effort to triangulate data by, for example, surveying teachers or examining comments" (Ferris, 2003: 29). Most studies employed one method of data collection, namely surveys, to explore students' preferences, teachers' beliefs, and their self-reported practices (Montgomery and Baker, 2007; 21). However, as far as teachers' beliefs about WCF are concerned, the surveys are unable to probe



deeply into teachers' and students' thinking (Lee, 2004). Questionnaires may not be adequate in terms of capturing the complexity of teachers' beliefs (Borg, 2006). In addition, since teachers' responses to students' writing is only one aspect of the complex interactions among students and teachers, other ethnographic methods such as classroom observations and think-aloud protocols of the teachers while correcting the students' texts should be utilized to find out whether previous results of discourse analytic research provide an accurate reflection of the teacher-student relationship and the writing classroom (Ferris et al., 1997). However, as has been argued by Bitchener and Ferris (2012), previous WCF research did not attempt to employ observation to study the other types of classroom activities that can support students' language and writing development and the institutional factors which describe a writing class. Similarly, except for Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990), there is no study that has employed think-aloud protocols to reveal teachers' thoughts and methods when giving feedback on their students' writing.

Unlike the experimental designs and the questionnaires which examine previously determined variables (Ferris, 1995; Diab, 2005; Grami, 2005), the present research utilizes multiple qualitative data collection methods, namely the teacher and student semi-structured interviews (to get their beliefs about the use of WCF), teacher think-aloud protocols (to observe teachers' actual practices while correcting their students' papers), feedback analysis of the students' papers (to get teachers' actual practices of the use of WCF), and classroom observations (to get teachers' actual practices of the use of WCF), and stimulated recall (to compare teachers' beliefs and practices). It is believed that this involvement of multiple methods and stakeholders might help to provide a clearer picture of the situation under investigation.

## **2.4 Research questions**

The present study, which investigates university writing teachers and their students at a Saudi university, intends to answer the following five research questions (RQs):

**RQ1:** What are the L2 writing teachers' beliefs regarding giving WCF on their students' writing?

**RQ2:** What are the L2 writing teachers' practices regarding giving WCF on their students' writing?

**RQ3:** To what extent do teachers' beliefs regarding WCF match their actual practices?

**RQ4:** What are the contextual factors that influence writing teachers' practices when giving WCF on their students' writing?

**RQ5:** To what extent do teachers' actual practices match students' preferences regarding giving WCF on their students' writing?

## **2.5 Chapter summary**

This literature review chapter has addressed two major topics. The first topic tackled the theoretical framework of teachers' beliefs and practices, by highlighting the importance and usefulness of studying the teachers' professed beliefs through their observed practices. This could provide a better understanding of the tensions between what teachers do (i.e., realities) and what they believe they should do (i.e., ideals). The second topic, which represents the essence of this study, presented the main issues in WCF research, which are, the purpose of WCF, the focus of WCF, the amount of WCF, the explicitness of WCF, the source of WCF, the positive feedback, and the change in teachers' WCF. A wide range of studies about teachers' beliefs, their practices, and students' preferences in providing WCF have also been analysed. The chapter ends by reviewing the research questions for the present study. The methodological procedures that were employed to find out the answers to these questions will be described in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter starts by presenting the theoretical stance of the study and by identifying the research type and paradigm (section 3.1), the study design and framework (section 3.2), and the data collection methods of this research (section 3.3). It then looks at the data collection procedures by describing how the pilot study and the main study were conducted (sections 3.4 and 3.5). Finally, the chapter explains how the collected data was analysed (section 3.6), and provides a consideration of validity and reliability (section 3.7) and the inter-rater reliability check (section 3.8).

### 3.1 Research type and paradigm

Since qualitative studies are mostly employed with the aim of understanding and exploring peoples' thinking and experiencing their lives (Dörnyei, 2007), the present study is a qualitative research as it aims at exploring and describing the beliefs of writing teachers about the use of WCF and their actual practices. However, the study is not a purely qualitative one since it includes some quantitative (deductive) features. The qualitative (inductive) elements of the present study are illustrated in the following:

- (1) Evaluative interpretative paradigm:** This study can be described as having an interpretative and a constructivist orientation. The goal of such research is to understand and present teachers' experiences, attitudes, what meanings they give to their actions, and how they get along in a particular setting. The study also compares teachers' beliefs against established norms (Yin 2003; Duff 2008). Specifically, the characteristics that are typical of the current interpretative and constructivist research are as follows:
- It focuses on the meanings of contingent and often subjective events and describes the meanings from the perspective of the participants (i.e. teachers and students) involved in

the phenomena (i.e. providing WCF on students' writing) (Borg 1998; Yin 2003).

- It aims to compare teachers' views and practices against the research supported practices (Borg, 1998; Yin, 2003; Duff, 2008).
- It involves an iterative rather than linear data collection and analysis process, for the data analysis moves back and forth between data collection, and data interpretation depends on the emergent results, as opposed to a linear approach when collecting all the data before beginning to analyse them (Miles and Huberman, 1994).
- It is naturalistic rather than experimental research design, for it examines and interprets observable phenomena within real-life context (Nunan 1992).

**(2) Naturalistic research setting:** This study took place in a natural setting, at the University of Dammam, with the purpose of describing phenomena (i.e. writing teachers' beliefs about giving WCF and their actual practices and students' beliefs about WCF) as they occur naturally (i.e. while teachers are correcting students papers and while they are teaching writing classes). The study attempted to understand the impact of different factors (e.g., contextual, educational, institutional, experiential, social etc.) on teachers' practices. In addition, being a former teacher in the same university and spending prolonged time in the research setting while collecting data, I was familiar with the research setting and the participants. According to Dörnyei (2007), being aware of the research site and the participants are important features of qualitative studies.

**(3) Emic perspective:** The study is concerned with subjective opinions, experiences, and feelings of individuals (i.e. writing teachers and their students) and thus the explicit goal of the research is to explore the participants' point of views of the situation being studied. Hence, the study allows for an emic perspective, i.e., an interpretation of human behaviour is based upon meanings which people attribute to and bring to situations (Punch, 2005).

**(4) Qualitative methods:** The study has employed multiple qualitative methods. These include teachers and students' semi-structured interviews (to elicit their beliefs about the use of WCF), teachers' think-aloud protocol (to observe teachers' actual practices while correcting their students' writing), feedback analysis of students' papers (to explore teachers' actual practices of the use of WCF), unstructured classroom observations (to get teachers' actual practices of the use of WCF), and stimulated recall interviews (to compare teachers' beliefs and practices). The reason for employing qualitative methods was that quantitative methods (e.g. questionnaires) do not give the teachers the chance to reflect on their ideas but rather the ideas of the researcher are imposed on the teachers, which in turn leads to an "etic" rather than "emic" perspective on beliefs (Munby, 1984). Moreover, although researchers (e.g. Basturkmen et al., 2004; Borg, 2006, 2009; Oppenheim, 1992) admitted that teachers' cognition can be examined through quantitative methods, they argued that these methods are not sufficient to understand teachers' beliefs because they "may not cover the full range of beliefs that respondents have or want to talk about" (Borg, 2006: 185). Conversely, qualitative methods enable researchers to check for any misinterpretation of the teachers' views (Richards, 2003). Borg (1998a: 34), who explored L2 teachers' beliefs and practices regarding grammar teaching, concluded that qualitative methods allow for a large amount of descriptive data to be collected. He argued that "descriptive data allow phenomena to be analysed and represented in a form closer to participants' perceptions of reality than a qualitative data do".

**(5) Sampling:** as in most qualitative studies, the present study had a purposive sample (10 writing teachers and 30 students), that is, participants who were chosen based on predetermined criteria (see section 3.4.2). Having a purposive sample, which is another feature of qualitative approach (Mackey and Gass, 2005), means that the study is less concerned with generalizability.

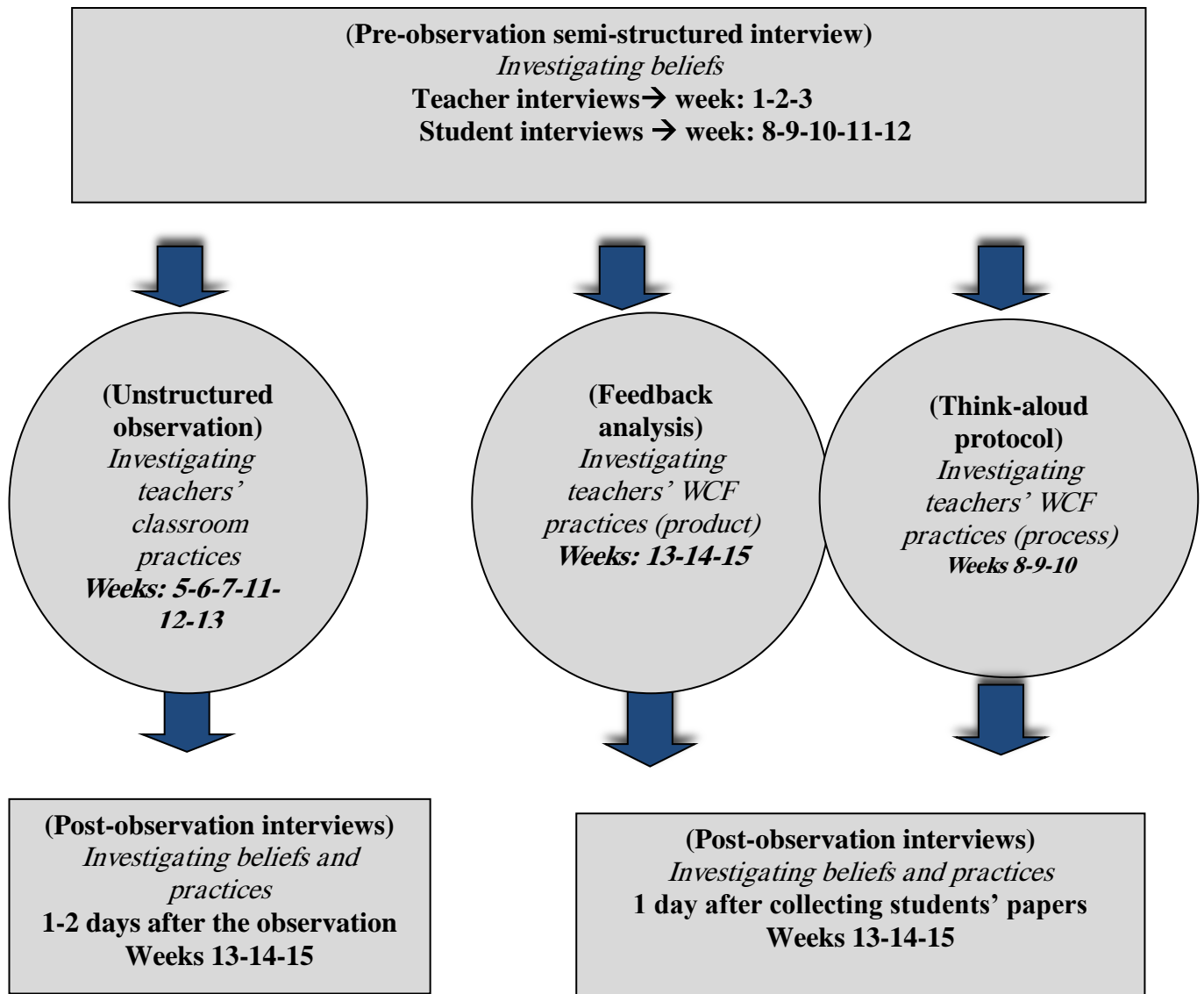
However, while in purely qualitative research, the researcher enters the research process without having preconceived hypothesis or predetermined categories as they emerge throughout the study (Dörnyei, 2007), the present study begins with descriptive categories that were taken from the literature as well as my knowledge of the research site. This study was based on the basic WCF issues that are commonly discussed in the literature by Ferris (1997, 2002, 2003, 2008), Ferris et al. (2011), Bitchener and Ferris (2012), Lee (2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2013), Montgomery and Baker (2007), and many others. These issues include the purpose of providing WCF, amount of WCF, explicitness of WCF, and the source of WCF. This is a classical feature of a deductive approach to analysis (i.e., top-down) which, in turn, led to structuring of instruments and data analysis.

As for the instrumentation, the semi-structured interviews and stimulated recall in this study contained some structured parts consisting of some closed questions that include prompt cards (see section 3.3.1). However, prompt cards were used only to help participants elicit more information after giving their complete answers. Moreover, unlike a purely quantitative study in which these categories are not flexible to accept any additions or changes once the research is undertaken, the research design of this study remained somewhat open and fluid so that it can respond in a flexible way to new details that may emerge during the process of investigation, this flexibility even applied to the research questions, which may evolve, change, or be refined during the study (e.g. after the emergence of the data, the researcher decided to assign a new research question on students' attitudes and preferences about WCF) (see section 3.4.5.2). In concordance with data analysis, although thematic codes were assigned to the raw data, some codes were derived from the literature (see section 3.6). Moreover, descriptive statistics (i.e. numerical data) were presented to provide a picture of the frequency of use of teachers' actual practices regarding the focus, the amount, and the explicitness of WCF (e.g. how many times teachers give students WCF on the language form) (see section 5.2.2).

A controversial question is whether researchers have to enter a qualitative project with only minimal background knowledge so as not to ‘contaminate’ the emergent nature of the study. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), qualitative results should ‘emerge’ naturally without any biased interference of the researcher. They believed that the researcher’s ‘theoretical sensitivity’ should only appear when the data has already been collected and partially analysed so that the concepts and hypotheses that have emerged from the data can be combined with existing knowledge. Conversely, most researchers have questioned the reality of this prerequisite. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003), for example, pointed out that few social scientists would conduct unplanned and unstructured research, with no orientation or point of view to guide them. On the contrary, the most established social researchers have extensive backgrounds in the areas that they are studying. Patton (2001) argued that the review of relevant literature prior to conducting the study can bring a focus to a study because it tells us what is known and what is unknown. Hence, it has allowed me to see if there are some WCF practices that are commonly found in other studies and that were not practiced by participants in my study. This position was taken in the present study because working purely bottom up can never identify what is missing from the entire data. Therefore, this study follows Hyde (2000: 88), who stated that: “extreme induction could deprive the researcher of useful theoretical perspectives which can help guide the exploration of a phenomenon; and extreme deduction could preclude the researcher from developing new theory”.

### **3.2 Study design and framework**

This study uses a triangulation of methods (see figure 3.1) because triangulating methods reduce the observer and interviewer bias and enhance the validity and reliability of the information (Johnson, 1992). Moreover, Borg (2009) stated that for studying teachers’ beliefs and practices, a wide range of methodological possibilities should be employed.



**Figure 3.1: Study design**

Figure 3.1 shows the sequential order of the methods employed in the study. In teacher cognition research, the issue of whether conducting interviews should precede observations or not has been a controversial one. Some researchers (e.g. Gahin, 2001, Mansour, 2009) believe that conducting the interviews before the observation generates more valid data. They argue that if teachers were observed first, they might change their beliefs in the interviews or adjust their answers based on the questions asked. Conversely, other researchers (e.g. Nettle, 1998) argue that if the interviews were first conducted, teachers might change some of their practices. In this study, the interviews



were conducted before the observations. Following the common practices in the literature (Borg, 2006), the present study starts with the interviews.

In order to minimise the effect of this sequence of methods on teachers' behaviour (i.e. to ensure that teachers' practices would not be affected), the researcher carefully explained the purpose of the study by reassuring the teachers that the purpose of the study was not to evaluate their teaching practices. Moreover, almost half of the writing classes (5 out of 12 classes) throughout the semester were observed. This lessened the probability of teachers changing their practices. Finally, in the students' interviews, the researcher asked if they noticed any changes on their behaviours in the observed classes but all confirmed that their teachers' practices were the same as usual. However, as Borg (2006: 236) argues, there is "no way of identifying the extent to which what is observed is typical of normal practices". Therefore, the observation data always needs to be taken into consideration with caution.

### **3.3 Methods**

This part reviews the definition(s), types, advantages and drawbacks of the methods (interviews, observation, think-aloud protocols, and stimulated recall) used in this study. It will also show how each instrument was designed in this study.

#### **3.3.1 Interviews**

Interviews are defined by Frey and Oishi (1995: 1) as "a purposeful conversation in which one person asks prepared questions (interviewer) and another answers them (respondent)" with the purpose of gaining information on a particular topic. Since the study is concerned with the subjective opinions of individuals (i.e. emic perspectives) (see section 3.1), interviews were used as they allow the researchers to investigate the non-observable phenomena such as perceptions,

feelings, behaviours, intentions, and situations that occurred at some point in time (Patton, 2001).

Bitchener and Ferris (2012: 114) explained the importance of combining classroom observations with interviews by stating the following:

Since teacher response is only one aspect of the complex interaction among the student, teacher, and institutional factors which describe a writing class, techniques such as observation and interviews of teachers and students should be employed to assess whether the conclusions of discourse analytic research are accurate reflections of classroom settings and teacher-student relationships.

From the three different types of interviews (structured, semi-structured, and unstructured), the semi-structured interviews were used because they are flexible, by allowing the researcher to digress and probe for further questions on issues that are not very clear and the interviewee is given the opportunity to expand on issues and events that seem to be important (Bryman, 2004: 314). Moreover, they are interactive since the researchers may elicit further information when the initial answers are imprecise, incomplete, unclear, and/or off-topic (Dörnyei, 2007).

Interviews have been criticised. One criticism of the interviews in teacher cognition research, which aims at eliciting mental constructs (i.e. beliefs), is that they obtain abstract data which lack in reference to the concrete contextual details which are essential in understanding teachers' conceptions of their work in ways which have practical meaning (Borg, 2006). To avoid these pitfalls, the interviews were triangulated with other methods (i.e. classroom observations, think-aloud protocols, and stimulated recall interviews). Moreover, it has been argued that asking teachers directly about their beliefs is a less productive way to elicit their beliefs:

Teachers are often unaware of their beliefs, they do not always possess language with which do describe and label their beliefs, and they may be reluctant to espouse them publicly. Thus, a direct question such as 'What is your philosophy of teaching?' is usually an ineffective or counterproductive way to elicit beliefs (Kagan, 1992: 66).

The purpose of the teachers' interview was to explore their perceptions about the writing course and writing instruction, to examine their beliefs regarding the use of WCF on students' writing, and to gain further information on the wider (non-linguistic) issues that influence their beliefs and, therefore, inform their practices. Similarly, the students' interview aims at revealing the students' attitudes about the writing course and to examine their beliefs regarding their writing teachers' practices of WCF.

The teachers' semi-structured interview questions were divided into two main parts (see Appendix A): (I)- general background questions and (II)- specific beliefs about giving written corrective feedback (WCF). Part I is divided into three sections. The first section includes the teachers' profiles and contains questions, for example, about the teachers' level of education, teaching experiences, and the way in which teachers prepare themselves to teach writing. The second section tackles the teachers' attitudes towards teaching writing, that is, whether they like teaching writing or not, the extent to which teachers view the writing course as helpful, the way in which students can develop their writing skills, and the challenges that they face while teaching writing. The third section addresses questions about the institutional factors such as the materials the teachers use, the syllabus the teachers follow, the writing tasks, and if they have the freedom to change and/or add on the syllabus.

Part II is divided into seven sections. It asks about the following issues regarding teachers' beliefs in giving written corrective feedback (WCF): (1) the purpose of WCF, (2) the amount of WCF to provide, (3) the focus of WCF, (4) the explicitness of WCF, (5) the source of WCF, (6) the variation in WCF depending on the students' proficiency levels, and (7) the follow up procedures after providing feedback on students' writing.

The pre-observation semi-structured interview contained open-ended questions where the participants were encouraged to talk freely about different issues and dimensions. These open-

ended questions were also followed by ‘why’ and ‘how’ follow-up questions to obtain further details from the respondents regarding the motives and reasons behind a certain answer (e.g. Do you think teachers should provide written comments on students’ writing? And Why? If yes how?). In addition, three prompt cards were used in teachers’ interviews. The first prompt card (in Part I, section three) elicits more data regarding the issue of how students can develop their writing skills (e.g. through reading, grammar instruction, writing multiple-drafts, imitating model essay, etc.). The second prompt card (in Part II, section three) suggests various possible answers for the types of errors that should receive more attention (e.g. language form, content, organization). The third prompt card (in Part II, section seven) presents some possible procedures teachers do after returning students’ writing (e.g. discussing students’ common errors).

The students’ interview questions were similar to that of the teachers (see section 3.5.5.6). The reason for following the same format for teachers and students’ interviews is to enable the researcher to compare their answers to the same questions. The students’ interview schedule, hence, was divided into two main parts: (I)- general background questions and (II)- specific beliefs about giving written corrective feedback (WCF). Part I was divided into two sections: the students’ profile and students’ attitude about the writing course. The former asks about the length of studying English and the reason(s) behind joining the English department, while the latter elicits the students’ beliefs about the best way to develop their writing skills. Part II, on the other hand, is divided into six sections. It presents the same sections of the teachers’ interviews (i.e. purpose, amount, focus, explicitness, and source of WCF) with an additional section about the students’ attitudes towards their teacher’s WCF, that is, the extent to which students understand, value, and benefit from their teacher’s WCF. This section involves discussing the interviewed students’ corrected writing to gain an insight into the extent to which students understand and benefit from their teachers’ feedback and to practically examine students’ opinion of their teachers’ use of WCF. Two prompt cards were used in students’ interview schedule. The first

prompt card (in part I section 2) addresses the possible techniques which can help students develop their writing skills. The second prompt card (in part II section 5) looks at students' preferences in terms of the level of explicitness of teachers' WCF (e.g. by providing the answer, by simply underlining, by using error codes) (see appendix B).

### **3.3.2 Classroom observations**

Classroom Observation is a method in which the researcher sits in class session(s), audio or video records the practices of the teacher and the actions of the students, and then meets with the teacher to discuss specific issues in the observation (Foster, 2006). Borg (2006) noted the importance of using observations in teacher cognition research arguing that they provide a concrete descriptive basis of what teachers believe could be investigated. This study uses observation for the following reasons:

- (1) To examine teachers' use of some aspects of WCF (e.g. teacher's oral feedback on students' common errors, the teachers' implementation of peer feedback, and/ or self-editing strategy training), to examine the extent to which teachers' focus when teaching writing is similar or different from her focus of WCF (e.g. language form, content, organisation), and also to observe other issues in the writing course that might affect teacher use of WCF (e.g. grammar instruction).
- (2) To discover whether teachers' beliefs match their practices or not. This complements the data obtained by feedback analysis and think-aloud protocols.

As with interviews, observations can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. Structured observations were criticised in teacher cognition research because they "attend solely to discrete surface behaviours in the classrooms", and there is the danger that "tight pre-specifications of what to observe may lead researchers to ignore unanticipated but potentially insightful classroom events and behaviours" (Borg, 2006: 243). Therefore, it is more common to use less structured

observations in teacher cognition research. Hence, the observations used in this study were unstructured, using an 'open system' for recording together with the field notes (see appendix C). However, the researcher came to the classes with what can be described as pre-observation literature, which is one feature of semi-structured observations (Patton, 2001).

The role of the researcher in the classroom observation differs according to the purpose of the research, the setting, the means of gaining access, and the observation method used (Foster, 2006). Borg (2006) argued that there is a great tendency in teacher cognition research for non-participant observations when the researcher avoids interaction with the participants. Following Borg's recommendation, my role was that of a non-participant observer.

However, observations have also been criticised. As with interviews, the validity of observations can be threatened as there is the possibility of personal or procedural reactivity (Foster, 2006). The former happens with subjects behaving in a different way because of a personal characteristic while the latter happens because the people change their practices due to being under observation. In order to avoid the limitations, the researcher has observed several classes and observed the whole lesson (i.e. 2 to 3 hours) to assure reliability since the more observations the researcher does, the more reliable data we can get (Cohen et al., 2000).

### **3.3.3 Think-aloud protocols**

Think-aloud protocol (TAP) is a method that allows the researcher to understand the thought process of the participants as they attempt to complete a specific task (Bowles, 2010). The quality of think-aloud protocols is enhanced when social interaction between the researcher and the participant is minimized (Mackey and Gass, 2011; Borg, 2006). Thus, respondents in think-aloud studies are often advised to verbalize their thoughts as if they were alone (Gilhooly and Green, 1996), and this is what I did. The researcher only speaks to remind the participant to 'keep talking' when s/he remains silent (Mackey and Gass, 2011).

Although researchers (e.g. Clark and Peterson, 1986; Borg, 2006) noted the importance of using TAP in teacher cognition research, Borg (2006) argued that it has not been used a lot in teacher cognition studies. Think-aloud has been used by Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) to investigate the relationship between what teachers provide as feedback on both L1 and FL writing and by Sachs and Polio (2007) to examine how L2 writers use feedback they receive on compositions. Lumley (2002) suggested that TAP can make a contribution to our understandings of the cognitions of language teachers while they are engaged in the process of assessing written work. Since commenting on students' writing is an unobservable complex cognitive process, TAP was employed in this study to give the researcher access to teachers' mental processes in order to explore the process of giving WCF (e.g. whether teachers follow a specific technique when giving feedback).

As with all methods, TAP has been criticised in the literature. While TAP may provide information on what is attended to by participants, it does not provide information on their processing strategies. Thus, researchers must be cautious in using the results of protocols in making interpretations. Moreover, concerns have been raised about the ability of subjects to simultaneously attend to the task and report information (Ericsson and Simon, 1993). Johnson (2003) has presented some of the difficulties of conducting TAP. Firstly, it is difficult and time consuming for the participants and the researcher. Secondly, the respondents may vary in how well they can do it. For example, some participants may address their thoughts to the researcher rather than providing a verbal report of their thinking. To try to lessen these limitations, participants in this study were given a warm-up training task (see below) prior to conducting the main TAP session. In addition, because of the controversy surrounding the use of think-aloud as a viable tool to elicit cognitive processes, there was a need to use another tool that could help fill any possible gaps in the data. In order to avoid this pitfall, TAPs were triangulated with other

method, that is, the analysis of teachers' written feedback on students' essays to get a more reliable picture of teachers' WCF practices.

Many considerations were discussed regarding employing TAPs. These included the think-aloud instructions, the warm-up tasks, the type and language of verbalisation, and time constraints. As for TAP instructions, the researcher should give a general statement about why the participants are being asked to think aloud (Bowles, 2008; Bowles, 2010; Ericsson and Simon, 1984; Bowles and Leow, 2005; Leow and Morgan-Short, 2004; Rosa and Leow, 2004).

As far as the warm-up task goes, it is highly recommended that subjects are given adequate training on verbal reporting (McDonough, 1995; Bowles, 2010). Some L2 studies reported using arithmetic problems as warm-ups (Addamegh, 2003; Leow and Morgan-Short, 2004; Bowles and Leow, 2005; Sanz et al., 2009), whereas others (Bowles, 2008) have used short verbal problems. Each has advantages and disadvantages. With arithmetic problems, the participants are practicing on a non-verbal task in preparation to carry out a verbal task, so it may be more difficult for them to extrapolate from thinking aloud in this type of practices to the operational study (Addamegh, 2003). Conversely, verbal warm-up tasks have the advantage that they are more similar to the operational tasks, so learners may be able to go from the practices of verbalisation to the operational study more easily (Scholfield, personal communication, 2012; Bowles, 2010). However, any verbal warm-up task should be carefully chosen so that it does not prime the participants for the target structure being investigated in the study. Therefore, in the present study, the participants were provided with a verbal warm-up task (see section 3.5.5.2).

As for the type of verbalisation, the decision about whether to require participants to think aloud metacognitively (i.e. by asking participants to verbalize the reasons behind their decisions) or non-metacognitively (i.e. by not obliging participants to verbalize reasons for their decisions) is a debatable one. However, according to Bowles (2010), this issue should be based on the research question(s) being asked and the level of detail required to answer them sufficiently. In general,



non-metacognitive think-aloud provides enough details to answer research questions. Only when it is necessary to probe participants' justifications should metacognitive think-aloud be required (Bowles, 2010). In qualitative research, which examines people in natural settings, researchers advocated the use of non-metacognitive think-aloud. Scholfield (personal communication, 2012) argued that the researcher should not prompt the participants what to say. Instead, s/he should ask them to say anything they want about what is going through their minds. In such a case, the researcher might get them just saying aloud what they are doing without justifications in some occasions and they might give some reasons at other occasions. Following Scholfield's (2012) advice, in the present study, I did not oblige the teachers to justify the reasons behind their decisions.

When discussing the language of verbalization, it is advisable to allow the L1 and the L2 to be used in think-aloud to ensure that participants are able to provide complete thoughts as much as possible (Bowles, 2010). Thus, the participants were allowed to choose the language they prefer during the verbalisation process.

Finally, with regard to the time factor, it is clear that think-aloud increases the time it takes participants to complete a given task. However, in the present study, the reaction time for the teachers' correction was not under investigation.

### **3.3.4 Stimulated recall interviews**

Stimulated recall interviews are a retrospective method which requires teachers to reflect on and/or comment on their cognitions with reference to prior behaviours (Borg, 2006). Stimulated recall is carried out with some degree of support through using stimuli (i.e. audio, video, or textual) by playing an audiotape, a videotape and/or reading a lesson transcript so that participants can watch and/or listen to themselves carrying out an activity while they vocalise their thought

processes at the time of the original activity. The specific moment at which the tape is stopped is not the most crucial element of the research, the moment is rather used “as a concrete point to talk about the teaching in general” (Woods, 1996: 28).

Stimulated recall is one of the main techniques for eliciting verbal commentaries on language teacher cognition research. One advantage which is associated with employing stimulated recall is that it examines teachers’ interactive thinking (i.e. teachers’ thoughts while teaching), since the teachers cannot teach and talk about their thoughts at the same time (i.e. concurrent verbalization is not possible) (Borg, 2006). This study uses stimulated recall interviews in order to uncover cognitive processes that are not evident through simple observation, such as questions about the individuals’ perspectives on learning and teaching and questions about the factors that led teachers to change their practices or that prevented them from enacting their beliefs.

One of the limitations of stimulated recall is the accuracy of the reporting (Van Someren et al., 1994) since the information may no longer exist in the participants’ short-term memories. To avoid this limitation, as suggested by Mangubhai et al. (2004), the time between the event reported and the reporting itself was kept short as much as possible (i.e. two days).

Two types of stimulated recall interviews are used in the present study. In other words, each participant was asked to sit for two stimulated recall interview sessions; the first compares teachers’ beliefs and their practices in the classroom observation (i.e. post-observation stimulated recall interviews) and the second compares teachers’ beliefs and their WCF practices as reflected in the feedback analysis. The reason for separating the two interviews was to ensure that teachers would not feel fatigued and to make the researcher and the teachers focus more on each method.

The questions used in the post observation stimulated recall interviews address two major topics which are covered in this study. The first one looked at the various techniques used/ not used in teaching writing (e.g., outlining, using model, employing multiple drafts, implementing peer

feedback, and/or self-editing strategy, etc.). The second focused on the writing instruction (e.g. language form, content, and/or organisation). The questions used in the stimulated recall interviews following the WCF analysis aimed at addressing the reasons behind teachers' WCF practices. This was with regard to (1) the amount of feedback the teacher provides, (2) the level of explicitness of feedback, (3) the focus of teacher's feedback, (4) the extent to which teachers change their WCF techniques depending on the students' different ability levels, and (5) the extent to which the teacher provides positive versus negative feedback. A closing question, for both interviews, was about the factors that affect the WCF techniques they use that were not mentioned before.

### **3.4 Pilot study**

This section tackles the aims, participants, instruments, and procedures of the pilot study. It ends by presenting the implications for the main study.

#### **3.4.1 Aims**

The purpose of this study was to test and improve the instruments for the main study before going into the field and facing unwanted obstacles and problems (Dörnyei, 2007). This might help us to spot some drawbacks, if any, in any of the instruments before using them in the actual context. It also aimed at familiarizing the researcher with the instruments and procedures, especially with the process of obtaining think-aloud protocols.

#### **3.4.2 Participants**

The study utilized three writing teachers from the target population. All three had been teaching in the English language and Literature department at UD for at least 5 years and had been teaching

writing for at least 2 years. The selection was based on two criteria; the first was that they had the experience of teaching writing; and the second was that they were not going to participate in the main study as they would not be teaching writing in the department for the period of the data collection. The students' interviews were also piloted. Four students, two level three and two level five students, were chosen by their teachers based on their willingness to participate.

### **3.4.3 Instruments**

All instruments, except for the observation (see section 3.4.4 below), were piloted including the think-aloud training task. It was impossible to observe the teachers I selected since they were not teaching the course at the time when I interviewed them. Because no observation took place, the stimulated recall was based mainly on the analysis of the feedback of the paper which I gave to the participants to correct.

### **3.4.4 Procedures**

The pilot study took place during Aug/Sep 2012. Once I obtained the written permission from the gatekeepers, I contacted 3 teachers whom I know via phone (since I was a teacher at UD for 3 years). I asked teachers to participate in an interview, a think-aloud protocol session, and a stimulated recall interview about giving WCF on the students' writing. All 3 teachers agreed to take part in the study. The study took place over three days. The meetings took place in my office at UD. Each pilottee was given a consent form and assured that the interviews and the think-aloud session would be confidential and any reporting of it would be anonymous. They were told that the interviews and the think-aloud session would be recorded. The meeting started with the pre-observation interviews which lasted for approximately one hour (see section 3.5.5.1).

I was taking notes during the interview to enable me to compare between teachers' beliefs and practices quickly without having to review the recorded interview. Ten minutes after conducting the interview, I started the think-aloud protocol section by giving some instructions on how to proceed and by giving them the warm-up task (as explained in section 3.5.5.2). After they understood the think-aloud procedures, I gave them a sample of an essay written by a junior (third year/level five) student at UD (see appendix D). I asked them to correct it as if correcting their own student's writing. Moreover, I asked them to think aloud while correcting the task. The think-aloud sessions lasted for approximately an hour.

After the think-aloud session, each participant was kindly asked to wait for approximately 20 minutes. During that time, I was looking at the pilotee's WCF with the aim to compare teacher feedback practices to her beliefs from the notes I took during the interview. I formed the stimulated recall interview questions based on the comparison of these two records. After that, each pilotee had a stimulated interview mostly in English which took around 15-20 minutes. All the sessions were audio recorded using an MP3 player recorder.

As for the students' interviews, I contacted the four assigned students to arrange for the time and place for the interview. I carefully explained the purpose of the study and told them that the interview would be in Arabic and would last for approximately 40 minutes. The interviews were conducted at my office. The issue of whether to start by asking students about their beliefs of how teachers in general should give WCF and then asking them about their teachers' actual use of WCF or vice versa was a controversial one. Hence, I made two versions, the first one asking about their beliefs first and then about their teachers' practices and the other one asking about their teachers' practices and then their beliefs. Each version was used with two students. I found out that asking students about their beliefs first led to a better flow of ideas and generated more data. Following this procedure I gave the participants the opportunity to comment on their teachers' behaviours more openly.

### **3.4.5 Implications for the main study**

Several implications related to the selection of the participants, research questions, and methods (the teachers' interviews, think-aloud protocols, and students' interviews) were drawn from the pilot study. These implications are discussed in the following sections.

#### **3.4.5.1 Implications for the selection of the participants**

As for the writing teachers, I found out that those who taught writing for the foundation year (level one and level two) used different methods and techniques from the teachers who taught students writing in the English department since the foundation year students might join any department. Thus, the focus of writing was mainly on the sentence structure level unlike students in the English department who were taught about all aspects of writing an essay (i.e. content, organisation, etc.). Thus, it was decided that the main study would only include teachers who teach writing for level three and five in the English department.

Moreover, after analysing the pilot study data, it appeared that teachers' responses took into account students' needs and preferences. For example, teachers believe in the importance of direct WCF as it satisfies the students' needs. A question that came to my mind was whether students indeed prefer direct WCF. In other words, are teachers aware of their students' preferences? Or do they tend to provide what they assume is useful for students?

All of these questions can only be answered by including the students as they constitute the other party in the feedback process. Without understanding students' attitudes and preferences and their response towards their teacher's WCF practices, teachers may run the risk of employing WCF techniques that are counterproductive (Lee, 2008a). Because of that, I decided to include the students in my study and their interviews were piloted (see section 3.4.4).

### **3.4.5.2 Implications for the research questions**

When conducting the pilot study, I found that the research questions, i.e., “how does the teachers’ educational background affect the writing teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding giving WCF on students’ writing?” could not be answered on the basis of the data collected. One possible reason for this is that ‘beliefs’ is a cognitive process which makes it difficult to get a complete understanding of the factors that influenced teachers’ beliefs. Another reason could be attributed to the fact that the teachers’ educational background does not play a vital role in teachers’ beliefs and practices. Pilotees in the interview confirmed this claim. As a result, this question was broadened to include all possible factors that could influence their practices. The research question was refined as such: “What are the factors that influence writing teachers’ beliefs in giving WCF to their students’ writing?”

### **3.4.5.3 Implications for teacher interviews**

The interview schedule was refined, with regard to the wording of the questions and some new questions were added. As for the former, the wording of some questions was changed because the pilotees did not understand the questions. For example, the question “How did you prepare yourself to teach a writing course?” was not fully understood by the pilotees. They started talking about their preparation for each lesson (e.g. “I start by briefly revising what was explained in the previous class”) rather than talking about how they trained themselves to teach the writing course in general (e.g. attending workshops about writing). Hence, the question was refined as “In the early years of your teaching, how did you prepare yourself to teach the writing course?”.

As for the latter, new questions were added to cover topics that emerged as important during the piloting of the interviews and to make smoother transitions in some parts of the interview. For example, before starting section two about WCF, a preliminary question was added, which is: “

Do you think teachers should comment on students' writing?". By adding this question, it was easier for the researcher to move smoothly between the previous section (i.e. about the various techniques teachers use to improve students' writing) and section two which was about giving WCF on students' writing. In addition, in the cases where teachers said that they did not choose to teach the writing course, it is important to ask them "if you had been given the choice, would you have chosen to teach the writing course?".

#### **3.4.5.4 Implications for the think-aloud protocols**

The following problems were faced during the TAP sessions:

(1)- One major problem faced by the pilotees was that they were correcting a piece of writing which was not written by one of their students (as I gave all pilotees the same paper written by a previous third level student). The pilotees said that they faced several problems when correcting this paper as they did not know what the students' teacher had explained in class, when this written piece of work was given (i.e. at the beginning, middle, or end of the term), and whether the student wrote this paper at home or in class. According to Scholfield (2012; personal communication), using one standard piece of writing written by any student from the university and asking the participants to think-aloud while correcting this paper is easier than asking each teacher to think aloud while correcting his/her students' papers. However, going for the latter (i.e. correcting their students' papers) is important for greater authenticity in a fully ethnographic kind of qualitative study (Scholfield, 2012; personal communication). Therefore, in the main study, it was decided that teachers would be asked to think aloud while correcting their own students' papers.

(2)- TAP took longer than when teachers corrected papers without thinking aloud. Hence, it was decided to tell teachers that they would need to have extra free time to correct and verbalize their thoughts.



(3)- Some participants were talking to the researcher. Thus, it is important to keep reminding them to talk as if talking to themselves.

(4)- One participant was very quiet in the verbalisation of her thoughts which made it difficult for the researcher to understand what she was saying. Therefore, it was important to ask participants to speak loudly to be able to transcribe all data.

#### **3.4.5.5 Implications for the student interviews**

The interview schedule was refined, with regard to the wording of the questions and the order of some questions. As for the former, the wording of some questions was changed either because the pilotes did not understand the questions or because the questions were not precise. For example, “Do you think teachers should give direct feedback by providing the answer or indirect by simply indicating the error? ”. This question might lead the participants to give less reliable answers as they might feel that they have to choose either ways or they might go for what they believe is the ideal (e.g. they may choose indirect feedback even if they prefer the direct one). This question was changed to “How do you want your teacher to indicate the errors in your written work? ”. This question, which is more general, gave the students more freedom to talk freely.

As for the order of the questions, the pilot study found that it was better to ask the students about their beliefs about how teachers should use WCF in general before asking them about their teachers’ actual use of WCF (see section 3.5.5.1).

### **3.5 The main study**

This section describes how access was ethically gained to the research site (section 3.5.1), the research site being the English language and Literature department at the University of Dammam where the study was conducted (section 3.5.2), where the study participants and target population

were approached (section 3.5.3), the role of the researcher (section 3.5.4), and the procedures for data collection (section 3.5.5).

### **3.5.1 Gaining access to the research site and research ethics**

After obtaining ethical approval for the research from the University of Essex, two types of permissions were obtained from the context of the study prior to conducting this study. The first permission was a verbal one, obtained through contacting the Head of department 6 months before conducting the study. Two weeks before data collection, I was given the written permission, signed by both the head of department and the dean of the University, to start doing my research at the university (see appendix E). Moreover, I arranged a meeting with the writing teachers (except for the male teacher) in which I explained the topic, the purposes, the methods, and the participants needed for my research.

Another permission, regarding research ethics, was obtained from the University of Essex. Participants, both teachers and students, agreed to sign the written consent form to participate in the study (see appendix F). Before giving their consent, I assured the participants that their anonymity would be preserved in all reports of the study, by deleting or changing details that might reveal their identities (e.g. their names were changed).

### **3.5.2 The English language and Literature department**

The Department of English Language and Literature (ELL) at the University of Dammam's College of Arts offers an academically rich program, which prepares its graduates for careers in a variety of fields from instruction to research as well as translation. In the following, I present a brief review of the teachers, learners, curriculums, textbooks, and examination systems at the ELL.

- **Teachers at ELL:**

There are more than fifty teachers at the ELL. Those teachers –including the present study participants- come from different ethnic backgrounds, such as Saudis, Jordanians, Syrians, Egyptian, Pakistanis, and Indians (see table 3.1). They hold different degrees (bachelor, Masters, or PhD) in English-related disciplines: English language and linguistics, English language and literature, TESOL, or Translation. The ELL includes both female and male teachers. Male teachers teach their female students remotely, via closed-circuit TV screen. Communications occur between the students and the male teachers through an internal telephone. The teacher depends on a female supervisor who is responsible for informing the teacher when the learners are ready for him to start, maintaining discipline in the class, and proctoring the exams.

- **Learners at ELL:**

Students at the ELL are graduates from different secondary schools. To be accepted at the ELL, an applicant should have a Saudi secondary school certificate. She also needs to pass the placement test, which consists of different aspects of English proficiency such as grammar and vocabulary, and which aims at evaluating the students ability and knowledge in English. The results of the placement test and the secondary school overall percentage of the applicant are calculated to decide on her eligibility to enrol at the college.

- **Curricula at ELL:**

The ELL offers a Bachelor degree in a range of language and literary modules in a four years (eight semesters/levels) program. The module comprises four domains: Skills and Foundations of the English Language (e.g. composition), Linguistics (e.g. Phonetics and Phonology), English Literature (e.g. The Modern Novel), and Translation (e.g. Translation Theory) (see appendix G for the complete modules). Students have to take three writing modules: “Composition 1”, which is

the first of the three writing courses and which focuses on the methods of developing descriptive essays. It covers writing an essay of a moderate length (four paragraphs) and activities which familiarize students with the techniques of writing a thesis statement, topic sentences, and supporting details. The course also includes writing an outline and making summaries. “Composition 2”, which is the second writing course, focuses on writing comparison and contrast, analysis, and definition essays. It also reinforces the skills of outlining and summarizing. “Essay”, which is the third and last course in writing, focuses on writing argumentative essays. It provides students with the examples, rationale, training, and techniques in this type of academic and public mode of text-type. Moreover, it covers the traditional structure of argumentation. It also aims at equipping students with the skills of making detailed outlines, analysing exemplary essays, and using published resources to argue and report a certain position.

- **Examination system at ELL:**

The ELL follows the traditional “pen and paper” exams rather than the computer-based ones. Teachers usually assess their students using frequent progress quizzes, mid-term exams and a final examination. The course co-ordinator normally takes the lead in this respect. She asks the other teachers either to prepare their own final exams or calls for a unified test in which all the teachers of that course may or may not participate by writing and delivering some questions and/or ideas. In the writing exam, the students are required to choose one from multiple topics to write an essay of about 750 words in length.

### **3.5.3 Participants and target population**

Ten writing teachers and thirty students taught by these ten teachers participated in this study. The most important criteria for selecting the teacher participants were: teachers were all teaching writing at the English department for at least four years, and that they were teaching the writing

course for students in the English Department at the time of the study. All ten teachers, nine female and one male, who were teaching writing at the period of collecting the data were selected on the basis of the above mentioned criteria plus their willingness to participate in the study. The participants differed in their age, qualification, level of experience, national backgrounds, and their first language as there were four non-Arabic teachers (see table 3.1). It is important to note that as there was only one male teacher, I will not reveal any further information about him to assure anonymity.

Teacher	Nationality	First Language	Age	Educational background	Experience in teaching language	Experience in teaching writing	Experience in teaching Literature	The Level they teach
Tasnem	Pakistani	Urdu	40s	MA in English Literature from the University of Punjab, Pakistan	9	7	4	Three
Mary	Indian	Urdu	40s	MA in TESOL from an Indian University	13	12	-	Three
Treza	Indian	Urdu	30s	MA in TEFL from an Indian University	6	6	-	Three
Shoq	Saudi	Arabic	30s	MA in Linguistics from King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia	5	4	-	Three
Amal	Jordan	Arabic	30s	MA in Literature from the university of Jordan	8	5	8	Five
Nadia	Jordan	Arabic	30s	MA in English Literature from Amman Arab university, Jordan	6	4	6	Five
Leena	Jordan	Arabic	40s	MA in Translation from the university of Jordan	10	5	9	Five
Reema	Saudi	Arabic	30s	MA in Linguistics from University of Dammam, Saudi Arabia	7	4	6	Five
Ann	Indian	Urdu	40s	MA in Linguistics and Literature from an Indian University	9	6	9	Five
Adam	-	Arabic	-	PhD in Linguistics from ain shams university in Egypt	-	-	-	Five

**Table 3.1 Teacher participants' personal information and education background**

As far as the student participants were concerned, I asked each of the ten teacher participants to nominate three students: one high-achiever, one average, and one low-achiever (i.e. 30 students in

total). Those students share the same nationality (i.e. Saudi), first language (Arabic), level of education (i.e. doing bachelor degree in English language and literature). They were selected by their teachers and their willingness to participate, and all students accepted to be interviewed.

#### **3.5.4 My role as the researcher**

Since the main goal of this research was to discover the beliefs and practices of ten teachers, there is a need to understand the “interpretations which [people] give of what they are doing” (Pring, 2000:96). To this end, it is important to understand the context of the participants. Being a teacher in the English Department at the context of the study for 3 years, knowing some of the participants, and being aware of the university rules and regulations, I was able to reflect more on teachers’ beliefs and their practices. However, I took care not to impose my personal views on any aspect of it, including its participants and outcomes. I detached myself from the study, continuously reflecting and taking a critical look at my research in order to improve its validity.

Having an office in the English Department gave me the opportunity to conduct all interviews (teacher and student ones), the think-aloud protocols, and stimulated recall interviews sessions there. In addition, having a good previous relationship with most of the teacher participants allowed for a more friendly atmosphere, i.e., the teachers felt relaxed to speak frankly, they did not feel threatened by the questions asked in the interviews, and they welcomed any discussion on the mismatches between their beliefs and practices.

#### **3.5.5 Data collection procedure**

The following sections describe how the instruments were utilised in the present study.

### 3.5.5.1 Teacher Interviews

Before starting the interviews, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants. In order to create a more friendly atmosphere and to obtain rich data, the participants were asked to choose the language of the interview, either Arabic or English<sup>2</sup>. All teachers preferred the interview to be conducted in English (see Appendix H for a sample of teachers' interview transcript). All interviews were voice recorded by using an mp3 recorder. I ensured to cover all the topics although the sequence of questions slightly varied because of the semi-structured nature of the interview. The duration of the interviews varied from 45 minutes to 74 minutes (see table 3.2).

Number of the interview	Participant	Date	Week number	Duration
Interview 1	Tasnem	11/9/2012	1	56 minutes
Interview 2	Nadia	12/9/2012	1	74 minutes
Interview 3	Adam	15/9/2012	1	58 minutes
Interview 4	Mary	16/9/2012	2	48 minutes
Interview 5	Amal	16/9/2012	2	59 minutes
Interview 6	Leena	17/9/2012	2	46 minutes
Interview 7	Ann	18/9/2012	2	55 minutes
Interview 8	Treza	19/9/2012	2	45 minutes
Interview 9	Shoq	22/9/2012	3	73 minutes
Interview 10	Reema	25/9/2012	3	58 minutes

**Table 3.2 the use of teachers' interviews in the main study**

### 3.5.5.2 Think-aloud protocols

In the first meeting with the teachers, all teacher participants were asked to contact me after collecting their students' first in-class writing to make the TAP. Once the teachers had contacted me, two meetings with each teacher were arranged; one meeting for a TAP training session and another, on the following day, for the main TAP session. The reason for making the training one day before the TAP session was to make sure that the teachers would not forget the TAP procedures and to feel at ease while doing it. I met the teachers, each at a different time, at my office. I started by explaining the general idea of the think-aloud and its purpose and provided the

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<sup>2</sup> However, teachers whose L1 is neither English nor Arabic were asked to verbalise in English.

instructions (see appendix I for TAP instruction) about how they should speak their thoughts while correcting, by stating the following:

In this task, I want you to correct this paper as if you are correcting your student's writing. I am interested in what you think about when you correct. In order to find out, I ask you to think aloud as you correct the paper. What is meant by "think aloud" is to say aloud everything that you would say to yourself silently while you think. Just act as if you were alone in the room speaking to yourself.

I modelled the think-aloud process by using a very simple arithmetic example which was multiplying 16 to 25. When the subjects understood the general idea, I started the warm-up verbal task which consisted of a one-paragraph, taken from IELTS reading passages (see appendix J for TAP warm-up task). I asked the participants to analyse the meaning of the paragraph and try to guess the meaning of the unknown word(s) if found. The session lasted for approximately 30-40 minutes. The researcher made sure that each subject had become familiar with think-aloud reporting.

Each teacher came the following day with their students' uncorrected papers at the researcher's office. The researcher asked the teacher to correct their students' writing, just as what they would have in a normal situation, except for the presence of the MP3 recorder. I allowed the teachers to stay alone but they all did not mind my presence. Since this was the case, I took the opportunity to take some notes while the teachers were thinking aloud. The notes were used to generate additional questions in the stimulated interviews (e.g. the teacher's mood when correcting good and poor writing, etc.). All teachers were free to verbalize in Arabic or English. Arabic teachers used both Arabic and English language while non-Arabic teachers used English mainly (see appendix K for a sample of TAP transcript). The length for the TAP session varied. Some teachers did not mind sitting for 2 consecutive hours while others stayed for 40 minutes. Similarly, the number of papers that each teacher corrected in the TAP session differed depending on the length



of the text and the time teachers spent on correcting students' writing. In general, each teacher corrected no less than five papers and no more than twenty papers (see table 3.3).

Number of the TAP	Participant	Date	Number of papers	Week number	Duration
TAP 1	Leena	3/11/2012	5	8	36 minutes
TAP 2	Nadia	5/11/2012	20	8	91 minutes
TAP 3	Amal	7/11/2012	10	8	174 minutes
TAP 4	Ann	10/11/2012	6	9	34 minutes
TAP 5	Adam	12/11/2012	5	9	65 minutes
TAP 6	Reema	13/11/2012	5	9	30 minutes
TAP 7	Mary	15/11/2012	22	9	31 minutes
TAP 8	Tasnem	18/11/2012	7	10	41 minutes
TAP 9	Treza	20/11/2012	6	10	37 minutes
TAP 10	Shoq	22/11/2012	7	10	47 minutes

**Table 3.3 Use of TAP in the main study**

### **3.5.5.3 Classroom observations**

In the first meeting with the teachers, I carefully familiarised them with the purpose of the observations by stating that their practices would not be evaluated. The observation field notes contained the names of the teachers, the modules they taught, the level of the students, and the duration of the class. I used to go to the teacher's office 10 minutes before the class started (except for the male teacher) in order to ask the teacher about the lesson and the activities that she would use in this class and to attach the digital voice recorder to the participant's shirt. Each teacher offered me 2 minutes to introduce myself to the students in the first class observation. I introduced myself as a PhD researcher investigating teachers' feedback on students' writing. I told the students that I would observe some writing classes and reassured them by stating that my aim was not to evaluate the students or the teacher but to see how the writing course was taught in general. I also asked the students to photocopy their portfolios which included all of their written work at the end of the semester. Students were already asked by their teacher to keep their portfolios as they constitute a significant portion of the students' grades. As already explained, the male teacher

taught from a remote location and the students would listen through a TV screen. Similar procedures were followed with the male teacher except that the observations were recorded twice; the first recorder was given to the teacher before the class started as to be attached to his shirt while explaining and the second recorder was placed in the class near the microphone where the students' voice could be heard.

I used to sit with the students at the back corner in order to be able to observe all students as well as the teacher. Throughout the whole lesson, I was taking notes all the time (see appendix L for a class observation notes). All the lessons were fully audio-recorded. Each recording lasted for a total of 3 hours for level three students and 2 hours for level five students. I observed 5 classes for each participant (see Appendix M for a sample of observation lesson transcript). In total, 50 lessons were observed over almost 10 weeks (see table 3.4).

Number of observation	Participant	Date	Week number	Duration
Observation 1	Amal	16/10/2012	5	105 minutes
Observation 2	Adam	16/10/2012	5	105 minutes
Observation 3	Nadia	16/10/2012	5	105 minutes
Observation 4	Leena	17/10/2012	5	105 minutes
Observation 5	Reema	17/10/2012	5	105 minutes
Observation 6	Shoq	27/10/2012	6	165 minutes
Observation 7	Tasnem	27/10/2012	6	165 minutes
Observation 8	Mary	27/10/2012	6	165 minutes
Observation 9	Ann	29/10/2012	6	105 minutes
Observation 10	Treza	29/10/2012	6	165 minutes
Observation 11	Amal	30/10/2012	6	105 minutes
Observation 12	Adam	30/10/2012	6	105 minutes
Observation 13	Nadia	30/10/2012	6	105 minutes
Observation 14	Leena	31/10/2012	6	105 minutes
Observation 15	Reema	31/10/2012	6	105 minutes
Observation 16	Shoq	3/11/2012	7	165 minutes
Observation 17	Tasnem	3/11/2012	7	165 minutes
Observation 18	Mary	3/11/2012	7	165 minutes
Observation 19	Ann	5/11/2012	7	105 minutes
Observation 20	Treza	5/11/2012	7	165 minutes
Observation 21	Amal	6/11/2012	7	105 minutes
Observation 22	Adam	6/11/2012	7	105 minutes
Observation 23	Nadia	6/11/2012	7	105 minutes

Observation 24	Leena	7/11/2012	7	105 minutes
Observation 25	Reema	7/11/2012	7	105 minutes
Observation 26	Shoq	24/11/2012	11	165 minutes
Observation 27	Tasnem	24/11/2012	11	165 minutes
Observation 28	Mary	24/11/2012	11	165 minutes
Observation 29	Ann	26/11/2012	11	105 minutes
Observation 30	Treza	26/11/2012	11	165 minutes
Observation 31	Amal	27/11/2012	11	105 minutes
Observation 32	Adam	27/11/2012	11	105 minutes
Observation 33	Nadia	27/11/2012	11	105 minutes
Observation 34	Leena	28/11/2012	11	105 minutes
Observation 35	Reema	28/11/2012	11	105 minutes
Observation 36	Shoq	1/12/2012	12	165 minutes
Observation 37	Tasnem	1/12/2012	12	165 minutes
Observation 38	Mary	1/12/2012	12	165 minutes
Observation 39	Ann	3/12/2012	12	105 minutes
Observation 40	Treza	3/12/2012	12	165 minutes
Observation 41	Amal	4/12/2012	12	105 minutes
Observation 42	Adam	4/12/2012	12	105 minutes
Observation 43	Nadia	4/12/2012	12	105 minutes
Observation 44	Leena	5/12/2012	12	105 minutes
Observation 45	Reema	5/12/2012	12	105 minutes
Observation 46	Shoq	8/12/2012	13	165 minutes
Observation 47	Tasnem	8/12/2012	13	165 minutes
Observation 48	Mary	8/12/2012	13	165 minutes
Observation 49	Ann	9/12/2012	13	105 minutes
Observation 50	Treza	9/12/2012	13	165 minutes

**Table 3.4 Use of observations in the main study**

### **3.5.5.4 Post-observation stimulated recall interviews**

After conducting the last classroom observations, I kindly asked the teachers to arrange for two separate interview meetings. I told the participants that the first interview would be about certain questions regarding the classroom observations that I did and the second interview will be about specific questions regarding their feedback on student writing. Teachers preferred the two interviews to be on the same day with half an hour break between the two interviews.

Before composing the post-observation stimulated recall interviews, I carefully listened to the teachers' pre-observation interviews and the recorded observations, together with my notes, and I tried to link what they said with the way they taught writing to students (e.g. grammar instruction, analysing a model, multiple drafts, explaining students' common errors, the use of peer feedback

and/or self-editing). The time span between the last observations and the interviews ranged between one to two days. The duration of the interviews, which were carried out in English, varied from thirty-two minutes to one hour (see table 3.5). All interviews were voice recorded: using an mp3 recorder.

Number of the interview	Participant	Date	Week number	Duration
Interview 1	Leena	10/12/2012	13	35 minutes
Interview 2	Nadia	11/12/2012	13	61 minutes
Interview 3	Amal	15/12/2013	14	51 minutes
Interview 4	Reema	17/12/2012	14	32 minutes
Interview 5	Ann	18/12/2012	14	33 minutes
Interview 6	Tasnem	19/12/2012	14	49 minutes
Interview 7	Mary	22/12/2012	15	47 minutes
Interview 8	Treza	24/12/2012	15	31 minutes
Interview 9	Shoq	25/12/2012	15	44 minutes
Interview 10	Adam	26/1/2013	15	46 minutes

**Table 3.5 Use of stimulated-recall interviews in the main study**

Once the session started, I played the audiotape for the teachers. Since I recorded up to 10-15 hours, I could not play the whole class. Instead I selected the episodes which were crucial for the present study (e.g. when feedback was provided, where the teacher explains grammar lessons, or where the teacher asks students to implement peer feedback...etc.) and asked the teacher to state the reason(s) behind certain actions. The post-observation stimulated recall interview questions which revolved around why a particular strategy was/was not used, although the participant believed/did not believe or reported/did not report that it should be used. It also addressed reasons behind the teachers' behaviours, choices, and preferences in particular situations. Throughout the interview, I took care not to sound judgemental so that the teachers do not need to feel threatened or to feel they need to defend their actions. The following excerpt provides such an instance (see Appendix N for an excerpt from a post-observation stimulated-recall interview transcript).

**Researcher:** I noticed that you only asked students to write one draft?

**Interviewee:** yeah I could not ask for more than one

**Researcher:** Although you believe that students should write more than one draft?

**Interviewee:** all right...the only reason that made me not to ask the students to repeat their essays is because I had large classes... extremely large classes. So, I would not be able even if I ask all of them to repeat the writing to rewrite their essays I would not be able to evaluate them I would not have time to nor the ability to read through the essays again and reevaluate them again so the numbers is a large limitation ...a huge limitation actually.

### 3.5.5.5 Stimulated recall interviews following feedback analysis

With the permission of the teacher and students (see section 3.5.1), copies of the students' portfolios, which included all the students' written papers that had been corrected by the teacher throughout the whole semester, were collected at the end of semester. Each teacher's students' papers differed in terms of the number of papers being corrected depending on the students' numbers, the number of the topics that students were required to write, and the type of the essay (see table 3.6). Before composing these interviews, I carefully linked what the teacher said in the pre-observation interviews with the analysis of their feedback on students' writing.

Since one of the issues examined in this study was how their students with different ability levels influenced teachers' feedback, I asked the teachers towards the end of the term (before analysing their feedback) to assign high-achieving, average, and low-achieving students. They were advised that their choice should depend on their grades in the writing course and on the students' participation and awareness in the writing class.

Teacher	Week no.	No. of papers	Topic(s)	Essay type
Nadia Level 5	3	38	College teachers and high school teachers	Explanatory
	5	34	Harmfulness of watching TV	Argumentative
	10	35	Studying English in the university of Dammam	Argumentative
Amal Level 5	5	38	College teachers and high school teachers	Explanatory
	8	36	Effect of advertisement	Argumentative
	11	38	Effect of Television	Argumentative
	13	32	Harmfulness of Technology	Argumentative
Adam Level 5	4	25	Effect of Television	Argumentative
	7	23	School uniforms	Argumentative
	11	22	Should the internet be monitored?	Argumentative
	13	28	Advertisement is harmful to the society.	Argumentative
Ann Level 5	2	31	The importance of education	Explanatory
	6	24	Responsibilities of working women	Argumentative
	9	29	Pollution	Argumentative
	11	31	Health hazards of fast food	Argumentative
Leena Level 5	3	42	Teenager or a responsible adult	Explanatory
	5	36	Personal diet and weight loss	Explanatory
	7	39	Online learning vs. Traditional classes	Argumentative
	10	46	How to be successful student	Argumentative
Reema Level 5	4	28	Studying English	Explanatory
	6	39	The best shopping mall	Explanatory
	8	26	How to be successful student	Argumentative
	12	38	Women driving	Argumentative
Tasnem Level 3	23	38	The park	Descriptive
	5	43	Problems of large cities	Descriptive
	7	39	A car accident	Descriptive
	8	41	House on Fire	Descriptive
	13	17	An Unforgettable incident	Narrative
Shoq Level 3	2	46	My best friend	Descriptive
	7	34	My favourite restaurant	Descriptive
	9	43	My friend's gift	Descriptive
	12	26	An unforgettable incident in my life	Narrative
	14	27	Road trip	Narrative
Mary Level 3	45	28	The qualities of an ideal teacher	Descriptive
	6	30	House on fire	Descriptive
	8	32	The park	Descriptive
	9	21	My family	Narrative
	12	32	My daily tasks and activities	Narrative

**Table 3.6 Overview of the students' writing throughout the writing course**

Teachers' WCF was analysed by identifying and calculating frequency counts on the feedback comments (see section 3.6.2) as those classified in the literature by Bitchener and Ferris (2012) and many others (e.g. Lee, 2003, 2008b, 2009; Ferris et al., 2011) and that were used in the teacher and student interviews (see section 2.2.2 for detailed definitions for these issues). These categories included:

**(1)- The amount of WCF** to provide, that is, whether the teachers corrected all types of errors or if they focused on patterns of errors, for example, the serious versus minor errors (i.e. interferes/do

not interfere with the understanding of the text), the frequent errors (i.e. repeated by a certain student), and the stigmatising errors (i.e. annoying errors according to teachers).

**(2)- The explicitness of WCF**, that is, whether the teachers marked errors explicitly by providing the correct form, adding the missing form, and/or crossing out the unnecessary form, or implicitly through circling, underlining, highlighting the error with or without an error code ('SP' for spelling) or by proving the cause of the error (e.g. spelling).

**(3)- The focus of WCF**, that is, the extent to which teachers commented on the content (i.e. the clarity, unity, coherence, and the development of ideas), the language form (i.e. grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalisation), and the organisation (i.e. the basic organisation patterns: an introduction where thesis statement is presented, a body in which each paragraph includes a topic sentence and supporting details and examples, and a conclusion).

**(4)- The extent to which teachers use positive versus negative feedback.**

**(5)- The extent to which teachers vary their WCF when responding to students of different ability levels.**

It is important to note that while teachers' practices on all the aforementioned issues were obtained through analysing teachers' WCF on students' writing, I referred to teachers' TAP data to find out the amount of errors and the patterns of errors which were measured according to what teachers view as serious, minor, frequent, and stigmatising as revealed in the TAP.

After conducting the post-observation stimulated recall interview, I presented some selected and representative samples from the students' writing together with the counted numbers for each WCF practice. I shared my analysis of their feedback practices with the teachers and asked them to comment on specific instances and techniques they tended to use frequently (see Appendix O for an excerpt from a teacher WCF stimulated-recall interview transcript). The interviews were

conducted in English and lasted for around 40-60 minutes. Again, the time span between the last observations and the interviews ranged between one to two days (see table 3.7). All interviews were voice recorded by using an mp3 recorder.

Number of the interview	Participant	Date	Week number	Duration
Interview 1	Leena	10/12/2012	13	52 minutes
Interview 2	Nadia	11/12/2012	13	68 minutes
Interview 3	Amal	15/12/2013	14	62 minutes
Interview 4	Reema	17/12/2012	14	59 minutes
Interview 5	Ann	18/12/2012	14	42 minutes
Interview 6	Tasnem	19/12/2012	14	58 minutes
Interview 7	Mary	22/12/2012	15	53 minutes
Interview 8	Treza	24/12/2012	15	46 minutes
Interview 9	Shoq	25/12/2012	15	63 minutes
Interview 10	Adam	26/1/2013	15	57 minutes

**Table 3.7 Use of stimulated-recall interviews of WCF analysis in the main study**

Similar to the post-observation stimulated recall interviews, the question wording revolved around why a particular strategy was/was not used, although the participant believed/did not believe or reported/did not report that it should be used. It also addressed why the participant concentrated on some strategies more than on others. The following excerpt shows the procedure that was followed:

Researcher: I noticed that you tend to give indirect feedback by providing the answer (Researcher shows the teacher students writing) Like in this paper (reading): “one of my feavirt food is lazenia” you simply underlined the spelling mistakes?

Interviewee: because students should know how to look for the correct answers themselves.

Researcher: Aha, but you sometimes give direct feedback. Like in these papers for example (*Researcher shows the teacher students writing*) (*researcher is reading*):

*gave the*  
“*she give me that gift*”

Interviewee: No, not with all students. Only with some students. You have to spoon feed them the answer because they do not even know how to look for the correct answer.

Researcher: I see

Interviewee: It depends on the student. Some of them benefit of these comments otherwise they will not search for the answer, but with good students, I know that these students will search for the answers so I let them work by themselves, because that way they will improve.

Researcher: But I noticed that you mostly give direct answers with good students like [student name] (Researcher shows the teacher students writing) whom you gave direct correction although you assigned them as the most good students?



Interviewee (laughs): ok, to be honest, I forget myself when I correct. I want to give her general remarks with no corrections but I find myself providing answers... Sometimes I forget while I do that.

Researcher: Aha!

Interviewee: And it depends on the time as well. When I do not have time, I gave them general remarks and I discuss their mistakes orally in the class

Researcher: yeah, what about the spelling error in the word 'favorait'. You corrected it by providing the error code 'SP'?

Interviewee: here, because it is a repeated error. With repeated errors, I put circles and I link them together so she knows she made a mistake here and specially for spelling mistakes...I try not to correct the same thing all the time but sometimes I provide answers for repeated errors without noticing. I forget myself when I correct.

In the cases where the teacher used two WCF techniques but relied more on one than the other, I asked the participants about their practices with regard to each technique in order to get more data about the usage of each. For example, as the following excerpt demonstrates, teacher Amal used both direct and indirect WCF. I asked her about the reason for using each method separately in order to understand the reason(s), if any, for using each technique.

Researcher: you mostly correct the language mistakes directly by providing the correct answer?

Interviewee: yes, language is easier to correct but providing the answers for the ideas is impossible unless if I want to write the essay myself.

*Researcher:* But you sometimes corrected students' ideas by crossing out students' ideas and rephrasing it? (researcher shows the teacher some corrected samples)

Interviewee : I wrote (teacher is reading) "in addition learning a forging language at young age grantee a better future for you since speaking more than one language is required for most jobs." Yes, I crossed her sentence and rephrased it like that because she wrote "learning a second language at young age make your mother language stronger". This is totally wrong even though it is grammatically correct. Learning the second language has nothing to do with the mother tongue. The idea is totally wrong.

Researcher: the same in here, you corrected the meaning by rephrasing the sentence. (researcher shows the teacher)

Interviewee: because the student wrote (teacher is reading): "when they (children) learn another language, that will benefit." When I read the word benefit I knew what she wants to say. I corrected the sentence because I knew that the student has the idea but she could not deliver it.

Researcher: what about this paper? (researcher shows the teacher a corrected paper)

Interviewee: the student wrote (teacher is reading): "Some people is destroying for the first wife emotions" again, it is clear that, she wants to say that, "people who are against polysemy sympathies with the first wife emotionally." That is why I wrote this sentence. This is paraphrasing I did not gave her the idea, the idea is there.

### 3.5.5.6 Student interviews

In the last observation that was conducted, after the teacher finished the class, the students were asked to stay for 5 minutes in which I reminded them of the purpose of my research. I then asked

those who were interested to have an interview in Arabic with me to write their full names and their mobile numbers.

I told them that the interview would be about their opinions on the writing course in general and the written feedback in particular. A paper with the instructor name was circulated to their students. After signing their names, I showed the paper to the teacher to choose from the high-achieving, average, and low-achieving students to be interviewed. The reason for that was to take the opinions of all different levels of students to find out if they share similar views and experiences regarding teacher feedback and to see whether teachers' feedback varies depending on the students' proficiency level. I asked the students to bring to the interview all their essays that have been corrected by their teachers. The procedures followed were the same as those of the teachers (section 3.5.5.1), except for the fact that students' interviews were done in Arabic due to their low L2 proficiency. All students were interviewed at my office individually. Each interview took approximately between 30-40 minutes. In total, 30 students were interviewed, 3 students from each of the participating teachers' classes (see table 3.8). All interviews were voice recorded by using an mp3 recorder.

Number of the interview	Participants	Date	Week number	Duration
Interview 1	Nadia's student 1	13/11/2012	9	46 minutes
Interview 2	Nadia's student 2	13/11/2012	9	40 minutes
Interview 3	Nadia's student 3	13/11/2012	9	35 minutes
Interview 4	Amal's student 1	14/11/2012	9	33 minutes
Interview 5	Amal's student 2	14/11/2012	9	44 minutes
Interview 6	Amal's student 3	14/11/2012	9	38 minutes
Interview 7	Adam's student 1	16/11/2012	10	51 minutes
Interview 8	Adam's student 2	16/11/2012	10	42 minutes
Interview 9	Adam's student 3	17/11/2012	10	33 minutes
Interview 10	Leena's student 1	18/11/2012	10	39 minutes
Interview 11	Leena's student 2	18/11/2012	10	37 minutes
Interview 12	Leena's student 3	18/11/2012	10	39 minutes
Interview 13	Reema's student 1	19/11/2012	10	39 minutes
Interview 14	Reema's student 2	19/11/2012	10	36 minutes
Interview 15	Reema's student 3	20/11/2012	10	46 minutes
Interview 16	Ann's student 1	21/11/2012	10	35 minutes
Interview 17	Ann's student 2	21/11/2012	10	41 minutes
Interview 18	Ann's student 3	21/11/2012	10	34 minutes
Interview 19	Tasnem's student 1	24/11/2012	11	42 minutes

Interview 20	Tasnem's student 2	24/11/2012	11	27 minutes
Interview 21	Tasnem's student 3	24/11/2012	11	53 minutes
Interview 22	Shoq's student 1	26/11/2012	11	39 minutes
Interview 23	Shoq's student 2	26/11/2012	11	63 minutes
Interview 24	Shoq's student 3	26/11/2012	11	34 minutes
Interview 25	Mary's student 1	1/12/2012	12	30 minutes
Interview 26	Mary's student 2	1/12/2012	12	44 minutes
Interview 27	Mary's student 3	1/12/2012	12	48 minutes
Interview 28	Treza's student 1	3/12/2012	12	37 minutes
Interview 29	Treza's student 2	3/12/2012	12	51 minutes
Interview 30	Treza's student 3	3/12/2012	12	35 minutes

**Table 3.8 Use of students' interviews in the main study**

### **3.6 Data analysis procedure**

As Cohen et al. (2007: 461) have stated, “there is no one single or correct way to analyse and present qualitative data; how one does it should abide by fitness to the purpose”. The data of this study was analysed by combining two approaches; the deductive which resulted in using some codes derived from the literature about the issues of WCF, and the inductive which allowed other codes to emerge from the data.

The data collected from the interviews, TAPs, and observations passed through similar stages of data transcribing (i.e. all data were transcribed in their original language), initial coding, analytic coding, refining and interpretation. In the final step, all codes and sub-codes were retrieved and listed according to the theme of each research question. Despite the fact that all data went through the same process, the coding procedures of each method differed as shall be illustrated in the following sections which describe the process of the coding of interviews, TAP and teachers' WCF, and of the classroom observations, respectively.

#### **3.6.1 Analysing interviews**

The data obtained from the teachers and the students' semi-structured interviews, and stimulated recall interviews went through three stages: initial coding, developing the final coding list, and then analytical coding which was done through the use of the qualitative data analysis software package

(i.e. QSR NVivo: QSR International, 2010).

I developed the initial codes by reading the transcribed data and assigning category labels under each theme. The codes were given names which were closest to the meaning they described. For example, the extent to which teachers change their feedback depending on the students' different levels is called [VARIATION IN WCF].

The following is an example of a deductively developed code, [AMOUNT OF WCF], which derived from the literature (e.g. Bitchener and Ferris, 2012; Lee, 2003, 2004, 2008, 2009, 2013), and which was further divided into two sub-codes: [COMPREHENSIVE] and [SELECTIVE].

*“Teachers should correct all errors and not to focus on specific errors only” (Nadia, pre-observation interview).*

Conversely, the code [TEACHER-LED CLASS DISCUSSION], emerged out of data, as in the following:

*“Instead of asking students to comment on each other, I prefer to work as one group and I consider myself as one of this group I direct this group and we comment together on students' writing” (Amal, pre-observation interview).*

Since more teachers referred to teacher-led class discussion, this was considered an important theme and a specific code was assigned to capture it. The same procedure was followed for the first five interviews in order to develop the initial list, which was then applied to the rest of the interview data.

Following Dey's (1993) advice, the initial codes went through refining stages in which some of the codes were renamed, combined and abandoned. Some codes were combined under one main code. For example, the codes: [STUDENTS' LARGE NUMBERS] and [CLASSROOM TIME] were combined as: [CLASSROOM CHALLENGES]. Moreover, some codes were abandoned because they turned out to be less important than it originally seemed. For example, the code:

[ATTENDING WORKSHOPS], which was related to the teacher preparation before starting to teach writing, was deleted because it appeared that none of the teachers attended any writing workshops, training sessions, or seminars regarding writing. This stage of deleting some codes is called the ‘winnowing’ process (Cresswell, 2007: 140). The same interpretation process was applied to five interviews until the final list of codes was produced (see Appendix P for list of codes).

The final step was achieved through the use of NVivo software. The ease and efficiency of the computerized ‘code and-retrieve’ technique enables researchers to interrogate, search, annotate, organise and retrieve the important elements in the text, facilitating the move between a view of coded categories identified in the data and the raw data itself (Welsh, 2002; Dolan and Ayland 2001; Richards, 2003). Code schemes can be easily and quickly altered and chunks of data can be double-coded (Bassett 2004; Richards and Richards 1991; St John and Johnson 2000). After finalizing the list of codes, the codes were categorized and organised into a ‘node tree’ and applied to the whole data set. Selecting a node from the tree node enables researchers to browse all the coded segments accordingly. Figure 3.2 illustrates a sample of a node-tree generated from an analysis of teachers’ interview scripts using NVivo 10.

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Writing beliefs	0	0	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	3/15/2013 2:41 PM	NIM
WCF beliefs	0	0	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	3/10/2013 7:08 PM	NIM
Purpose of WCF	8	17	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	2/21/2014 1:52 AM	NIK
Amount of WCF	0	0	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	3/10/2013 7:10 PM	NIM
Focus of WCF	0	0	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	3/10/2013 7:13 PM	NIM
Explicitness of WCF	0	0	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	3/10/2013 7:19 PM	NIM
Frequency of WCF	8	10	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	2/21/2014 1:49 AM	NIK
Time of giving WCF	8	15	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	2/21/2014 1:50 AM	NIK
Procedure after WCF	0	0	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	5/13/2013 3:22 PM	NIM
After correction	0	0	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	5/13/2013 3:22 PM	NIM
Place of WCF	0	0	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	5/13/2013 3:22 PM	NIM
Assessment	0	0	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	5/13/2013 3:22 PM	NIM
Variations in WCF	0	0	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	5/13/2013 3:30 PM	NIM
Other types of feedback	0	0	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	5/13/2013 3:33 PM	NIM
Nature of WCF	0	0	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	5/15/2013 2:05 PM	NIM
Language of WCF	0	0	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	5/15/2013 2:11 PM	NIM
Teacher's profile	0	0	10/24/2013 7:42 PM	NIM	5/13/2013 2:22 PM	NIM
Writing beliefs (2)	0	0	2/16/2015 11:40 PM	NIK	3/15/2013 2:41 PM	NIM
Writing beliefs (3)	0	0	2/16/2015 11:41 PM	NIK	3/15/2013 2:41 PM	NIM

Figure 3.2 sample of a node-tree generated from an analysis of teachers’ interview scripts using NVivo 10.

### 3.6.2 Analysing think-aloud data and teachers' WCF

While transcribing think-aloud protocol data, it was important to distinguish between teachers' written feedback (e.g. adding missing forms, providing the answer, crossing out unnecessary form etc.), the teachers' oral verbalization, instances of reading students' writing, teachers use of L1, and the researcher's comments. To that end, I assigned a standard font for teachers' oral verbalizations, bold red font for teachers' WCF, quotation marks for instances of reading students' writing, brackets to illustrate the researcher's comments, and italics for the use of L1 (see Appendix K for a sample of TAP transcription). The following example illustrates how the data was transcribed:

Teacher (reading): "The teaching of English is strict" ... it is not the teaching... it is 'the way of teaching' (teacher writes: <b>The way of teaching English</b> ) Teacher (reading): "so let us learn more and more" Teacher: what does she mean by this "let us learn more and more"? I cannot understand... (Teacher underlines it).
---

In the second stage, think-aloud protocols were coded, drawing on categories which generated codes about teachers' WCF practices (similar codes for interviews were used). As with the interview analysis, the current literature on WCF methodology suggested initial categories for analysing teachers practices (e.g., Focus of WCF); others were added as they emerged (e.g. emotional responses, non-feedback practices, and reference to teaching). In addition, as with interviews, the codes went through similar stages of renaming, combining, and abandoning until the final list of codes was established (see appendix P).

Finally, each student's essay was attached to her teacher's transcribed data and these were classified according to two criteria: the students' English language level and the students' writing teachers. For example, the students' papers of teacher Adam were grouped into high-achiever, average, and low-achiever papers based on the teacher's evaluation (see section 3.4.2). Then, the

codes were listed in a table together with the instances of students' writing, teachers' written feedback, and the teachers' verbalization. The following table, for example, illustrates the analysis of part of an average student's writing which is commented on by one of the teacher participants (see table 3.9).

Students' writing	Teacher verbalisation	Teacher WCF	Focus of WCF									Explicitness of WCF				Reference to teaching	Negative / positive feedback		Patterns of errors						
			Form			Content			Organisation			Direct		Indirect			In the past	In the future	Positive	Negative	Minor error	Serious error	Frequent error	Stigmatising error	
			Grammar	Spelling	Punctuation	Capitalization	Development of Ideas	Clarity of Ideas	Coherence	Unity	Conclusion	Body	Introduction	Providing direct form	Crossing-out	Adding missing form									Coded
"in addition that"	"Again...grammatical error... I explained the connectors to them... I told them that it is 'in addition to' ... This is annoying"	"In addition to that,"	*		*	*						*					*					*	*		
"When we will graduate we will be able to know the main basics."	Basics for what? This is unclear!	"Unclear"					*								*										

**Table 3.9 Example one of analysing TAP**

Finally, to find out about teachers' WCF practices, I counted the frequency of each WCF technique for each teacher across the students' different ability levels. Finding out the frequency of each teacher WCF practices enabled me to compare between teachers' practices and to report on the findings of all ten teachers. In the following example, I counted the frequency of WCF by one of the teacher participants (see table 3.10).

Participant		Focus of WCF											Explicitness of WCF				Reference to teaching	Negative / positive feedback		Patterns of errors					
		Form			Content			Organisation			Direct		Indirect												
		Grammar	Spelling	Punctuation	Capitalization	Development of ideas	Clarity of Ideas	Coherence	Unity	Conclusion	Body	Introduction	Providing direct form	Crossing-out	Adding missing form	Coded	Uncoded	In the past	In the future	Positive	Negative	Minor error	Serious error	Frequent error	Stigmatising error
Adam	High-achiever 1	4	3	1	4	0	1	2	1	1	3	2	7	3	8	1	3	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
	High-achiever 2	5	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	3	1	5	2	3	2	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	0

**Table 3.10 Example two of analysing TAP**

As for the amount of WCF, since this code does not refer to individual instances of giving feedback but is rather a cumulatively applied code based on the whole feedback giving session, it was only assigned at the end of each teacher's TAP session for each script marked. I considered teachers following the comprehensive WCF if they gave written feedback, whether direct or indirect, on all errors that they noticed based on their verbalisations, while selective approach was considered to be followed if teachers focused on specific error categories only or if they purposefully ignored specific types of errors despite having noticed them (the evidence of which was found in the teachers' verbalisation).

I followed the same procedure in the analysis of FA. However, a few codes were abandoned as they were not valid for the FA. These codes included [PATTERNS OF ERRORS] as judgments about whether the teachers view errors as [SERIOUS ERROR], [MINOR ERROR], or [STIGMATISING ERROR] cannot be made based on the marked scripts alone. In other words, these codes can only be assigned on the basis of the teachers' verbalisations (see table 3.11 for an example of the FA). The same procedure for TAP was followed in which I counted the frequency of each teacher's WCF technique across the different ability levels.

Students' writing	Teacher WCF	Focus of WCF									Explicitness of WCF				Negative / positive feedback			
		Form			Content			Organisation			Direct		Indirect					
		Grammar	Spelling	Punctuation	Capitalization	Development of ideas	Clarity of Ideas	Coherence	Unity	Conclusion	Body	Introduction	Providing direct form	Crossing-out form	Adding missing form	Coded	Uncoded	Positive
"Who can be more resbonsibility"	" <u>responsible</u> "	*	*									*						
"I think men have more <u>resbonsibility</u> and able to do it"	<u>are</u> " <u>...</u> <u>and</u> <u>^</u> able..."	*											*					
"Women like to spend their time shopping and taking care of themselves"	" <u>IR</u> " (for irrelevant)						*								*			

**Table 3.11 Example of analysing FA**



### **3.6.3 Analysing observations**

After transcribing all observation data (see Appendix M for an excerpt from observation lesson transcript), I listed them in a chronological order based on the lecture sequences. While the notes helped me keep the additional contextual information available about how a certain technique is employed (e.g. the extent to which teachers intervene while students are writing, which is a strategy that cannot be recorded), the transcribed data gives more detailed description of the techniques used (e.g. how teachers commented on students' common errors).

The next stage was coding and analysing observation data drawing on categories which generated codes about teachers' approaches to teaching writing. The same themes for interviews and TAPs were used in order to make it possible for the researcher to compare the data. As with the interview and TAP analysis, current literature on WCF methodology suggested initial categories for analysing teachers' practices (e.g., [GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION], [PEER FEEDBACK]); others were added as they emerged (e.g. [TEACHER-LED CLASS DISCUSSION]).

To find out teachers' practices in teaching writing, I counted the frequencies of strategy use in classes and then classified the strategies on the basis of how frequently they were used. The final step was comparing the episodes that were selected from the classroom observations, TAPs, and FA against the quotes that emerged from both the interviews and stimulated recall, in order to triangulate findings.

### **3.7 Inter-rater reliability test**

Coding is considered to be reliable when "two independent raters produce roughly the same results when putting the system into effect" (Smagorinsky, 2008: 401). To test the reliability of coding, a second rater, an Arabic speaker and PhD holder specializing in the field of Applied

linguistics and with good knowledge of the qualitative paradigm and methods of research, was provided with a randomly selected 10% of each dataset (i.e. one sample of the teacher interviews, three samples of the students' interviews, ten samples of TAP data, ten papers of the students' corrected papers, and five transcribed classroom observations). The second rater was also provided and familiarized with the lists of codes for all datasets, their definitions, and examples from data (see Appendix Q) and was asked to apply each provided list of codes on the related data.

The final procedure was to check the number of similarities between the researcher and the second coder regarding the application of the codes. This was achieved by using Scholfield's (2005) formula (see figure 3.3). The results of the inter-rater reliability tests are presented as follows:

$\frac{\text{Number of items coded the same by the two raters}}{\text{Number of items (stretches of data assigned a code) coded by the researcher in the data}} \times 100$
---

**Figure 3.3 Scholfield's (2005) Formula for Inter-rater Reliability Agreement**

Table (3.12) below shows how the agreement percentage was calculated:

	Number of instances coded the same by the second coder and the researcher	Number of instances where a code was applied by the researcher only	Number of instances where a code was applied by the second coder only.	Number of instances coded differently by the second coder and the researcher	Agreement Percentage
<b>Teachers' interviews</b>	87	7	6	8	$(87/102) \times 100 = 85.2\%$
<b>Students' interviews</b>	103	8	3	4	$(103/115) \times 100 = 90\%$
<b>TAP</b>	92	13	11	10	$(92/114) \times 100 = 81\%$

**Table 3.12 Inter-rater reliability of the coding**

Table 3.12 indicates that the total percentage of agreements between the researcher and the second rater (85%, 90%, and 81%) exceeded 80%, which is satisfactory as it is above the minimum acceptable agreement percentage (i.e. 80%) as recommended in the literature (Miles and

Huberman, 1994; Mackey and Gass, 2005). It should also be noted that instances of disagreement between the researcher and the second coder were discussed and resolved. As a result of the discussion, a few codes were either added, refined, or deleted. The following example illustrates how instances of disagreement were resolved and how the process of the inter-rater reliability testing led to the improvements in the coding scheme:

The discussion of teachers' interviews revealed a problem with the application of the two codes [REASONS FOR TEACHING WRITING] (i.e. why did teachers teach the writing course?) and [WRITING USEFULNESS] (i.e. benefits for teaching writing) as the relevant data covered by these two codes tend to overlap as in the following example:

*Researcher: Did you choose to teach writing?*

*Interviewee: now, yes. I started to like it but when I taught it first at the beginning I did not like it at all because it wasn't writing, it was grammar... but teaching writing is the basic of every other course.*

Although it was possible to resolve this problem by allowing 'double-coding', it was decided to combine these codes into one code [ATTITUDES TO TEACHING WRITING] as the usefulness of writing can be implied under teachers' attitudes towards the writing course

### 3.8 Validity and reliability

Considerable literature has been published about how a piece of research should be validated using two conventional criteria: internal validity and external validity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Hammersley, 1992; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Patton, 2001; Bryman, 2001; Richards, 2003; Mackey and Gass, 2005; Silverman, 2005).

Guba (1981) proposed that these conventional terms have to be replaced with new terms that better fit the qualitative research. These terms are *credibility* (instead of internal validity), *transferability* (instead of external validity), *dependability* (instead of reliability) and *confirmability* (instead of objectivity).

**Credibility (internal validity)** involves establishing that the findings of a research are believable. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed multiple ways of achieving credibility. Credible studies must provide evidence of lengthy engagement in the field. Accordingly, in the present study, the data was collected over a period of four months. Another means of achieving credibility depended on the richness and accuracy of the data, rather than the amount of the gathered data. This required the principle of triangulation in order to reduce the effect of researcher bias. This study achieved both data and methodological triangulation. Data triangulation was achieved when teachers' beliefs and practices were confirmed from another source, that is, the students. In addition, the methodological triangulation was accomplished by employing multiple methods, i.e., interviews, think-aloud protocols, feedback analysis, and observations. Another source of credibility included expert validation. The coding scheme, and the application of the codes on the data were both checked by two experts in applied linguistics. Moreover, the Arabic translated extracts that were to be used as examples in this thesis were checked by an Arabic PhD holder, with a specialisation in translation.

**Transferability (external validity)** is defined as the degree in which the results from one study can be applied to other similar contexts. This issue, which is defined by the readers of the research, can be achieved by having a rich description of the context and the participants so that the reader can determine the degree in which the results of a study can be transferred to their context (McKay, 2006: 13). This study aims at understanding a specific situation in which teachers are engaged in the processes of giving WCF on their students' papers. However, Yin (2003) argues that it is possible to make 'analytic generalizations'. Such generalizations can be achieved by relating the findings to theoretical propositions. The present study aims at providing further evidence of the impact of beliefs on classroom practices.

**Dependability (reliability)** ensures the consistency of the findings and the possibility of the study being repeated. This requires documenting the study procedure in a detailed manner to allow an external researcher to repeat the inquiry and obtain similar findings. This also allows researchers to comprehend the methods and their efficacy (McKay, 2006). This study ensures dependability as it provides a detailed description of the participants involved in the study, the context of the study, and the procedures taken to conduct the study. Moreover, this study uses the inter-rater reliability test which is one of the measures that ensure greater reliability.

**Confirmability (objectivity)** questions the way in which the results are supported by the collected data. This is to reveal the extent to which the researcher has been biased during the study. According to Edge and Richards (1998), the study can ensure confirmability through providing a detailed description of how the data was collected and how the categories were derived. Therefore, the present study gives a detailed description and examples of how the data was analysed and how the codes were obtained. Moreover, the results chapter presents a large number of excerpts from students' writing that shows teachers' WCF and extensive quotations from the data to support any reported finding. In addition, samples of the students' interviews, teachers' interviews, observation classroom, TAP, and stimulated recall interviews are provided in the appendices.

### **3.9 Chapter summary**

This chapter reviewed the methodology used in this study by examining the theoretical background of the methodology, the main study and the procedures for data collection, and the data analysis and interpretation. In general, this chapter showed that although this study utilized qualitative methods of data collection, it has some quantitative sense through the prior exploitation of the literature and the use of numerable data. The following chapter will present the findings obtained from the data analysis.

## CHAPTER FOUR: TEACHERS' BELIEFS

This chapter provides an answer to the first research question: “What are the writing teachers’ beliefs regarding giving WCF on their students’ writing? ”. It presents the findings of the interview analysis with regard to teachers’ beliefs about writing instruction (section 4.1) and teachers’ beliefs about giving WCF (Section 4.2).

### 4.1 Teachers’ beliefs about writing instruction

In the discussion of teachers’ beliefs regarding writing instruction, three themes were highlighted: (1) the teachers’ attitude towards teaching writing, (2) teachers’ beliefs about the usefulness of writing instruction, and (3) teachers’ beliefs regarding how writing should be taught (i.e. the techniques that should be implemented when teaching writing). While the first two themes help to understand the teachers’ wider beliefs regarding writing which might contribute to shaping teachers’ beliefs about WCF and/or understanding the factors that influence their WCF practices, the third theme helps us to find out how teachers’ beliefs regarding the focus of the writing instruction relate to their beliefs regarding the focus of WCF.

#### 4.1.1 Attitudes towards teaching writing

The study generally found that most (eight out of ten) writing teachers dislike teaching writing. Teacher Nadia, for example, stated:

*“Teaching writing is a challenge for me. That is why I do not like it” (Nadia, pre-observation interview).*

Similar to teacher Nadia, most teachers who dislike writing instruction attributed their negative attitudes to the difficulties related to how teaching writing is organised in this particular teaching context, rather than to reasons related to the nature of teaching writing in general. These

difficulties include large student numbers (Nadia, Shoq, Amal, Leena), the lack of direct contact with students (i.e. in the case of the male teacher Adam), and the teacher's unfamiliarity with the students' L1 (Treza, Tasnem, Mary, Ann). While these cause difficulty in teaching writing, they may not give an indication about the teachers' attitude towards writing in the sense that such difficulties might presumably reoccur in all other courses as they are not only related to the teaching of writing in particular. In addition, the teachers' attitudes towards writing instruction might change if these difficulties are sorted out.

However, many teachers gave reasons related to the nature of the writing instruction such as writing teachers' workload, the teachers' inadequate training, and their negative attitude towards the teaching methods they are required to use. For many teachers (Reema, Amal, Nadia, Adam), teaching writing is not appealing because unlike all other teachers, writing teachers have many other responsibilities to do at home which takes a lot of their time. Teacher Reema stated:

*"I do not like to teach writing because it is unfair that the writing teachers should work at home correcting students' papers and designing rubrics for students and make the plan for the next class while teachers of all other subjects have only to prepare for their lessons. The department has to take this into consideration by reducing the teaching hours of the writing teachers"*(Reema, pre-observation interview).

Teacher Adam added that the department should assign two teachers for the writing course; one teacher to prepare and teach the writing lessons and another teacher to correct the students' papers. However, those teachers claimed that they do not dislike the actual teaching of writing but they dislike the workload of teaching the writing course. Therefore, their feelings might change if their workload is reduced.

In addition, two teachers' (Nadia and Tasnem) attributed their dislike of teaching writing to their lack of appropriate training. They argued that writing should be taught by someone who is

specialized in the field of language and linguistics. Since their major is literature, they feel that they would be more qualified and more creative in teaching literary subjects. Teacher Nadia stated that:

*“I used to tell Dr. \*\*\*\* [the head of the department] that I do not want to teach writing. It is not because I hate it. But I do not like it. My field is literature and criticism. I feel that I will be more creative in teaching literature”* (Nadia, pre-observation interview).

Despite the fact that teacher Tasnem found the writing course less interesting than other literary courses, she stated that she still “can manage to teach it [the writing course] after having this long experience.” In addition, two other teachers, Amal and Shoq, do not like the fact that teaching writing is not as creative as they would like it to be, i.e. that its focus is too narrow on controlled activities. For those teachers, teaching writing becomes interesting only when they are given the freedom to select materials for students themselves. Teacher Amal, for example, explained:

*“I did not like [teaching writing] at all because it wasn't writing; it was grammar. We had to spend the lectures explaining grammar rules”* (Amal, pre-observation interview).

In contrast to the above, only two teachers (Ann and Leena) reported that they like teaching writing. Teacher Leena enjoys teaching writing “*because it is a comprehensive skill. Within writing, you teach grammar, how to use the language in good way, how to express your ideas and connect them in a paragraph, and how to organise your paragraphs in a well-written essay*”. Whereas teacher Leena enjoys teaching the various skills in the writing course, teacher Ann’s preference to teach writing is related to students’ improvement. She stated:

*“I like to see the creative ideas that are generated by students in a systematic order, and the improvement at the end of the course”* (Ann, pre-observation interview).



To conclude, while most teachers seem to dislike teaching writing for broadly similar reasons related to the difficulties in teaching the subject rather than the actual process of teaching writing, two teachers, Leena and Ann, viewed writing instruction as an interesting challenge for apparently different reasons. Teaching writing, according to Leena, is interesting given the fact that through teaching writing, she can engage in a range of teaching activities. In contrast, teacher Ann attributed her love of teaching writing to the improvement she can notice in her students as writing allows students to express their creative ideas.

#### **4.1.2 Beliefs about the usefulness of writing instruction**

Although most teachers have reported that they do not enjoy teaching writing, all teachers found the writing instruction useful for students. Teacher Amal, for example, reported her opinion by saying:

*“Of course it is [writing instruction] useful. And it is one of the most important courses to be taught for students in this department”* (Amal, pre-observation interview).

According to many teachers (Adam, Leena, Ann, Amal, Nadia), writing is the basic skill that all students need in order to master other courses like literature, translation, and linguistics. In a typical response, teacher Adam stated that:

*“The writing course is the total outcome through which all other skills of language or literature could manifest themselves”* (Adam, pre-observation interview).

In addition, two teachers (Treza and Shoq) viewed writing courses as useful not only for study purposes, but also for the students’ professional careers beyond the university. Teacher Shoq explained that:

*“Writing is something that they are going to use when they graduate and even when they work*

*and when they continue their studies. The basics they learned in this course will remain forever”*  
(Shoq, pre-observation interview).

In addition to these general benefits of the writing instruction, teachers also indicated specific areas and skills which develop as a result of writing instruction. For instance, teacher Ann believed that teaching writing improves the students’ reading skills as “writing and reading are interconnected.” Teacher Nadia stated that the writing course helps students to master two important skills: how to be selective (i.e. selecting the ideas that are related to the topic) and how to be accurate about what you write. According to teacher Tasnem, writing gives students the opportunity to assess their knowledge *“because in all other courses, when something comes to your mind orally, you think that you know it but the actual test comes when you write it. Then you discover if you really know it or not. So, without writing, students have no grip on the material”*.

To sum up, it is interesting to find that while most teachers dislike writing instruction, all teachers believed that students benefit from writing courses both in terms of overall development of proficiency necessary for following other courses and for their future academic career, and in terms of developing specific skills (i.e. to improve their reading skills, to help them select important and relevant materials, and to assess their knowledge).

#### **4.1.3 Beliefs about techniques for teaching writing**

This section addresses teachers’ beliefs about the different techniques that should be used in order to help students develop their writing skills. As the data reveals, all teachers believed in the importance of engaging students in various writing activities in order to improve their written performance. The activities teachers mentioned include redrafting (i.e. writing a second draft), outlining (i.e. forming a list divided into headings and subheadings that distinguish the thesis statement, the topic sentences, and the supporting details), using models (i.e. reading essays

written by professional writers), and discussing the students' common errors (i.e. identifying common errors by the majority of the students for class discussion). While there is a general agreement about the usefulness of most of these activities, specifically, outlining, explaining common errors, redrafting, the teachers' opinions are split about the use of models. Teachers' views on the techniques are presented below starting from those that all teachers consider useful.

**Outlining**, according to all teachers, saves time for both students when writing and for teachers when correcting their students' writing but it also helps to guide students and develop their organisation skills. Teacher Amal has explained that:

*“Outlining is important not only for them but for me as well... It helps them to be more focused on the main issues and not to write off topic and it helps them to follow the correct structure, and not to get confused about what to add. And it helps me following up otherwise I get lost in the paper. So outlining saves me the time to think of the main points she wants to discuss in her essay”* (Amal, Pre-observation interviews).

Moreover, all teachers believed in the importance of discussing the students' **common errors** orally in class after correcting their students' writing. According to half of the teachers (Tasnem, Ann, Treza, Leena, Amal), giving oral feedback on students' common writing errors has multiple benefits, such as to help students remember their mistakes, and to be aware of the mistakes that their classmates make. According to teacher Tasnem, explaining common errors is important especially for those students who do not read teachers' WCF. She has stated that:

*“It's very useful if you select the papers which cover students' common errors- and comment on them orally in front of the students. Most students do not know about their errors or some of them do not read the teachers' comments. So it's better to discuss it orally”* (Tasnem, pre-observation interview).

As for the importance of **multiple-drafts**, teachers believed that a good piece of writing is produced after having produced many drafts. To give an example, teacher Ann explained that:

*“Good writing comes only through hard work. If you want to write something you have to write it many times. Writing has to be a continuous process and it has to have a hard labour on it”* (Ann, Pre-observation interviews).

Teachers have highlighted the numerous benefits of multiple-draft writing for the development of students’ writing skills. First, according to four teachers (Amal, Tasnem, Reema, Shoq), redrafting allows students time to organise their ideas into a coherent, well-structured, and error-free essay. Moreover, two teachers (Leena and Mary) have argued that writing more than one draft “gives students the courage to express their thoughts more freely without paying much attention to language” (Leena, *Pre-observation interviews*) as the first draft is not going to be assessed. Three teachers (Nadia, Shoq, and Ann) have added that when students redraft, they can uplift their language by using advanced words and figures of speech. Teacher Shoq, for example, has stated that:

*“When they rewrite, they will have time edit their language and refine it, using symbols and figures of speech”* (Shoq, Pre-observation interviews).

Although all teachers agreed that **models** can be useful in teaching writing, they disagreed upon how models should be used. According to four teachers (Treza, Tasnem, Shoq, Mary), students should be required to imitate models. Teacher Tasnem, for example, explained how and why students should imitate models by saying that:

*“[Students] have to read passages written by others and discover how something can be expressed, and then copy them... This is how the child learns a language when he copies his mom's words first. With reading and imitating, they will slowly learn how to make their contributions”* (Tasnem, pre-observation interview).

Conversely, other teachers (Adam, Amal, Leena, Reema, Nadia) have expressed their concerns regarding using this strategy. They believed that imitating prevents students from creating and from generating unique ideas as students tend to copy “everything to be on the safe side” (Adam, pre-observation interview). Instead of giving them good models to imitate, they believed that students should be given models in class in order to “analyse not to imitate” (Amal, pre-observation interview) the commonalities and the various ways in which the same genre can be composed. According to those teachers, when students analyse, they acquire the ideas, the style, the structure, and the language pattern automatically.

In sum, it is interesting to find that while all teachers believed in the importance of some elements of the process approach (i.e. outlining, redrafting), others seem to believe in the usefulness of combining the features of the process and product approaches.

#### **4.1.4 Beliefs about the focus of writing instruction**

The interviews have also revealed more about teachers’ beliefs on the aspects of writing that should be taught in the writing course. Broadly speaking, these aspects can be divided into features such as language form (i.e. grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization), content (i.e. coherence, unity, and clarity of ideas), and organisation (i.e. the essay should have an introduction where the thesis statement is clearly presented, a body which presents the topic sentence(s) stated, and a conclusion). The findings show that teachers can be split into two different groups regarding the foci of the writing instruction. While one group believed that teachers should mostly focus on language, the other group believed that more importance should be given to organisation and content and not to language form. To give an example of the language form-focused group, teacher Mary explained that:

*“Language, of course, is the most important thing to focus on in writing”* (Mary, pre-observation interviews).

Conversely, teacher Leena explained the reason why organisation is the most important writing aspect by saying that:

*“Teaching them [students] how to write an argumentative essay for example, the steps of writing, is the main focus of the writing course”* (Leena, pre-observation interviews).

The contrast between these two groups’ views is mostly evident in their beliefs about the role of grammar in writing instruction. According to six teachers (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Leena, Reema, Ann), grammar should be taught through teaching writing, to support and/or to clarify issues in the student’s writing, rather than to be taught for its own sake. As a result, mini-grammar lessons should be taught through highlighting the students’ common errors. Teacher, Nadia, argued that:

*“It is important to give them some grammar hints but not to teach them grammar. For example, ‘use simple present when you are not sure about the tense’”* (Nadia, pre-observation interview).

Teachers gave many reasons to justify that it is not their job to teach grammar rules in the writing class. According to teacher Adam, teaching extensive grammar lessons draws both the teachers and students’ focus away from other more important issues in writing since “the whole class turns into a grammar lesson.” (Adam, pre-observation interview). In addition, two teachers (Leena and Reema) argued that teachers do not have time in class to teach grammar. Teacher Leena, for example, stated that class time should be allocated to teaching more important skills in writing, i.e., content and organisation:

*“The writing class is two hours only and you have to divide these two hours to teach students new skills related to writing such as keeping unity and coherence and organising these ideas”* (Leena, pre-observation interview).

Moreover, three teachers (Amal, Adam, Nadia) stated that students should have another separate module on grammar. Teacher Amal stated: “Why should we focus on explaining grammar when they have to do another course about grammatical structure?” (Amal, pre-observation interview).

Conversely, four teachers (Tasnem, Mary, Treza, Shoq) believed that extensive grammar lessons should be tackled as part of the writing class and that teachers should engage students in grammar exercises to examine their understanding of grammatical rules. Although those teachers are aware that students take separate modules on grammar, they believed in the importance of repetition for learning. Teacher Tasnem, for example, stated that:

*“We have to explain these grammar rules even though they have studied them. This is how they [students] learn by repeating and emphasizing on important issues”* (Tasnem, pre-observation interview).

In addition to the importance of language form, all teachers believed that writing teachers should focus on the **content** (i.e. coherence, and/or clarity of ideas) of the essay. The following excerpt shows how teacher Adam advocated for the process approach in which teachers work with students on the process of generating ideas:

*“Process of writing should be -I believe-divided into certain stages. Do not just give them a topic and ask them to write. Teachers should discuss the content with [students], how they can organise their ideas, how they can generate new ideas, how to select the ideas which fit on the essay, and how can they connect between sentences and paragraphs using the correct transitions”* (Adam, pre-observation interviews).

To conclude, despite the teachers’ consensus on the importance of explaining the different aspects of writing, teachers differed regarding the most important one. Teachers are classified into two groups; one advocates the primary importance of organisation as being the focus of writing instruction and the other argues for the importance of language form.

#### 4.1.5 Summary of teachers' beliefs about writing instruction

This section has presented the teachers' attitudes towards teaching writing, their beliefs about the usefulness of writing instruction, and finally teachers' beliefs regarding the implementation of various techniques in the writing class. The findings showed that while most teachers dislike teaching writing due to various difficulties related to the students (i.e. contact, number), teachers (i.e. workload, specialization, L1, contact), and the teaching methods, all teachers nevertheless have acknowledged the usefulness of the writing course as it is the basic skill that all students need in order to master other courses. In addition, the findings revealed that teachers can be classified into two groups regarding their beliefs about the focus of writing instruction. The first group (Adam, Amal, Nadia Leena, Reema, and Ann) believed that essay organisation is more important than language form. Hence, they can be described as organisation-focused writing tutors. Conversely, the other group (Tasnem, Mary, Shoq, and Treza) can be described as form-focused. This distinction enables us to examine the extent to which both groups have similar or different beliefs regarding the focus of WCF, which will be discussed in the following section.

#### 4.2 Teachers' beliefs about WCF

This section tackles the findings about teachers' beliefs regarding specific issues in WCF which are highlighted in Table 4.1 below:

Purpose and goal (section 4.2.1)	Why should teachers give WCF on student's papers?
Explicitness (section 4.2.2)	How should teachers provide WCF?
Amount (section 4.2.3)	How much WCF should teachers provide on students' papers?
Focus (section 4.2.4)	What types of errors should teachers focus on?
Sources/providers (section 4.2.5)	Who should give the feedback?
Positive versus negative feedback (section 4.2.6)	Should teachers' WCF include positive versus negative comments?
Variation in teachers' WCF (section 4.2.7)	Should teachers vary their WCF techniques depending on students' proficiency levels?

**Table 4.1 Basic issues in WCF research**



### 4.2.1 Beliefs about the purpose of WCF

All teachers strongly believed that WCF is important and should be given on all students' essay writing. As teacher Tasnem stated:

*“It (giving WCF) is the most important thing to do as a writing teacher. Without it, students will not show any achievement or progress in their writing and will keep repeating their mistakes”* (Tasnem, pre-observation interviews).

The following table (4.2) demonstrates the different purpose(s) of WCF as stated by the teachers:

Purpose(s) of giving WCF	No.	Teachers									
		Adam	Amal	Nadia	Ann	Leena	Reema	Shoq	Tasnem	Mary	Treza
Improve students' writing abilities	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Recognize and avoid mistakes	7	✓	□		✓	✓	□	✓	✓	✓	✓
Facilitate and support the teaching of writing	4		✓		✓		✓				✓

**Table 4.2 Purpose of giving WCF**

As Table 4.2 shows, the teachers view WCF as having multiple purposes. Most (nine) teachers believe that WCF fits into the larger purpose of teaching writing which is to improve the students' writing in the future. Teacher Amal, for example, has argued that:

*“We aim at making students able to write a professional essay by the end of the course”* (Amal, pre-observation interviews).

Conversely, many (seven) teachers find WCF useful for the immediate/short term goal, that is, to help students recognize and avoid their mistakes when writing another essay. Teacher Adam, who stressed the advantage of written feedback over the oral one, has stated that:

*“Unlike oral comments, the written feedback is an available record that students can refer to whenever they can”* (Adam, pre-observation interviews).

In addition to the long-term and short-term goals of WCF, some (4) teachers regarded WCF as beneficial for teachers as well as for students. As for teachers, WCF supports the teaching of writing and makes it more effective by helping teachers to find out the students' common errors. In addition, it enables teachers to assist the students' understanding. As far as the students go, WCF helps students to evaluate their level and to recognize their points of weaknesses. For example, teacher Reema, who has argued for the usefulness of WCF in the learning and teaching process stated that:

*“The written feedback helps teachers as well as students. Teachers can re-highlight or re-focus on the important points in writing such as how the essay is organised, how the ideas are expressed correctly in a well coherent essay, and how the sentence is structured. Without written feedback, all theoretical explanation will not be clearly understood”* (Reema, pre-observation interviews).

In conclusion, all teachers believe in the importance of WCF and view WCF as having multiple goals. While most of these reasons serve the long-term goals of writing instruction, some are related to other immediate/short-term goals.

#### **4.2.2 Beliefs about the explicitness of WCF**

On the question of how teachers should deliver WCF, all teachers were in favour of the direct feedback (i.e. providing the answer, providing the cause of the error, crossing-out, or adding to student's text) as this satisfies the students' needs and expectations. Teacher Treza, for example, stated that:

*“The correct answer should be provided otherwise students will not pay attention to that error.”* (Treza, pre-observation interviews).

In addition, according to half of the teachers (Amal, Shoq, Mary, Adam, Reema) coded feedback (e.g. ‘spelling’ or ‘SP’) can also be used only when the error is frequent and/or if the teacher is planning to explain this error in the writing class. Teacher Nadia mentioned that:

*“Using the code ‘GR’ or writing ‘grammar’ might be confusing for student. But you can use them when you have already corrected a lot of grammar mistakes or when you want to discuss this rule for all students” (Nadia, pre-observation interviews).*

Conversely, none of the teachers preferred the indirect uncoded feedback (e.g. underlining the error) as they believed it was misleading and that it created confusion to students who were unable to figure out the cause of the error and/or how it could be corrected.

Despite the teachers’ consensus on the usefulness of the direct approach, teachers’ beliefs regarding the explicitness of WCF vary depending on the students’ level (this issue will be discussed in section 4.2.7) and on the type of errors. In terms of the types of errors, teachers’ beliefs regarding the explicitness of WCF differed depending on whether the error is frequent, serious and/or stigmatizing. Half of the teachers (Nadia, Ann, Leena, Tasnem, Shoq) believed that frequent errors are more important to be corrected explicitly than the infrequent ones. Teacher Leena argued that:

*“Frequent errors whether trivial, simple errors or big and important errors, they have priority to be pointed out and corrected because they shouldn’t occur in the first place” (Leena, pre-observation interview).*

Two teachers (Shoq and Nadia) stated that if the error is repeated in a student’s paper, it means that the student lacks the knowledge of the correct form, and this necessitates the importance of prioritizing them. Teacher Nadia explained that:

*“Imagine a mistake that becomes a regular for her, this has become a big problem and that is why we should focus on them more (...) by providing complete feedback” (Nadia, pre-observation interview).*

In addition, four teachers (Adam, Amal, Treza, Mary) believed that both frequent and infrequent errors should be given the same focus because it is the teacher’s job to focus on all errors explicitly in the paper, whether it is repeated or not.

As far as the seriousness of errors goes, all teachers (except for teacher Amal) believed that serious errors (i.e. those that cause communication breakdowns such as conveying vague or unclear ideas) should be corrected directly more often than minor errors which relate to formatting such as capitalization, punctuation, or spelling because “minor errors might be unintentional” (Mary, pre-observation interview) and because “students can easily correct them when they revise the essay” (Tasnem *pre-observation interview*). However, according to teacher Amal, teachers “should focus on both serious and minor errors; otherwise, the simple errors will keep occurring” (Amal, pre-observation interview).

Finally, when discussing stigmatizing errors (i.e. irritating errors that label students as less proficient writers) four teachers (Amal, Shoq, Mary, Tasnem) believed that while stigmatizing errors should not be prioritized by the teachers, they still must be corrected explicitly because it is the writing teachers’ job “to correct everything no matter how much annoying the errors are”(Shoq, *pre-observation interview*) and because “students want everything to be corrected” (Amal, pre-observation interview). In contrast, all other (six) teachers believed that stigmatizing errors should be corrected indirectly by writing teachers in the sense that “students must be able to figure out the correct answer by a simple revision” (Adam, *pre-observation interview*) and/or by consulting a dictionary or a friend to get the correct answer.

To conclude, while all teachers believe in the effectiveness of the direct WCF, some teachers still believe that indirect WCF might be also used in three situations: when dealing with frequent errors, minor errors, and/ or with stigmatizing errors.

#### **4.2.3 Beliefs about the amount of WCF**

All teachers believe that errors should be marked comprehensively. They argued that it is the best approach for students to improve their writing; otherwise, students would not realize that they have made mistakes and they would reoccur. Four teachers (Tasnem, Amal, Nadia, Mary) added that it is the teachers' job to correct all mistakes; otherwise students will think negatively about their teachers. Teacher Tasnem, for example, stated that:

*“All errors. Why should some errors be left and not checked? What should the student think about us or what impression she will get? She will think that this is not error or that we do not want to do our jobs” (Tasnem, pre-observation interview).*

Despite the teachers' consensus on the usefulness of the comprehensive approach, most teachers (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Leena, Treza, Mary, Tasnem, Shoq) believed that the amount of WCF might vary depending on the students' proficiency levels. This issue will be discussed in section 4.2.7.

#### **4.2.4 Beliefs about the focus of WCF**

Although all teachers believed in the comprehensive WCF, they still believed that some errors should be given more attention than others. When discussing the focus of WCF, the teachers' responses can be classified into two different groups. According to six teachers (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Ann, Leena, Reema), the organisation and the generic structure of the essay is the most important and the first things to concentrate on by teachers because *“if [the student] did not follow the correct procedures or structure, [the teacher] will not understand anything even her topic, her*

*thesis statement and if it is related to the body or not, she will end up taking zero*” (Nadia, pre-observation interview). In addition to their beliefs about the importance of organisation, according to this group, content is more important (Adam, Amal, Leena) or as important (Nadia, Ann, Reema) compared to the language form. Teachers claimed that it is not their job to focus on language errors as students *“are supposed to learn the language form in all other English courses like translation and literature not only in the writing class”* (Amal, pre-observation interview). Besides, teacher Leena has argued that since students can acquire the language form easily in practice, the teachers should concentrate on the content. Moreover, according to teacher Adam:

*“It's easier to tell the students you should pay attention to the verb while writing and you should put an "s" to the verb...but I believe that teachers' focus should be directed to the process of writing itself the organisation of the ideas, the flow of ideas, the logic which covers the whole essay (...) and all other stages which are related to the content of the essay”* (Adam, pre-observation interview).

Conversely, in the second group, four teachers (Tasnem, Mary, Treza and Shoq) believed that errors related to language form should be given more importance than errors related to content and organisation. Teacher Tasnem stated that:

*“Language comes first, content and organisation are also important but it comes later, because a writing which has no unity, no coherence, and not correct organisation but written in correct sentences will be understood if it's written in correct language”* (Tasnem, pre-observation interview).

It is important to note that teachers' beliefs about the focus of WCF are aligned with their beliefs about the focus of writing instruction. This indicates that teachers' beliefs about WCF are part of a larger belief system (Philips and Borg, 2009) (see section 2.1.3.2). The organisation-focused teachers seem to be inclined towards the process writing instruction as they are more concerned with helping students develop their writing skills through outlining, writing multiple-drafts, and by

analysing other models. They believed that there is more to good writing than having good knowledge of grammar. For those teachers, language should only be taught for the purpose of highlighting the students' common errors. Conversely, the language form-focused group focused in the writing instruction and in the use of WCF and were also more product oriented as they believed in the use of models for imitation. The writing course, according to them, is just a tool to develop students' language proficiency. This group preferred more controlled types of writing practices and focused mostly on grammar, correctness, and the product approach in general.

#### **4.2.5 Beliefs about the source of WCF**

All teachers believed that students should be allowed to get feedback from their peers. Teacher Nadia, for example, believed that "peer feedback helps them [students] exchange ideas." According to four teachers (Adam, Tasnem, Amal, Treza), peer feedback gives students the opportunity to realize the difficulties faced by other students and to link them with their own which, in turn, fosters the students' self-esteem to write more freely. In addition, teacher Reema believed that peer feedback helps students not to be over dependent on teachers. Although all teachers believed in the usefulness of peer feedback, teacher Amal added that it is better for teachers to take part in that activity by leading the discussion of the students' writing. Teacher Amal stated that:

*"I believe in that [peer feedback] but the teacher has to observe it because not all students are good... We should ask each one to write on the board and we comment together on student's writing and give different versions of it"* (Amal, pre-observation interview).

Although all teachers believe in the importance of peer feedback, they still believe that this should not replace the teachers' written feedback. As teacher Adam stated:

*“[Students] should go through self editing first and they should also receive feedback from their fellow colleagues and then comes the role of the teacher after that.”*(Adam, pre-observation interview).

In short, although peer feedback is important and should be implemented according to teachers, it should however, neither replace nor compensate for teachers’ WCF, and it should be guided by the teacher.

#### **4.2.6 Beliefs about positive versus negative feedback**

There was a consensus among all teachers regarding the negative and positive feedback on students’ writing. As for the positive feedback, all teachers acknowledged the importance of using praising terms to motivate students at all levels. In a typical response, teacher Adam has stated that:

*“You have to highlight the areas or points of strength by writing encouraging terms and expressions. This, I believe, facilitate and improves students’ writing because people usually tend to do better when they are encouraged ”* (Adam, Pre-observation interviews).

Teachers also believed that negative and harsh expressions should be avoided so as not to discourage students. Teacher Leena, for instance, stated that:

*“We must encourage the students and motivate them by praising what they write and not undermining whatever effort they do”*(Leena, Pre-observation interviews).

As can be seen, teachers are aware of the importance of the way in which WCF is phrased due to its potential motivational effect on students.



#### 4.2.7 Beliefs about the variation in WCF

Despite the teachers' consensus on the usefulness of the comprehensive and the direct approach of WCF, many teachers nevertheless believed that the amount and explicitness of WCF should vary depending on the students' ability levels.

As for the amount of WCF, six teachers (Adam, Shoq, Leena, Treza, Mary, Amal) explained that teachers should give more comprehensive WCF to high-achieving students than low-achieving ones. With low-achieving students, they argued that teachers should not focus on all errors to enable them to master specific issues at a time and not to make them feel depressed because of the large amount of feedback. Teachers hold different opinions regarding the errors that should be selected for correction in low-achieving students' writing. Two teachers (Adam and Treza) explained that, with low-achieving students, teachers should focus only on serious and frequent errors. Teacher Adam stated that:

*“You have to be more meticulous [give more explicit WCF] with excellent students (...) With weak students, you may ignore some errors to encourage them unless there is a fatal error or repeated errors”* (pre-observation interviews).

In addition, according to two teachers (Tasnem and Mary), with low-achieving students, “teachers should concentrate on language as low-achievers always have very poor language”(Tasnem, pre-observation interviews).

As for the explicitness of WCF, despite acknowledging the direct approach, seven teachers (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Reema, Leena, Shoq, Tasnem) believed that the indirect approach might be useful for high-achieving students only as they are able to find out the correct form without the teacher's help. As stated by teacher Leena:

*“I think this [level of directness] depends on your knowledge of your students. Weak students need very explicit feedback that you have to write the correct sentence for them because she is not up to the level of figuring out the correct answer by herself. But when I know that the students have good background in English, that they can figure out the mistakes by themselves, we can just make a hint. For instance, I’d just write ‘run on sentence’ without mentioning exactly what went wrong”*(Leena, pre-observation interviews).

In short, although the teachers’ general beliefs state that teachers’ WCF should be explicit and comprehensive, they are not categorical beliefs that apply to all students and all situations but instead they vary depending on the students’ ability levels. Because of that, it will be important to examine teachers’ practices when giving WCF to students of different ability levels to see the extent to which their beliefs are congruent with their practices.

#### **4.2.8 Summary of the findings about teachers’ beliefs in WCF**

This section reviews teachers’ beliefs about the explicitness of WCF, amount of WCF, the focus of WCF, the source of WCF, the negative feedback, and the variation in WCF. Generally, teachers preferred to locate and correct errors explicitly and to respond to these errors comprehensively. As for the focus of WCF, teachers differed in their beliefs regarding whether they should focus on organisation more than content and language form or whether language form should be prioritized over content and organisation. This is in line with the division of teachers into organisation-focused group versus language form-focused group. In addition, while teachers believed in the usefulness of implementing peer feedback, they still argued that teachers should be the main source of feedback. As for the positive versus negative feedback, all teachers have agreed on the importance of using praising terms to appreciate all levels of writing and not to use harsh terms. As for the variation in teachers’ WCF, while some teachers believed that teachers should not comment on all errors on low-achieving students’ papers in order not to intimidate those students

with too many comments, most teachers believed that less explicit WCF might be used with high-achievers as they are able to figure out the answers themselves.

### **4.3 Chapter summary**

This chapter presents the findings about teachers' beliefs (RQ1) based on the analysis of teachers' semi-structured interviews. Generally, it revealed the teachers' consensus in that they dislike teaching writing despite believing that it is useful, that the purpose of WCF is to help students improve their writing and to avoid their mistakes, that teachers should correct errors comprehensively and explicitly and that teachers should praise the students' writing to motivate them. In addition, teachers should also offer more comprehensive and less explicit WCF to high-achieving students.

While teachers shared similar beliefs regarding the above mentioned issues, they can be split into two groups according to their beliefs about the writing approaches. The first group believed that organisation is more important than language form both when teaching writing and when responding to students' writing while the other group is inclined toward language form. This distinction will be followed in the next chapter to see whether the same division can be observed in their practices about giving WCF as well.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: TEACHERS' PRACTICES**

This chapter presents teachers' practices in teaching writing in general and in giving WCF on the students' writing in particular. It aims at finding out the answer to the second research question: "What are the writing teachers practices regarding giving WCF on students' essay writing? ".

The findings in response to this question are presented in two sections. The first section (section 5.1) is about the teachers' writing instruction practices as revealed from the classroom observations. It tackles teachers' practices regarding three important issues: the source of feedback, the writing activities employed, and the focus of writing instruction. The second section (section 5.2) addresses teachers' WCF practices which are obtained from the TAP and the analysis of teachers' feedback (FA) on the students' writing. It presents teachers' practices regarding the reading strategies they adopt when responding to the students' writing (global versus local reading) and the main issues in their WCF practices, namely: the focus, the amount, the explicitness, the positive versus negative feedback, and the variation in teachers' WCF.

### **5.1 Teachers' writing instruction practices**

In order to understand teachers' practices when responding to students' writing, which is the focus of the present study, it is important to begin with a consideration of the wider aspects of L2 writing instruction practices and then to consider where WCF fits into the writing process. Therefore, the following findings about teachers' practices are taken from the five classes observed from each of the ten teachers. In particular, three main issues are addressed in this part: (1)- the source of teacher feedback, including peer feedback, teacher-led class discussion, and self-editing strategy, (2)- the writing activities implemented by the writing teachers including outlining, working on model essays, and commenting on common errors, and (3)- the extent to

which teachers focus on the different aspects of writing, i.e., content, language form, and organisation.

### 5.1.1 Practices regarding the source of WCF

Generally, it was found that none of the teachers implemented self-editing in his/her classes and a few teachers rarely relied on peer feedback. Conversely, all teachers preferred to lead the discussion when commenting on students' writing. The following table illustrates teachers' use of peer feedback and teacher-led class discussion.

Type of the activity	Adam					Amal					Nadia					Ann					Leena					Reema					Tasnem					Shooq					Mary					Treza						
Class No.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5												
Peer feedback		*																																																		
Teacher-led discussion	*	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

**Table 5.1 Teachers' practices regarding the source of WCF**

As Table 5.1 reveals, peer feedback was only implemented once by two teachers (Shoq and Adam). However, neither Shoq and Adam trained their students nor have they distributed a checklist that explains how to implement peer feedback. The following dialogue between teacher Shoq and her students illustrates how she asked the students to exchange their papers to comment on each other's writing without providing guidance on how they should do it:

\*In the transcripts 'T' refers to the teacher, 'SS' refers to students in general, while 'S1,' 'S2' etc. refers to a particular student.  
Quotation marks “ “ refers to students' writing  
Brackets ( ) refers to the researcher notes

T: have you finished writing?  
SS: yes  
T: now, I want you to exchange papers with your classmate and each student correct for the other.  
(Students are engaged in the peer feedback task and the teacher does not interfere)  
T: Have you finished from correcting your classmate's paper? I want you to give me your papers to be corrected.

It is also important to note that neither of the teachers (Shoq and Adam) have monitored students while they were engaged in the process of giving feedback to their peers. In addition, both teachers have collected all students' papers to correct them without taking into account their peers' comments.

Instead of implementing peer feedback, all the teachers tended to engage all students in the process of giving feedback on their peer's writing through guiding the class discussion. In doing so, the teacher asked students to read out phrases they wrote and/ or to write sentences and paragraphs on the board and then all other students were asked to comment on each other's writing. The teacher also directed students' answers and stimulated their thinking while they commented on other student writing. To illustrate this further, teacher Amal asked each student in the excerpt below to write her thesis statement on the board and asked all other students to comment on it orally. The dialogue between the teacher and the students illustrates how she led the discussion:

T: now I want you to write the thesis statement on the board and I will ask the rest of the class about their opinion.  
S1 (writing on board): "learning a foreign language in an old day can be a quite difficult."  
T: now, what do you think of this thesis statement girl? Is it OK or bad? And why?  
S2: fact  
T: is that fact? What do you think girls?  
S3: no  
T: why?  
S3: because I can write argument out of it. Someone else might say that 'learning a foreign language can be quite easy for some old people'  
T: excellent

In short, while none of the teachers had implemented a self-editing strategy and only two teachers employed peer feedback, all teachers had used teacher-led class discussion quite regularly. In addition, we can see from the examples that the teacher led the discussion quite skilfully and

engaged students in whole-class peer feedback, whereas instances where peer feedback was used as a pair activity did not seem to involve appropriate student preparation.

### 5.1.2 Practices regarding the use of writing techniques

The data reveals that while none of the teachers implemented multiple-drafts writing, most or all of the teachers implemented the following three types of activities<sup>3</sup>: outlining, using models, and explaining the students' common errors. The following table (5.2) shows the frequency of teachers' use of each activity.

Type of the activity	Adam					Amal					Nadia					Ann					Leena					Reema					Tasnem					Shooq					Mary					Treza						
Class No.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5							
Outlining			*		*			*	*		*			*		*			*	*	*	*		*	*																											
Using Models			*	*		*	*				*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Common errors	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 5.2 Teachers' practices regarding employing writing activities

Table 5.2 reveals that all the teachers relied mostly on using models and commenting on the students' common errors. Conversely, outlining was practiced by certain teachers only and was never implemented by the others. In the following, I present the findings about those activities following the process that students follow in their writing, that is, outlining, using models, and explaining common error.

As for **outlining**, six teachers (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Ann, Reema, Leena) asked their students to write an outline before starting writing. In the following example, teacher Ann demonstrates to

<sup>3</sup> The researcher observed other activities used by the writing teachers such as brainstorming and using mind maps. However, these activities were rarely used by a few teachers and hence, they are not mentioned in the present study.

students how to make an outline by writing on the board an outline on the topic of “The Harmfulness of TV”.

Teacher: In the outline, just write fragments because it is for you to help you. Let us say that we are against TV (teacher writes on board):

- I. Introduction
  - A. Useful (how?)
  - B. Harmful (how?)
- II. Body
  - A. Eyesight (examples)
  - B. Obesity (examples)
- III. Conclusion (summary, question, recommendation)

This is an example for a simple outline. It will save you the time when you write because everything will be organised and structured.

We notice from the example that the teacher did not elicit arguments from students (e.g. by asking students what they want to include in the introduction). Rather, she led the whole process top down and it was not clear –from the observation- whether the students understood the purpose of outlining and whether they were able to make an outline themselves.

Given that outlining is a process approach activity, the finding that outlining was implemented by the organisation-focused teachers and was never implemented by the language form-focused teachers is not surprising given that the first group of teachers believe in the superiority of the process approach pedagogy while product approach is favoured by the other group.

In addition, although all teachers used **model essays**, they differed in how they implemented this technique. According to the language form-focused group, models were used for the purpose of imitation. Teachers engaged students to read a text written by expert writers several times in order to pick up the meaning, vocabulary and the way in which the meaning was expressed in correct



grammatical sentences. Conversely, for organisation-focused groups, models were used as examples to be analysed, compared, and discussed. Students read a model essay and then the features of the genre were highlighted and examined. Those teachers engaged students to find out errors related to organisation and content in that text. In this way, the teachers used texts as samples of writing rather than as models. The dialogue between teacher Adam and the students below illustrates how he asked them to analyse both the organisation (thesis statement, topic sentences) and the content (relevance of ideas) of the essay entitled ‘The Harmful Effect of Television’:

T: Now after reading and analysing the parts of this essay, where is the thesis statement?

S1: “Television has the power to educate and to entertain but unfortunately, there benefits are outweighed by the harm it does to dedicated viewers. Television is harmful because it creates positivity, discourages communication, and present a false picture of reality.”

T: Excellent. How many ideas does it discuss?

SS: three

T: So, how many paragraphs should we have in the body?

SS: three

T: Which paragraph lacks topic sentence?

S2: paragraph number four

T: yes excellent

T: Now I want you to look at the ideas in each paragraph, there are some irrelevant details that have to be omitted. Can you identify them?

This excerpt shows that teacher Adam led the discussion, trying to engage students to analyse and criticize the different parts of the essay. He also asked them to find and improve the inefficient parts of the essay (e.g. irrelevant sentences). Conversely, teacher Tasnem, in the following excerpt asked the students to read an expertly written error-free model and to highlight the new terms and how simple past tense is expressed in the descriptive essay:

T: read the descriptive essay “An Unforgettable day”. While reading, try to highlight the vocabulary used in the essay and notice the use of past tense in all sentences. Try to follow the same structure and use similar terms when you write not about “An accident”. (Students are engaged reading the essay for 10 minutes)

T: now, I want you to give me the new vocabulary that you highlighted?

S1: fascinated

T: do you know what does it mean?

S: in love with

T: try to memorize these words.

All the teachers **discussed the students’ common errors** orally in the class. These common errors were mostly about the students’ language form. The example below illustrates how teacher Tasnem referred to the students’ common errors related to grammar:

T: before starting the class, I will talk about a common error. I noticed that you wrote two verbs in a sentence. For example, I remember that one student wrote “I saw a large crowd in the midst of the road was blocked”. In this sentence, ‘the road’ serves as an object for the first sentence and a subject for the second one.

Another common error, related to spelling, was referred to by teacher Mary:

T: you always write the word ‘two’ like this (teacher writes on board): ‘tow’. Remember that the word ‘two’ is consisted of lines and then the circle comes (teacher writes): “T III O”. Memorize it like this.

We can see from the two above examples that neither of the teachers (Tasnem and Mary) used any interactive and inductive methods when presenting the common error or when asking individual students to explain it themselves. Both teachers, however, gave students mini-lessons in which they explained the error, by indicating that it is a common mistake. In addition, the two examples show that in order to clarify and explain the common error, teachers might use the board to show

some specialist grammatical terms (e.g. ‘run on sentences’ as in the first example) and they might also use common language (e.g. ‘drawing lines and circles’ as in the second example).

In short, none of the teachers had employed multiple-drafts writing, which is an important aspect in the process approach pedagogy. In addition, the examples of employing outlining, and commenting on the students’ common errors reveal the teachers’ inclination towards top-down instruction. In contrast, when analysing the model essay, teachers seem to be actively involved in the activity as the example demonstrates. Besides, models were used differently by the two groups of teachers.

### 5.1.3 Teachers’ focus on different aspects of writing

The findings reveal that teachers focus mostly on three aspects in the writing instruction, namely, language form, organisation and content. The table below presents the number of lessons in which these aspects were discussed.

Type of the activity	Adam					Amal					Nadia					Ann					Leena					Reema					Tasnem					Shooq					Mary					Treza					
Class No.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5						
Language Form	*	*						*	*			*	*	*			*	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Organization	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Content	*	*	*				*					*					*					*				*					*																				

**Table 5.3 Teachers’ focus on different aspects of writing**

Table 5.3 shows that the teachers’ foci of writing are consistent with the types of activities they employed in the writing instruction. The four teachers following the product approach pedagogy were more in favour of addressing language form than the organisation and the content of the essay. Conversely, the other group of teachers who advocated the process approach placed more emphasis on the organisation than language form and the content of the essay. The following is the discussion of each writing aspect.

Teachers showed two different practices regarding **language form**. Whereas the language form-focused group frequently referred to the various language aspects related to the capitalization, spelling, and punctuations, the organisation-focused group never discussed these issues in the writing class. The following excerpt shows how teacher Treza, for example, discussed the capitalization rules:

T: I will explain the capitalization rules to you. First, you have to capitalize the first letter then every word, except the preposition, but if you have the same preposition in the beginning you'll capitalize. Second, first letter of the new sentence must be capitalized whether it is a word, a pronoun, or a preposition. Third, names of hospitals, malls, parks, etc. must be capitalized.

In addition, while all teachers explained grammar in the writing class, teachers revealed two different practices regarding the way they implemented grammar in the writing class. The language group explained grammar in almost every class. For those teachers, grammar instruction consists of extensive grammar presentations. For example, teacher Treza drew a table on the differences between simple present and present perfect (figure 5.1).

▪ **What's the difference? Present Perfect and Past Simple**

<b>Present Perfect Simple</b>	<b>Past Simple</b>
Unfinished actions that started in the past and continue to the present: • I've <b>known</b> Julie for ten years (and I still know her).	Finished actions: • I <b>knew</b> Julie for ten years (but then she moved away and we lost touch).
A finished action in someone's life (when the person is still alive: life experience): • My brother <b>has been</b> to Mexico three times.	A finished action in someone's life (when the person is dead): • My great-grandmother <b>went</b> to Mexico three times.
A finished action with a result in the present: • I've <b>lost</b> my keys! (The result is that I can't get into my house now).	A finished action with no result in the present: • I <b>lost</b> my keys yesterday. It was terrible! (Now there is no result. I got new keys yesterday).
With an unfinished time word (this week, this month, today): • I've <b>seen</b> John <b>this week</b> .	With a finished time word (last week, last month, yesterday): • I <b>saw</b> John <b>last week</b> .

**Figure 5.1 The differences between simple present and present perfect**

T: last week, I have already explained the present simple tense. Now we will discuss the simple past and the present perfect tense. "Simple Past is used to show that an action has started in the past and completed in a specific time in the past". But, present perfect tense describes an action that has started in the past and it sometimes complete the future.

This excerpt shows how teacher Treza discussed both tenses as though students had no previous background about them. In addition, after explaining the rule, the teacher asked students to work on the grammar exercise, below, to examine the students' understanding of the explained rules:

Now in the exercise on your book, complete the sentence with the simple past or present perfect:

1- my mother----- to visit me every year

S1: came

2- I --- two jobs

S2: had

T: 'had' is the past participle but when you use the present perfect you use what plus what?

S: have had

T: yes excellent

Conversely, for the organisation-focused group, grammar was sometimes discussed. Those teachers provided mini-lessons that highlighted specific common errors being marked. The example below from teacher Reema's lesson illustrated a brief mini-lesson that was designed based on a student's frequent error and which aimed to help students understand the differences between present simple and present progressive. In this example, the teacher assumed that students have some previous knowledge of the form, meaning, and use of both progressive and simple tenses.

S: "Students who are speaking two languages"

T (corrects): "who know"

S: All students who speak two languages have advantages over those who are not speak two languages

T (corrects): "who do not speak". Girls, you have to concentrate on the tense.

Unlike language form, the instruction related to the **organisation** was discussed more often and in more depth by the organisation-focused group teachers than the language form-focused group teachers. In the discussion of organisation, all teachers followed the same process as they started

by highlighting the theoretical information regarding the organisation to be followed in a particular type of essay (i.e. argumentative or descriptive). After that, teachers worked on examples of thesis statements, topic sentences, the use of supporting details and examples, and concluding paragraphs to examine the students' level of comprehension. The following example shows how teacher Adam examined the characteristics of the argumentative thesis statement, by engaging students in an exercise about the validity of different thesis statements:

T: The thesis statement should define the scope of the argument and make an assertion that is open for debate. For example: The students should have a say In the hiring and firing of teachers. This is open for debate. But advantages and disadvantages of something is not an argument. Now I want you to do exercises 4 p. 265 on thesis statement. I want you to examine these sentences. Can they be a thesis statement for an argumentative essay or not?

1- "CNN is the best TV channel."

S1: This is not an effective thesis statement.

T: excellent. Why?

S1: because it had personal choice and preference which cannot be proved and cannot be discussed

T: excellent

In the second excerpt, teacher Ann worked with students on finding out topic sentences that related to the thesis statement:

T: After writing the thesis statement, what is the next step? We will make topic sentences based on the thesis statement. Let us work on the same thesis: "State university should take physical educational courses". The topic sentences can be the reasons for this claim. Can you help me girls?

S1: "Students enjoy physical education courses".

T: excellent. This can be a topic sentence for the first paragraph in the body. What else?

S2: "Students learn social skills and teamwork in physical education courses"

T: excellent.

Having said that, although all teachers focused on the essay organisation, the organisation-focused teachers focused more on explaining how the essay was organised than the other teachers.

In addition to language form and organisation, the data analysis found that the **content** of the essay was never referred to by two teachers (Mary, Treza), and was rarely discussed by the other teachers. In addition, those teachers gave general guidelines regarding the content without engaging students in content-related activities. To give an example, teacher Nadia referred to the meaning of the term ‘coherence’ without giving examples or exercises:

T: Focus on only one idea. If you used two ideas, you will lose unity and coherence. Coherence means to move smoothly without gaps.
---

To sum up, teachers revealed two different practices regarding their focus of writing instruction. While the language form-focused group tended to explain the various language form aspects and provide extensive language lessons using a deductive approach, the organisation-focused group gave mini-grammar lessons and focused mostly on explaining the organisation of the essay. However, teachers were similar in that the content of the essay was rarely and only briefly referred to. Teachers also seem to be similar in teaching organisation in the sense that they used a deductive approach, starting from explanation of the essay structure, followed by analysis of examples rather than an inductive approach, in which students are given essays to analyse with the help of guiding questions, leading them to make conclusions about essay structure.

#### **5.1.4 Summary of teachers’ practices regarding writing instruction**

Having discussed the teachers’ classroom practices regarding the sources of WCF, the writing activities, and focus of writing instruction, we can conclude that all teachers showed a similar tendency regarding the source of WCF as they tended to neglect the feedback given by the peers and the self, while relying mostly on teacher-led discussion in the process of commenting on students’ writing. In contrast, teachers’ practices were split into two regarding the focus of writing instruction and the writing activities they employed in the writing class. While the organisation-focused group tended to employ some process approach related activities (i.e. outlining) and they

focused on organisation more than on language form, the language form-focused group employed product approach activities mainly (e.g. imitating models) and focused on language related exercises such as editing.

In the following, teachers' WCF practices will be discussed in order to find out the extent to which teacher WCF practices intersect with their writing instruction.

## **5.2 Teachers' WCF practices**

This section relates to the practices taken from the teachers' TAP while correcting student writing and from the text analysis of teacher WCF on students' writing. Two important themes will be tackled in this section. Firstly, the reading strategies that teachers follow when giving WCF on the students' papers (section 5.2.1). Secondly, teachers' feedback practices (section 5.2.2) which include: the focus of WCF, the explicitness, and amount of WCF, the teachers' negative feedback when correcting students' papers, and the variation in teachers' WCF.

### **5.2.1 The employment of reading strategies when responding to students' papers**

Findings from the TAP reveal that the previously identified two groups of teachers, i.e. the organisation-focused and language form-focused groups, behaved similarly regarding the reading strategies they followed when correcting student papers. The organisation-focused group looked at the paragraph level, focusing on the global issues of the essay while the language form-focused group looked at the sentence level pointing out the local errors within each sentence.

#### **5.2.1.1 Global reading strategy**

The organisation-focused group teachers seem to follow the top-down reading strategy, as they looked at the essay as a whole, using their knowledge of the genre to gain holistic understanding



of the organisation of the ideas instead of understanding every word. In doing so, teachers start by scanning the introduction, looking for the thesis statement. If the thesis is found, the teacher checks the validity and clarity of the thesis statement. Then, s/he scans the body for the topic sentences to check that the thesis statement and the topic sentences are related and that they are following the type of writing (i.e. argumentative essay). Then, the teacher reads the essay line by line from the beginning. However, if the teacher found that the thesis statement and the topic sentences do not follow the type of writing required (i.e. argumentative essay), the teacher does not correct the paper. In other words, teachers respond to the students' writing only when they make sure that the student is following the correct organisation. The following excerpt gives an example of how teacher Adam looks at the global issues before looking at the language form:

Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
"The Negative Effect of TV"	From the title, she is against TV.	
"Some people believe that T.V is useful and it does not cause problem for us, but in my opinion, I think television has proved to be one of the worst invention of modern times because it has now influence on society, children and health"	Well, yes, perhaps this one could be a clear thesis statement although it is not an accurate sentences but anyway it is okay, "in my opinion, I think...children and health".	
"one of the worst invention"	There is a missing 's'	" inventions "
"it has now influence on society"	But she does not tell us in what way does it influence the society... The language is really weak. But ok thesis statement.... Let me see how she is going to develop it in the supporting paragraphs. I will see the topic sentences for each paragraph...	"it has influenced the society negatively"
"Television has a negative effect on people as individuals and as a whole" "Television has negative effect on children's life" "Television has negative effect on health"	Good. That's nice. I will put tick and write topic sentence.	✓

In this example, teacher Adam starts checking the organisation of the essay before he starts giving WCF. Once he found out that the topic sentences are related to the thesis statement, the teacher evaluates the essay as 'good', which indicates that good writing according to this teacher means employing the conventions of the target genre.

### 5.2.1.2 Local reading strategy

Instead of grasping the meaning of the essay as a whole, the language form-focused group teachers appear to be applying the bottom-up reading strategy as they tended to rely on reading out each word in a sentence, by focusing on errors at the sentence level. The following example of teacher Tasnem when correcting the first paragraph of a student paper illustrates this strategy:

Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
"The life on a big city"	Mistake in the use of preposition	"in a big"
"The life in a big city, in general, are"	She should put 'in general, between two commas.	"',in general,'"
"The life on a big city in general are"	'is' not 'are'	"is"
"The life on a big city, in general, is so much difficult than the small cities.	"so much difficult" is not a comparative word. She uses here "than small cities". This is wrong. She has to delete this part.	"The life on a big city, in general, are so much difficult <del>than the small cities.</del> "
"Everything in the city is very expensive the home, food"	Run on sentence. Sentence is finished but she doesn't end the sentence.	"Everything in the city is very expensive. The"

Finally, it is also worth mentioning that the teachers' choice of the global versus local approach is relatively stable even when dealing with students of different ability levels (i.e. high-achieving, average, and low-achieving students). The difference in teachers' practices in terms of focusing on language forms versus organisation will be further confirmed when discussing the teachers' focus of WCF in the following section.

### 5.2.2 Practices regarding giving WCF

This section outlines teachers' WCF practices regarding the focus, explicitness, amount and the teachers' positive versus negative feedback on students' writing. The findings were derived from two sources: (1) Feedback analysis of 60 student pieces of writing marked by the ten teachers and (2) from teachers' think-aloud protocols while marking the students' writing (six papers marked by each teacher during a think-aloud session). Such a classification enabled us to compare teachers' practices when dealing with three different proficiency levels.

### 5.2.2.1 Practices regarding the focus of WCF

To examine what teachers focused on when giving WCF, the raw frequencies of occurrences for each individual's teacher feedback comment and the percentages of the total WCF points - as revealed from teachers' feedback analysis (FA) as well as the TAPs- are presented in Table 2.1. As pointed out in section 3.5.5.5, content refers to the unity (i.e. all sentences are about one main topic), coherence (i.e. clear movement between ideas), and clarity of ideas (i.e. the ideas are expressed clearly). Language form includes grammar, punctuation, spelling and capitalization. Organisation stands for the thesis statement (i.e. presence, validity, clarity), the topic sentences (i.e. presence, relevance), the supporting details (i.e. presence, relevance), and the conclusion of the essay (i.e. presence, clarity).

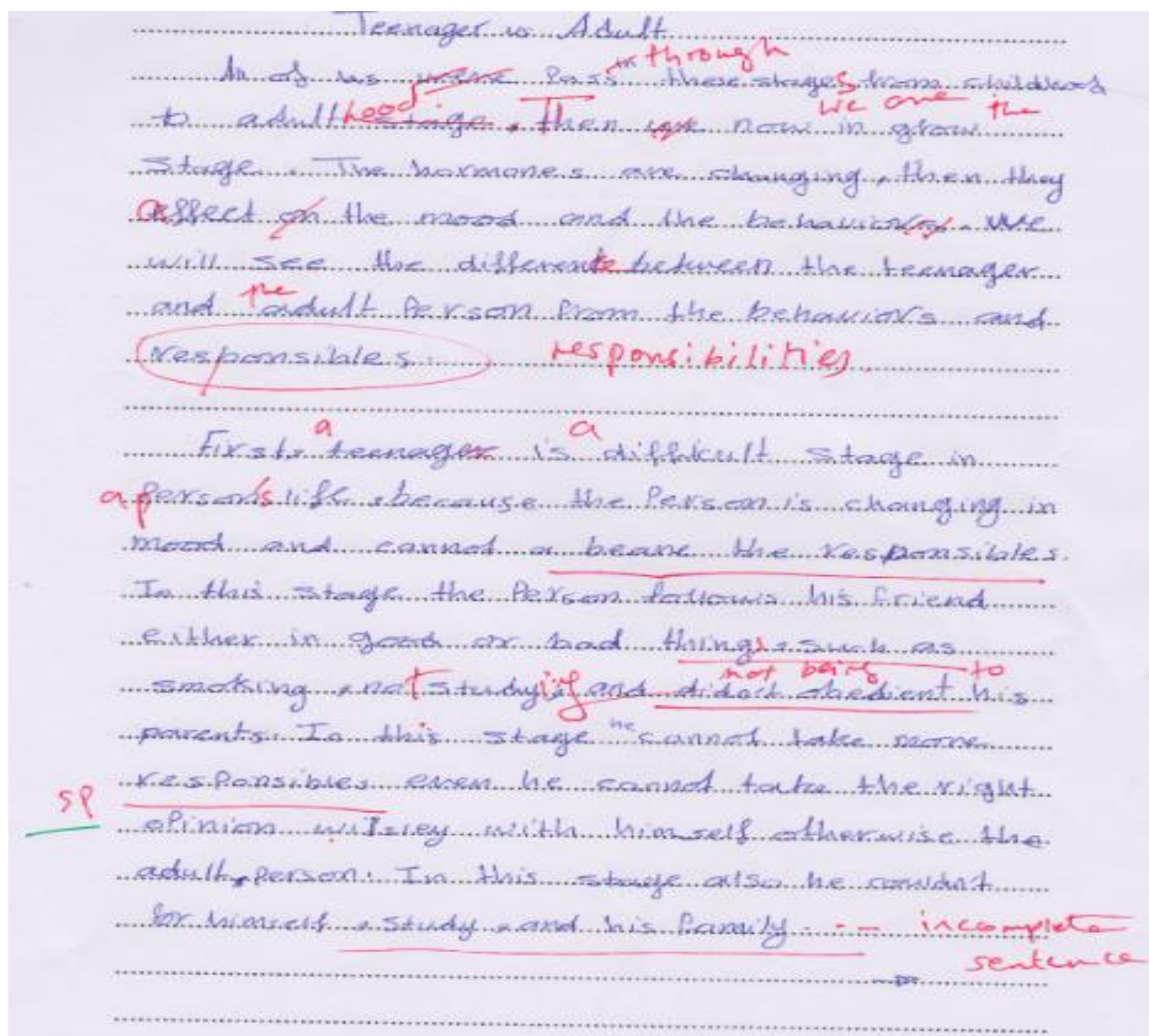
Participant	Method	Focus of Teachers' WCF Practices			
		Language form	Content	Organisation	Total WCF
Adam	TAP	43 (39%)	30 (27%)	37 (33%)	110
	FA	37 (38%)	27 (28%)	31 (32%)	95
Amal	TAP	52 (40%)	31 (24%)	46 (35%)	129
	FA	57 (42%)	29 (21%)	48 (35%)	134
Nadia	TAP	47 (44%)	21 (20%)	39 (36%)	107
	FA	42 (44%)	17 (18%)	35 (37%)	94
Leena	TAP	55 (50%)	18 (16%)	37 (34%)	110
	FA	37 (42%)	17 (19%)	34 (39%)	88
Reema	TAP	39 (51%)	12 (16%)	26 (34%)	77
	FA	40 (44%)	14 (14%)	38 (41%)	92
Ann	TAP	31 (44%)	10 (15%)	30 (42%)	71
	FA	29 (45%)	12 (18%)	24 (37%)	65
Tasnem	TAP	97 (80%)	14 (8%)	14 (11%)	125
	FA	90 (77%)	13 (10%)	15 (13%)	118
Shoq	TAP	72 (73%)	12 (12%)	15 (15%)	99
	FA	91 (84%)	9 (8%)	8 (8%)	108
Mary	TAP	64 (84%)	3 (4%)	7 (9%)	74
	FA	60 (83%)	2 (3%)	6 (8%)	68
Treza	TAP	71 (86%)	4 (5%)	6 (7%)	81
	FA	60 (86%)	2 (3%)	8 (11%)	70
Total no.	TAP	571 (58%)	155 (16%)	257 (26%)	983
Total no.	FA	543 (58%)	140 (15%)	247 (27%)	932
Total No per category		1114 (58%)	295 (15%)	504 (26%)	1913

**Table 5.4 The focus of teachers' WCF from the TAP and FA**

The TAP and FA findings, as revealed from Table 5.4, show that all teachers focused on: language form, organisation, and content in the order of frequency with differences in the extent to which each teacher gave attention to these categories. Generally, Table 5.4 shows that practices involved in the TAP and FA were consistent, i.e., 58% of TAP and FA comments addressed errors related to language form, 16% of the TAP comments and 15% of the FA comments were about content, and 26% of the TAP comments and 27% of the FA comments focused on the organisation, respectively. In addition, teachers' practices on the FA and TAP reveal similar trends. For example, comments on language form given by teacher Amal were 40% in the TAP and 42% in the FA.

Not surprisingly, language form-focused group teachers (Tasnem, Shoq, Treza, Mary) gave much more feedback on language form than both organisation and content as shown in the table above. For example, 80% of teacher Tasnem's comments in TAP were about language, while only 11% and 8% of her comments were about organisation and content, respectively. Conversely, the organisation-focused group showed two different practices. Four out of six teachers (Leena, Reema, Nadia, Ann) paid a somewhat similar amount of attention in their feedback to issues related to language form and the organisation of the essay. For those teachers, although content issues were looked at, they still gave it the least amount of feedback. To give an example from Table 5.4 above, teacher Leena –as revealed from the FA- gave 42% of her comments on the language form and 39% on the organisation, while 19% of the comments were on the content. However, the other two teachers, Adam and Amal, took into account all three aspects of writing to a relatively similar degree. For example, 39% of teacher Adam's comments in TAP were about language, 33% on organisation, and 27% of his comments were about content. This finding is in line with the way teachers looked at and read students' papers. For the four language form-focused group teachers, it is expected that they focused mostly on language errors and ignored all other aspects as they read and corrected the essay sentence by sentence, looking at the local issues at the

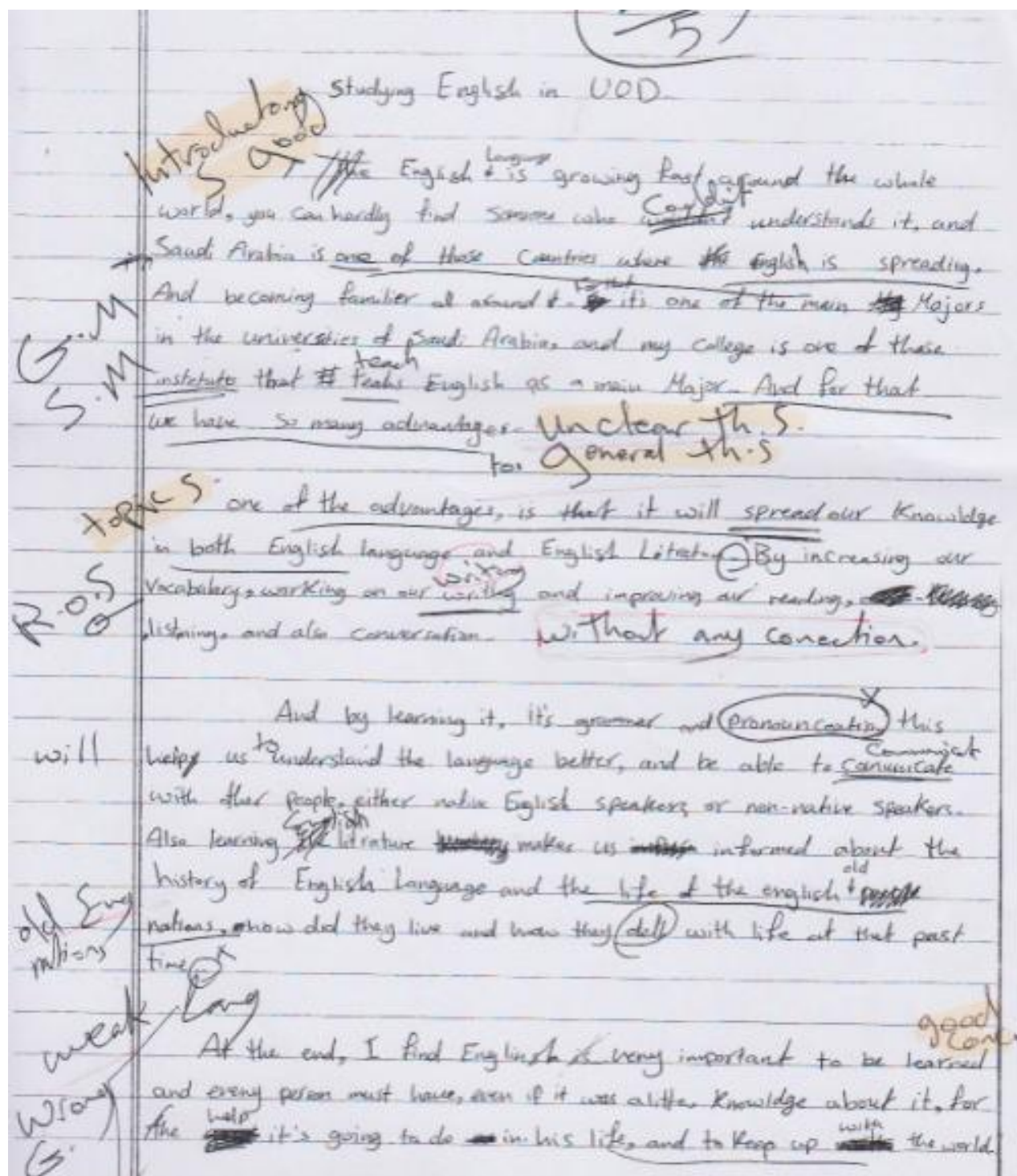
sentence level. Conversely, the organisation-focused group who looked at the global issues of the essay such as how the essay is organised before going into the sentence level, it is not surprising that they focused on the organisation of the essay. An example of the feedback analysis of teacher Shoq's comments on a student writing, below, demonstrates how language form-focused teachers offered feedback on language errors:



Sample 1: Teacher WCF on student writing

In this paper, teacher Shoq commented on different grammatical issues, (e.g. wrong tense, part of speech, missing articles, sentence fragment, possessiveness, and the singular-plural), spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. However, she did not comment on the thesis statement, the topic sentences, and the clarity and relevance of the ideas. Conversely, the example from the

organisation-focused teachers below illustrates how teacher Nadia focused on the organisation of the essay:



Sample 2: Teacher WCF on student writing

Although teacher Nadia in this example corrects language errors by using error codes (GM for wrong grammar, SP for wrong spelling, and ROS for run on sentence), by encircling or



College Teachers and High School Teachers

From my experience, <sup>there</sup> are some differences between college teachers and high school teachers.

~~School teachers are trained in teaching methods. They often remind about missing assignments and incomplete work.~~

~~On the other hand, college teachers treat students as adults and they expect from students a lot.~~

~~this make behavior. College teacher specialists in some subjects.~~

In conclusion, both of them have one goal which is education, so we must respect them.

In this example, teacher Amal provided a number of feedback comments on the content (e.g.

‘what, ‘unclear’, and ‘rewrite’ for unclear ideas and ‘not related to your thesis statement’ and ‘irrelevant’ for the irrelevant ideas), the organisation of the essay (e.g. weak thesis statement) as well as the different language mistakes (e.g. spelling, grammar, and capitalization).

In sum, the above discussion demonstrates that teachers displayed different practices regarding their focus of WCF. The following presents the findings regarding the way teachers responded to errors related to language form, organisation and content, respectively. As for **language form** errors, all teachers focused on all aspects of language including grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation (see table 2.2).

Participant	Method	Language form				Total number
		Grammar	Punctuation	Spelling	Capitalization	
Adam	TAP	24 (56%)	9 (20%)	8 (19%)	2 (5%)	43
	FA	29 (78%)	3 (8%)	5 (14%)	0 (0%)	37
Amal	TAP	21 (40%)	6 (11%)	18 (44%)	7 (13%)	52
	FA	27 (47%)	5 (9%)	19 (33%)	6 (11%)	57
Nadia	TAP	28 (60%)	4 (9%)	12 (25%)	3 (6%)	47
	FA	22 (52%)	4 (10%)	9 (21%)	7 (17%)	42
Leena	TAP	28 (51%)	7 (13%)	13 (23%)	7 (13%)	55
	FA	20 (54%)	4 (11%)	10 (27%)	3 (8%)	37
Reema	TAP	19 (49%)	2 (5%)	15 (38%)	3 (8%)	39
	FA	21 (52%)	5 (13%)	8 (20%)	6 (15%)	40
Ann	TAP	15 (48%)	2 (6%)	9 (29%)	5 (16%)	31
	FA	21 (72%)	0 (0%)	5 (17%)	3 (10%)	29
Tasnem	TAP	37 (38%)	13 (13%)	29 (30%)	18 (19%)	97
	FA	39 (43%)	16 (18%)	22 (24%)	13 (14%)	90
Shoq	TAP	40 (45%)	2 (3%)	18 (25%)	12 (17%)	72
	FA	54 (59%)	7 (8%)	21 (23%)	9 (10%)	91
Mary	TAP	30 (47%)	3 (5%)	20 (31%)	11 (17%)	64
	FA	22 (33%)	5 (8%)	16 (27%)	17 (28%)	60
Treza	TAP	28 (39%)	11 (15%)	23 (32%)	9 (13%)	71
	FA	30 (50%)	4 (7%)	20 (33%)	6 (10%)	60
Total No per category		555 (49%)	112 (10%)	300 (29%)	147 (13%)	1114 (58%)

**Table 5.5 Teachers’ focus on errors related to language form**

As can be seen from the above table (5.5), with regard to errors in the language form, all teachers were similar in that they focused mostly on grammatical errors (49%), followed by errors in spelling (29%) and the fewest comments were on the capitalization (13%) and punctuation (10%). To give an example from Table 5.5, the TAP shows that (48%) of teacher Ann’s comments were on grammar, (29%) on spelling, (16%) on capitalization and (6%) on punctuation.



In addition, despite the fact that teachers are classified into three different groups regarding their focus of WCF, the findings, as shown in Table 5.4 and Table 5.5, reveal that all teachers focused on the language form the most often. This is also apparent from the total percentage of all ten teachers' feedback comments on language form (58%), which constitutes more than half of the total amount of all the teachers' comments. This finding is not surprising given that errors on mechanics and language form are more frequent as they can occur in every sentence. This is also confirmed by the TAPs in which most teachers (Adam, Nadia, Amal, Leena, Reema, Tasnem, Ann, Shoq, Mary) viewed errors related to grammar and spelling as the most frequent and common errors among students. The below example from the TAP demonstrates how teacher Shoq viewed the wrong usage of 'verb to be' as a common error:

Type of error	Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
Common errors	"She is mean the world for me"	Again grammar mistake in 'she is mean.' This is a repeated common mistake.	"She means"

In another example, teacher Reema commented on the frequent errors of spelling:

Type of error	Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization
Frequent errors	"sucesful student is ..... sucesful student	Spelling mistake again! This paper has many spelling mistakes. She should have consulted the dictionary or revised her essay before submitting. This is too much.

In this example, teacher Reema was irritated by the high number of spelling mistakes this student had made. Not only teacher Reema, but many other teachers as well (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Shoq, Reema, and Leena), considered frequent errors which are mainly related to language form as **stigmatizing** ones. Below is another example of a frequent stigmatizing error:

Teacher	Type of error	Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
Adam	Stigmatizing And frequent error	"in addition that"	Again this is a grammatical error... this is what I told them.. I explained the connectors to them although they studies it several times ... I told them that it is 'in addition to' ... This is annoying	In addition to that

In this example, teacher Adam was irritated not only because the paper had many grammatical errors, but also because he referred to that grammatical error previously in class as it was a common one. Most teachers (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Treza, Reema, Tasnem, Shoq) found recurring errors previously discussed in class irritating.

In addition, while giving WCF, six teachers (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Leena, Reema, and Shoq) noted some common errors related to language form that they decided to address in class in the future. Below is an example of a common language error that will be discussed by teacher Adam:

Type of error	Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
Common error	"It is probably replacing activities in child's life that they would rather watching T.V. over than playing with their friends'.	Now I understand... It is 'sentence fragment', the common mistake done by students. They do not complete their sentences. They have another idea and they start with it or they force two different incomplete ideas into one. <b>So, I think I should mention this to the whole class next time. I should explain this to them.</b>	Sentence fragment

This example shows that giving feedback to a particular student might lead teachers to plan a teaching point for all students. This is interesting because it shows how teachers' WCF is part of the teaching activity in a broader sense.

In addition, it is interesting to find that despite the fact that most of teachers' feedback addressed aspects of the language form, the TAP findings reveal that many teachers viewed errors related to capitalization (Adam, Nadia, Amal, Leena, Tasnem, Ann, Mary), spelling (Adam, Nadia, Amal)

and punctuation (Adam, Nadia, Amal, Leena) as less important or minor errors. The following excerpt gives an example of how teacher Adam looked at errors related to the punctuations as minor ones:

Type of error	Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
Minor errors	"Some of the contents containing violence and other inappropriate material, which should not be shown, and This may become at times harmful for the society.. TV has become..."	She also has not used Punctuations in many places like putting a comma instead of period after the sentence or two periods... and also using capital letters in the middle of the sentence. I can do them myself and she can do it herself. It does not matter either ways. This is minor issue.	"and this may become at times harmful for the society. TV has become..."

In this example, despite acknowledging that punctuation errors are minor and frequent errors, teacher Adam decided to correct all wrong usage of punctuation and/or missing punctuation. One possible reason for this behaviour, stated by teacher Adam in that TAP, was that language form errors "are easy to correct". To summarise, although all teachers commented mostly on language form errors, most of them found errors related to language form minor and some of those errors were also stigmatizing. In addition, the finding that language form errors were the most frequent and common errors in students' papers seems to explain why most teachers' feedback addressed errors in language.

As far as the **organisation** of the essay goes, teachers focused on the essay components, i.e. the introduction, the body, and the conclusion (see table 2.3). In terms of the introduction, all participants mostly concentrated on the thesis statement. As for the body of the essay, teachers focused on the topic sentences and the supporting details and examples in each paragraph. Finally, teachers looked at the concluding paragraph.

Participant	Method	Organisation				
		Introduction	Body		Conclusion	Total number
			Topic sentences	Supporting details		
Adam	<b>TAP</b>	8 (22%)	9 (24%)	12 (32%)	8 (22%)	37
	<b>FA</b>	7 (23%)	8 (26%)	11 (35%)	5 (16%)	31
Amal	<b>TAP</b>	9 (20%)	16 (35%)	14 (30%)	7 (15%)	46
	<b>FA</b>	12 (25%)	15 (31%)	13 (27%)	8 (17%)	48
Nadia	<b>TAP</b>	6 (15%)	14 (36%)	13 (33%)	6 (15%)	39
	<b>FA</b>	8 (23%)	9 (26%)	12 (34%)	6 (17%)	35
Leena	<b>TAP</b>	9 (24%)	9 (24%)	13 (35%)	6 (16%)	37
	<b>FA</b>	6 (18%)	10 (29%)	12 (35%)	6 (18%)	34
Reema	<b>TAP</b>	4 (15%)	11 (42%)	8 (31%)	3 (12%)	26
	<b>FA</b>	7 (18%)	16 (43%)	9 (24%)	6 (16%)	38
Ann	<b>TAP</b>	6 (20%)	9 (30%)	9 (30%)	6 (20%)	30
	<b>FA</b>	6 (25%)	7 (29%)	5 (21%)	6 (25%)	24
Tasnem	<b>TAP</b>	4 (29%)	5 (37%)	5 (36%)	0 (0%)	14
	<b>FA</b>	6 (38%)	6 (38%)	4 (24%)	0 (0%)	16
Shoq	<b>TAP</b>	4 (27%)	5 (33%)	2 (13%)	4 (27%)	15
	<b>FA</b>	3 (38%)	3 (38%)	0 (0%)	2 (25%)	8
Mary	<b>TAP</b>	5 (71%)	2 (29%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7
	<b>FA</b>	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6
Treza	<b>TAP</b>	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6
	<b>FA</b>	3 (38%)	5 (26%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8
Total no per category		120 (24%)	164 (32%)	142 (28%)	79 (16%)	505

**Table 5.6 Teachers' focus on errors related to organisation**

Table 5.6 shows that teachers differed in the way they looked at errors in the organisation. While the organisation-focused teachers looked at all essay components (i.e. introduction, body, and conclusion), the language form- focused teachers (Tasnem, Shoq, Treza, Mary) looked only at the presence of the thesis statement in the introduction and the topic sentences in the body. For example, the FA shows that teacher Nadia, who belongs to the organisation-focused teachers, gave 23% comments on the introduction, 26% and 34% of the comments were on the topic sentences and supporting details in the body, and then 17% of the comments focused on the conclusion. Below are a few examples illustrating teachers' focus on errors related to the thesis statement:

Teacher	Type of error		Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
Reema	Introduction: thesis	Presence	"The driving is important for all person men or women ... In Saudi Arabia There is Shoura council and ministerial meeting..."	I do not understand her writing, so how can I know where is her thesis.	"Where is your thesis statement?"
Adam		Validity	"However, the advantages of television outweigh its disadvantages."	This thesis is not argumentative thesis statement. This looks as an expository essay.	"Rewrite your thesis statement!"
Nadia		Clarity	"there are many advantages for studying in this college but I'm talking about the most important for me."	Unclear ... It is an announcement for the essay...	"Unclear general thesis statement"

These examples reveal that teachers pay attention to a range of aspects when focusing on the thesis statement, such as whether it is stated (teacher Reema), whether it is valid (teacher Adam), and whether it is clear (teacher Nadia). As for the body of the essay, teachers –as shown in the following examples- looked at the presence of topic sentences and the supporting details and examples in each paragraph, and if they were stated, whether they are related to the thesis statement and what the whole topic is about.

Teacher	Type of error		Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
Amal	Body: Topic sentence	Presence	"For the entertainment people go to parks shops and...visit each other as a kind of entertainment."	This is OK as a supporting but where is the topic sentence?	"Where is your topic sentence?"
Reema		Relevance	"The life in a big city is more difficult than small cities."	So, she has compared ... "more difficult than"... the essay should be descriptive... but the topic sentence is about comparison.	"The topic sentence should not be comparison"
Tasnem	Body: Supporting	Presence	"Second when we need to visit Some places we need"	We see this is the second main idea then there are no supporting details for it.	"give examples"
Leena		Relevance	"Now, after these three weeks, I'm felling the change. I do not get exhausted when a walk for miles."	The details in this paragraph are not related to her topic sentence. She should talk about the process that she went through while making the diet not the results.	"not related to your topic sentence"

In terms of the concluding paragraph, teachers focused on two types of comments, i.e., the presence and the clarity, as shown in the following examples:

Teacher	Type of error		Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
Nadia	Conclusion	Presence		Let us see the conclusion... oh, there is no conclusion!	"without conclusion"
Adam		Clarity	"Finally, what can be concluded about television is that overall it does not have a good impact on people. It might be entertaining but nevertheless it all depends on whom and what their watching..."	This is a weak conclusion. Is she advising us not to use it or to use it wisely? I do not know.	"Weak conclusion"

It is also noticed that when responding to organisational issues, teachers provide direct comments that are written in a full sentence or phrase (e.g. where is your topic sentence?). Conversely, comments given on the language are written in word form (e.g. grammar, spelling). This finding seems to suggest that teachers find errors related to organisation very important as they are centred on the students' comprehension of these comments. This finding is further confirmed by the TAP findings. Unlike errors related to language form, all teachers (except Treza and Mary) considered organisational errors to be related to the validity of the thesis statement as the most **serious errors**. In addition, those teachers do not continue reading the paper when they find a thesis statement that is not related to the essay. Below is an example which illustrates this situation:

Type of error	Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
Serious error related to the organisation	"There are many advantages of the television which I will talk about"	She is supposed to write an argumentative essay, to argue for or against TV. But now she is taking about it not defending it and she is not against it. This seems to be an expository not an argumentative. Oh God I am always telling them (knocking on the table) to be careful about this issue ... It is the most crucial thing in this course, if you do not follow the type of the essay which you are asked for-which is argumentative now-, the whole essay will be rubbish.	"Big ZERO"

When discussing errors related to **content**, teachers (except for teacher Adam and Amal) were relatively similar in that they focused on content less than on the language form and the organisation. However, teachers differed in the way they looked at content (see table 5.7).

Participants	Methods	Content				
		Clarity of ideas	Unity	Coherence	Development of Ideas	Total number
Adam	TAP	11 (37%)	5 (16%)	3 (10%)	11 (37%)	30
	FA	8 (30%)	7 (26%)	2 (7%)	10 (37%)	27
Amal	TAP	16 (52%)	3 (10%)	3 (10%)	9 (33%)	31
	FA	15 (51%)	4 (14%)	4 (14%)	6 (21%)	29
Nadia	TAP	6 (28%)	2 (10%)	7 (33%)	6 (28%)	21
	FA	7 (41%)	1 (6%)	5 (29%)	4 (24%)	17
Leena	TAP	8 (44%)	4 (22%)	1 (6%)	5 (28%)	18
	FA	7 (41%)	2 (12%)	3 (18%)	5 (29%)	17
Reema	TAP	5 (73%)	3 (25%)	0 (0%)	4 (33%)	12
	FA	7 (50%)	3 (21%)	0 (0%)	4 (29%)	14
Ann	TAP	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	2(20%)	10
	FA	7 (58%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (42%)	12
Tasnem	TAP	6 (50%)	2 (17%)	0 (0%)	4 (33%)	12
	FA	7 (50%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	6 (43%)	14
Shoq	TAP	6 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (17%)	4 (33%)	12
	FA	4 (44%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (56%)	9
Mary	TAP	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3
	FA	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2
Treza	TAP	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4
Total No per category		136 (46%)	40 (14%)	30 (10%)	90 (30%)	296

**Table 5.7 teachers' focus on errors related to content**

While all teachers commented on the clarity of ideas, most of them commented on the development of ideas (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Leena, Reema, Ann, Shoq, Tasnem) and unity (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Leena, Reema, Tasnem, Ann), but only half commented on coherence (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Leena, Shoq). An example for the feedback on each type is illustrated below:

Teacher	Type of error	Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
Nadia	Development of ideas	"First of all the reasons of choosing this course is that to learn a second language, certificate is needed in a lot of jobs."	You should have given more ideas to show how English is needed in a lot of jobs.	"Add more details"
Nadia	Clarity of ideas	"When we will graduate we will be able to know the main basics."	Basics for what?...This is unclear	"Unclear"
Adam	Unity	"The other effect on society is changes in timings. Most people have turned their daily timings in accordance ..."	This part is irrelevant... It does not show how TV affects society. It talks about people not society"	"Irrelevant."
Amal	Coherence	"Learning a second language increase your self-esteem. When you learn language, you will have some knowledge of the other culture."	But she has suddenly moved from one idea to another. She was talking about how learning language makes you confident but she did not tell me how. She jumped to talk about how it can makes you knowledgeable of the other culture.	"Coherence"

The above examples demonstrate that teachers did not provide the answers for errors related to content. They, however, identified the problem (e.g. unclear, irrelevant), by assuming that the students would understand how to correct the errors themselves. Since content is the substance of writing, teachers may believe it is not up to the teacher to provide ideas for students to use in their essays. Therefore, it could be that they are not concerned with how the students will solve content-related problems. They focused on identifying the problems in the area of content and that seems to be the limit of their intervention in terms of content.

Similar to the errors related to the thesis statement, content errors related to the clarity of ideas are considered serious by many teachers, who decided not to correct the paper when they are faced with lots of unclear ideas. The following example from the TAP illustrates how teacher Nadia was annoyed and stopped reading the essay because of the unclear ideas:

Type of error	Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
Unclear ideas	" English langoug is the one oF other Forigen langouge it is beautiful, easier and everyone need to learning it espically in this time."	This is terrible... unclear content... I am angry now... I feel I cannot correct more papers any more.	"What is this?"

In line with the previous findings, the findings about teachers' focus of WCF confirm the previously established division of teachers into two groups regarding their focus on language: the form-focused group versus the organisation-focused group. However, teachers (apart from Adam and Amal) paid the least attention to issues related to content. In addition, while the general amount of feedback on language form (58%) was more frequent than the feedback on the organisation and content, both the organisation and content were considered by teachers to be more serious than the language errors.



### 5.2.2.2 Practices regarding the explicitness of WCF

Table 5.8 shows the amount of direct and indirect WCF that each teacher has provided. Findings are provided in terms of the frequency of occurrences of feedback comments and the percentage of each category by each teacher:

Participant	Method	Total number and percentage		Total number of WCF
		Direct	Indirect	
Adam	TAP	58 (52%)	53 (48%)	111
	FA	36 (38%)	59 (62%)	95
Amal	TAP	62 (52%)	55 (47%)	117
	FA	57 (42%)	78 (58%)	135
Nadia	TAP	49 (46%)	58 (54%)	107
	FA	31 (33%)	63 (67%)	94
Leena	TAP	60 (54%)	50 (45%)	110
	FA	34 (39%)	54 (61%)	88
Reema	TAP	44 (57%)	33 (43%)	77
	FA	41 (45%)	51 (55%)	92
Ann	TAP	41 (55%)	33 (45%)	74
	FA	25 (52%)	40 (48%)	65
Tasnem	TAP	105 (81%)	23 (19%)	128
	FA	103 (81%)	24 (19%)	127
Shoq	TAP	84 (84%)	16 (16%)	100
	FA	87 (81%)	21 (19%)	108
Mary	TAP	49 (66%)	25 (34%)	74
	FA	42 (58%)	26 (22%)	68
Treza	TAP	69 (83%)	12 (17%)	81
	FA	50 (71%)	20 (29%)	70
Total no	TAP	621 (63%)	358 (37%)	979
Total no.	FA	506 (54%)	436 (46%)	940
Total no. and percentage		1127 (59%)	794 (41%)	1919

**Table 5.8 Teachers' practices regarding the explicitness of WCF**

As can be seen from Table 5.8, all teachers tended to use both techniques: the direct and the indirect feedback. Moreover, the table shows that the total number of instances of direct feedback in the TAP (63%) is almost close to the total number of direct feedback comments on the FA (54%). This confirms the reliability of the findings that teachers' practices in the TAP and the FA are similar. In addition, despite the fact that the total amount of the direct WCF provided by all teachers (1127/ 59%) is higher than the total amount of indirect feedback (794/ 41%), in general, teachers' practices show three different patterns regarding the explicitness of their feedback. While some teachers tended to use predominantly direct feedback (e.g. Tasnem, Shoq, Treza,

Mary), others (e.g. Adam, Amal, Ann, Reema, Leena) used both types of feedback to the same degree, and one teacher (Nadia) had a slightly more pronounced preference for indirect feedback. However, teachers showed similar practices regarding the level of explicitness they provided on errors related to the different writing aspects (see table 5.9).

Participant	Method	Writing aspects					
		Language Form		Content		Organisation	
		Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
Adam	TAP	40 (91%)	4 (9%)	9 (30%)	21 (70%)	9 (24%)	28 (76%)
	FA	28 (76%)	9 (24%)	2 (7%)	25 (93%)	6 (19%)	25 (81%)
Amal	TAP	46 (88%)	6 (12%)	7 (33%)	14 (67%)	9 (20%)	35 (80%)
	FA	45 (79%)	12 (21%)	4 (14%)	25 (86%)	8 (17%)	39 (83%)
Nadia	TAP	39 (83%)	8 (17%)	3 (14%)	18 (86%)	7 (18%)	32 (82%)
	FA	29 (69%)	13 (34%)	0 (0%)	17 (100%)	2 (6%)	33 (94%)
Leena	TAP	47 (85%)	8 (15%)	7 (39%)	11 (61%)	6 (16%)	31 (84%)
	FA	28 (76%)	9 (24%)	2 (12%)	15 (88%)	4 (12%)	30 (88%)
Reema	TAP	36 (92%)	3 (8%)	4 (24%)	13 (76%)	4 (19%)	17 (81%)
	FA	33 (80%)	8 (20%)	3 (23%)	10 (77%)	5 (13%)	33 (87%)
Ann	TAP	30 (97%)	1 (3%)	1 (10%)	9 (90%)	10 (30%)	23 (70%)
	FA	20 (69%)	9 (31%)	2 (17%)	10 (83%)	3 (13%)	21 (87%)
Tasnem	TAP	95 (91%)	9 (8%)	2 (20%)	8 (80%)	8 (57%)	6 (43%)
	FA	90 (92%)	8 (8%)	5 (38%)	8 (62%)	8 (50%)	8 (50%)
Shoq	TAP	69 (95%)	4 (5%)	7 (54%)	5 (46%)	8 (53%)	7 (47%)
	FA	75 (82%)	16 (18%)	6 (67%)	3 (33%)	6 (75%)	2 (25%)
Mary	TAP	49 (77%)	15 (23%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	7 (100%)
	FA	42 (78%)	18 (22%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	6 (100%)
Treza	TAP	65 (91%)	6 (9%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (100%)
	FA	48 (80%)	12 (20%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (100%)
Total no. and percentage		954 (84%)	178 (16%)	70 (24%)	217 (76%)	103 (21%)	397 (79%)

**Table 5.9 the explicitness of WCF in each writing aspect**

As can be seen in Table 5.9, the total number and percentage of feedback shows that while errors related to language form (84%) are corrected directly (except frequent errors) and errors related to content (76%) and organisation (79%) are mostly corrected indirectly. This is also evident in the TAP and FA findings of all teachers. To give an example from the TAP, 91% of teacher Adam's comments on language form were direct in contrast to 76% and 70% indirect comments on errors related to the organisation and content, respectively. The examples below illustrate how **content** was corrected indirectly:

Explicitness of WCF	Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
Provide the cause of the error	"Before television was around people did things outside because there was not much point in setting around inside"	Irrelevant sentence. She was talking about how the TV. Affect the individual and the society negatively and then she mentioned that we can do without TV.	"irrelevant"

In this excerpt, teacher Adam only provided the cause of the error by writing that the sentence is 'irrelevant'. However, he neither crossed it out nor did he write any comment on how to replace the sentence with a relevant one. Similarly, errors related to **organisation** were also corrected indirectly by providing the cause of the error, by using an error code, and by offering uncoded feedback. Although teacher Nadia, in the following excerpt, noticed that the thesis statement was unclear, she provided indirect uncoded feedback by underlining the sentence and leaving it to the student to find out what was wrong in that sentence.

Explicitness of WCF	Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback	Researcher notes
Uncoded	"there are many advantage study English in this college but I'm going to talk about the most important for me."	I feel there is something missing here. unclear thesis statement .	" <u>there are many advantage study English in this college but I'm going to talk about the most important for me.</u> "	Teacher underlines

Conversely, the examples below illustrate how **language errors** were corrected directly by providing the correct answer, crossing out unnecessary form, and adding the missing form.

Teacher	Type of explicitness	Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback	Researcher notes
Ann	Provide direct answer	"The Importance of Education"	The student misuse the capitalization	"importance"	Teacher provides corrects form
Tasnem	Cross out	"The second problem is crowd, it is very problem because car crowds."	All run on sentences "The second problem is crowd"...ok she must stop here	"The second problem is crowd; <del>it is very problem because car crowds.</del> "	Teacher crosses out
Tasnem	Addition	"in big city"	There is a missing article	a "in ^big city"	Teacher adds 'a'

One reason for the teachers' tendency to correct language errors directly might be that language errors are minor and easy to correct. As has been shown previously in the example in section 5.2.2.1, although teacher Adam stated that the student could easily edit that mistake, he decided to correct it directly. In fact, the TAP reveals that the patterns of errors (i.e. whether the error is frequent, serious or minor, or stigmatizing) affected the teachers' explicitness of WCF as shown in the following table:

Patterns of errors								
Participant	Frequent		Serious		Minor		Stigmatizing	
	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
Adam	2 (22%)	7 (78%)	0 (0%)	8 (100%)	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	3 (38%)	5 (62%)
Amal	4 (33%)	8 (67%)	1 (14%)	6 (86%)	5 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (22%)	7 (78%)
Nadia	4 (27%)	11 (73%)	0 (0%)	9 (100%)	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
Leena	1 (17%)	5 (83%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Reema	1 (17%)	5 (83%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
Ann	1 (25%)	3 (75%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Tasnem	5 (83%)	1 (17%)	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)
Shoq	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (33%)	2 (67%)
Mary	2 (33%)	4 (67%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	6 (60%)	3 (30%)	2 (40%)	3 (60%)
Treza	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)
Total no. and percentage	<b>25 (33%)</b>	<b>50 (66%)</b>	<b>3 (6%)</b>	<b>42 (93%)</b>	<b>35 (85%)</b>	<b>6 (15%)</b>	<b>13 (32%)</b>	<b>27 (67%)</b>

**Table 5.10 Patterns of errors as shown in the TAP**

While the TAP findings, as demonstrated in Table 5.10, confirm that minor errors were mostly (i.e. in 85% of the instances) corrected directly, frequent, serious, and stigmatizing errors tend to be corrected mostly indirectly (i.e. in 66%, 93% and 67% of all instances, respectively) by most teachers (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Ann, Reema, Treza). As shown in the above mentioned example in section 5.2.2.1, while according to teacher Adam following the conventions of the target genre of writing is the most crucial issue, he provided indirect (i.e. uncoded) feedback when he found that the thesis statement and the topic sentences did not follow the argumentative essay. This might be attributed to the fact that correcting errors related to the organisation directly are time consuming. As far as frequent and stigmatizing errors were concerned, the following example shows how a frequent and stigmatizing error was corrected indirectly by using error codes:

Type of error	Explicitness of WCF	Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
Frequent and stigmatizing errors	Coded	"sucesful student is ..... sucesful student	Spelling mistake again! This paper has many spelling mistakes. She should have consulted the dictionary or revised her essay before submitting. This is too much.	"SP"

To conclude, while teachers tended to differ regarding the explicitness of feedback, it appears that all teachers were similar in that they corrected most language errors, including common errors and minor errors, directly, while they corrected most frequent errors, stigmatizing errors, content errors, and errors in the organisation of the essay indirectly.

### 5.2.2.3 Practices regarding the amount of WCF

As shown in section 5.2.2.1, teachers did not seem to focus on a specific type of error which indicates that their approach is not selective when providing WCF but rather comprehensive. However, this does not necessarily prove that teachers follow the comprehensive approach since the feedback analysis does not reveal whether teachers correct all the errors they notice in the text or not. In other words, feedback analysis cannot tell us whether any uncorrected errors are a result of the teacher's decision not to correct them or whether they were not noticed by the teacher. Therefore, I have analysed the teachers' verbalization in the TAP to determine the extent to which teachers intentionally leave some errors uncorrected although these errors have been noticed. While the TAP findings reveal that teachers tend to correct all errors that they notice, only three teachers (Ann, Leena, Reema) recognized -in a few (two to three) instances- a problem related to the content of the essay but did not provide any feedback. Below is an example of a content problem related to the clarity of ideas.

Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Researcher notes
"When we will graduate we will be able to know the main basics."	Basics for what? This is unclear	The teacher did not provide feedback

In this example, teacher Ann commented on a student's unclear sentence. Nevertheless, she did not provide any kind of feedback, whether direct or indirect to show that she did not understand the sentence. However, it is important to mention that teachers did not ignore other types of errors apart from the content. This may suggest that errors related to content are less important than all the other types of errors. It might also be that it is more difficult to correct content errors than correcting other types of errors related to language or organisation. In addition to errors related to content, the TAP reveals that many teachers have ignored many errors in papers written by low-achievers. This issue is discussed in section 4.2.2.5.

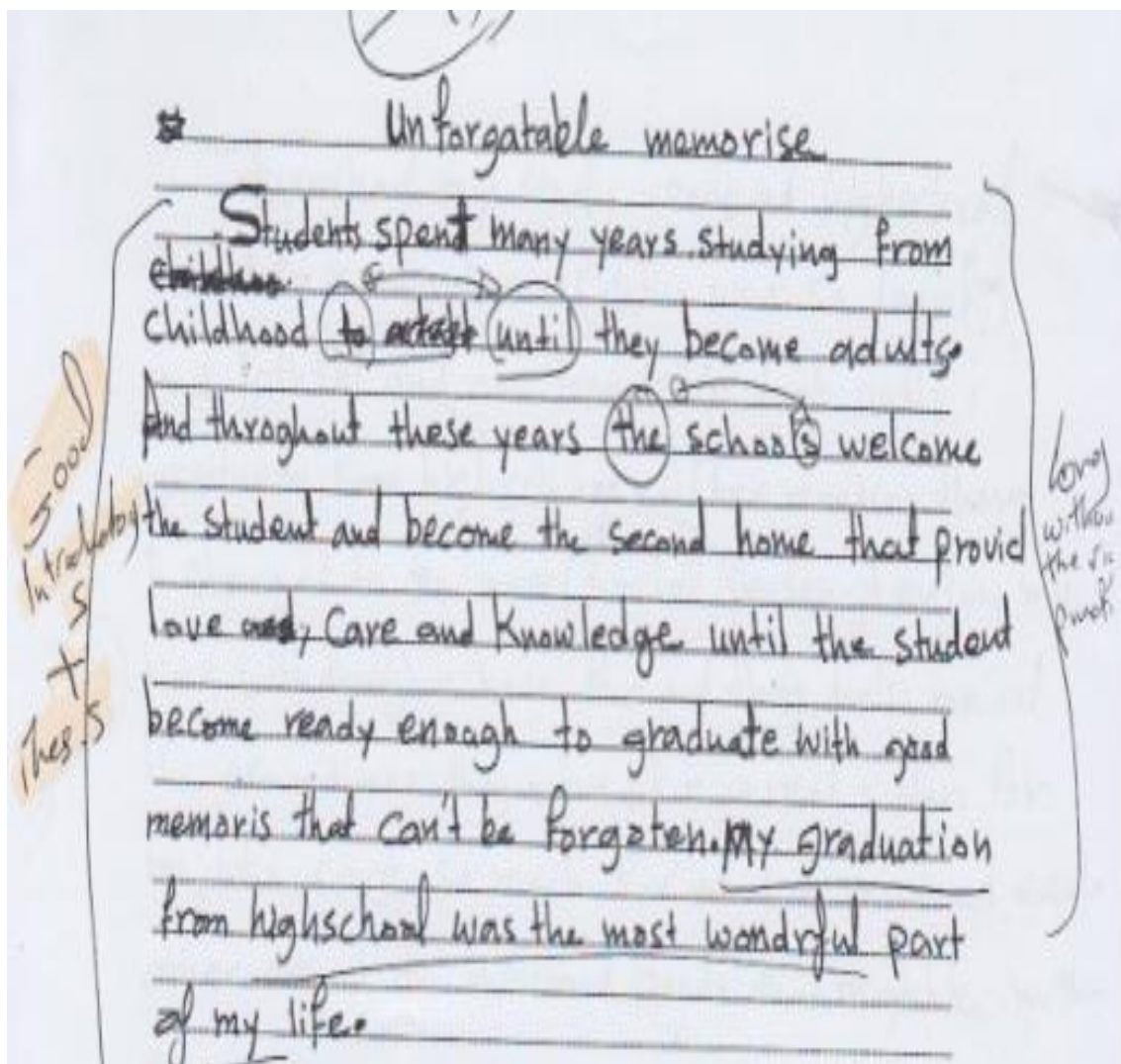
It can be concluded that, apart from the few examples in which some teachers intentionally ignored errors related to content and/ or low-achieving students' writing, all teachers tended to correct all errors they noticed and hence, they apparently aimed to correct all errors comprehensively.

#### **5.2.2.4 Practices regarding positive versus negative feedback**

The findings of TAP and FA reveal that all teachers used positive feedback i.e., praise, to varying degrees, only when dealing with high-achieving and average student papers. These positive responses were mostly provided on the issues related to the organisation of the essay. Below is an example from the TAP which illustrates how teacher Nadia praised a high-achieving student's topic sentence.

Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
"There are many advantages of studying English as a main course in college."	Excellent... very good topic sentence.	"Excellent topic sentence"

Another example below shows how teacher Treza gave positive comments on the introduction and the thesis statement in an essay written by an average student:

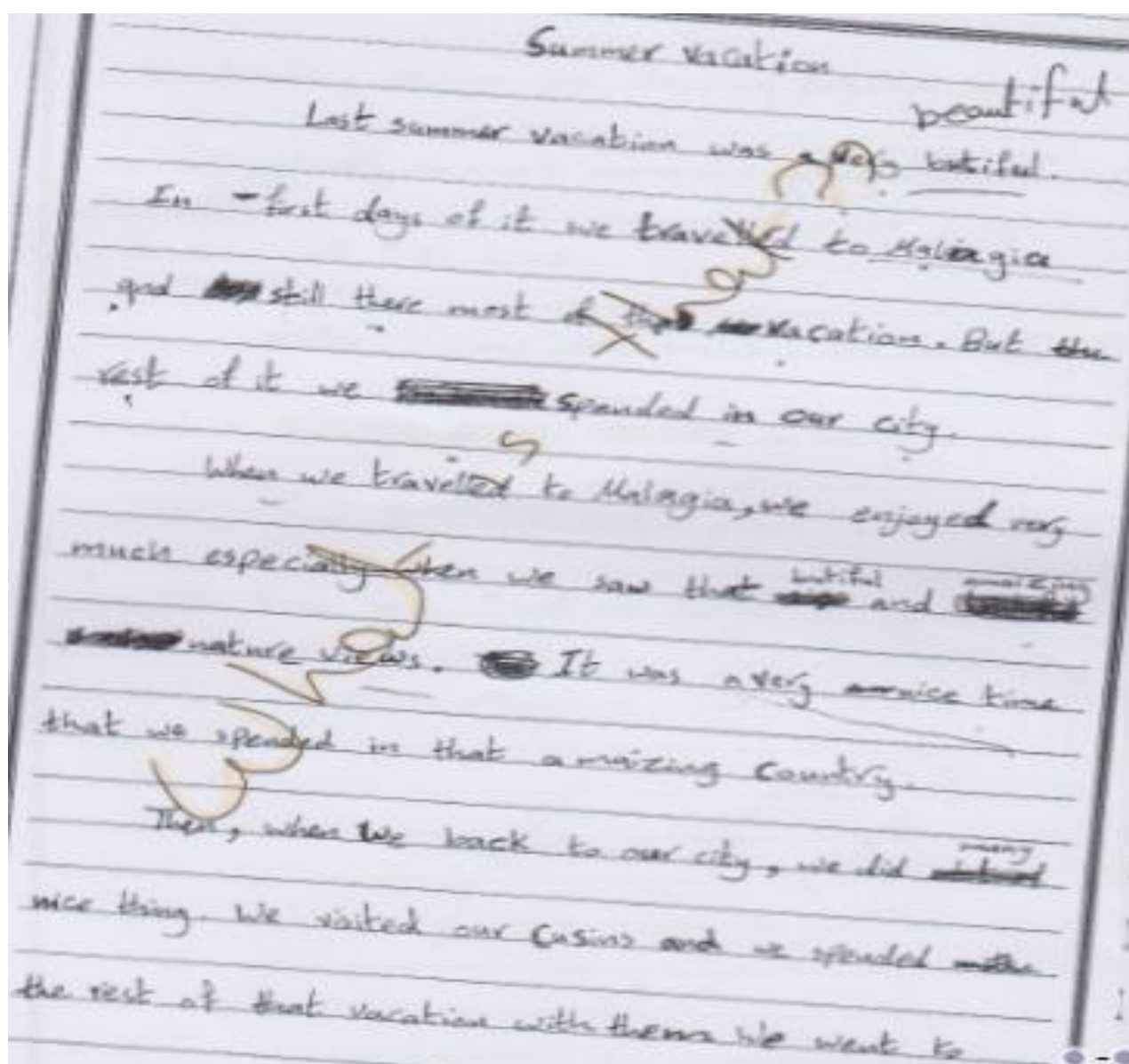


Sample 4: Teacher WCF on student writing

Conversely, both TAP and feedback analysis findings reveal that many teachers (Shoq, Adam, Nadia, Amal, Reema) expressed negative responses when responding to frequent errors in a student's paper, to serious errors which hindered the comprehension of the content of the essay, to errors in the organisation of the essay, to errors that were previously explained in class, and to errors in papers written by low-achievers. The following example illustrates how teacher Nadia provided negative feedback on unclear ideas.

Teacher reading from students' papers	Teacher's verbalization	Teacher written feedback
"Most of students that joined to college they feel scared at the beginning because of the new place the new degree and they have to move from youth to adult hood"	What is this ... This is just rubbish ideas ... Not connected.	"This is not English at all"

Another example demonstrates how teacher Amal responded negatively when being unable to understand the low-achieving student's ideas:



Sample 5: Teacher WCF on student writing



In this example, teacher Amal was obviously annoyed at the content of the essay. The feedback she gave “what is that”, shows not only that she did not understand what the student wanted to say but also that she did not hide her annoyance.

In conclusion, teachers expressed both positive and negative feelings when responding to the students’ writing. While these feelings might be expressed as praise or harsh criticism, they seem to be mostly related to the content and the organisation of the essay rather than to language form.

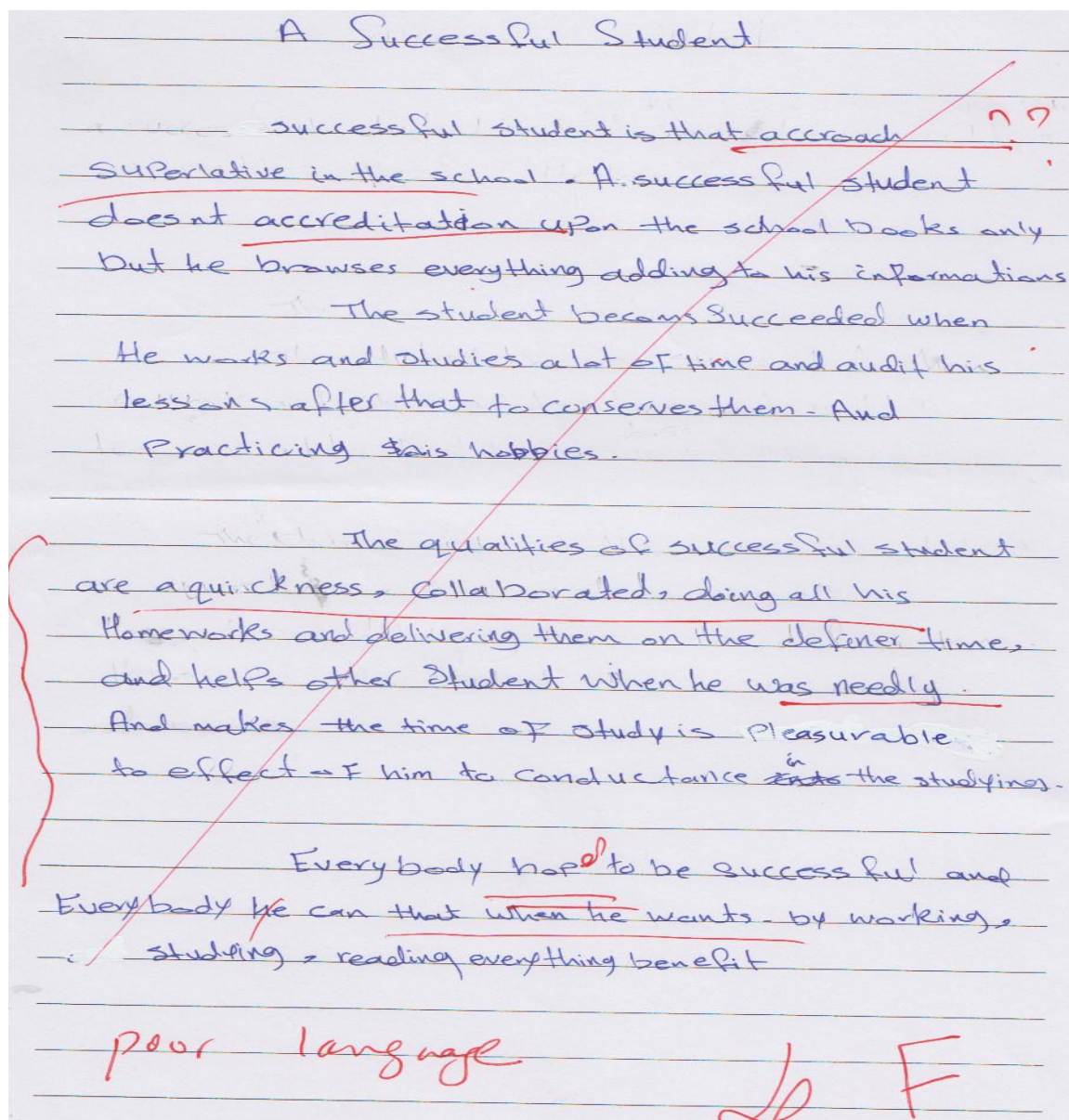
### 5.2.2.5 Practices regarding the variation in WCF

The findings show that teachers varied in their WCF provision depending on the student’s proficiency level. While none of the teachers changed the focus of their WCF, most teachers changed the amount and explicitness of WCF depending on the students’ levels. All teachers (except for Tasnem and Shoq) chose not to provide feedback on many errors in low-achieving students’ papers despite noticing them. Below is an example of a low-achieving student’s essay corrected by teacher Amal:

Teacher reading from students’ papers	Teacher’s verbalization	Researcher notes
“Although, the preparing study It is have many advantage However some substances have many information about ....”	This is very bad. Punctuations are missing. A lot of grammar mistakes... I cannot even understand her ideas. A lot of spelling mistakes as well.	The teacher did not provide feedback

In this example, teacher Amal started providing WCF on the student’s paper, but after finding out that the paper had many errors and that the student was a low-achieving one, she did not provide feedback on all other recognized errors. One plausible reason for this was that the teachers did not want to disappoint the student with lots of corrections. Another reason might be that the teacher became frustrated because of the quantity of errors. In addition, the following example from the

feedback analysis shows how teacher Leena did not correct most errors in the low-achieving student's paper.

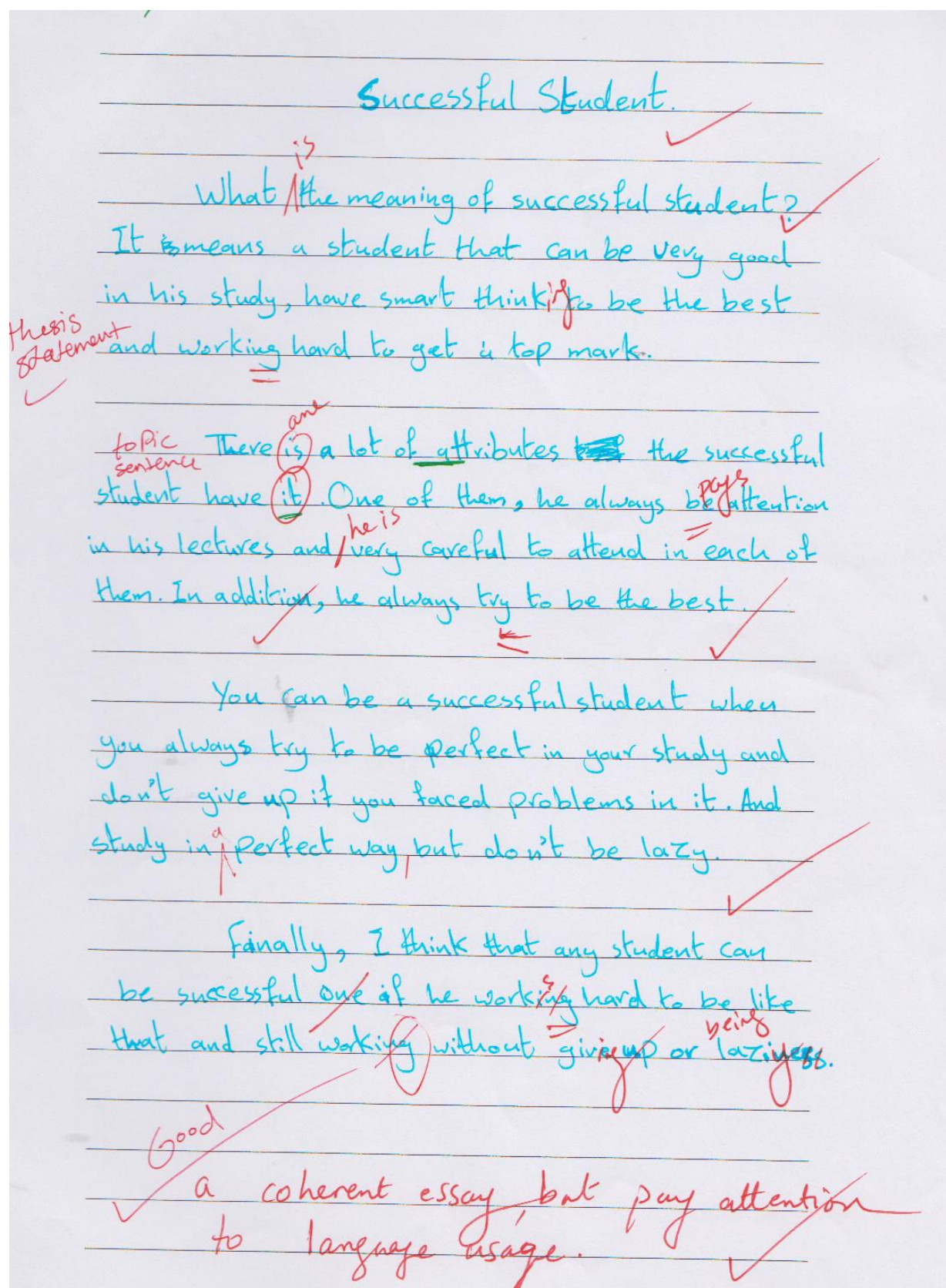


Sample 6: Teacher WCF on student writing

In this example, teacher Leena started giving indirect uncoded WCF as she underlined some words and put a question mark to show that there were certain problems. However, it is clear that the teacher did not provide enough feedback for a number of errors.

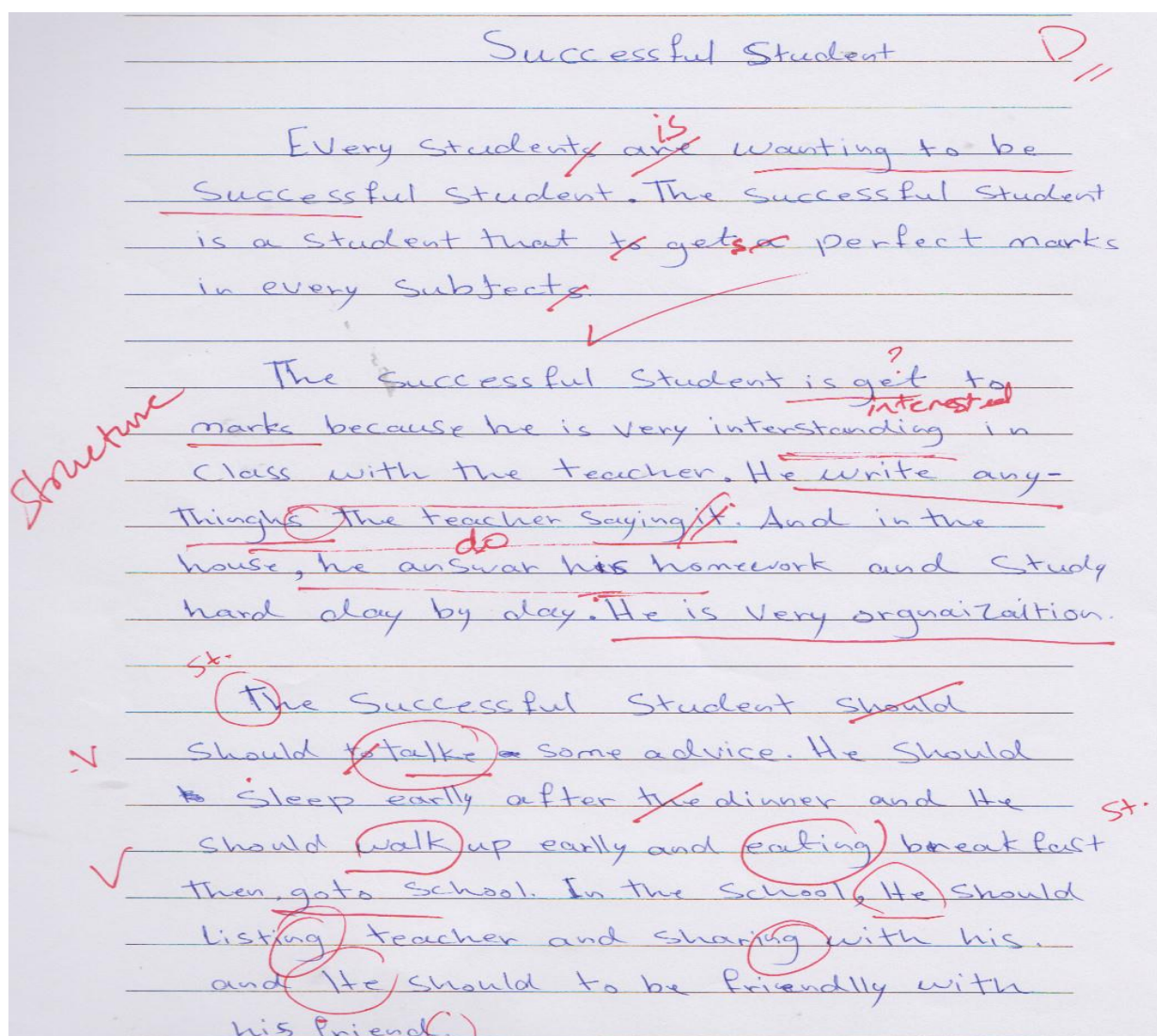
As for the explicitness of WCF, all teachers (apart from teacher Tasnem, Shog) tended to give more direct feedback to high-achieving students' papers and indirect WCF to low-achieving ones. The following two examples show how teacher Leena corrected the high-achieving student's

paper directly (example 1) while she gave more indirect WCF to the low-achieving student's paper (example 2).



Sample 7: Teacher WCF on student writing





**Sample 8: Teacher WCF on student writing**

In the first example, the teacher corrected all errors directly by providing the correct form (e.g. *are* instead of *is*), by crossing out unnecessary forms (e.g. *working*), and by adding the necessary forms (e.g. *what*^ the meaning). However, for the low-achieving student's paper, the teacher gave more indirect uncoded feedback, by underlining and encircling errors and by giving coded WCF (e.g. *V* for verb and *ST* for structural errors).

#### 5.2.2.6 Summary of teachers' WCF practices

This section has presented the findings about teachers' WCF regarding the focus, the explicitness, the amount of WCF, and the teachers' positive versus negative feedback. As for the focus of

WCF, while the organisation-focused group paid more or similar amount of attention to the organisation of the essay, the language-focused group teachers concentrated mostly on the language form. In addition, except for Adam and Amal, teachers gave the least amount of WCF on content issues. This focus was not only represented by the number of feedback points given on each category but also by the way these teachers looked at students' papers and read them. This finding is also consistent with teachers' writing instruction practices. In addition, when discussing the explicitness of WCF, the findings reveal that teachers were similar in that they tended to provide direct feedback on errors related to language form and indirect feedback when responding to errors related to content and organisation. Moreover, although there were a few situations in which some teachers did not provide feedback (some content-related errors and errors in low-achieving students' writing), all teachers tended to correct all errors comprehensively. Finally, most teachers tended to change their practices when responding to low-achieving students' writing, by providing negative feedback and not responding to most of their errors.

### **5.3 Chapter summary**

This part has presented the findings relating to teachers' actual practices when teaching writing and when responding to students' writing. The findings, which were obtained from three sources, TAPs, FA of students' writing and observations of five lessons taught by each teacher, revealed that teachers' practices were consistent regarding the focus of the writing aspects. In other words, when responding to students' papers, teachers tended to focus on the same issues that they focused on when they taught writing.

The following chapter compares teachers' practices and beliefs in order to find out the extent to which teachers' beliefs match/ mismatch their practices.

## **CHAPTER SIX: TEACHERS' PRACTICES IN COMPARISON WITH THEIR BELIEFS**

This chapter aims to analyse the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices and the factors influencing and/or forming constraints on teachers' practices. I address the third research question: "Do teachers' beliefs regarding implementing WCF on students' writing match their classroom practices?" and the fourth research question: "What are the factors that affect teachers' WCF practices? ". Three topics are discussed in this chapter: the in/congruence between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding their writing instruction (section 6.1), the in/congruence between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF (section 6.2), and the factors impacting teachers' practices (section 6.3).

Since the analysis reveals a more complex picture than a complete congruence or incongruence between teachers' beliefs and practices, three categories of congruence are introduced to provide a more fine-grained presentation of the findings: (a) congruence where most teachers' (8-10) beliefs match their practices, (b) incongruence where most teachers' (8-10) beliefs' do not match their practices, and (c) partial in/congruence where some teachers' (3-7) beliefs match their practices while others do not. The findings are presented according to the writing techniques and WCF issues rather than per teacher for two reasons. First, the number of the participants was large (10 teachers) and presenting the findings about each teacher required more space. Secondly, presenting data by techniques highlights more clearly the similarities and differences between teachers and students, which helps answer the fifth research question.

### **6.1 Teachers' beliefs and practices regarding writing instruction**

The findings presented in this section are based on the analysis of teachers' beliefs in the pre-observation interviews (section 4.1) and their practices recorded in the classroom observations

(section 5.1). The section outlines three themes: the focus of writing instruction (6.1.1), the techniques used in writing instruction (6.1.2), and the source of feedback (6.1.3).

### **6.1.1 Beliefs and practices regarding the focus of writing instruction**

The observational findings reveal that the beliefs of both groups (language form-focused and organisation-focused teachers) were congruent with their practices regarding the focus of writing instruction. As shown in previous sections, the organisation-focused teachers believed that organisation is the most important aspect of writing instruction which can help students write a good essay by keeping them focused and helping them follow the conventions of the genre. In line with their beliefs, the five observed classes taught by each writing teacher demonstrate that they focused, in almost every class, on how argumentative essay should be organised. On the other hand, the teachers in this group sometimes provided mini grammar lessons to highlight a specific problem in student writing (see section 5.1.3). This practice was in line with their beliefs that the teachers' job is not to focus on grammar rules but rather refer to these rules by highlighting the students' common errors. For example, when asked to comment on the brief grammar lesson on the difference between the present simple and the present continuous tense, which she incorporated in one of the observed lessons, teacher Leena explained:

*“Because I found most students are confused between the two. They are sometimes “I playing” without adding the helping verb or deleting the ‘ing’. So, I just reminded them about that issue because it is a common mistake” (Leena, SR).*

Conversely, language form-focused teachers were more concerned with the language form than the organisation. According to those teachers, teaching students the correct grammatical structure was more important than teaching them organisation. Teacher Tasnem, for example, argued:

*“I am not here to give a seminar to tell them how to write (...) Writing is not only about unity and coherence. Imagine if a student has good ideas that are expressed in the right place but she can not put it in a right structure, even if there is unity and coherence, even if the organisation is correct, the sentence might not be understood because of the bad structure” (Tasnem, SR).*

As their practices reveal, those teachers spent much of their classroom time explaining all language form components (i.e. grammar, capitalization, punctuations, and spelling) (see section 5.1.3). In the simulated recall interviews, those teachers explained the reason for their practices by referring to the students’ low proficiency levels which prevented them from composing a correct sentence. Teacher Mary, for example, who was asked about the reason for starting a lesson with grammar rules, justified her practice by students’ low language level:

*“I have to keep in mind their level and from where to pick them and how to lift them up. As most of the students I am teaching are poor, I have to start with them from the very beginning, that is, teaching them how to write a correct sentence. Once they master this, I can move on the next level that teaches them how to connect these sentences in a paragraph and then how to connect paragraphs in a coherent essay.” (Mary, SR)*

In contrast, teachers’ beliefs were incongruent with their practices regarding focusing on content. Although teachers stressed that they should focus on content, the findings show most teachers have never engaged students in content activities (see section 5.1.3). According to teacher Leena, concentrating on the content would “restrict students’ ability to think freely.” In addition, teacher Amal explained that “teaching students’ how to organise the ideas is more important than teaching them what ideas to write about”. The differences between teachers’ beliefs seem to be attributed to the tension between their beliefs system. Teachers opted to prioritise giving students the freedom to construct ideas and to focus on the organisation of the ideas, which is a core belief, over focusing on content, which is a peripheral belief not held with the same level of conviction.



To summarise, teachers' beliefs and practices were totally congruent regarding focusing on language form and organisation. However, incongruence was found between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the focus on content.

### **6.1.2 Beliefs and practices regarding the techniques in teaching writing**

It was generally found that the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices was completely congruent regarding using models, partially congruent in using outlining, and completely incongruent regarding implementing multiple drafts. The findings regarding these techniques are presented below, respectively.

As discussed in the pre-observation interviews, while all teachers believed in the **use of models**, they differed in their views about how to use these models. According to language form-focused teachers, models were to be imitated (see section 4.1.3). Similar to their beliefs, in practice, those teachers asked the students to imitate the structure and the vocabulary of specific model writing without critically analysing how the models are composed (see section 5.1.2). Conversely, for the organisation-focused teachers, models were to be analysed in terms of the content and organisation (see section 4.1.3). This group's beliefs were congruent with their practices as they tended to engage students in analysing and criticizing the different parts of the essay (see section 5.1.2).

As for the technique of **outlining**, while all teachers acknowledged the importance of outlining (see section 4.1.3), only six teachers (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Leena, Reema, Ann) asked their students to produce an outline (see section 5.1.2). Conversely, four teachers (Tasnem, Treza, Shoq, Mary) never asked their students for an outline, despite acknowledging its importance (see section 5.1.2). When asked about the reason, three teachers (Tasnem, Shoq, Mary) justified their practice by students' proficiency level. Teacher Tasnem argued that:

*“Outlining makes the content flow smoothly but if the students are writing poor sentences, you have to help them first to write a correct sentence then when they master that you ask them to outline their thoughts.”* (Tasnem, SR).

Teacher Shoq added *“outlining helps when writing long essays, but for the short essays that they write, I do not think they should make an outline for them.”* In addition, according to two teachers (Treza, Shoq), time allocated in class is not enough to ask students to write an outline before starting writing.

In short, despite that fact that the four language-focused teachers gave various reasons for not implementing the technique of outlining (e.g. time in class, students’ level, and the writing length), the finding that outlining was not implemented by the language form-focused teachers confirmed their tendency towards product approach of writing.

In addition, unlike using models and outlining, where teachers’ beliefs and practices were totally and partially congruent, respectively, a total incongruence between all teachers’ beliefs and their classroom practices was found in terms of implementing **multiple drafts**. In the pre-observation interviews, all teachers acknowledged the importance of process writing, which required students to rewrite their essays (see section 4.1.3). However, teacher’s WCF was given to one single draft as the collected papers revealed. A common reason for such a mismatch, given by all teachers, was that teachers did not have enough time to let students go through multiple drafting.

*“I do not have so much time for one topic to correct it twice. They should assign two teachers for the writing course, one to teach students and another teacher to correct students’ drafts.”* (Leena, SR).

Teacher Leena argued that a single teacher cannot manage to work on both teaching students writing and giving WCF on their writing. Three teachers (Adam, Tasnem, Nadia) added another reason relating to the students’ attitude.

*“If students knew that they will go for a rough draft, they will not take the first drafts seriously”* (Tasnem, SR).

Moreover, according to some teachers (Adam, Leena, Amal), rewriting helped them to edit their language mistakes only.

*“Redrafting is effective in correcting the language mistakes much more than organisation of ideas. The organisation of ideas should be clear from the very beginning otherwise the second draft will be a completely different essay”* (Adam, SR).

To conclude, the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding how to teach writing (the techniques implemented in writing instruction) varied. While teachers were completely congruent regarding using models, they were partially congruent regarding outlining, and totally incongruent regarding redrafting. Teachers justified this divergence in their practices by giving different reasons related to the teachers’ workload, the students’ attitude, and the actual task of redrafting.

### **6.1.3 Beliefs and practices regarding the source of feedback**

The findings reveal that peer feedback was never implemented by teachers (except once by two teachers- Adam and Shoq) during the five classes observed for each teacher, although most teachers believed it should be used (see section 4.2.5). However, when teacher Leena was asked after her observed classes about the reason for implementing peer feedback only once, she attributed that incongruence to the students’ bias by stating that:

*“I did it once because I wanted students to see the mistakes of other students so that she they can avoid them when they writes. What happened was that students took it personally. Most students just wrote “excellent” and gave ‘full mark’ because maybe the student is her friend... With the other class, I noticed that there was some kind of hostility between students. Some girls were complaining because their classmate has given her lots of negative comments while she*

*was praising her work. That is why I did not do it again, not because it is not useful, but because our students take it personally” (Leena, SR).*

In addition, six teachers (Mary, Nadia, Reema, Amal, Treza, Ann) justified this divergence in their practices due to their fear of losing control in class. Teacher Mary, for example, explained that:

*“Because students start talking and they get noisy. They do not talk of the subject, they misuse the time given” (Mary, SR).*

A further stated reason related to students’ level. Teacher Tasnem, for example, claimed that:

*“Most students are weak. They do not have the ability to correct each other's mistakes because they have a lot of problems in writing they need guidance all through, that’s why it is not useful here” (Tasnem, SR).*

In short, while all teachers believed in the importance of peer feedback, none of the teachers implemented it for various reasons including the students’ cultural background, their attitudes, and/or the students’ level. Instead of asking students to give feedback to their peers, all teachers preferred to lead the class in a teacher-led class discussion (see section 4.2.5). Teachers’ beliefs regarding the importance of leading the class when giving feedback matched their classroom practices (see section 5.1.1). All the teachers implemented teacher-led class discussion, instead of peer feedback, believing that is more effective. This was because they believed it puts the teacher in a better position to ensure that all students are engaged in the process of feedback, that they are genuinely involved in the activity and also to make sure that no negative personal feelings are caused between students.

#### **6.1.4 Summary of teachers’ beliefs and practices in writing instruction**

This section discussed the in/congruence between teachers’ beliefs and practices in the focus of writing instruction, the techniques used in writing instruction, and source of feedback. As for the

writing focus, it was found that teachers' beliefs were completely congruent with their practices regarding focusing of organisation and language form, and partially congruent regarding focusing on content. When discussing writing techniques, teachers' beliefs were congruent regarding using models, partially congruent with their practices regarding outlining, and incongruent regarding using models. Finally, as for the source of feedback, teachers' beliefs and practices were totally incongruent regarding implementing peer feedback and totally congruent regarding class-led discussion.

The following section will tackle the in/congruence between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF, which is the main focus of the present study.

## **6.2 Teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF**

The findings of this section are based on teachers' beliefs at the pre-observation interviews (section 4.2) and their practices presented in the TAP and text analysis (section 5.2). It was generally found that all teachers' beliefs were greatly congruent with their practices regarding the focus and amount of WCF. However, all teachers' beliefs were incongruent with teachers' practices regarding the explicitness of WCF and the teachers' positive versus negative feedback.

### **6.2.1 Beliefs and practices regarding the explicitness of WCF**

Incongruence was found between all teachers' beliefs and practices regarding how explicit teacher feedback should be. Although all teachers were in favour of the direct feedback (providing correct form, crossing-out, and/or addition) over the indirect approach (i.e. un-coded, coded and providing the cause of the error), which they believed was misleading for students, the findings of both TAP and text analysis show that all teachers (apart from Tasnem) have used

both direct and indirect techniques (see section 5.2.2.2). While stimulated recall interviews show that teachers still believed that direct feedback is the best approach, they nevertheless attributed their practices to many reasons related to the type of the error, time constraints, the teachers' mood, and students' proficiency level.

*“I believe we should provide direct correction but there are some cases where we might –or should- make the feedback more implicit” (Adam, SR).*

As for the error type, teachers discussed three types of errors which affect the explicitness of their WCF, namely: serious versus simple errors, errors related to content versus form, and frequent versus infrequent errors. When discussing serious/minor errors, according to many teachers (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Leena, Mary, Treza), simple errors should be corrected directly while serious errors should be corrected indirectly because simple errors are easy to correct unlike serious ones. Teacher Leena, for instance noticed the incongruence between her beliefs and practices regarding this issue.

*“I believe that my approach is to correct whenever possible, but sometimes mistakes are beyond your comprehension you know the mistake is so grave, serious that you do not know what to do with it but whenever there is a simple, you can correct it easily ... I know I said to you earlier that simple errors do not need to be corrected explicitly but in practice it is easier to amend simple language errors” (Leena, SR).*

When discussing content versus language form errors, all teachers admitted that they would correct language errors directly because they are quicker and easier to correct than errors related to content, which are difficult to correct. Teacher Nadia, for instance, explained that:

*“It is not my job to apply the thoughts for her. If she has a problem with her ideas, she has to correct them. I can help her with what is doable which is language. But when it comes to ideas*

*or organisation or essay format it is difficult to do it your self. Giving her the thought that doesn't solve the problem” (Nadia, SR).*

As far as frequent errors are concerned, three teachers (Reema, Ann, Adam) stated that indirect feedback might be used with frequent errors, which is also consistent with their beliefs stated in the pre-observation interviews. When teacher Reema, for example, was asked about the reason for giving indirect feedback on one repeated grammatical error, she replied that:

*“Because the student has repeated that error and I have corrected it for her many times. Repeated errors should not be corrected every time otherwise students will be relying on us mainly” (Reema, SR).*

In addition to the type of the error, half of the teachers (Adam, Nadia, Ann, Leena, Shoq) attributed divergent practices based on how they dealt with time constraints.

*“Sometimes when I am running out of time, when I have to finish correcting the papers, I do not provide answers, I just underline most errors and correct a few errors only” (Adam, SR).*

Moreover, according to three teachers (Reema, Amal, Nadia), the issue of whether to correct errors directly or indirectly depends on their psychological state, i.e. they give direct feedback when they are in a good mood and vice versa. Teacher Reema has argued that:

*“To be honest, it depends on my mood. When I start correcting, I tend to provide direct feedback because I am usually enthusiastic. This tendency decreases by the time specially when I am faced with a weak writing, I become definitely depressed. So for that paper and the papers that come after it, these are unlucky papers because I do not provide the direct answers for those papers due to my bad mood” (Reema, SR).*

While teachers believed in the importance of direct feedback, they still used the indirect approach, which they attributed to the time at their disposal, their mood, the students’

proficiency level, and the type of the error (i.e. serious vs. minor, frequent vs. Infrequent, content vs. Form). Two final points need to be mentioned regarding the explicitness of WCF. First, the TAP findings reveal that the explicitness of WCF is not something that teachers think about while giving feedback but rather a spontaneous tendency those teachers did not recognize until the researcher drew their attention to it in the SR interviews. Teachers tried to give possible and tentative reasons for giving indirect feedback although believing in the direct approach. In addition, their approaches regarding this issue were not fixed. They may still provide indirect feedback for infrequent language errors and/or direct feedback on content errors. All participants attributed that to the fact that they do not follow any particular fixed strategy while correcting their students' papers. For example, when teacher Adam was asked about the reasons for giving direct feedback, although rarely, on content errors, he stated:

*"I do not know. I do not follow any strategy. I correct without saying that this error is related to language or content and without putting in mind that this is an error that should be corrected directly or vice versa. I correct randomly focusing and referring to whatever errors I found and giving direct or indirect correction without thinking of what is more essential or important"* (Adam, SR).

To conclude, teachers' beliefs in that WCF should be direct are incongruent with their practices, as they tend to provide both direct and indirect WCF. Teachers gave various reasons for using indirect WCF related to the type of the error, time limitation, their mood, and students' level.

### **6.2.2 Beliefs and practices regarding the focus of WCF**

The analysis of congruence between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the focus of WCF yielded different findings. As far as organisation and language form were concerned, teachers' beliefs were congruent with their practices. The organisation-focused teachers (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Leena, Reema, Ann), who believed in the priority of organisation (see section 4.2.2), paid



attention to the different aspects regarding how the essay was organised both when they taught writing (see section 5.1.3) and when they provided WCF on students' writing (see section 5.2.2.1). Similarly, the language form-focused teachers (Tasnem, Shoq, Treza, Mary) followed their beliefs that errors related to language should be given the most focus (see section 4.2.2). They in practice gave the highest amount of comments on errors related to language form (see section 5.2.2.1).

However, teachers' beliefs were incongruent with their practices regarding focusing on content. When they were first interviewed, six teachers said that good writing depends on development of ideas and that teachers should focus on the content (see section 4.2.2). However, the findings of both TAP and FA demonstrate the opposite as teachers (except for teacher Adam and Amal) gave the least amount of feedback on errors related to content (see section 5.2.2.1). Teachers also admitted, in the SR interviews, that they paid less attention to content errors than errors related to language form and provided many reasons to justify their practice. One reason, given by three teachers (Nadia, Leena, Reema), was related to the amount of language errors in the students' papers.

*"Most students have lots, lots, lots of grammatical mistakes and then yes this make me upset. I have to correct them and focus on them and that makes me sometimes ignoring the content" (Leena, SR).*

Two teachers (Ann, Nadia) gave a further reason relating to the students' needs and expectations.

*"I focused on the language because students, our students most of the time...they have good ideas but because they want to express it in an elevated language, they do not express them or they express them in an unclear language." (Nadia, SR).*

Teacher Adam added that language errors affect not only the structure of the sentence but the content as well:

*“It's two ways traffic actually, and it may seem contradictory but it is not. Well, if they make mistakes in some details, it's ok. But if even the topic sentences are not written in a correct grammatical manner, of course the idea will not be clear” (Adam, SR).*

According to three teachers (Ann, Leena, Nadia), not focusing on the content is attributed to the students' low level.

*“Students are weak. We need to work on how they write a correct sentence before we look if the ideas were related or not” (Ann, SR).*

One final important point is that although teachers gave little attention to errors related to content, serious content errors such as unclear ideas, irrelevant and incoherent ideas, or off topic essays were sometimes not corrected by the teacher (see section 5.2.2.1). Teacher Amal explained the reason by saying:

*“When I do not find the essay a good one in terms of ideas so there's no use going through grammatical errors as well. Why would I correct the grammatical errors or the language errors while the whole essay is off point?” (Amal, SR).*

In sum, the findings demonstrate a general congruence between their beliefs and practices regarding focusing on organisation and language form. Conversely, there is incongruence between most teachers' beliefs and practices regarding errors related to the content.

### **6.2.3 Beliefs and practices regarding the amount of WCF**

General congruence is found between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the amount of WCF. The pre-observation interviews reveal teachers' beliefs that it is their job to correct all errors in student papers since they believed that otherwise students will not pay attention to all of their mistakes (see section 4.2.3). The TAP findings reveal that teachers tended to correct almost all errors that they recognized and that they were not confined to correcting specific patterns of

errors (see section 5.2.2.3). While this proves that teachers' beliefs are congruent with their practices, some incongruence was found in that three teachers (Ann, Leena, Reema) sometimes recognized errors related to content but did not provide any feedback (see section 5.2.2.3). In addition, all teachers (except for Tasnem) overlooked some errors with some low-achieving students. In the SR interviews, all teachers insisted that they were following the comprehensive approach. According to two teachers (Reema, Ann), leaving such errors would not affect the students as these unchecked errors are minor and they do not break the rules of English. When teacher Ann, for example, was asked:

Researcher: What is the reason for neglecting an irrelevant sentence: *"For the entertainment, people go to parks, shops, and visiting each other"* although you have noticed it and commented on it verbally saying: *"this is not related to technology"*?

Teacher: *"Because it is very minor that it does not affect the text and it is not an obvious error like in grammar or spelling that we have to correct them for her"* (Ann, SR).

For many teachers (Adam, Amal, Leena, Treza, Mary), simple errors might be ignored when teaching low-achieving students who have lots of errors to correct. Teacher Mary stated that *"not focusing on simple issues with low-achieving students help them concentrate on important issues"* (Mary, SR). Most teachers (Adam, Amal, Nadia, Reema, Treza, Mary Leena, Ann) acknowledged that they do not provide feedback on some errors when responding to a low-achieving student's paper because *"If they corrected all errors, the paper will be cramped with corrections and this might be demotivating"* (Leena, SR). Teacher Reema added that low-achievers have to work very hard and according to teachers and if those students are not willing to improve, teachers will not waste much time correcting all of their errors when they might not even look at teachers' feedback.

*“I always used to correct all errors for weak students even if there were lots of corrections. Once I found some of those weak students’ papers with my corrections on the floor. I was shocked because I am wasting my precious time in correcting at my home and my children suffer. If they do not benefit or if they are not ready to learn, then for what reason we correct every single mistake?”* (Reema, SR).

In short, teachers’ beliefs regarding the amount of WCF are congruent with their practices. Although there are a few instances where three teachers did not provide WCF on some errors related to content and where many teachers did not provide errors to very low-achieving students, teachers attributed that to many reasons; such as that those types of errors were minor and that they overlooked some errors when responding to low-achieving students’ writing to help them focus on serious issues in their writing, not to demotivate them with the amount of feedback, and not to waste much time commenting on the low-achievers’ writing while some of them do not look at their teachers’ WCF.

#### **6.2.4 Beliefs and practices regarding the positive versus negative feedback**

Teachers tended to give positive comments on high-achieving and average students’ writing only although they believed that teachers should praise all students no matter how good they are (see section 4.2.6). In addition, teachers’ feedback showed harsh criticism on low-achieving students’ papers which clashes with their beliefs that teachers should not undermine student work (see section 5.2.2.4). In the SR interviews all teachers acknowledged that they did not praise low-achieving students and/or that they used some negative feedback. According to four teachers (Amal, Leena, Nadia, Adam), not praising student writing and/or giving negative feedback might help students realize their level.

*“When you correct some papers you find yourself totally lost. You get really upset because you can do nothing to help these students... For those students, yes I write some harsh words because I want them to wake up. To work very hard to improve themselves”* (Amal, SR).

Teacher Leena added that praising low-achieving students might work negatively as students might be misled with these praising terms and think that they are on the right track.

*“If we motivated such a student, she will think that she is good and she will not work on herself. When she fail the course or when she takes a low grade, she will approach you complaining that she failed while you were praising her work” (Leena, SR).*

Three teachers (Adam, Nadia, Amal) argued that negative terms such as ‘*this is not English*’ or ‘*this is rubbish*’ can be given when students write unclear sentences, which they cannot understand. Teacher Adam has stated that:

*“Imagine correcting a paper which doesn’t look like English! You cannot even continue reading it. Because if you go through this kind of writing, this means that you are going to write the essay yourself. And I do not have the time or the will to rewrite the essay for her. This is her job not mine!” (Adam, SR).*

In short, teachers’ beliefs and practices appear to be incongruent regarding praising students and/or giving negative comments on low-achieving students’ papers. However, teachers believe that giving negative comments and not praising low-achieving student writing helps students realize their true level.

### **6.2.5 Beliefs and practices regarding variation in WCF**

In the pre-observation interviews, all teachers believed that the WCF should vary depending on student ability levels. As for the amount of WCF, teachers differed in their beliefs regarding the issue of giving more or less WCF on low-achieving students’ writing (see section 4.2.7). According to five teachers (Adam, Amal, Shoq, Mary, Treza), teachers should correct all errors in high-achieving student writing while they should overlook errors in low-achieving students’ papers. Those teachers’ beliefs are congruent with their practices, as they tended to provide less

WCF to low-achieving students' writing. Conversely, the other five teachers (Ann, Reema, Leena, Tasnem, Nadia) believed the opposite i.e., the weaker the student writing is, the more WCF should be provided. However, except for teacher Tasnem, those teachers' beliefs were incongruent with their practices, as they tended to provide less feedback on low-achieving student writing (see section 5.2.2.5). Those teachers attributed their divergent practices to beliefs about their inability to understand poor writing.

*“Those students are very weak. If I want to correct their errors, I will have to write a new essay. That is why I just do not correct their papers. It is impossible to understand her ideas and I cannot read the whole essay, guessing what the student wants to say” (Leena, SR).*

As for the explicitness of WCF, although most teachers believed that an indirect approach might be given to high-achieving students as they are able to find out the correct form by themselves, teachers' practices show the opposite i.e., the more advanced the students are, the more the feedback is direct whereas low-achieving students receive more indirect feedback. Although teachers were aware of their practices, most of them (Adam, Leena, Reema, Ann, Shoq, Treza, Mary) justified this contradiction by reference to students' motivation.

*“Because you cannot provide feedback on all of [low-achieving students'] their errors. It will be too much corrections and that is so depressing for students” (Leena, SR).*

In addition, two teachers (Amal and Nadia) explained that since low-achievers do not invest any effort in improving their writing, teachers should not waste time correcting low-achieving student writing.

*“Because when I repeat a lot and you do not get it and when I encourage you to ask and you do not ask, when I invite you to my office to come and you do not come! Then, the problem is with the [low-achieving] student ... She doesn't want to learn. So why would I waste my time on her*

*papers if she did not waste anytime trying to listen to what I say? This is unfair for the hardworking students who work hard to improve” (Amal, SR).*

In short, teachers’ beliefs that WCF should vary depending on student levels are partially congruent regarding the amount of WCF but are incongruent regarding the explicitness of WCF.

#### **6.2.6 Summary of teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding WCF**

This section discussed the in/congruence between teachers’ beliefs and practices in the focus of WCF, the explicitness, amount of WCF, and the positive versus negative feedback when responding to student writing. While the findings reveal a great level of congruence between teachers’ beliefs and practices in the focus and amount of feedback, incongruence was found between teachers’ beliefs and practices in the explicitness of WCF, the teachers’ positive versus negative feedback, and the change of WCF.

### **6.3 Factors impacting teachers’ practices**

Whereas the previous parts have mentioned where relevant some of the factors influencing and/or forming constraints on teachers’ practices when teaching writing and/or when giving WCF on student writing, this part provides a thorough analysis of these factors. The data analysis of teacher stimulated recalls reveals eleven factors related to teachers, students, and/or the context. While five of these factors affect teachers’ practices both in teaching writing and giving WCF, seven factors only affect teacher writing instruction practices, and one factor affects teacher WCF only.

The following two tables illustrate the extent to which these factors have been perceived by teachers as affecting their practices in teaching writing (table 6.1) and in giving WCF (table 6.2), respectively.

Factors on teachers' writing instruction practices		Number of responses	Teachers									
			Adam	Amal	Nadia	Ann	Leena	Reema	Tasnem	Shoq	Mary	Treza
Student-related	Students' proficiency level	9		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Students' expectations	9		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Large students' numbers	9		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Students' class behaviours	6		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Teacher-related	Teachers' past learning experience	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Teachers' teaching experience	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Lack of L1 shared with students	4				✓			✓		✓	✓
	Teachers' heavy teaching loads	4				✓			✓		✓	✓
Context-related	Exams' requirements	6	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
	Cultural effect	4		✓			✓	✓		✓		

**Table 6.1 Factors influencing teacher writing instruction practices**

Factors on teachers' WCF practices		Number of response	Teachers									
			Adam	Amal	Nadia	Ann	Leena	Reema	Tasnem	Shoq	Mary	Treza
Student-related	Students' proficiency level	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Students', expectations	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Large students' numbers	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teacher-related	Teachers' heavy teaching loads	7		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Lack of L1 shared with students	4				✓			✓		✓	✓
	Teachers' emotional response	3		✓	✓			✓				

**Table 6.2 Factors influencing teacher WCF practices**

As can be seen from the two tables above (6.1 and 6.2), while student and teacher-related factors affect teachers' practices both in teaching writing and giving WCF, cultural effects, and factors related to the context (e.g. exam requirements) affect only teachers' practices in writing instruction. It is also apparent that there is some unavoidable overlap among these three factors. To give an example, 'teachers' heavy teaching loads' can be related to teachers and the context. Moreover, 'teacher-student contact' can be related to teachers, students, and/or the context. It is, also, important to note that all of these factors (apart from the teachers' previous learning



experience and the teachers' teaching experience) are viewed by the teachers as constraints preventing them from enacting their beliefs.

In the following, I present the findings about each of the three factors, i.e., student-related factors (section 6.3.1), teacher-related factors (section 6.3.2), and context-related factors (section 6.3.3).

### **6.3.1 Student-related factors**

Data analysis reveals four factors related to students. While two of these factors are related to students only, i.e. 'students' discipline' and 'students' proficiency level', the other two factors appear to relate to both students and the context such as large student numbers and student expectations regarding their teachers' practices. In addition, these four factors, apart from the students' discipline, affect teachers' practices both in teaching writing and giving WCF. The analysis of student-related factors is presented below.

#### **6.3.1.1 Students' behaviour in class**

Students' behaviour in class is a constraint on the teachers' writing instruction practices. As can be seen from Table 6.1, six teachers reported that maintaining control in class is one of the reasons for not implementing peer feedback and self-editing strategies in the writing class despite acknowledging its efficacy. For example, teacher Treza stopped the self-editing exercise because she was afraid of losing control in class:

*"I had to ask them to stop working on the editing exercise because students were noisy and they were doing it as groups although I asked each student to work by herself. So, I preferred to do it together because they got so engaged that I was afraid that other teachers in other classes will complain"* (Treza, stimulated recall interview).

In this excerpt, teacher Treza seems to be afraid of what other teachers would think of her teaching abilities if her classroom was noisy. This might give an indication about her beliefs that noisy classrooms are unruly ones. In addition, in these two excerpts, both teachers Mary and Treza expressed their core beliefs that is, having control on students is more important than the peripheral belief, that is, conducting peer feedback or self-editing is useful for students' writing skills development (see section 2.1.3.2).

### **6.3.1.2 Student proficiency level**

Student proficiency levels affect both the way teachers teach writing and give WCF. When discussing writing instruction, although peer feedback is reported by all teachers as an important strategy, all teachers reported that they could not conduct it in class because of the students' varying proficiency levels. Teacher Ann, for example stated:

*"I could not ask them to correct for each other because of their level. Most of them lack the basic rules of language"* (Ann, SR).

The students' varying proficiency levels also affect the teachers' grammar instruction. Because of the students' weak level, two teachers (Mary, Shoq) felt that they had to teach intensive grammar lessons. For example, teacher Mary reported:

*"Writing is composed of sentences. So the sentence is the basic writing. And when you find out that most of the students are poor... that they cannot compose a correct grammatical sentence, in this case, you have to focus on the grammar until they know the basic grammatical rules and apply them correctly"* (Mary, SR).

Although it is clear that the students' low proficiency forms a constraint on teachers' practices, it is interesting to see what teachers believe the solution for that constraint to be. In this excerpt, for

instance, teacher Mary believed that mastering grammar would lead to improving student writing.

In addition to affecting teacher writing instruction practices, the students' proficiency level was perceived by the teachers as a factor that could oblige them to change their WCF practices with regard to explicitness, focus, amount, and the teachers' negative feedback.

As for the **explicitness** of WCF, although most teachers believed that an indirect approach should be applied in case of high-achieving students only, as they are able to find out the correct form, teachers' practices show the opposite. They showed that the more advanced the students are, the more direct the feedback is whereas low-achieving students receive more indirect feedback. Although teachers were aware of their practices, most teachers (Adam, Leena, Reema, Ann, Shoq, Treza, Mary) justified this contradiction by reference to the excessive frequency of errors in low-achieving student writing. As shown in section 6.2.1, teacher Leena, for instance, felt that correcting errors directly in low-achieving student essays would be excessive and 'depressing for students'. In addition, two teachers (Amal and Nadia) argued that since low-achievers do not invest any effort in improving their writing, teachers should not waste time correcting low-achieving student writing directly. Teacher Amal, for example, stated:

*"Because those usually do not pass the course so why wasting a lot of time on their papers if they are very weak. When I repeat a lot and you do not get it and when I encourage you to ask and you do not ask (...) Then, the problem is with the student ... She doesn't want to learn. So why would I waste my time on her"* (Amal, SR).

As far as the **amount** of feedback is concerned, teachers gave less feedback when responding to low-achieving student papers although half of the teachers (Ann, Reema, Leena, Tasnem, Nadia) believed that the weaker the students are, the more WCF should be provided. In the SR interviews, four teachers (Reema, Leena, Tasnem, Nadia) attributed this incongruence to their inability to understand low-achieving student writing. Teacher Leena, for instance, explained that:

*“Those students are very weak. If I want to correct their errors, I will have to write a new essay. That is why I just do not correct their papers. It is impossible to understand her ideas and I cannot read the whole essay, guessing what the student wants to say” (Leena, SR).*

Moreover, according to two teachers (Tasnem and Ann), since low-achieving students make many errors, correcting all errors might make it difficult for them to read all comments. As a result, they tended to ignore a few errors in students’ papers. Teacher Tasnem, for example stated:

*“I will only correct for those who will read my feedback and benefit from it” (Tasnem, SR).*

When discussing the **focus** of feedback, the students’ weak level affected half of the teachers’ (Nadia, Amal, Ann, Leena, Reema) practices in that they shifted their focus from content to language form. Those teachers paid more attention to language errors although they believed that content should receive more or similar focus similar to that of language form. Three of the teachers (Leena, Amal, and Nadia) attributed this divergence to their previous assumption that students have had good language levels. However, those teachers found out that most students make an excessive number of errors related to language. In a typical response, teacher Ann mentioned her reasons for focusing on language errors by stating that:

*“Because I thought that students have reached the level of writing good language...I thought their language will be much better ... I found out that they need a lot of work on the base of their language. That is why I'm happy with whatever ideas they have produced as long as they are related to the topic and organised” (Ann, SR).*

As for the negative feedback, although all teachers believed that the feedback should cover both the strengths and weaknesses of the students, teachers appeared to give **negative feedback** to low-achieving students while praising only low- and average- achieving students. Many teachers

(Adam, Amal, Leena, Nadia, Reema, Mary) expressed the reason that praising low-achieving student papers might be misleading for them as they will think that they are on the right track while there are major errors in their papers. As teacher Leena mentioned:

*“Supporting words help students a great deal but if you have a very poor paper, how can you support it? If we motivated such a student, she will think that she is good and she will not work on herself. When she fail the course or when she takes a low grade, she will approach you complaining that she failed while you were praising her work”* (Leena, SR).

In short, the students’ different proficiency levels form a constraint on the teachers’ writing instruction and their WCF practices. As for the writing instruction, teachers felt they could not implement peer feedback and some teachers felt that they had to give intensive grammar instruction due to the students’ low language level. As far as WCF is concerned, teachers gave indirect WCF to low-achieving students although believing in the superiority of the direct approach; some teachers focused on language form more than content despite their beliefs that more attention should be given to content. Teachers have also given less WCF to the low-achievers despite their belief in the comprehensive approach, and they gave negative feedback to low-achieving students although they believed that all students should be praised regardless of their level. Many reasons - relating to the students’ proficiency levels- are provided by teachers for this contradiction between their beliefs and practices such as their intention not to depress and intimidate the low-achievers with too many corrections, their inability to understand student writing intentions, a sense of fairness to high-achieving students, annoyance with the low-achieving students’ apparent unwillingness to learn from feedback, and not to deceive low-achieving students with praising terms that do not reflect their actual level of writing.

### 6.3.1.3 Students' expectations

Student expectations constitute another constraint on writing instruction and WCF practices in terms of affecting the teachers' decisions about whether they should focus on language form or content.

As far as the teaching of writing is concerned, four teachers' practices (Amal, Nadia, Leena, Reema, Ann) contradicted their beliefs that writing teachers should help students with the content more than with language. The teachers claimed that it is not their job to teach students language. They justified their focus on language form by reference to those students who expect to be taught the language form aspects in the writing class. Teacher Reema stated that:

*"We have to teach students the different language issues and focus on grammar. This is how students assume the writing class will be discussing. Language and organising it in a form of the essay"* (Reema, SR).

When discussing teacher WCF practices, four teachers (Nadia, Ann, Leena, Reema) focused on language form more than on the content despite believing the opposite, because they want to please their students. Teacher Ann, for example, remarked:

*"We have to correct the language because all students expect us to return their papers free from any language error. This is how they learned in schools that writing means a correct language"* (Ann, SR).

To conclude, teachers' beliefs about what students expect affect some of teachers' practices in terms of the focus of both writing instruction and WCF. Those teachers focused on the language form more than on content both when teaching writing and when giving WCF. This was the case although they believed that teachers should give more or similar focus to content.

#### 6.3.1.4 Large student numbers

The large number of students is reported by all teachers to considerably affect teaching of writing and WCF practices. As for the writing instruction, all teachers, for example, argued that they could not implement multiple draft writing and that they cannot ask students to practice more writing in class because of the huge number of students (see section 6.1.2). Teacher Adam, for instance, talked about this constraint saying:

*“Students’ large number is one of the biggest constraints that we face specially when teaching writing. We cannot ask students for another draft and we cannot practice enough writing because we cannot correct these papers. When we ask them to write, they expect us to correct their papers and give them their papers back. Unfortunately, we cannot correct every time we give a class.”* (Adam, SR).

The number of students forms a constraint on teacher WCF as well by affecting both the explicitness and the amount of feedback. Thus, instead of following the direct approach of feedback which teachers believe in, all teachers mixed the two approaches (i.e. direct and indirect) by attributing their use of the indirect approach to the large number of students. For instance, teacher Nadia stated:

*“We have a lot of papers to correct. There are 37 students in one of my sections. I cannot always give them the answers every time”* (Nadia, SR).

Moreover, because of the students’ large numbers, the teachers had to skip some frequent errors without correction. Teacher Amal claimed that:

*“I skip some repeated errors because I have already corrected them... I have lots of papers to correct. That is why I have to skip the repeated errors”* (Amal, SR).

To sum up, teachers were unable to implement multiple-drafts, and they tended to give less feedback and less direct WCF because of the students’ large numbers.

### 6.3.2 Teacher-related factors

The analysis reveals five factors related to teachers, namely their past learning experiences, their teaching experience, the teachers' lack of L1, their heavy teaching loads and their mood. Whereas most student-related factors affect both teachers' WCF and writing instruction, most teacher related factors affect either the writing instruction (i.e. past learning experiences and teaching experience) or teachers' WCF practices (i.e. teacher heavy teaching loads and teacher mood). These factors are discussed in the following sections.

#### 6.3.2.1 Past learning experiences

The teachers' past learning experiences shape teachers' beliefs and consequently affect their practices. For example, teacher Leena explained:

*"I always remember the way that my teachers used to teach me and I adopt the approach yeah when I teach writing" (Leena, SR).*

Similarly, teacher Nadia explained how her choices regarding process writing were positively affected by her past experiences:

*"When I was a student, my teacher told me that writing doesn't come just all of a sudden. I remember those days when I found it difficult even to write one paragraph properly. But because my teacher used to keep on giving us exercises on writing and practice, I improved so much. So, I understood from my own learning and teaching experience that it is only through hard work, which is what can make you a good writer. You have to practice writing a lot. And if you want to write something, you have to write it as a first draft, a second draft, until you get a good piece of writing" (Nadia, SR).*

However, two teachers (Shoq and Tasnem) were critical about their past learning experiences. This attitude has forced them to change some of the techniques employed by their teacher. For



example, teacher Shoq stated that she tried to give students interesting topics because she was having difficulty writing about a topic she had no knowledge about. She stated:

*“I remembered the difficulties that I faced and I put them in my mind when I teach. For example, when I was a student, everything was based on the textbook. They ask us to write essays about new years and about Christmas. That was a problem for me because these things we did not live them so I can't relate to them. So, now, I learnt that I should not force students to write about something that they do not live in their daily lives even if it was in their writing book. (Shoq, SR).*

To summarise, all the teachers reported that their previous learning had affected their teaching practices. However, while most teachers stated that their previous learning made them implement the techniques they found useful as students, two teachers reported that they had to change some of the techniques employed by their teachers because they found them ineffective and developed different practices in response to those.

#### **6.3.2.2 Teaching experience**

Teachers' beliefs and practices were influenced not only by their past learning experiences when they were students, but also by their teaching experience as writing teachers, making them adopt the practices they found useful. For example, the teaching experience affected teacher Tasnem, making her change her practices with regard to the time of WCF. She explained:

*“When I first taught writing, I was commenting of the students' papers while they were writing. Sometimes, I would stop the student to ask her about a spelling mistake or a missing verb. But with practice, I learned that it is not useful to interrupt their process of thinking. Let them write and you can monitor them but not to the extent that you start correcting before they finish. This is one thing I learned from my experience” (Tasnem, teachers' interview).*

Similar to teacher Tasnem, all other teachers stated that their teaching experience helped them improve the way they taught writing. Teacher Mary, for example argued:

*“The more experience I get in teaching writing, the more I develop my instruction in all means”* (Mary, teachers’ interview).

However, while most teachers stated that they now depended mostly on their teaching experience for development on their teaching skills, two teachers (Adam and Treza) benefited from their experiences besides using other sources (e.g. consulting books, colleagues, etc.). Teacher Adam has stated that:

*“I do not depend totally on my own experience. I may also consult others. I may refer back to the teacher’s book or whatever materials I have got in order to have a general guideline for me to go through and of course I use my experience a lot in dealing with situations in class”* (Adam, teachers’ interview).

In short, while all teachers agreed that their teaching experience had affected their practices, most teachers argued that their teaching experience was the only source of reference when teaching writing.

### **6.3.2.3 Lack of L1 shared with students**

All four non-Arabic speaking teachers (Ann, Treza, Tasnem, Mary) reported that they encountered some difficulties because they did not understand the students’ L1 (i.e. Arabic). Those teachers found it difficult to select a topic that the students would know about. In addition, they had difficulty understanding some local or traditional ideas expressed by the students. This constraint was one of the reasons for disliking teaching writing. For example, teacher Treza stated:

*“It is not easy to teach writing if you do not know the language of the students. It is difficult for me to choose the topics that they have knowledge about. Sometimes, students write about a particular issue or a traditional issue which we have no information about. I believe that writing should be taught by teachers who understand students’ L1”* (Treza, SR).

All four teachers found it difficult to choose the topics that students would know about. Teacher Ann explained how the lack of L1 made it difficult for teachers to understand specific cultural issues and terminology. She stated:

*“I asked the students to write about Ramadan. They described a festival they do called ‘Qurqean’, that they do it in the mid of Ramadan. Because I have no knowledge of their culture, I could not understand that.”* (Ann, SR).

To conclude, the lack of L1 and cultural common ground functioned as a barrier for non-native teachers in understanding their students’ writing which, in turn, affected the teachers’ writing instruction and WCF practices. While one might argue that not knowing the students’ L1 may not necessarily be negative, it is interesting to find out that the teachers viewed it as a constraint on their practices.

#### **6.3.2.4 Heavy teaching loads**

Another constraint related to large student numbers was the teachers’ heavy load. All teachers complained about the heavy teaching load (see section 4.1.1). This heavy load affected both writing instruction and teachers’ WCF negatively. As for the instruction of writing, all the teachers explained that the reason for not implementing a multiple drafts writing approach was their heavy teaching load (see section 5.1.2). As for the WCF, six teachers (Amal, Nadia, Leena, Reema, Ann, Mary) argued that they were not able to correct all errors directly because of the heavy load. Teacher Adam, for instance, stated that:

*“Sometimes I cannot give direct answers. I do not have time. I have to teach two other modules other than writing and I have a lot of work to do”* (Adam, SR).

In short, all the teachers believed that heavy teaching loads made them unable to implement what they believed to be useful both in teaching writing and in giving WCF.

### 6.3.2.5 Teachers' emotional response

According to three teachers (Reema, Amal, Nadia), WCF practices, including the explicitness of feedback, depended on the level of students. That is, direct feedback was given when they corrected high-achieving student writing as they became more enthusiastic. Conversely, the teacher would get annoyed when responding to a low-achieving student paper, which led to giving more indirect feedback. Teacher Reema, for example, explained:

*“To be honest, it depends on my mood. When I start correcting, I tend to provide direct feedback because I am usually enthusiastic...This tendency decreases by the time specially when I am faced with a weak writing, I become definitely depressed. So for that paper and the papers that come after it, these are the unlucky papers because I do not provide the direct answers for those papers due to my bad mood” (Reema. SR).*

Finally, it is important to note that the finding that teachers changed their WCF depending on their emotional response confirms what has been found in the TAP (see section 5.2.2).

### 6.3.3 Context-related factors

While the previous sections tackled some of the contextual factors relating also to teachers and/or students such as the teachers' workload and the large number, the data reveals two other factors related to the context, i.e., the exam requirements, and the students' cultural background. Exam requirements are some of the biggest constraints that affect the choice of methods when teaching writing and when responding to students' writing. This is what Alderson and Wall (1993, 2003) called the negative 'washback' effect in which the teachers prepare students for their final tests (see section 2.1.3.1). For example, teachers did not focus on reading activities although it was important, as their beliefs show, because students would not be tested on that. Teacher Mary stated:

*“I did not ask them to read and yes I skipped the exercises about the reading skills because in the writing exam we have no question about that. Students want me to focus on what is important for them to pass the final exam”*(Mary, SR).

In addition, teacher Shoq focused mainly on language form despite believing that content should be focused on as well, because of the exams. Since the exam would test the students’ language ability more than the ideas, she did not focus on the content both when teaching writing and when giving WCF on student writing. She stated:

*“I am giving them some grammar yes, but it is against my will doing this and actually I'm not pleased with it I do not like the idea, feeling like I'm teaching grammar while I should teach instead how to write effectively and clearly because that is what they need in writing. But unfortunately I have to do so because in the exam, there will be a lot of grammar exercises as the course coordinator is the one who put the exam not me”* (Shoq, SR).

As far as the students’ cultural background is concerned, four teachers (Amal, Reema, Shoq, Leena) viewed the culture where the study was conducted as a determining factor in their writing instruction practices. Despite those teachers’ beliefs that peer feedback should be implemented as it helps students self-edit their texts in the future (see section 4.2.5), they claimed that they could not implement it in an Arabic culture where people tend to personalize most issues and not to accept any criticism even if it was to help them improve (see section 6.1.3). Teacher Leena, for example, explained the situation by saying:

*“I do not do that [peer feedback], because they will not take it again seriously. They will take it personally. Some of the students if they are their friends, they will not have problems, and they can accept anything from their own friends. But from students whom they do not know, I do not expect they will accept it. They will take it personally. It's our culture, we always take things personally”* (Leena, SR).

To sum up, the teachers believed that preparing students to pass their writing exam was more important than explaining other activities that would not be included in the writing exam.

#### **6.3.4 Summary of the factors impacting on teachers' practices**

This part presented the factors that affect teachers' practices when teaching writing and when giving WCF on student writing. It was found that these factors were related to the teacher, the students, and/or the context. While some of these factors affected either the teachers' writing instruction (e.g. exam requirements and teacher-student contact) or WCF practices (e.g. teachers' emotional response), others affected teachers' practices both in teaching writing and giving WCF (e.g. large students' numbers, students' proficiency level, students' expectations, lack of L1 shared with students). In addition, while most of these factors were viewed by the teachers as constraints on their practices, only two factors (previous learning, teaching experience) made teachers change their practices because they found them useful.

#### **6.4 Chapter summary**

This part demonstrates the incongruity between teachers' beliefs and practices in how to teach writing and how to give WCF on student writing. Whereas teachers tend to follow their practices, there are instances where teachers' beliefs are either completely incongruent or partially incongruent with their practices. While teachers are aware of this incongruity, they attribute their practices to constraints either contextual (e.g. time, exams, institutional) and/or to non-contextual factors (e.g. students-related and/or teacher-related). The following chapter presents the extent to which teachers' practices match students' beliefs (i.e. needs and expectations).

## CHAPTER SEVEN: STUDENTS' PREFERENCES REGARDING WCF

As revealed in Chapter six, teachers' beliefs and practices were greatly influenced by their perceptions of student needs and preferences. This prevented teachers, sometimes, from enacting their beliefs. Therefore, this part aims at validating these findings, that is, to find out the extent to which teachers are aware of their students' actual needs and preferences and the extent to which teachers' practices match their students' preferences regarding the WCF they provide. This answers the fifth research question, that is, "to what extent do students' preferences match their teachers' practices regarding the WCF they receive on their writing?"

The findings are based on the analysis of the students' interviews which aimed at finding out the extent to which students' preferences towards WCF match their reports about the actual WCF they receive from their teachers. The results are presented to address six issues, namely the students' attitudes towards WCF (section 7.1), the explicitness of WCF (section 7.2), the amount of WCF (section 7.3), the focus of WCF (section 7.4), the provider of WCF (section 7.5), and the teachers' negative WCF (section 7.6).

### 7.1 Attitudes towards WCF

All thirty students believe that it is important to receive WCF, arguing that it is the norm that a writing teacher should provide WCF to his/her students' writing. AS1 stated that:

*"It is our right as students to receive the feedback from our teacher (...) we need to get the feedback otherwise we will not benefit from the writing course. (AS1, students' interview)"*

While all students reported that they benefit from their teachers' WCF, they see WCF as having three different purposes (see table 7.1):

\*Students are classified according to levels as determined by their teachers (high-achieving students = HS, average students = AS, and low-achieving students = LS).

Purpose(s) of giving WCF	Total Number= 30	Students																														
		High-achieving students										Average-achieving students										Low-achieving students										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Improve students' writing abilities	20	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*								*			
Draw students' attention to their mistake	8											*	*	*			*		*	*	*				*		*					
To pass the exam	5																						*	*	*		*		*			

**Table 7.1 students' attitudes towards the purpose of WCF**

Table 7.1 demonstrates that the students' proficiency level affects their opinion about the importance of WCF. According to high-achieving students, improving their writing is the only purpose for the writing course. For example, HS1 argued that:

*"I want to be able to write like a professional writer, to express myself more freely. I want to improve and become a poet. That is my dream; to be able to write interesting stories and poems in English"* (HS1, students' interview).

In addition, it is only low-achieving students who are concerned with passing the exam. The following excerpt demonstrates how the low-achieving student LS8 had only one main aim which was, to pass the writing course. She stated that:

*"Teachers' feedback help me to write good essay in the final exam and this will help me pass the course"* (LS4, students' interview).

Average students, however, do not show any concerns regarding passing the exams. They viewed the writing course as a way to both learn from their mistakes and improve their writing in turn. AS3 stated that:



*“To know my mistakes and try to avoid them next time... and by doing so, my writing will improve”* (AS3, students’ interview).

In general, most (20) students’ answers predominantly suggest that they were more concerned with the long-term goal, that is, to improve their writing in the future, than with the immediate goal of helping them avoid the same errors (8), and/or to pass the exam (5). The students’ responses about the usefulness of WCF match those of the teachers. Both students and teachers believed that the aim of the writing course is to improve the students’ writing more than serving the immediate goal such as remembering those mistakes or fixing them (see section 4.2.1).

However, in order to fully understand the students’ attitudes towards their teachers’ feedback, we need to know the extent to which students read and/or understand their teachers’ feedback. As far as reading teachers’ WCF goes, all thirty students reported that they read their teachers’ WCF. In a typical response, AS7 stated that:

*“Of course I read all comments written on my paper and I try to understand them”* (AS7, student interview).

Although all students stated that they read and benefited from their teachers’ WCF, most (21) students, especially low-achievers (10) and average-achievers (8), had difficulty understanding some of their teacher’s feedback. LS10, for example, received the comment ‘introductory sentence’ which indicated that there was something wrong with her introductory sentence. The student, however, read it as a ‘contradictory sentence’, stating: *“I do not know why this sentence is contradictory. I cannot understand what does she mean by this”*. In addition, AS3 did not understand her teacher’s comment ‘coherence and cohesion’. She explained:

*“I have no idea what these refer to. I remember she said in the class that this means that the ideas are not related but I do not know why or in which line the ideas are not related. I do not know”* (AS3, student interview).

Another example is shown in the teacher's comment "not paralleled structure" to indicate that the structure of the sentence is not paralleled in the following sentences in the student's paper:

*"I disagree to allow women to drive for three reasons: women will be faced a lot of flirting by youths, women will be talking with the foreigners and an attention to women by their fathers will be less."*

The student AS6 interpreted this comment as a shift in the tense. She explained:

*"I do not know. I think she wants me to use one tense... this is what I think she means but I am not sure because I used the future tense only"* (AS6, students interview).

Another problem with the students' use of the teacher's WCF lies in the fact that many (14) low and average- achieving students do not know how to correct their errors despite understanding the feedback. To give an example, LS4 stated that:

*"Sometimes I understand that there is a problem in the grammar of the sentence, or that the word is not suitable that I should change it with another word, but I do not know how to correct it"* (LS4, students interview).

In addition, according to some (9) students, indirect WCF on errors related to content are the most difficult errors to correct. AS2, for instance, stated that:

*"Most of the time, we cannot correct our errors specially when the teacher write "paraphrase" or "unclear". She can correct it herself or suggest other ways of paraphrasing this sentence. She has to teach us how to paraphrase"*(AS2, students interview).

While students read their teachers' WCF, they did not understand their teachers' WCF or they understood it but they could not correct it. When those students were asked about their reaction to the errors that they did not understand and the errors that they could not correct, it is interesting to

know that many (13) students stated that they do not do anything. AS5, for example, stated that:

*“I just ignore it. I do not do anything. I cannot trust the students and it is not easy to contact the teacher. She is always busy even during her office hours”* (AS5, students interviews).

Conversely, 9 students reported that they prefer to ask their more knowledgeable classmates. For example, HS1 stated:

*“I consult my classmate because I know she is a good student”* (HS1, students interview).

In addition, 8 students preferred to ask their teacher believing that the teacher is the only person whom they can trust. HS4, for example, stated that:

*“If I could not understand it, I will go to the teacher and ask her about it. I cannot trust anyone else but my teacher”* (HS4, students interview).

To conclude, the findings reveal that students, similarly to their teachers, acknowledged the importance of WCF, and they aimed at improving their written performance in the future. Despite having difficulty understating their teachers' WCF, all the students reported that they had read and benefited from their teachers' feedback.

## **7.2 Preferences in terms of explicitness of WCF**

Students revealed a shared belief regarding how they wanted their errors to be corrected. All thirty students believed that teachers' feedback should be direct. In a typical answer, HS6 stated:

*“The teacher has to provide the correct form or at least guide it by telling us how to correct it. Otherwise, there will be no use of her feedback”* (HS6, students interview).

When asked about their opinion on using the indirect approach (i.e. coded), most students replied

that this approach was not always helpful. According to 22 students, *“using codes (e.g. SP) takes much time from students who try to figure out what this code stands for”* (LS6, students interview). However, for some (7) students, the use of this approach depended on the error. According to them, indirect coded WCF became very difficult to correct when it was too general because it did not specify the exact problem in the wrong form. For example, HS2 explained:

*“Sometimes when I have a spelling mistake for example and the teacher write ‘spelling’ or ‘SP’, in this case, it is easy to correct it by checking a dictionary. But when there is problem in the grammar and the teacher write ‘grammar’, most times I do not know how to correct it”* (HS2, students interview).

In addition to the coded WCF, all thirty students showed a negative attitude towards the indirect uncoded WCF, stating that it is their teacher’s job to correct the errors directly. HS5, for example, argued:

*“It is our rights as students to receive the correct answers. If the teacher does not want to do her job in correcting, this means that she does not deserve to be a teacher”* (HS5, students interview).

In addition, according to AS4, leaving students errors uncorrected means that students would not improve their written performance. She stated that:

*“If she only underlined the errors, it means that she does not want us to learn”* (AS4, students interview).

It is interesting to note that the students’ preference matched teachers’ beliefs regarding the usefulness of the direct approach (see section 4.2.2). However, there is a mismatch between what students prefer and what the teachers do. Teachers’ practices reveal that they implement both techniques; direct and indirect ones (see section 5.2.2.2). Students, who were aware of their teachers’ practices, reported that they faced problems understanding the indirect feedback. An

example of AS6 reveals how she did not understand the indirect coded feedback (i.e. providing the cause of the error):

*“The teacher wrote ‘word choice’, but I do not know what is wrong with the word choice (...) I do not know what other words can be used?”* (AS6, students interview).

Another example demonstrates LS3’s confusion when reading the coded feedback ‘R.O.S’:

*“I have this code in all of my paper. I know that this ‘R.O.S’ is a repeated error but I do not know what does ‘R.O.S’ mean”* (LS3, students interview).

One last example shows how LS2 was unable to figure out the teacher’s uncoded feedback:

*“The teacher underlined the whole line. But she did not write anything. I do not know if she underlined it because she liked it or because it is all wrong. And if there is something wrong with it, what is that?”* (LS2, students interview).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that teachers’ beliefs that low-achieving students should be given direct feedback was in line with the low-achievers’ needs but the teachers do not follow their beliefs in this regard as shown in their practices (see section 5.2.2.5). In sum, while students’ preferences match teachers’ beliefs regarding favouring the direct WCF, teachers’ actual practices are not congruent with students’ preferences and teachers’ beliefs as they tended to use both approaches, direct and indirect WCF. In addition, the data has shown that students, especially low-achieving ones, could not understand the teachers’ indirect coded and uncoded WCF.

### **7.3 Preferences in terms of the amount of WCF**

All thirty students stated that their teacher should mark all their errors. In a typical response, LS7 stated that:

*“I want all of my errors to be corrected no matter how much they are... If the teacher corrected certain errors only, I will think that these are my only errors and I might show a slow improvement”* (AS7, students interview).

When they were asked about the reason for favouring the comprehensive WCF, students were fairly consistent, believing that selective marking did not help them to recognize their errors. Many (21) students added that seeing their errors marked helped them learn and remember them next time when they wrote. In a typical response, HS5 stated:

*“When the teacher gives me feedback, I try to think about it and it sticks in my mind, and I try to avoid it, but when there is no feedback, I do not know that I have made an error and so I do not pay attention thinking about it”* (HS5, students interview).

Moreover, all students, including low-achievers, argued against the claim that correcting all errors is discouraging and depressing for the students. On the contrary, they believe that the more WCF they receive, the more they appreciate their teacher’s work. LS7, whose writing is poor, stated:

*“I do not feel discouraged by the number of feedback I receive. Why to be discouraged? These are my mistakes and I should know them and it is better to know my errors than not to correct them at all”* (LS7, students interview).

Finally, it is important to note that the students’ beliefs regarding the usefulness of the comprehensive approach match teachers’ beliefs (see section 4.2.3). Most (22) students reported that their teachers tend to give comprehensive WCF which matches their preference. HS8, for instance, stated that her teacher “corrects all errors even frequent and simple ones”. However, most low-achieving students (8) revealed their dissatisfaction with not receiving feedback on most of their errors. For example, LS2 stated:

*“I feel really depressed when I get my paper uncorrected (...) I know that my writing is not perfect and I have lots of language mistakes but I always think of different and interesting ideas. I decided not to work very hard because I have been working hard without getting even feedback on all of my errors” (LS2, students interview).*

This shows that contrary to what teachers believed (see section 6.2.5), the low-achieving students’ feelings were not hurt by receiving many corrections. On the contrary, most of them reported their disappointment as they did not receive enough corrections. To conclude, while high-achieving and average students’ preferences and expectation to receive comprehensive WCF match teachers’ beliefs and practices, most low-achieving students revealed their dissatisfaction with the fact that most of their errors were not corrected. In addition, receiving comprehensive WCF was not depressing according to low-achieving students; they, on the contrary, found it encouraging and inspiring as it helped them to work on their weaknesses.

#### **7.4 Preferences in terms of the focus of WCF**

The data shows that students have different opinions regarding the focus of WCF. While most students (17) preferred their teachers to address both aspects, language form and content (i.e. ideas expressed), some of the students (9) stated that writing teachers should pay more attention to content than form, and only a few students (4) wanted to receive feedback on language form rather than content. For example, HS1, who preferred to receive WCF on both aspects, stated:

*“Content and language are both important and the teacher should give them similar focus because I want to know all of my errors” (HS1, students interview).*

The finding that most students preferred to receive feedback on both aspects is in line with the students’ preference for comprehensive feedback as described above. AS10 attributed the reasons for focusing on both content and form on the students’ needs:

*“Sometimes, the essay is written in correct language but the ideas are not good, while other students have very good ideas but their language is weak, so sometimes the teacher should focus on something more than the other depending on students’ weaknesses but both are important” (AS10, students interview).*

Conversely, some (9) students desired to receive feedback on content more than language form.

AS6, for example, explained the reasons for that saying:

*“When there is a language error, you can check it yourself in the dictionary or using other devices like word processor, but you can’t find ideas in dictionary”(AS6, students interviews).*

AS5, who preferred to receive feedback on the language form argued that meaning would not be understood if it was written in poor language. She stated:

*“ Correcting grammar is more important otherwise the reader will not understand the sentence and the meaning not be clear” (AS5, students interviews).*

While students differed in their opinions about the focus of teachers’ WCF, most students believed and expect their teacher to focus on both content and language form. This, however, contradicts teachers’ actual practices as viewed by their students. Most (19) students criticized the way in which teachers concentrate on their language more than the content. For example, AS6 stated:

*“Our teacher focuses on language only and she ignores the content. This is an obstacle that prevents us to write. Imagine that when the teacher gives us a topic, lots of unique and interesting ideas occur to my mind, but I cannot express them because I am watching my language (...) Because of that, I always write very short and simple essay just to secure myself from making mistakes” (AS6, students interviews).*



In addition, it is interesting to note that teachers' beliefs and practices, as revealed in section 6.2.2, were incongruent because they gave more attention to language form than the content although believing in the opposite. The teachers attributed this incongruence to the fact that students expect and want them to focus on language form. This seems to indicate that teachers are not always aware of their students' actual needs and expectations.

To sum up, students' preferences regarding the importance of focusing on content are incongruent with teachers' practices who are more concerned with language form at the expense of focusing on content.

### **7.5 Preferences in terms of the source of WCF**

Most (26) students believed that it is mainly the teacher's job to locate and correct errors for students. For example, according to AS1, "the teacher is the first and most important source of information". Conversely, only four students stated that they want to receive WCF from their peers. Still, those students added that *"only excellent students may correct for other students"* (AS4, students interview).

Students gave many reasons for the superiority of teacher feedback. The reasons most (13) students had related to the teachers' language competence. LS2, for instance, mentioned that she does not "know how to locate the mistakes". Another common reason most students (21) provided is that they do not see the benefits of consulting peers, whose language proficiency is lower than that of the teacher. HS4, for example, stated:

*"I do not trust the student. What if she was a weak one! Even if she was good, how do I know that she will be able to locate all of my errors?"* (HS4, students interview).

In addition, some (7) students believed that peer feedback is not effective as students take it personally. AS8 mentioned that:

*“Peer feedback is not an honest source of feedback as students either over praise you if they were your friend or that they try to give you poor mark just because they are jealous of you. It is not useful at all”* (AS8, students interview).

The students’ expressed desire not to receive peer feedback is congruent with teachers’ practices as viewed by the students who stated that their teacher never implemented peer feedback. In addition, as section 6.1.3 shows, one of the reasons provided by the teachers for not implementing peer feedback is because students do not like to receive feedback from their classmates as they take the feedback personally. This finding shows that, in this respect, the teachers have an accurate perception of their students’ preferences.

## **7.6 Preferences in terms of the positive versus negative feedback**

All students confirmed that teachers should use praising terms to encourage students even with low-achieving ones. LS10, for example, stated:

*“Teachers should motivate us when they comments on the paper. We want to see our mistakes but we also want to get praise for even little improvements. This makes us work harder to prove that we can do even better”* (LS10, students interview).

However, students’ preferences were incongruent with teachers’ practices (see section 5.2.2.4). Many (24) students were critical of their teachers for not praising their work. AS7 stated:

*“I remember when I was in school and the teacher encouraged me with a word or even a smiley*

*face. I know that I am an average student, but I work very hard on myself. This semester I have been working very hard but the teacher never encouraged me, not even with a word, even though my grades get higher from one assignment to the other” (AS7, students interview).*

In addition to students’ dissatisfaction with the way in which teachers do not praise or encourage their writing, low-achieving students also complained about the negative and harsh comments they received on their papers. To give an example, LS2 revealed her dissatisfaction with the way in which her teacher crossed out her paper and wrote ‘this is not English’. She stated:

*“If I am that weak, she should have advised me, talked to me in person to see what are the difficulties that I face. I now feel depressed and I feel that I am very stupid and I cannot write anything and that there is no way that I can improve” (LS2, students interview).*

This excerpt provides an insight into the students’ feelings when receiving negatively phrased feedback. Such feedback intimidates students and discourages them from writing.

Finally, while both teachers and students believed in the importance of praising student writing as a way of appreciating their efforts and encouraging them to work hard, the students complained about teachers’ practices in which they show negative and harsh comments which undermine their efforts.

## **7.7 Chapter summary**

This part presented students’ attitude towards their teachers’ WCF. In addition, it tackled the in/congruence between students’ preferences and teachers’ practices as viewed by their students. As for the students’ attitude, while all students stated that they read and benefited from their teacher feedback, they differed in their beliefs regarding the aims of feedback based on student

levels. Moreover, while students read and benefit from their teachers' WCF, many low- and average- achieving students reported that they did not always understand their teachers' WCF and even when they did understand it and they were not always able to correct their errors by themselves. In addition, the data showed that while high-achieving and average students' beliefs are congruent with their teachers' practices in that the amount of WCF should be comprehensive, low-achieving students criticized the way in which their teachers did not comment on most of their errors. While there is a partial congruence between students' preferences and teachers' practices in the amount of WCF, the data revealed a total congruence between the students' preference and teachers' practices in that teachers should be the key providers of feedback. Conversely, students' preferences were incongruent with the teachers' reported practices regarding the explicitness of WCF, the focus of WCF, and the negative feedback. The students claimed that they received both direct and indirect WCF while they believed that the feedback should be only direct. In addition, most students preferred to receive WCF on both content and language form while they stated that most of the feedback they received was on language form. Moreover, students wanted their teachers to praise their writing but most of them stated that their teacher never encouraged them and low-achieving students reported their disappointment as their teacher used negative terms and undermined their writing.

It is, also, important to note that the students' report about their teachers' practices matched what the teachers actually do as it was revealed in the observations (section 5.1), the TAP, and FA (section 5.2). This finding gives a cross-validation of the data. In other words, students accurately represented their teachers' practices, and the teachers did not change their practices because of their participation in the present study.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION**

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the key research findings presented in chapters four, five, six, and seven and links them to the relevant literature. The chapter is divided into three sections which represent the key themes of the study. The first section (section 8.1), which is considered to be the heart of this work, discusses the first research question about teachers' beliefs with regard to WCF, the second research question about teachers' actual practices on WCF, and the third research question focuses on the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF. The second section (8.2), discusses the findings of the fourth research question and is devoted to the factors that affected teachers' practices in teaching writing and when giving WCF. The third section (8.3) presents the discussion of the fifth research question which asks about the relationship between teachers' practices and students' preferences. The chapter ends with a discussion of the overall findings in section 8.4.

### **8.1 Teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF**

This section discusses the findings about teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF. It starts by discussing the findings on teachers' beliefs and practices regarding teaching writing (section 8.1.1). It, then, presents the main issues into WCF research including the amount of WCF (8.1.2), the explicitness of WCF (8.1.3), the focus of WCF (section 8.1.4), the source of WCF (8.1.5), the positive versus negative feedback (8.1.6), and the variation in teachers' WCF (8.1.7).

#### **8.1.1 Teachers' beliefs and practices regarding writing instruction**

The interview findings reveal teachers' consensus on the importance of some process approach activities in writing, including outlining and redrafting (see section 4.1.3). This finding supports

Alhosani's (2008) study which indicated that teachers are aware of the importance of the process approach in teaching writing. However, teachers have rarely or never implemented process approach activities in this study. The finding that most of the teachers did not implement process approach activities (e.g. multiple-drafts writing) despite acknowledging their importance goes in line with previous research into EFL teachers (e.g. Lee, 2009) in general and Saudi teachers (e.g. Grami, 2010; Al-Hazmi, 2003) in particular.

One reason for the mismatch between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding focusing on process versus product approach can be ascribed to the clash between core and peripheral beliefs. Teachers who revealed their concerns to cover the curriculum and to prepare students for examination explained that they do not have time in class to ask students, for example, to make outlines and to go for another draft. Teachers also attributed that mismatch to their students whom they believe would not take the first draft seriously if they knew that their writing would be corrected for a second time. This justification goes in accordance with Grami (2004) who reported that teachers in a Saudi university do not implement process approach activities such as asking students for another draft in order to make students focus on the final product. These two justifications given in the present study by the teachers indicate that teachers' beliefs in the importance of using class time effectively and making students take writing seriously seem to be stronger compared to their beliefs in the importance of implementing process approach activities. This explanation confirms the arguments of Phipps and Borg (2009) that core beliefs are experientially-rooted and outweigh other peripheral beliefs.

The limited training opportunities for learning how to teach writing may be another reason for the avoidance of the process approach activities (Montgomery and Baker, 2007). Similarly, the fact that teachers in the present study did not receive any kind of training on providing written feedback might be the reason for not implementing the process approach despite believing in its importance.

### **8.1.2 Teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the amount of WCF**

All teachers believed that the comprehensive approach is important in that it fulfils the students' expectations and prevents the error fossilization that may occur if some errors are not corrected (see section 4.3.2). This finding goes in line with Jodaie and Farrokhi (2012) which indicated that teachers favour the comprehensive approach, believing that a great amount of feedback is motivating while little feedback makes students depressed. It, however, does not support other studies (e.g., Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Lee, 2003, 2008b; 2009; Hamouda, 2011), which showed the opposite, that teachers value the selective approach as giving feedback becomes more manageable. The reason that this finding yielded two opposing results may be due to the different student levels. Similar to the present study, Jodaie and Farrokhi (2012), which revealed the teachers' strong preference for the comprehensive approach, examined college/university teachers who were teaching a writing course to students. Conversely, the other studies, which reported teachers' beliefs in the selective approach, were focusing on language teachers in secondary schools, who were teaching students how to write as part of their English language class. This justification was expected as the writing teachers always aim at highlighting all types of errors (e.g. essay format, organisation, coherence) in the students' writing unlike language teachers who usually tend to pay more attention to specific aspect(s) in students' writing (e.g. present perfect) depending on the given task.

In line with teachers' beliefs, all teachers tended to use the comprehensive approach –except with some low-achieving students (see section 8.1.6)- in giving WCF. This finding seems to indicate that teachers were concerned with the final product of writing rather than the process of writing which entails helping students to gain self-editing strategies. The finding, also, indicates teachers' beliefs in teacher-centred approaches as they did not give students the chance to find out their errors and correct them. The comprehensive approach in giving WCF was commonly used by L2

writing teachers, as reported in previous studies (e.g., Lee, 2004, 2008a, 2009; Ferris et al., 2011).

In spite of the studies that doubted the effectiveness of the traditional comprehensive approach (e.g. Lee, 2013; Bitchener and Ferris, 2012; Storch and Wigglesworth 2010; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Leki, 1990a; Hendrickson, 1980) as it does not help students master the self-editing strategy skills, teachers' beliefs and practices and students' preferences in the present study revealed their preference for the comprehensive correction. According to Lee (2013), the comprehensive approach is dominant in most EFL writing classrooms which is affected by the "more is better maxim", that is, the more teachers tend to feel responsible, the more errors they will correct. Similarly, teachers in the present study might think that through comprehensive WCF, they demonstrate to students that they are hardworking teachers. Teacher interviews revealed that they see error correction as their responsibility and feel that it is hard to avoid this job. Moreover, teachers, who justified their focus on the comprehensive approach due to their desire to fulfil the students' expectations, might be worried that students will complain about their unfair practices if they left errors uncorrected. This reason is a likely motivation for the teachers in the present study since students in the present study believe that correcting all errors is the teachers' job and not focusing on all errors means that teachers are lazy that they are not doing their job. This justification also reveals that teachers, in this regard, are aware of student needs. Teachers also report their concerns that students will not know what errors they have made if they did not mark all errors. Another plausible reason might be that selective marking is hard to implement as teachers simply do not know how to go about it (Lee, 2003) This reason might explain why teachers in most previous studies adopt a comprehensive approach even if they believe in the selective approach. Teachers may also find it difficult to resist the 'temptation' of highlighting all student errors. In addition, the teachers' choice to focus on all errors might be attributed to their lack of training which obliges them to adhere to the most common and trusted approach of feedback.



### 8.1.3 Teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the focus of WCF

As the findings in section 4.2.4 and section 5.2.2.1 have revealed, teachers were divided in their beliefs and practices regarding the focus of WCF, with six of them believing that organisation should be the primary focus of feedback, while the other four believed in the superiority of language form. It is interesting to note that the same variations between teachers' beliefs regarding the focus of WCF have been also found in teachers' beliefs regarding focusing on writing instruction. In other words, the same group of teachers who argued for the importance of explaining language form in the writing class are those who believe that correcting errors in language form should be prioritized over errors related to organisation. Conversely, the same teachers who believed in the importance of explaining how the ideas are organised in the essay also believed that teachers should pay more attention to errors related to the organisation and content of the essay than language form.

Such within-group differences between teachers' beliefs have also been reported in other studies (e.g., Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990; Gharib, 2009; Golombek, 1998; Gahin, 2001, and Lockhart, 2008; Lee, 2008a) which indicates that research into teachers' beliefs about WCF may yield similar results with regard to teachers' beliefs about other domains. For example, Gharib (2009) has classified his participants regarding their beliefs and practices into the conservative and the transformative. These studies attributed the differences to the teachers' academic qualifications, their years of experience, the prescribed textbooks, and/or the level of students they are teaching. Similarly, the difference between teachers' beliefs and practices in the present study can be attributed to the above-mentioned variables.

Lockhart (2008), for example, reported that teachers differed in their beliefs regarding writing strategies depending on their **academic qualification**; teachers who have post-graduate qualifications hold different practices concerning writing from those who have lower academic

qualifications. Similarly, in the present study, teachers who have undertaken (or are doing) PhD studies tended to be more oriented towards the process approach while those who have completed their Master's degree seemed to hold the form-oriented beliefs (see section 3.4.2).

Moreover, differences in the **students' levels** appear to influence teachers' beliefs and practices in the present study. Teachers who were teaching level three students (i.e. focus on language form) have different beliefs and practices from those who taught level five students (i.e. focus on organisation). Such difference between teachers' beliefs and practices seems to be related to the prescribed textbooks they were using. In the present study, teachers who adhered to the syllabus which requires teaching level five students how to write argumentative essays, tended to believe in the importance of organisation and they focused on it in their writing classes. Conversely, teachers who had to teach language form to level three student were those who believed that the aim of the syllabus is to enable students to produce correct grammatical sentences and paragraphs. Previous studies (e.g. Hyland, 2003; Lee, 2008a; Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990) reached a similar conclusion that teaching writing and responding to student writing was greatly influenced by the focus of the textbooks teachers were required to use to a particular level of students. For example, Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) found that, by adhering to the syllabus, EFL language institute teachers focused on language issues in their students' writing while the EFL university teachers focused on the organisation.

A further justification for the difference in teachers' beliefs and practices regarding form versus organisation focus may be attributed to the teachers' **teaching experiences**. The data analysis showed that teachers who believed in the importance of organisation had been teaching literary courses (e.g. poetry) together with the writing course, while the other group of teachers, who argued for the language form-focused instruction, had been mostly teaching English language subjects, including grammar, reading, listening, and writing.

However, while the present study found that teachers' beliefs were consistent with their practices

regarding focusing on language form and focusing on the organisation, most teachers behaved in a way that contradicts their beliefs as they focused on language form more than the content (see section 5.2.2.1). This finding goes in accordance with most previous studies (e.g. Ferris, 1997, 2003; Ferris, 2006; Zamel, 1985; Lee, 2009; Cumming, 1985; Montgomery and Baker, 2007). Ferris (1997), for example, found that only 15% of the teachers' comments address student ideas and rhetorical development and the rest of the comments were directed to the language form. Lee (2009) reached a similar finding such as that teachers gave precedence to language accuracy despite believing that they should concentrate more on the content. This incongruence between teachers' beliefs and practices indicates that teachers in this study were caught in a conflict between their awareness that there is more to good writing than language accuracy and their form-focused approach. Teachers, in the stimulated-recall interviews, gave a possible reason for such a mismatch, arguing that language errors are frequently committed by students. Such a justification has been also reported by Lee's (2009) teachers who stated that students tend to have too many language problems in their writing compared to other errors related to content or organisation. This explanation has been proved by many studies (e.g. Bitchener and Ferris, 2012; Lee, 2013) which found that language form errors were the most frequent errors by students.

A further reason for the incongruence between teachers' beliefs and practices, regarding the form versus content argument, appears to be related to the students' needs and expectations. Teachers in the stimulated-recall interviews reported that their provision of WCF depends on what students expect and want. However, in this study, most students' responses (in both levels three and five) revealed the opposite; that they were more concerned with the content than the language form (see section 8.3.3). This shows that teachers had a wrong impression about the students' actual preferences regarding the focus of WCF. Another reason for the fact that teachers in the present study did not focus on errors related to the content might be that teachers did not follow a systematic rubric which works as a watching guide for teachers' feedback. The result that teachers

gave more comments regarding errors related to language and ignored content-related errors can also be attributed to the finding that writing is treated primarily by teachers as a product and that teachers tended to look at themselves as language instructors rather than writing teachers (Ferris, 2003). The exam culture might be another possible reason that makes teachers focus on the form more than the content. Similarly, Lee (2009) found that the nature of the writing exam in EFL context makes teachers focus mostly on language aspects. Teachers in this study, who admitted that the nature of exams affects their practices and makes them change their beliefs, might have been focusing on the language in order to help students pass the writing exam. The ‘washback effect’ has been reported by Lee (2009) as one of the factors that led teachers to focus on language despite believing that there is more to good writing than accuracy. One of Lee’s (2009: 15) participants explained the reason for focusing mostly on language form by stating that “writing practice is for examinations. So we simply focus on accuracy, fluency, and vocabulary to prepare students for public exams”. It can also be argued that teachers’ beliefs regarding the importance of preparing students to pass their exams is the core belief while focusing on the content is their peripheral belief. This explanation reconfirms the aforesaid argument presented by Phipps and Borg (2009) that the teachers’ core beliefs, which are experientially rooted in the teachers, tend to outweigh their other peripheral beliefs.

#### **8.1.4 Teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding the explicitness of WCF**

All teachers involved in this study preferred direct feedback as the only effective technique to mark errors (see section 4.2.2). The results are similar to those in Lee (2003), Jodaie and Farrokhi, (2012), and Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) in which studies the teachers claimed that direct WCF is more useful than the indirect one. However, the results of the present study disconfirm Lee (2009) and Hamouda (2011) in which studies teachers believed in the indirect approach. A possible interpretation for the difference between teachers’ beliefs in Lee’s (2009) study and those in the

other studies -including the present study- might be that teachers' beliefs in Lee's (2009) study were influenced by the school policy that obliges teachers to help students point out and correct their own errors. In addition, since Hamouda's (2011) teachers aimed to point out specific errors related to language, it is expected that they believed in giving indirect WCF as to help students correct their grammar and improve their language.

Teachers' beliefs regarding the importance of direct WCF disagrees with WCF literature (e.g. Storch, 2010; Van Beuningen, 2010; Ferris, 2002; Lalande, 1982; Van Beuningen, 2010) which suggested that the indirect approach correction is more appropriate as it encourages students to be more reflective and analytical about their errors. According to Lee (2008a), correcting student errors explicitly makes students over reliant on the teacher. Therefore, the finding that teachers in this study believed in the explicit approach gives a further indication that they believe in the teacher-centred approach and that they do not believe in the students' capacity to find out their errors and/or correct them by themselves.

Teachers in the present study justified their preference for the direct feedback by reference to their beliefs that the more explicit the feedback is, the more students understand it and benefit from it. This argument is supported by Ferris (2002), who argued that a higher degree of explicitness is more beneficial for the students' reflection and cognitive engagement. Another common reason for teachers' beliefs in the explicit approach is attributed to their belief that students do not have the linguistic competence to correct all of their errors. This justification has been given by most teachers in previous studies (e.g. Ferris, 2002; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010). A further justification -suggested by most teachers in this study- is to fulfil the students' expectations as students believe that teachers should provide the correct form for all of their errors. The teachers' justification confirms the students' responses in the interviews as they believe that it is the teachers' job to correct errors explicitly and that not doing so indicates that they do not want to do their job the right way. It also indicates that teachers are aware of the students' needs regarding the amount and

explicitness of WCF.

In practice, teachers used a combination of direct and indirect WCF (see section 5.2.2.2). This finding is in line with Ferris et al. (1997) and Lee (2004, 2008). Such a practice seems also to be in accordance with Bitchener and Ferris (2012), who argued that providing a mixture of direct and indirect feedback is the most effective way to scaffold the students' learning and understanding of feedback. However, the teachers' tendency of using both techniques (direct and indirect) despite believing in the direct method does not support Lee's (2009) finding that teachers tended to give direct feedback despite believing in the indirect approach. The mismatch between teachers' beliefs and practices is attributed by teachers to their work-load and time constraints. This explanation is consistent with Van Beuningen (2010) who argued that too much explicit WCF is exhausting and time-consuming for the teacher.

Despite teachers' beliefs in the superiority of the direct approach, teachers also believed that the degree of explicitness might depend on the students' different proficiency levels (this issue is discussed in section 8.1.7) and error types. This finding is congruent with the general principle emerging from the previous research (e.g. Ferris, 2002; Storch, 2010; Van Beuningen, 2010) that the explicitness of feedback depends on a number of factors, such as the error types and the students' proficiency levels. As for the students' different proficiency levels, teachers' beliefs in the present study confirm Ferris' (2002) advice that direct feedback is more appropriate for less proficient students. As far as the error type goes, teachers' beliefs are also in line with the recommendations in the literature which argued that direct feedback should be used with complex errors that are beyond students' ability to self-edit (Ferris, 1999; Frodesen, 1991) while the indirect approach should be employed when teachers try to engage learners in problem-solving activities in order to improve their editing strategies (Lalande, 1982; Ferris, 2002; Ferris and Hedgcok, 2005).

In contrast to their beliefs, teachers give less direct WCF to poor students and more direct WCF is

given to high-achieving students. This finding is odd as it contradicts not only teachers' beliefs but also what has been recommended in previous research (Bitchener and Ferris, 2012; Lee, 2013) where it was found that lower proficiency students benefit more from the direct forms whereas advanced students benefit from the less direct feedback. The present study teachers ascribed this incongruence to their fear that too much correction is frustrating for the students. Reid (1998) came to the same conclusion that teachers tend to give more direct feedback to excellent students than to their low-proficient counterparts. The issue of the teacher's variation of WCF depending on the students' levels is discussed in more depth in section 8.1.7. Teachers also contradicted their beliefs by giving direct WCF on minor errors related to language form (e.g. grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation), while giving indirect WCF (coded or uncoded) on serious errors related to content and organisation. Teachers in the SR interviews justified this practice by the ease of correcting language errors unlike errors related to content or organisation whose correction entails replacing or changing whole sentences or paragraphs. The teachers' justification confirms Bitchener and Ferris' (2012) findings which indicate that most teachers cannot resist the temptation to provide the correct answer for the errors in their students' language as this practice does not take much of their time.

To conclude, teachers' beliefs in that errors should be mostly corrected directly, that low-achieving students should receive more direct feedback, and that serious errors should be corrected directly are incongruent with their actual practices as revealed from the TAP and the analysis of teacher feedback on the students' writing. Such incongruences can be ascribed to the fact that teachers –as they revealed in the interviews- never received any training on how to teach writing and/or how to give feedback on their students' writing. These mismatches also indicate that, while correcting, teachers seem to be unaware of the principles for giving feedback on different categories of errors and to students at different proficiency levels. This interpretation supports Lee (2013: 111) who argued that the explicitness of the EFL teachers' WCF practice is

“haphazard and not well informed by research or theoretical principles”. Bitchener and Ferris (2012) also stated that teachers are not aware that the choice of feedback strategies must follow principled approaches. Teachers in the present study admitted that they do not tend to follow any particular technique when correcting students’ papers. In other words, in practice, teachers seem to correct spontaneously without putting in mind error types or the students’ level despite their belief that these two variables should be taken into consideration. There were no clear procedures that guided teachers on how or when teachers should give feedback on students’ writing. Teachers in the interviews pointed out that they give feedback due to their conviction that feedback is effective for students and that students expect them to give feedback on their writing. This further indicates that teachers’ feedback practices are not well informed by their beliefs and by previous research about what should be done. This issue of whether teachers- while responding to their students’ writing- lack awareness of the different studies about WCF appears to be an area for further research.

#### **8.1.5 Teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding the source of WCF**

The findings suggest that teachers believe in the importance of implementing peer feedback in order to help students recognise the mistakes of other students and this eventually helps students edit their own writing. However, they believe that teachers should still be the main providers of feedback (see section 4.2.3). Teachers’ beliefs that teachers’ WCF is more important than peer feedback correspond to those of the participants in the studies by Amrhein and Nassaji (2010), Zacharias (2012), and Jodaie and Farrokhi (2012). They are, however, in contrast with studies in L1 writing context (Hairston, 1986; Moxley, 1989) which indicate that teachers believe in the usefulness of peer feedback over teachers’ feedback. The differences between teachers’ beliefs may be attributed to differences in the students’ writing contexts status as L1 or L2 writers. In



other words, in L1 contexts, students do not have limited proficiency as they do in L2 contexts, which allows them to provide peer feedback beyond language form.

However, teachers in the present study did not implement peer feedback as they were concerned about the appropriateness of peer feedback activities in L2 writing context and about the potential limitations or challenges with L2 students (see section 6.1.3). This finding corresponds to the majority of the studies (Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990; Montgomery and Baker, 2007; Ferris et al., 2011; Norouzian and Farahani, 2012) that teachers relied merely on themselves in giving feedback. The finding also corresponds with the previous literature (e.g. Goldstein and Conrad, 1990; Hyland, 2000; Storch, 2004; Bitchener and Ferris, 2012) which argued that the use of peer feedback in the classroom is quite limited as peer feedback is not effective in the L2 context. In addition, this finding suggests that the teachers' general belief in the role of the teachers as the source of knowledge outweighs their particular (peripheral) belief that teachers should be engaged in peer feedback activities. This behaviour emphasizes once again the distinction between core and peripheral beliefs suggested by Phipps and Borg (2009).

The finding- that peer feedback was not implemented by the teachers despite their beliefs about its usefulness- raises the question about whether it is possible to implement peer feedback, given the obstacles coming from the teaching tradition, teachers' beliefs, and/or the students' attitudes towards peer feedback. Jacobs et al. (1998) argued that studies that oblige students to choose between teacher and peer feedback were misguided as these forms of feedback should not be mutually exclusive. This confirms the finding reached by Nelson and Murphy (1993) and Caulk (1994) which indicated that peer feedback might well complement the role teachers' WCF plays and that students might find it useful when they are engaged in it. Therefore, in this study, teachers' beliefs about the inappropriateness of peer feedback might stem from the fact that they never implemented it. In other words, students might find peer feedback useful and teachers might change their beliefs once peer feedback is implemented. Again, the fact that teachers were not

given any specialized training in language pedagogy, as they revealed in the interviews, might be another reason for not implementing peer feedback.

#### **8.1.6 Teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the positive versus negative feedback**

Teachers in the present study believed in the importance of using praising terms to motivate students no matter how weak their writing is. In addition, they believe that negative terms should be avoided as they make students feel depressed (see section 4.2.6). The finding that teachers believe in the importance of praising students' writing is not surprising as it has been reported by the majority of the WCF research (e.g. Lee, 2009; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Zacharias, 2012; Jodaie and Farrokhi, 2012). This consistent finding may indicate the teachers' awareness of the positive effect of praise in increasing the students' self-esteem and motivation as recommended in the literature (Bates, Lane, and Lange, 1993; Connors and Lunsford, 1993; Ferris, 1995b).

In contrast to their beliefs, the data analysis of teachers' WCF and TAP in section 5.2.2.4 demonstrated that teachers rarely motivate the high- and average- achievers and have never motivated low-achieving ones through praising their writing. They often used harsh terms with low-achieving students. This finding supports the finding given by Ferris et al. (1997) that although most L1 and L2 research highlights the importance of praise in developing the students' writing, teachers' positive feedback is scarce. Similar to the present study findings, Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) reported that teachers rarely encourage students and Ferris et al. (1997) found that teachers give empowering and more positive comments to high-achieving students while giving directive, mechanical, and negative comments to the poor ones. Moreover, the finding that teachers' beliefs were incongruent with their practices goes in line with Lee (2009) who found that teachers respond to the students' weaknesses only despite their beliefs in the importance of positive feedback.

While the present study teachers gave various reasons for the mismatch (e.g. not to deceive low-achieving students about their performance) (see section 6.2.4), one possible explanation for this incongruence might be attributed to the error-focused approach to WCF (Lee, 2009), which is mostly adopted in the EFL writing context, and which attracts the teacher's attention to students' weaknesses in writing rather than their strength. This approach has been reported by Lee (2009) in the Hong Kong context and seems to be evident in the Saudi context as well. The educational system in Saudi Arabia supports this negative attitude towards students. Hamouda (2011) argued that the teachers in Saudi Arabia tend to assume that the more negative feedback students receive, the more they learn and improve. In addition, teachers might also be influenced by their previous education in which teachers tend to focus on the students' weaknesses.

#### **8.1.7 Teachers' beliefs and practices regarding variation in WCF**

The study revealed teachers' beliefs that the amount and the explicitness of feedback should vary depending on the students' different proficiency levels (see section 4.2.7). According to them, indirect and less comprehensive feedback might be given to high-achieving and average students as they are able to figure out the correct form themselves without the teachers' help. Similarly, Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) found that many teachers believe that their feedback needs to be modified to suit the students' proficiency levels. This indicates that the students' different proficiency levels can have a strong impact on shaping teachers' practices of WCF.

In contrast to their beliefs, teachers' WCF practices showed that they give less direct and less comprehensive feedback to low-achieving students while giving more comprehensive and more explicit feedback to the high-achieving ones (see section 5.2.2.5). This finding contradicts Ferris et al. (1997) who found the opposite i.e. that teachers tend to give indirect WCF when responding to high-achieving students who have the ability to self-correct and direct correction to low-achieving students who were unable to correct their errors themselves.

The incongruence between teachers' beliefs and practices in the present study can be explained by the findings of Ferris (2002) who reported that correcting every error may drastically increase the teachers' workload and make them feel exhausted. In the SR interviews, some of the teachers explain that they usually do not waste their time correcting poor writing which is full of errors. Teachers also explained the incongruence by referring to low-achieving students' lack of interest in learning as much as their high-achieving counterparts. Some teachers stated that most of the low-achieving students do not read their teachers' feedback. Therefore, teachers seem to be giving less direct feedback to students whom they assume will benefit less from it. Teachers in this study also stated that they do not respond to all errors for the low-achieving students as not to intimidate and discourage them with the large amount of comments and corrections. While the teachers' justification is in line with previous research (Van Beuningen et al., 2008; Truscott and Hsu, 2008) which argued that the comprehensive approach has a negative impact on the students especially the low-achieving ones, it, however, contradicts the low-achieving students' responses in this study as they state that they never feel discouraged by the amount of feedback they receive. On the contrary, they revealed that the more feedback they receive, the more they feel motivated to improve. This further indicates that teachers have a wrong view of their students' actual needs and preferences.

In addition, the reason why the present study yielded different results from those in Ferris et al. (1997) might be ascribed to the nature of the relationship between teachers and students in Saudi Arabia which is biased in favour of high-achieving students, that is, teachers in the Saudi context seem to pay more attention to the advanced students and ignore the low-achieving ones (Hamouda, 2011). It could be also attributed to the fact that the institution does not differentiate between students according to their proficiency level. The teachers' lower level of concern for low-achieving students seems to be attributed to the negative opinion teachers hold about those students. The present study teachers argue that low-achievers did not read their teachers'

comments, that they were not eager to improve their writing, and that they usually did not want to pass the course. This seems to suggest that the teachers' negative feelings about low-achieving students are the reasons behind their practice. As Leamnson (1999: 31) stated, "pedagogy will be lackluster at best if we start with negative feelings about students." The teachers' concern with high-achieving students may be also ascribed to the fact that many of the teachers in the present study were teaching literary courses and were not trained to be writing instructors. One can argue that it is the policy issue of the college as it recruits teachers who are specializing in the fields of literary studies to teach the writing courses.

Finally, it should be kept in mind that responding to students' papers is a form of two-way communication, and that similar to any other form of human interaction, teachers' feedback will vary depending on the students' abilities and personalities. Presumably, teachers in the present study felt that their comments were more answered when they are addressed to high-achieving and average students. However, the reasons that really made teachers give less direct and less comprehensive feedback to the low-achieving students were not completely clear. The issue of teacher variation of WCF appears to be an area for further research.

## **8.2 Contextual factors affecting teacher writing instruction and WCF practices**

The findings revealed that the teachers' writing instruction and WCF practices were affected by a range of interrelating factors. This finding is in line with Brock (1995) who argued that teacher WCF practices do not take place in the vacuum but within a number of interrelated factors. These factors - as reported from teachers in the SR interviews- can be related to the context, the students, and the teachers.

As the teachers' interviews revealed, factors related to context include the pressure of exams and the effect of the educational culture. The contextual constraints have been reported in most studies

which investigate the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices (e.g. Borg, 2003, 2006; Issa, 2011) in general and WCF practices research (e.g. Hyland and Hyland, 2006; Bailey and Garner, 2012; Lee, 2009) in particular. The negative effect of 'washback' may lead to the abandonment of instructional goals in favour of test preparation (Alderson and Wall, 1996). For instance, when teachers were asked about the reason for not implementing multiple-drafts writing, teachers stated they wanted students to be exposed to different writing topics in order to prepare them for the final exam. The exam-oriented culture has also an influence on teachers' marking criteria for student writing. Most of their feedback focused on language because, to them, this is the main focus of the marking system to the exams authority. The impact of exams in the giving WCF has been reported by Lee (2009), who found that teachers' beliefs and practices in focusing on language form instead of the content were mediated by the final exams. The exam's phenomenon in the Arab world and its role in affecting teachers' practices have been also emphasized by Othman (2009), and Issa (2011).

In addition, the findings showed that teachers change their practices because of the cultural norms. This finding is in line with Eisenstein et al. (1997) who revealed that teachers' beliefs and practices differ depending on the culture of the context they work in. Similarly, teachers in Lee's (2009) study attributed the incongruence between their beliefs in the importance of implementing selective marking and multiple-drafts and their practices of following comprehensive marking and single-draft writing to the culture which appreciates the teacher-centred class. Moreover, Hyland and Hyland (2006) reported that teachers' WCF practices were affected by their beliefs and mediated by the culture and institution where teachers work. Similarly, in the present study, peer feedback was not implemented because, according to the teachers, students were affected by the Arabic culture which tended to take criticism too personally. This finding confirmed Kennedy's results (1988) who maintained that the cultural system exerts a great influence on the teachers' practice. In addition, Hyland and Hyland (2006) explained that teachers' WCF is a kind of social

behaviour that takes place in a specific institutional and cultural context. Therefore, changing teachers' WCF practices might indicate a change not only in the beliefs of the teachers, but also in the cultural system which shapes teachers' practices (Ferguson, 1993).

Other reported factors are related to students such as large student numbers, lack of discipline, low proficiency levels, and student expectations. As for the students' expectations, the data showed that the beliefs teachers had about the usefulness and the role of WCF were greatly influenced by their knowledge of (or assumptions about) student needs and expectations. For example, the data revealed that teachers focus on the form and neglect the content because of their assumption that students get irritated when the teacher corrects their ideas. This finding goes in accordance with Lee (2008a) who found that teachers tended to use choppy phrases in written comments (e.g., correct the grammar), despite believing in writing short terms, as students demand to have their feedback in complete sentences. Most WCF research (e.g. Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990; Lee, 2004; Montgomery and Baker, 2007; Norouzian and Farahani, 2012) found that teachers' practices are influenced by the students' needs and expectations. However, the present study showed that teachers sometimes hold a wrong perception about student needs, preferences, and expectations. The relationship between students' preferences and teachers' practices is discussed thoroughly in section 8.3.

Finally, teacher related factors- as reported by the present study teachers- include lack of subject-specific knowledge, and the teachers' learning and teaching experiences. Teacher related factors have been reported by Li (1998), Wu and Badger (2009), and Lee (2008a) who argued that lack of teacher training is one of the constraints to teachers' practices. In a similar context, Issa (2011) and Alghamdi (2013) reached the same finding according to which teachers' beliefs and practices are influenced by their past learning and teaching experiences.

That said, it can be concluded that studying the relationship between teachers' beliefs and

practices in isolation of the context in which they occur does not give a clear understanding of the complexity of such a relationship as some of these factors may prevent teachers from enacting their beliefs. Such studies may give incomplete results, that do not reflect the actual picture of how teachers' beliefs are mirrored in their practices.

### **8.3 The relationship between students' preferences and teachers' practices**

This section discusses the fifth research question which asks about the extent to which student beliefs -which are obtained from thirty student interviews- match teachers' practices regarding WCF. This section tackles five topics, namely the attitudes towards WCF (section 8.3.1), the amount of WCF (8.3.2), the focus of WCF (section 8.3.3), the explicitness of WCF (section 8.3.4), and the source of WCF (section 8.3.5).

#### **8.3.1 Attitudes towards WCF**

The findings about the students' attitudes towards WCF are related to four important issues, namely to student attitudes towards their teachers' WCF, the purposes of WCF according to students, students' understanding of their teachers' WCF, and students' reaction to their teachers' WCF. First, the findings demonstrate that all students -regardless of their levels- found their teachers' WCF useful (see section 7.1). This finding is in accordance with most previous studies which have investigated the L2 students' attitudes towards their teachers' WCF (e.g. Cohen, 1987; Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990; Leki, 1991; Ferris, 1995; Lee, 2004; Grami, 2005; Diab, 2005; Montgomery and Baker, 2007; Hamouda, 2011). Even studies which doubted the usefulness of teachers' WCF (Truscott, 1996), acknowledged that students still appreciate and value the feedback they receive from their teachers.

Despite their beliefs that teachers' WCF is beneficial, most of the present study students –



especially low-achievers and average students- experienced difficulties in understanding it. This mismatch between the students' attitude and understanding of feedback has been reported in many studies (e.g. Cohen, 1987; Zacharias, 2007; Ferris, 1995; Ferris et al, 1997; Leki, 1990a; Lee, 2004, 2008b; Zamel, 1985; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010) which found that most L2 students may face difficulties when responding to their teacher's comments, to understand her use of terminology and symbols, and even to read her handwriting. The difficulty that students-in the present study- faced might have been caused by the inadequate terminology or jargon, used by the teachers. A further plausible reason is attributed to the students' motivation. Students who were less likely to take teachers' WCF fully into account and to report its usefulness tended to have low motivation levels (Guénette, 2007). This explanation is likely in this study given that low-achieving students reported that the indirect WCF and a small amount of WCF they received from their teacher made them feel demotivated. In addition, the fact that teachers had a very heavy workload, as they revealed in section 6.2.5, might have resulted in an undesirable phenomenon in which teachers became obliged to respond to the students' papers quickly to deal with the heavy marking loads. Consequently, teachers gave feedback in haste, without taking care to make it accessible or legible to the extent that some students in this study reported that they could not decipher the teachers' handwriting.

In addition, the findings suggested that students differed in their views on the purposes of WCF (see section 7.1). While high-achieving students viewed WCF as a way of improving their writing performance, low-achieving ones aimed at getting the grades that would allow them to pass the course, and most students -across all levels- expected that feedback would help them notice their errors and avoid them in the future. This finding reaffirms previous studies conducted by Riazi (1997) and Leki (2006) which reported that successful students looked at teachers' WCF as an effective means to help them improve. The finding is also in line with Thompson (1994) and Zacharias (2007) which showed that students, especially low proficient ones, value the feedback

that helps them get a better grade. It can be argued that the low-achieving students' desire to pass the writing exams may be ascribed to the previous finding (see section 5.2.2.5) that teachers tended to be more concerned with high-and average achievers (i.e. by giving them more comprehensive and more explicit WCF) than their low-achieving counterparts. Teachers in the present study conceded that they do not pay much attention to the low-achievers, claiming that those students will not read their feedback. In addition, the finding that students differed in their view of WCF seems to indicate that student motivation to achieve the larger aim of the writing course can influence their improvement. As Hyland (2010: 177) claimed, WCF becomes most effective only when students get 'willing and motivated to engage with it' and when they really aim to improving their performance. Shaughnessy (1977) also argued that students can acquire all aspects of writing only when they are developmentally ready. Conversely, when students are not ready to improve, teachers' feedback may not be effective.

The students' interviews also showed that most of them do not seek clarification from the teacher for the WCF they did not understand (see section 7.1). This finding may suggest that students do not try to react when they feel depressed by the feedback they did not understand. This claim supports previous research (Zamel 1985; Cohen and Robbins, 1976; Ferris, 2002) which found that students do not try to deal with teachers' WCF when it becomes frustrating by its inconsistent, inaccurate, and/or vague terminology, the illegible terms and confusing symbols. Another possible reason might be attributed to the context in which WCF is delivered. Since teachers in the present study responded to single draft writing and as students were not required to revise their writing, students may feel less motivated to understand their teachers' feedback. This further supports Cohen (1987) who argued that in single-draft contexts, vague and unclear feedback does not bother students as much as similar feedback given to multiple-drafts in a process-oriented classroom. Ferris (2003) added that when the feedback is given to a single draft, students might respond in a different way since they lack the opportunity to make use of the feedback as much as

in a multiple-drafts classroom. In addition, since teachers in the study required students to write one draft only, students are likely to view their teacher as the main source of knowledge and themselves as passive recipients in the writing process.

Having that said, it can be argued that the students' inability to understand teachers' WCF and the fact that most of them do not react to their teachers' feedback is perhaps attributed to the lack of communication between the teachers and the students in the present study. As revealed from teachers' self-reported practices in the interviews and from the classroom observations, teachers do not meet the students (e.g. in their offices) to discuss the difficulty that the students face and the writing errors that are complex and idiosyncratic.

### **8.3.2 Amount of WCF**

The findings suggested that all students preferred the comprehensive approach and that they believe that it is the teachers' job to correct all errors in their writing (see section 7.3). The students' preference for the comprehensive WCF is similar to that of their teachers and is also congruent with most previous studies (e.g. Diab, 2005; Radecki and Swales, 1988; Leki, 1991; Ferris and Robert, 2001; Lee, 2004; Hamouda, 2011; Amrheirn and Nassaji, 2010; Norouzian and Farahani, 2012) which showed that students expect correction of all errors and that teachers might lose their credibility among their students if they do not correct all student errors. For the present study, this finding is encouraging; students seem to care about having their written errors corrected, for reasons beyond that of obtaining a good grade on the paper. It is also reassuring that students want to receive feedback not only on the form but also on the content (see section 7.4). One possible reason for this student preference for the comprehensive approach might be related to the students' concerns about their ability to notice the errors that have not been pointed out by teachers. Students in this study expressed that having their errors marked comprehensively helps

them learn and remember them in the future better than if they are not marked (see section 7.3). This explanation supports Bitchener and Ferris (2012) who argued that most students do not value the selective approach of feedback as they are afraid that they will not be able to catch their errors on their own if the teachers did not mark them.

Student interview data also demonstrated that most students-except some low-achieving students-were satisfied with the amount of WCF they received, by arguing that their teachers tend to correct their papers comprehensively. Students' satisfaction with the amount of feedback they received indicates that teachers seem to be behaving according to students' preferences regarding the amount of feedback. However, some of the low-achieving students in the present study reported their dissatisfaction as they receive little feedback on their writing. While one of the explanations given by teachers in the SR interviews was that they tend to give less feedback to high-achieving students so as not to intimidate them, the teachers' explanation does not confirm students' preferences as they reported in the interviews that they do not feel irritated or discouraged by the amount of feedback they receive. The finding also contradicts Zacharias (2007) and Ferris (2002) who argued that the students' feelings depend on the amount of teacher feedback- too much WCF is irritating. Such contradiction between the present study and the previous study findings highlights the need to conduct future research on low-achieving student attitudes towards receiving a lot of feedback on their writing.

### **8.3.3 Focus of WCF**

Despite the students' beliefs in the importance of comprehensive approach, they nevertheless believe that errors related to content should be given more importance than those related to form (see section 7.4). This finding does not match most of the previous studies in L2 contexts (e.g. Cohen, 1987; Leki 1991; Radecki and Swales, 1988; Ferris, 1995) which showed that students prefer teachers to focus on surface errors. The reason for the differences between the present study

students' beliefs and those in previous studies may lie in the students' specialization. More specifically, whereas students in these groups of studies were doing language courses, the present study students were doing discipline-based courses (i.e. literary courses). In a similar finding, Leki (2006), whose students were taking discipline-based courses, found that students complained that they did not receive enough comments on content. Gabinete's (2013) finding reaffirms the findings of the present study as well, as he found that students who study language-based courses prefer to receive feedback on language while non-language based course students opt to receive less feedback on language. The result is also in agreement with Celce-Murcia (1985) who found that advanced EFL students who are literate and well-educated can benefit most from the feedback on the content.

However, the current study students' preference to receive feedback on content seems to contradict the actual feedback they get from their teachers. Many students reported their dissatisfaction as their teachers concentrate on the form and neglect the content. This finding does not seem to be in line with Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) who found that the teachers who placed emphasis on the content is something that conflicts with the students' perception that the focus of comments should be on grammar and language mechanics. The mismatch between the preferences of the students and the teachers' views of what students want lies at the root of such a contradiction. Although teachers were aware of the importance of the content, they attributed their form-focused approach to students who, as they claim, do not like teachers to correct their ideas. This further indicates that teachers may sometimes have a wrong perception of their students' needs and preferences. Moreover, although teachers' practices regarding the focus on language form are not supported by their beliefs nor by their students' preferences, teachers may feel compelled to deal with grammar and mechanics, because of the students' low proficiency levels, which –according to the present study teachers- constitutes one of the biggest constraints in teachers' practices.

#### 8.3.4 Explicitness of WCF

The findings suggest that students want and expect their teacher to correct their errors explicitly (see section 7.2). This finding confirms most L2 studies (Radecki and Swales, 1988; Leki, 1991; Ferris, 1995b; Hedgcok and Lefkowitz, 1994, 1996; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Diab, 2005; Lee, 2004, Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010). Students in the present study explained that the direct WCF enables them to remember their errors and learn how to correct them. This finding goes in accordance with Lee (2013) who argued that a clue without correction is not beneficial as students need more specific and explicit advice. As the data found, teachers in this study tended to mark the students' writing mostly explicitly, by responding to all errors and by not employing any student-centred activities. This resulted in the students being passive and over reliant on their teacher. Therefore, the students' preference for the explicit WCF is not surprising. Belcher and Liu (2004) found that once students give up the power to their teacher, they become over dependent on the teachers and they cannot take initiative to direct their process of learning, which might explain our students' preference for the explicit approach.

Students in this study were not satisfied with their teachers' practices as they tend to use the indirect (coded and uncoded) feedback as well as the direct one. Likewise, Lee (2008b) found that despite students' preferences for the direct approach, students tend to receive a mixture of both direct and indirect feedback. Similarly to the justification given in the amount of WCF, the current study teachers attribute their use of the less direct approach to time constraints and to the students' dissatisfaction with the amount of feedback. This explanation is consistent with Ferris (2002: 67) who argued that identifying errors directly can be "cumbersome for the teacher and confusing for the student". This finding gives more evidence that teachers may not be really aware of their students' needs.

### 8.3.5 Source of WCF

As the findings in section 7.5 demonstrated, students preferred the teacher to correct their writing, rather than leaving this task to their peers. This finding is congruent with that of previous studies (e.g. Connor and Asenavage, 1994; Montgomery and Baker, 2007) which found that students perceive teachers' feedback as being more effective than the students' feedback because they do not trust the linguistic abilities of their classmates who are not English native speakers.

This finding reconfirms the students'-and teachers' view of teachers as the sole authority. Similar to the teachers' view of their students, students reported that they do not think that their fellow mates have the linguistic abilities to correct their papers. The current study students seem to be concerned that peers might use harsh criticism and worry about having their feelings hurt and losing their face in front of other students. Students might also fear that teachers will use peer feedback as a mechanism to avoid giving feedback themselves. In addition, this finding may be ascribed to the fact that most students –as revealed from the classroom observations as well as the students' interviews- never experienced peer feedback. Even those who did experience peer feedback once, they were not trained by their teacher on how they should implement it and their teacher had not been trained on how to implement it.

However, the finding, that students in this study preferred teachers' feedback over peer feedback, seems to be in contrast with other studies (Leki, 1990b; Nelson and Murphy, 1993) in which all their L2 students preferred to receive peer feedback and found it beneficial. One possible distinction between the present study design and those in the other studies is that -unlike the current study students- students in the other studies have not been asked to choose between teacher and peer feedback but rather to focus exclusively on whether they liked or disliked peer feedback. This explanation is consistent with Leki (1990b) who found that students did not mind receiving peer feedback. However, when students were asked to choose between teacher and

student feedback, all students preferred teacher to non-teacher feedback. This argument suggests that, according to students' preferences, it is not advisable either to use peer feedback exclusively or to abolish it altogether (Ferris, 2002).

Following students' preferences, the current study teachers did not implement peer feedback. This finding confirms the results of Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) who found that teachers did not implement peer feedback based on their students' preferences.

### **8.3.6 Positive versus negative feedback**

The present study indicates that students—especially the low-achieving ones—are quite anxious to receive at least some feedback as to what they are doing right (see section 7.6). In fact, students in most previous studies (e.g. Gee, 1972; Cohen, 1987; Lee, 2008b; Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990) reported similar interests. This finding is in agreement with Hyland and Hyland (2006) who suggested that students are most likely to find their teacher's feedback effective only when it motivates them and when it gives a great consideration to their individual needs.

However, students in this study complained that the teacher rarely or never praised their work and low-achieving students reported that the teacher, sometimes, used harsh comments that made them feel depressed and did not motivate them to improve. This finding goes in line with Lee (2004) who reported that the students' response to teachers' WCF was influenced by the use of the terms, which might be motivating or depressing. This result might also suggest that students' motivation was a major factor of their success in writing. As Dörnyei (1994) stated, motivation is the main determinant in L2 achievement. Similarly, Macintyre et al (1998) observed that students, who were not motivated by their teachers to participate in class, were less willing to communicate. This indicates that the performance of those students becomes often limited. Moreover, working from a social psychological perspective, MacDonald (1991) suggested that students-especially low-achieving ones-, when their writing receives negative comments, they usually get frustrated and



disappointed, and to reduce this tension they tend to discredit their teacher's comments.

#### **8.4 Discussion of the overall findings**

This study provides a broad understanding of how teachers' practices relate to both teachers' beliefs and students' preferences. It also sheds light on the factors that prevent teachers from enacting their beliefs.

As for the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices, the data showed a number of mismatches within teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the explicitness, the source, the negative feedback, and the variation in teacher feedback. This finding confirms Lee's results (2009) where several mismatches between teachers' beliefs and practices including the focus, the source, the explicitness, the amount, the negative feedback were found. However, the findings of the present study showed that teachers' beliefs and practices were greatly congruent regarding the amount and focus of WCF. The finding that teachers' beliefs and practices were congruent with some issues in WCF and incongruent with others might indicate that the congruity between teachers' beliefs and practices is related to the concept of exams. In other words, teachers' practices seem to reflect their beliefs only when the university policy requires such practices from teachers in the final or mid-term exams. As a result, teachers often appear to focus on errors comprehensively as they are obliged to point out all the students' errors in student exam papers to meet the university policy. Similarly, the data showed that the focus of teachers' beliefs and practices is directed to the organisation for those who teach level five students and to language form for those who teach level three students. Such a congruence might also be attributed to the course syllabus which requires teachers of each level to focus on this specific aspect in the writing exams. Conversely, teachers' beliefs and practices are incongruent concerning the explicitness of WCF, the source of feedback, and the positive versus negative feedback as the exams do not require teachers to correct student errors explicitly, to praise student writing, and/or to implement

peer review.

The study provides an insight into the factors that teachers report as constraining their practices. In addition to those factors that the teachers identified as explanations for their pedagogical instruction, the study also shed light on other possible factors that have been driven from the analysis of the data. One of the possible common reasons for the mismatch between teachers' beliefs and practices was related to the lack of teacher training or preparation for working with or responding to L2 writers. Teachers who stated that they have had no training sessions, workshops, and/or seminars in teaching writing or responding to L2 writers seemed to lack the knowledge of how to implement some writing activities such as peer feedback and multiple-drafts writing despite acknowledging their efficacy. The teachers' lack of training also seemed to be one of the main reasons for the incongruence between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the explicitness of WCF, the focus and the source of WCF, the positive versus negative feedback, and the change in teacher WCF. Such a lack of training has been reported as causing one of the biggest constraints on teacher WCF practices in Saudi Arabia (Grami, 2004, 2005; Hamouda, 2011). Grami (2004: 307) insisted that teachers in Saudi Arabia "should be involved in training courses to show them the importance of feedback and equip them with effective feedback strategies and recommended principles". This lack of training indicates the need for having a comprehensive preparation for all teachers who intend to teach writing courses.

Another reason for the mismatch between teachers' beliefs and practices is ascribed to the state of mismatch between the teachers' belief systems. This belief system or network of beliefs (Borg, 2006) has influenced teachers' practices and choice of certain actions, with the stronger or core beliefs outweighing the peripheral ones (Pajares, 1992). In the present study, although teachers' stated beliefs were not always consistent with their actual observed practices, they were certainly consistent and in line with their general, experiential-rooted, and core beliefs about teaching and learning. For example, it has been found that teachers' beliefs about the importance of preparing

students for the final exams, maintaining control in class, using the class time effectively to cover the curriculum, and adhering to the students' cultural norms were more important than implementing peer feedback and multiple-drafts writing.

By the same token, the dominant core belief of the teacher-centred approach seems to have influenced teachers' beliefs and practices throughout the study. All teachers believed that it is only teachers who should correct all errors explicitly. Their practices were consistent with their beliefs regarding these issues. As Phipps and Borg (2009: 388) explained, core beliefs are "experientially ingrained, while peripheral beliefs, though theoretically embraced, will not be held with the same level of conviction". Likewise, teachers in the present study opted to prioritize teacher-centred approach, which was a core belief ingrained from the teachers' experience of teaching, of prioritizing teacher feedback over peer feedback, which is a peripheral belief not held with the same level of conviction. The present study's teacher reliance on the teacher-centred approach may have been influenced by the teachers' experience when they were students since their teacher-centeredness seems to be deeply rooted in the educational tradition in SA (see section 1.2).

Interestingly, the students' interviews revealed that they held the same beliefs as their teachers by considering their tutors as the only source of knowledge, by preferring to receive direct feedback on all errors, by maintaining the view that it is the teachers' job to locate all errors, to indicate error types, and to provide corrections. In addition, they showed little or no trust in their classmates' ability to respond to their writing. Students' belief in the teacher-centred approach seemed to be greatly influenced by teachers' actual practices. In other words, teachers' WCF practices seemed to have a strong impact on students' preferences. Since teachers responded to all errors explicitly and did not provide opportunities to implement student-centred activities (e.g. peer-or self-feedback), the students became passive and over reliant on their teacher. Another justification for the students' preference for the teacher-centred approach seemed to be related to the fact that students were only required to write single drafts. Given the fact that students were

not required to revise and edit their writing seems to reduce their evaluation and participation in the process of writing. This might also explain why students in the present study considered their teachers as the sole authority in the classroom.

The second topic around which this study centred was the relationship between students' preferences and teachers' actual practices. While teachers seemed to be aware of their students' preferences regarding the amount and source of feedback, they appeared to hold a wrong idea about what students' really needed concerning the focus and explicitness of the feedback. One reason might have been that while the focus and explicitness of WCF varied from a student to another, the view of the teacher as the main source and as the only person who should cover all errors was a cultural embedded issue that all teachers seemed to be aware of. The teachers' misperceptions of students' preferences seemed to be one of the main reasons for the mismatch between teachers' practices and students' preferences. While this is congruent with previous studies (Saito, 1994; Hyland, 1998; Hyland, 2003; Diab, 2005; Jeon and Kang, 2005) which found that there is a number of mismatches between teachers' practices and students' preferences, there's a contradiction with Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) who found that there is a good fit between students' preferences for WCF and their teachers' practices.

The mismatch between students' preferences and teachers' practices seems to be problematic. Teachers might provide a particular type of feedback for the purpose of satisfying their students' needs but students may not agree with it. Such scenario was observed in the present study. Teachers sometimes tend to do what they think is effective and appealing for students but it appears to be demotivating for the students. Students in the interviews revealed their dissatisfaction regarding the language form focus approach of teachers' WCF. In addition, the low-achieving students reported that they were disappointed and less motivated by the negative, less comprehensive, and less explicit feedback that they received from their teachers. Many students argued that their teacher tended to fill their texts with underlines, circles, and codes,

without an explicit correction. As Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) pointed out, if students did not receive the feedback they wanted, it was less likely that they would benefit from it. Many studies have shown that to make teachers' WCF more useful, there should be a match between students' preferences and teachers' practices (e.g., Raimes, 1991; Leki, 1991; Hyland, 1998; Saito, 1994; Diab, 2005; Jeon and Kang, 2005).

Students' preferences were part of what Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) and Hutchinson and Waters (1987) referred to as the 'subjective needs' which addressed the students' subjective perceptions about what they felt the course should be like. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) advocated the learner-centred approach which was based on taking the students' subjective needs into account. In addition, according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), since writing instruction was based on the particular needs of the students, it was an ultimately learner-centred approach, and thus, it emphasized the learners' knowledge, experience, attitudes, responsibility and development rather than the teacher's excellent performance in the classroom. However, the fact that the writing instruction for the present study was teacher-centred (i.e. advocating teachers' over non-teachers' WCF, comprehensive WCF, and explicit WCF) and the fact that teachers had not assigned time during the class to ask students about their actual needs (based on teachers' and students' interviews) could explain the reason for the contradictions that occurred in teachers' practices who at times thought that they were fulfilling the students' needs and preferences while in fact they were doing the opposite. While there was no previous subjective needs analysis which should be based on the students' own statements (Van Avermaet and Gysen, 2006: 20), the teachers' perceptions were probably based on their previous learning and teaching experiences. It is suggested that a 'needs analysis' should be conducted at the beginning of the writing course in order to determine student needs, preferences, and expectations. This would help teachers to understand the extent to which students –especially those of different proficiency levels- have similar or different needs and preferences.

Finally, while there are various possible reasons for the incongruence between teachers' beliefs and practices and between students' preferences and teachers' practices, there is no concrete evidence as to whether teachers gave the real explanations behind their practices or not. As a result, further ethnographical research will be required to shed more light on this issue.

## CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

### 9.1 Summary of the study and its key findings

The main objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding how WCF should be provided on the students' L2 writing and the factors that prevented teachers from putting their beliefs into practice. The secondary aim of this study was to examine students' preferences regarding WCF and their attitudes towards their teacher's WCF and to compare students' preferences with their teachers' actual practices. The study was carried out at a University in Saudi Arabia, in the department of English language and literature. A triangulated approach was adopted in order to collect data by means of multiple instruments -- pre-observation interviews with teachers and students, classroom observations, think-aloud protocols, feedback analysis, and stimulated-recall interviews over a period of one term (i.e. 14 weeks).

To achieve its aims, the study has addressed five research questions. The first RQ examined teachers' beliefs regarding WCF. The second RQ tackled teachers' actual practices. The third research question examined the congruence between teacher stated beliefs and their actual practices and provided explanations of the incongruences as revealed by the present study teachers. The fourth RQ uncovered a number of factors viewed by teachers as influencing their WCF practices, as identified from the stimulated-recall interviews. The fifth RQ addressed the extent to which students' preferences, as revealed from students' interviews, matched teachers' actual practices.

The first RQ revealed that all teachers agreed that they should correct errors comprehensively and explicitly, that teachers should praise students' writing, that they should encourage the use of peer feedback, and that teachers should give more comprehensive and more explicit WCF to low-achieving students. However, teachers' beliefs were split into two, with one group believing in the

superiority of organisation and the other group prioritizing language form. With regard to the second RQ, the findings revealed that teachers were similar in that they tended to provide direct feedback on errors related to language form and indirect feedback when responding to errors related to content and organisation. Moreover, although there were a few situations in which some teachers did not provide feedback (some content-related errors and errors in low-achieving students' writing), all teachers tended to correct all errors comprehensively. In addition, most teachers tended to change their practices when responding to low-achieving student writing, by providing negative feedback and not responding to most of their errors. However, teachers differed in the focus of WCF, as some teachers looked at the global issues before commenting on the language level while the other group of teachers concentrated on the sentence level without referring to the whole context.

As far as the third RQ was concerned, both congruence and tensions between teachers' beliefs and practices were found. Teachers' beliefs were greatly congruent with practices regarding the amount and focus of WCF. Conversely, teachers' beliefs were incongruent concerning the explicitness of WCF, the use of positive feedback, and the source of WCF. In addition, the study found that teacher core beliefs had a stronger influence than their peripheral ones upon their actual practices. For example, two teachers expressed their core beliefs by claiming that having control over students is more important than the peripheral belief, i.e. the usefulness of peer feedback or self-editing. In the fourth RQ, several contextual factors related to the university overall context (e.g. time allocated to cover the syllabus), teachers (e.g. teachers' experience), and students (e.g. proficiency levels) were found to affect teachers' practices.

Finally, the fifth RQ found that although students valued their teachers' WCF and placed greater importance to it, they faced difficulties understanding some of their teachers' comments. In addition, the data showed that while good and average student beliefs were congruent with their teachers' practices in that the amount of WCF should be comprehensive, high-achieving students



criticized the fact that their teachers did not comment on most of their errors. Moreover, total congruence was found in terms of the teachers being the key providers of feedback. Conversely, students' preferences were incongruent with the teachers' reported practices regarding the explicitness of WCF, the focus of WCF, and the provision of positive feedback. Students claimed that they received both direct and indirect WCF while they believed that the feedback should be only direct. In addition, most students preferred to receive WCF on both content and language form while they stated that most of the feedback they received was on language form. Moreover, students wanted their teacher to praise their writing but most of them stated that their teacher never encouraged them, and high-achieving students reported their disappointment as their teacher used negative terms and undermined their confidence as writers.

## **9.2 Pedagogical implications and recommendations**

Several implications of the study can be identified. While many of these are practical suggestions that relate to the provision of professional development, several deductions can also be drawn from this study which will provide practical recommendations – for teachers, teacher educators and administrators and will also contribute to researchers in the field of language teacher cognition, L2 writing instruction and WCF research.

As the findings of the present study have revealed, teacher WCF practices were in many instances not consistent with their beliefs due to the existence of the complex beliefs systems as well as due to the various contextual factors that prevented teachers from enacting their beliefs into practices. However, the exploration of the contradictions between teachers' beliefs and practices is a “driving force” in the teachers' professional development (Golombek and Johnson, 2004: 323-324). This incongruence, thus, could be used as a springboard for meaningful discussion between teachers, which could hopefully raise their awareness about their beliefs. As Borg (1998: 273) noted:

Teacher development activities which draw upon vivid portraits of teaching and teachers to be found in research data can provide an ideal platform for the kind of other oriented inquiry which facilitates self-reflection.

This finding also calls for the need to make teachers' beliefs explicit, so that those beliefs that are detrimental to learning can be challenged and modified during the course of development (Freeman, 1992; Pajares, 1992). This, however, does not mean that teacher educators should spend time teaching practitioners to change their beliefs and values (El-Okda, 2005), but rather to understand these beliefs and use them through critical self and collaborative reflection among themselves. Raising the teachers' consciousness about their beliefs and about responding to student writing could further encourage reflection on how teacher tacit knowledge shapes the way they understand and act upon information in the classroom (Borg, 1998).

Besides reflecting on teachers' WCF beliefs, the incongruence between teachers' beliefs and practices and the existence of the contextual constraints in the present study indicates the need for training teachers to experiment with a wider range of feedback techniques. Administrators are, thus, encouraged to take the initiative by inviting experts to hold specialized seminars, training sessions and workshops either outside or inside the university, about teaching writing in general, and responding to student writing in particular. This recommendation is also supported by the present study findings according to which most teachers lacked the necessary training, apart from the little experience they might have gained during their academic studies or before coming to the university. Writing instructors with prior experience and training would reorient themselves to work effectively with students who have different needs, difficulties, values, and attitudes, than they had experienced previously (Ferris, 2010). This training should help teachers to (1) create a student-centred atmosphere, (2) to advocate editing strategy training, (3) to select a specific pattern of errors, (4) to encourage students through WCF, (5) to conduct needs analysis, and (6) to address students' different proficiency levels. These issues will be discussed in the following subsections.

### **9.2.1 Creating a student-centred atmosphere**

The findings of this study suggest that a teacher-centred approach to feedback is likely to produce reliant and passive students. In a classroom culture students are used to playing a passive role as it was observed in the present study, however, the students might also simply wish to read their teachers' WCF without a desire to do anything with the comments. Teachers are able to change their students' attitudes and preferences towards feedback, mainly by asking learners to play an active role in "the learning-to-write process". This can be done for instance, by engaging in peer and self evaluation, by participating in the development of assessment criteria for different writing tasks, or by using error frequency charts or error logs to help students become more aware of their own error patterns and to take greater responsibility for their own improvement. Teachers should be encouraged to reflect on and examine their own practices critically, and to adopt a more reflective and open attitude to WCF. If, however, the main stakeholders like university administrators, students, or the cultural norms do still oblige teachers to respond to student writing in certain ways, it is unlikely that innovative ideas about WCF will gain ground (Lee, 2003). More studies are thus warranted to examine the views of the university administrators regarding WCF, and to find out ways of changing the teachers' unproductive attitudes.

### **9.2.2 Advocating editing strategy training**

The study showed that most teachers have never implemented peer feedback and self-editing strategies, because of their perception of the students' low proficiency levels. Research, however, has shown that L2 students are capable of editing their own errors and commenting on their peers' writing when they are given guidance and motivation for doing so. Therefore, teachers need to understand and consider long-term measures that would help students become independent writers. As Ferris and Helt (2000) claim, teachers' WCF should be supplemented by intentional

instruction that helps students learn to understand the issues and to avoid making the same errors in the future. This instruction can take at least two distinct yet related forms: building self-editing skills (i.e. strategy training) and building linguistic knowledge (i.e. grammar instruction). Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) have suggested a number of editing strategies that should be taught and practiced with students. These strategies include:

1. Breaking up the task into chunks.
2. Reading the text aloud helps students notice when a word is missing or unnecessary, when a word does not sound right, and when sentences are long, choppy, or repetitive.
3. Focused editing on specific error patterns.
4. Using electronic tools effectively (Word processor or online text editing).
5. Asking a trusted classmate to read and critically comment on the text (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005: 32).

Strategy training should go further than simply naming the strategies and hoping students will apply them: teachers should model them and even require students to practice them so that they can experience their usefulness. Future research which could examine the students who are trained to self-edit their writing and review other students' texts would be expected to yield more satisfactory results.

### **9.2.3 Encouraging students through WCF**

The study has shown that providing little, less explicit, and negative feedback to low-achieving students can cause demotivation to those students (as students revealed in the interviews), although ironically weak students are the ones who need to learn the most from their teachers' feedback (Lee, 2008b). Teacher WCF which increases the students' confidence, self-esteem, and interest in writing is more likely to help students develop their written performance than a rigid

policy that requires an error-focused approach to WCF (Straub, 2000). Moreover, the low-achieving students are the most vulnerable, so it is necessary to enhance their motivation through encouraging comments (Lee, 2008b). If not, the result is likely to be a lowered self-esteem and diminished interest in writing. Guénette (2007: 52) argues that “any type of feedback that does not take the crucial variable of motivation into consideration is perhaps doomed to fail”. Future research can specifically address the WCF strategies that the less advanced students’ teachers can use to motivate them—for instance, by praising their effort, focusing on interesting content, and by responding to a considerable amount of errors.

#### **9.2.4 Selecting specific patterns of errors**

The study has shown that teachers tended to mark errors comprehensively. In addition, both teachers and students believed that the comprehensive feedback was the best and ideal option. However, these findings were in contrast with previous WCF scholars who have advised against the comprehensive approach, by suggesting that feedback may be most effective “when it focuses on patterns of error, allowing teachers and students to attend to, say, two or three major error types at a time, rather than dozens of disparate errors” (Ferris, 2002: 50). One problem associated with comprehensive error feedback is that once teachers decide to go for comprehensive error feedback, there is a tendency to over-mark errors (Lee, 2004), as demonstrated in the study. In addition, when teachers go for the comprehensive WCF, there is bound to be omission, as shown in the findings of the study (see section 5.2.2.3). The study also suggests that teachers may not know how to apply the selective feedback systematically, as they tend to give feedback on an ad hoc basis. Therefore, in order to implement selective marking successfully, it is important that the WCF policy will be discussed openly among teachers, problems and concerns will be shared, and ways will be sought to link WCF systematically with grammar instruction.

### 9.2.5 Conducting needs analysis

The results of this study support the general contention that L2 students seem to expect surface-level error correction from their teachers and believe that such feedback is beneficial (Ferris, 1995b; Leki, 1991; Radecki & Swales; 1988; Saito, 1994; Schulz, 1996, 2001). However, L2 students' need or desire for WCF is not necessarily indicative of the effectiveness of such feedback; many students face difficulties understanding their teachers' WCF. One reason seems to be that writing teachers in this study, again because of lack of adequate preparation, simply teach the writing materials in their assigned textbooks, regardless of whether that material represented an important area of need or concern for the students. Many teachers were sometimes having wrong perceptions of their students' actual needs, usually based on limited knowledge or experience. Another reason might be that students hold wrong perceptions about what constitutes effective WCF.

As a result, teachers should try to address students' needs and expectations about WCF (Leki, 1991). It is teachers' responsibility to be aware of their students' beliefs and needs of what helps them progress and to incorporate these beliefs in their instruction. In accordance with Ferris et al. (1997), it is strongly recommended that teachers help their students understand the effect of teachers' WCF on their writing and why it is given the way it is. They should also understand their students' attitudes, beliefs, and needs about writing and WCF and to try to bridge any gap between their own beliefs and those of the students (Schulz, 1996, 2001).

It is very important for teachers to incorporate classroom discussions about writing instruction, in general, and WCF, in particular, to help teachers become familiar with their students' beliefs about what constitutes effective WCF and to reinforce or modify these beliefs accordingly. In doing so, teachers need to take time at the beginning of a course to assess what the most critical needs and gaps were for a given group of student writers. They should not assume that, if they are teaching a

course that they have taught before, the needs of a new class will be entirely the same as those of previous students.

Teachers can assess and analyse their students' needs and preferences in several ways. First, teachers could administer a background questionnaire as a way to understand their new students' needs, numbers, and backgrounds (Bitchener and Ferris, 2012). Second, teachers should collect a short writing sample in the first class (perhaps of 30-60 minutes, depending upon proficiency level) on any topic of common interest. Besides looking at their students' arrangement of content, language, and organisation of ideas, teachers could use these samples to perform a class error analysis, in which they could make a list of the errors to focus upon in their WCF and during in-class mini-grammar lessons in the writing class.

### **9.3 Main contributions of the study**

The present study provides several contributions related to the field of language teacher cognition and WCF research. As far as the contributions of the study to the field of language teacher cognition are concerned, this study is the first of its type that examines the relationship between teacher WCF beliefs and practices in the target context (i.e. Saudi Arabian university). This is an important contribution because it fills a gap in the literature, especially when we know that studies in language teacher cognition in literacy in general are under-researched (Borg, 2006) and their equivalents about WCF in particular are totally lacking. Moreover, in this study, 'practices' were broadly conceptualized to include not only the teachers' classroom behaviours when teaching writing but also the way in which teachers read and commented on the students' texts which were produced outside of the classroom, but which were an inseparable part of the writing teacher's job due to the nature of the writing skill. In addition, the present study has not only examined the

mis/match that exists between teachers' beliefs and practices but it has also highlighted the potential tension(s) that may exist in the teachers' belief systems.

The present study also contributes to the WCF literature. Examining the relationships between teachers' beliefs and practices and between students' preferences and teachers' practices concerning WCF in the same context has provided a fuller insight into the way teachers and students view and deal with WCF. This is an important contribution especially when we know that previous literature on WCF has mostly focused on the issue of effectiveness of WCF. Besides, this study has also provided an important contribution regarding teachers' WCF practices. More specifically, this study has not only listed the feedback comments that were used by each teacher when providing the feedback, but it has also described the process in which teachers' feedback was actually provided and each feedback comment was actually provided through the use of TAP. Such explanations are lacking in the WCF research and exploring them was an invaluable contribution in order to understand how the same error could be treated differently (stigmatizing error, local error, direct WCF) and what was the context in which such feedback was provided.

Moreover, studying the students' views and preferences regarding WCF can assist researchers to perceive the ways in which teacher philosophies and practices could be misunderstood by the students. For instance, one consistent finding was that the students were struggling with understanding their teachers' vague comments. Results of other studies have also found that students do not understand some of the comments their teachers' provide. This indicates that being aware of what students do not understand could help teachers to communicate with students and explain themselves better, rather than assuming that everyone is operating under the same philosophies. Understanding the students' needs, improving their motivation, and highlighting communication between students and teachers could offer a valuable insight into research on the students' views regarding WCF (Ferris, 2010).



## 9.4 Limitations of the study

Though the current study provides a comprehensive analysis of teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF, the novelty of the topics examined, the complexity and diversity of language teacher cognition research and the space allocated created some limitations. These limitations included the following:

- **Teacher participants** knew what this research study was investigating. Therefore, one might argue that their responses might have been influenced. However, the triangulation of the data increased the validity of the findings as the researcher was able to cross-check. For example, TAPs and FA data were similar in content, and data from the students' interviews regarding their teachers' behaviours were similar to the data gathered from the classroom-observations, TAPs and FA about teachers' actual practices.
- **The topics of the students' essays** varied from one teacher to another, which may have influenced teachers' feedback practices and it has thus biased the overall findings. This makes it difficult for the researcher to compare the students' writing and to fully understand teachers' feedback techniques.
- **Students** who participated in the present study were not at the same level (i.e. level three and level five students). This may have affected teachers' practices concerning the amount, focus, and explicitness of WCF.

## **9.5 Suggestions for future research**

In addition to the suggestions presented earlier in this chapter (section 5.2), this study has opened up numerous areas worthy of future research. As the feedback investigation in this study was restricted to only one type feedback (i.e. written), future research could examine the teacher's beliefs and practices with regard to all kinds of feedback (oral and written feedback) given on all aspects of writing (e.g. during conferencing). Research designs to investigate this question could include mixed-method approaches of surveys, interviews, analyses of student texts with teacher corrections, and the classroom observations of teachers inside the classroom and outside the classroom during the teacher-student conferences in order to find out how teachers responds orally to each student writing.

Future research should also go beyond teachers' practices of WCF and also examine other types of classroom activities that can support the students' language and writing development (Ferris, 1995b, 2002). Support activities could include required revision after WCF, strategy training and classroom language instruction focused on structures either problematic for students in the class and/or that will be needed by the students to successfully accomplish specific writing tasks. Though such supplementary interventions have been recommended for years, there has been no focused research on the effect of these treatments. Examining this question will likely involve some ethnographic techniques such as classroom observation, interviews of teachers and students.

Finally, future research may also be undertaken to see changing trends in teachers' beliefs and practices after attending a training course that aims to develop and raise awareness about teachers' beliefs and practices.

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## Appendix A: Teachers' semi-structured interview schedule

[Questions for the pre-observation interviews]

Thank you so much for accepting to take part in this study. I would like to start by asking you some general questions.

### (I) General background questions

#### **Section 1: Teachers' profiles**

- A. What degree do you hold? In which major?
- B. What courses have you taught in English? And for how long have you taught writing?
- C. Did you choose to teach the writing course in the department? Why?
- D. How did you prepare yourself to teach writing course early in your career? How helpful was that?
- E. To what extent you still benefit from these sources after having practical teaching experience?

#### **Section 2: Attitude towards teaching writing**

- A. What do you like in teaching writing? What do you dislike in teaching writing? Why?
- B. What do you consider the challenges of teaching writing?

#### **Section 3: Philosophy of teaching writing**

- A. In your opinion, does teaching writing course help students? If so, how?
- B. What do you think is the best way for students to develop their writing skills?

#### **Prompt card**

- a. Materials (e.g. books, handouts, etc.)
- b. Teaching Grammar lessons
- c. Asking students to read a lot
- d. Imitating a good writing
- e. Asking students to write multiple drafts
- f. Taking students' needs into consideration
- g. Commenting orally on students' writing

- h. Commenting on students' writing
- i. Others

#### **Section 4: Institutional factors**

- A. What materials (textbooks, handouts...etc.) do you use in teaching writing?
- B. What do you think of these materials?
- C. Who assigns/select these materials?
- D. Who developed the syllabus? To what extent you abide by the syllabus?
- E. What kind of tasks you ask students to write (e.g. in-class writing, assignments, short writing, quizzes, etc.)? How often? Are all of these corrected by you and submitted to students?
- F. Do you have any idea about what the students do with the feedback they receive from you on their writing?
- G. Is there any relationship between the exams and the way you teach writing?

#### **II. Specific beliefs about giving written corrective feedback (WCF)**

##### **Section 1: Purpose of WCF**

Do you think teachers should provide comments on students' writing? Why?

##### **Section 2: The amount of WCF to provide**

Do you think teachers should mark all types of errors in the text, or focus on particular errors while leaving others uncorrected? Why?

##### **Section 3: Focus of WCF**

A. In your opinion, what types of errors should receive more attention? Why?

##### **Prompt card**

- a. Content (e.g. coherence, unity, development of ideas, and clarity of ideas)
- b. Language form (e.g. grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization)
- c. Organisation (e.g. an introduction where the thesis statement is clearly presented, a body which include topic sentence(s) and supporting details, a conclusion).
- d. Serious errors (i.e. interferes with the understanding of the text) or minor errors.
- e. Frequent (i.e. common) errors or the infrequent errors
- f. Errors that irritates the teacher

B. Do you think teachers should praise students' writing?

#### **Section 4: Explicitness of WCF "How"**

- A. How -do you think- should teachers indicate the errors on students' writing? Why?
- B. Do you think teachers should provide the feedback explicitly e.g. by providing the direct form or implicitly by e.g. underlining the error? Why?

#### **Section 5: Source of WCF**

- A. Who- do you think- should give feedback on students' writing? Why?
- B. Do you think teachers should be the key providers of feedback? If no, who else should provide feedback on students' writing other than the teacher?

#### **Section 6: Other variables**

- A. Should teachers vary their WCF depending on students of different ability levels? If yes, how?
- B. In your opinion, what other factors influence the feedback technique(s) teachers always/ often use?

#### **Section 7: Follow up**

What do think teachers should do when they submit the essays to their students?

##### **Prompt card**

- a. Teach students the common errors
- b. Ask students to revise
- c. Discuss the feedback they did not understand
- d. Mini lessons

### **III. Concluding question**

Do you have any comments/suggestions or concerns/problems regarding providing feedback on students' writing?

## Appendix B: Students' semi-structured interview schedule

[Questions for the students' interviews]

Thank you so much for accepting to take part in this study. I would like to start by asking you some general questions.

### (I) General background questions:

#### Section 1: students' profiles

- A. Did you study in a private or public schools?
- B. Why did you choose English as your major?

#### Section 2: students' attitude about the writing course

- A. Do you like the writing course? Why?
- B. In your opinion, does the writing course help you develop your writing skills?
- C. From the following list, which of these help you to develop your writing skills?

##### **Prompt card**

- a. Materials (e.g. books, handouts, etc.)
- b. Teaching Grammar lessons
- c. Asking students to read a lot
- d. Imitating a good writing
- e. Asking students to write multiple drafts
- f. Taking students' needs into consideration
- g. Commenting orally on students' writing
- h. Commenting on students' writing
- i. Others

### (II) Specific beliefs about giving written corrective feedback (WCF)

#### Section 1: Students' attitudes towards WCF

- A. Do you understand your teachers' written comments and corrections?
- B. Do you benefit from your teachers' written comments and corrections?
- C. When you start writing the second essay, do you go back and reread the comments?

#### Section 2: Purpose of WCF

- A. In your opinion, why should teachers give feedback on your essay writing?



### Section 3: The amount of WCF to provide

- A. Do you think teachers should mark all types of errors in the text, or focus on particular errors while leaving others uncorrected? What does your teacher do?

### Section 4: Focus of WCF

- A. In your opinion, which errors do you consider most important for teachers to look at? What is the focus of your teachers' feedback?
- B. Do you think teachers should focus mainly on students' errors? Why?

### Section 5: Explicitness of WCF

- A. How do you want your teacher to indicate the errors in your written work?
- B. From the following list, which type(s) of feedback you prefer to receive? Why?

#### Prompt card

- a. By showing where the error is and providing the correct <sup>have been</sup> (e.g. Since I arrived here, I am very lonely).
- b. By showing where the error is and giving a clue about the error (e.g. Since I arrived here, I am very lonely). <sup>tense</sup>
- c. By showing where the error is and providing codes/symbols (e.g. Since I arrived here, I am very lonely). <sup>T (to indicate **tense error**)</sup>
- d. By ONLY showing where the error is (e.g. Since I arrived here, I am very lonely).

- C. What strategy your teacher adopts?

### Section 6: Source of WCF

- A. Who do you think should comment on your writing? Why?
- B. Do you think teachers should ask you to give feedback on their peer? Why? Does your teacher implement peer feedback in the writing classes?
- C. Do you think teachers should ask you to self-edit your writing? Why? Does your teacher ask you to self-edit your writing?

### (III) Concluding question

- A. Do you have any comments/ suggestions and/ or concerns/ problems in the way your teacher gives feedback on your writing?

## Appendix C: The unstructured Observation

### Observation sheet

<b>Teacher's name:</b> .....	<b>Students' level:</b> .....	<b>Observation No.</b> .....	<b>Materials available:</b> ..... .....
<b>Date:</b> .....	<b>Students' number.....</b>	<b>Class duration</b> .....	<b>Textbook(s) used:</b> .....
<b>The writing lesson:</b> .....			

### Free field notes

## Appendix D: Think-aloud protocol model task

In this task, I want you to **correct this paper** as if you are correcting your student's writing.

I am interested in what you think about when you correct. In order to find out, I ask you to **THINK ALOUD** as you correct the paper. What is meant by "think aloud" is to say aloud everything that you would say to yourself silently while you think. Just act as if you were alone in the room speaking to yourself.

### Life in The Farm and Life in the City

Every person have his way of how or where want to live. Some of people like to live in the farm, such as, our grandfathers and grandmothers. Other people Like to work and Live in the city. In fact, there are a lot of reasons that make people decid to Live in the farm or city.

Where we look at the person how lives in the farm. they have a good health, cause. they eat from there his farm. they people in the Farm wake up in the sunrise and start to work in there farms with the family. At the end of the day, the family sits together and prepares to sleep. However, the Farm always quite and nicely to live for people that do not want crowd.

Most of the people who lives in the city have there on jobs. They high exposure to recurrent then they go to the jobs in different careers. At the end of the day, they went back to home and go to sleep. The buildings and cars and people seperated in anywhere. That is why the cirt is too crowded.

Finally, there are many differences between live in the farm and in the city. They have different traditional and methods of there live. All that depends to the culture, personality, and background.

## Appendix E: Written permission by University of Dammam

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION | وزارة التعليم العالي  
UNIVERSITY OF DAMMAM | جامعة الدمام  
Arts College - Dammam | كلية الآداب بالدمام  
Department of English | قسم اللغة الإنجليزية



إلى من يهمله الأمر:

يفيد قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية الآداب - جامعة الدمام بأن طالبة الدكتوراه/ندى إبراهيم محمد الخطيب والمبتعثة من جامعة ايسكس ببريطانيا قد انتهت من الرحلة العلمية بعد استكمالها (٣) أشهر وذلك اعتباراً من ٢٠١٢/١٠/١م إلى ٢٠١٣/١/٣٠م بعد قيامها بعدد من المقابلات مع أساتذة مادة الكتابة والطالبات بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة الدمام.

والله الموفق...

رئيسة قسم اللغة الإنجليزية  
د. نسرين بنت إسماعيل نواب



حماها //

## Appendix F: Consent form

**UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX,**  
**Department of Language and Linguistics**

### FORM OF CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

**Title of project / investigation:**

**Writing teachers' beliefs and practices about giving written feedback on students' essay writing: A study in a Saudi EFL context**

**Brief outline of project, including an outline of the procedures to be used:**

**Dear Participant,**

This study investigates writing teachers' opinions towards the use of written feedback on students' writing.

Participants will be kindly asked to take part in a pre-observation interview(s) which will last approximately for an hour and will focus on issues of how they think written feedback should be given to students' writing. Participants, then, will be kindly requested to give the researcher a copy of students' writing after being corrected by teachers. These writing will be analysed and then discussed with teachers in an interview which will last for one hour. Moreover, Participants' lessons will be observed and recorded. This will be followed by a post-observation interview about their lesson and other relevant classroom behaviours. In addition, participants will be asked to participate in 'think-aloud' procedure for 2 sessions while correcting students' writing. The think-aloud protocols will be audio recorded as well.

I would like to inform you that your data will be treated confidentially and your anonymity will be preserved. It is also important to emphasize that you have the right to withdraw from this study at anytime without providing any justifications.

**Please tick the appropriate boxes**

- I have read and understood the project information given above.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
- I agree to take part in the project. Taking part in the project will include being interviewed and audio -recorded as well as being observed.
- I understand that my taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the study at any time and I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part.
- Use of the information I provide is for this project only
- I understand my personal details such as name, email address and phone number will not be revealed to people outside the project.
- I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs.

**Yes    No**

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Project contact details for further information:

**Researcher name:** Nada Alkhatib **Email:** [nimalk@essex.ac.uk](mailto:nimalk@essex.ac.uk)

**Supervisor's name:** Dr. Bojana Petric **Email:** [bpetic@essex.ac.uk](mailto:bpetic@essex.ac.uk)

## Appendix G: English language and literature department course requirements

SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE DOMAIN	N.	COURSE	CREDIT HOURS	CONTACT HOURS	TOTAL
<b>Skills and Foundation</b>	<b>A- Listening / Speaking</b>				
	1	Listening Comprehension	2	4	4
	2	Listening and Speaking	2	4	4
	3	Arts of Speech	3	4	4
	<b>B- Reading Comprehension</b>				
	4	Reading	2	4	4
	5	English Prose	2	2	2
	6	English Thought & Culture	2	2	2
	<b>C- Grammatical Structure</b>				
	7	Grammatical Structure	3	4	4
	8	Grammatical Rules and Systems	2	2	2
	<b>D- Writing</b>				
	9	Composition (1)	3	4	4
	10	Composition (2)	3	4	4
	11	Essay	2	2	2
<b>Total in Domain</b>			<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>

SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE DOMAIN	N.	COURSE	CREDIT HOURS	CONTACT HOURS	TOTAL
<b>English language and Linguistics</b>	12	Introduction to Linguistics	3	4	4
	13	Phonetics & Phonology	3	4	4
	14	Syntax & Morphology	2	2	2
	15	Semantics & Pragmatics	2	2	2
	16	Applied Linguistics	3	4	4
	17	Psycholinguistics	2	2	2
	18	Sociolinguistics (elective)	2	2	2
	19	Language Planning (elective)			
	20	Language Variation (elective)			
	21	Discourse Analysis	2	2	2
	22	Language and I. T.	2	2	2
<b>Total in Domain</b>			<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>



S K I L L S & K N O W L E D G E D O M A I N	N.	COURSE	CREDIT HOURS	CONTACT HOURS	TOTAL
<b>Translation</b>	23	Translation Theory	2	2	2
	24	Translation text-types (English-Arabic, & vice versa)	3	4	4
	25	Creative Translation	2	2	2
	26	Machine Translation (elective)	2	2	2
	27	Simultaneous Translation (elective)			
	28	Translating Terminology (elective)			
<b>Total in Domain</b>			<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>

S K I L L S & K N O W L E D G E D O M A I N	N.	COURSE	CREDIT HOURS	CONTACT HOURS	TOTAL
<b>English Literature</b>	29	English Literature of the Renaissance	3	4	4
	30	Seventeenth Century English Literature	2	2	2
	31	The Rise of the Novel	2	2	2
	32	The Modern Novel	2	2	2
	33	English Poetry from Romantics to Moderns	2	2	2
	34	Literary Criticism	3	4	4
	35	Intro. to American Literature	2	2	2
	36	Modern Drama	2	2	2
	37	The Short Story (elective)	2	2	2
	38	Children's Literature (elective)			
	39	Comparative Literature (elective)			
<b>Total in Domain</b>			<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>

## Appendix H: Extracts from a teacher interview

**Researcher:** Thank you for accepting to take part in my study. We will start with the general background questions. Well, first of all, what degree do you hold and in which major?

**Interviewee:** I have M.A. degree, I finished my M.A. program, from Jordan, from [] university in 2008. And my major is literature and criticism.

**Researcher:** okay, what courses have you taught in English?

**Interviewee:** in English, you know, I used to teach general English including writing, reading...etc., translation, literature, introduction to literature, so in different majors in literature. That's all.

**Researcher:** Do you like teaching writing?

**Interviewee :** No. Actually *I used to tell Dr. \*\*\*\* [the head of the department] that I do not want to teach writing. It is not because I hate it. But I do not like it. My field is literature and criticism. I feel that I will be more creative in teaching literature. Teaching writing is a challenge for me. That is why I do not like it.*

**Researcher:** what are the challenges you face in teaching writing?

**Interviewee:** sometimes I read a paper maybe twice, thrice, and especially when you are correcting the girls. You want from the girls to develop themselves. Really it's not an easy job, because I gave them an essay to write it about the life in school, yeah, it's about, yeah, studying here in Dammam college, really I want from them to develop themselves, I correct their essays and I give it back to them, and they will reread it again, rewrite it again and give it back to me. Imagine how much it needs ... Time, work, really of efforts, and you have to consider each ... because you are not going just to teach grammar or spelling, or the essay in general how the form of the essay. You have to concentrate on everything, spelling, grammar, the form of the essay, their way of writing, did they give you the information right or wrong, everything. You have to concentrate on everything. This is why it's really needs time, especially if you have a huge number of girls. I have 37, one of my classes 37, imagine when you are talking about something good to writing, if you really want from the girls to develop you have to follow each one, right? You have about 37, yeah imagine, when I want to check the papers, I'm talking about 37, sometimes I spend the whole week in just correcting the papers. And for me in Jordan I used to give courses 20, sometimes 19, okay, I can follow each girl... this is much much better, but I'm trying you know to get used with these things, here, especially in this college. In [] it wasn't like that 27, maximum 35.

**Researcher:** I see.

**Interviewee:** yeah, you know it's a challenge for me and I like it. I like to really, especially with human beings, when you are put really in the corner as we call it you really push yourself to the limit. And I told Ms. Laila in the morning that really last lecture and this lecture, you know I started to really admire this subject, this material, yeah writing, I have to work, I have to do everything, and I have to attract their attention

**Researcher:** okay, alright, well, in the early years of your teaching how did you prepare yourself to teach writing?

**Interviewee:** Honestly, I used to talk with those who used to, especially teacher xxx, and for two years I've been giving writing. So, I just take from them their experience, how they present it, how they can teach it for the girls.

**Researcher:** good. What else?

**Interviewee:** honestly, sometimes I'm giving them things from Google,

**Researcher:** you surf the internet.

**Interviewee:** yeah sure, for sure, for me I'm always just searching. They used to tell me, if you lose your mobile you just Google where's my mobile. Always on the Google something for the girls, the girls love sometimes when you give them summary. I concentrate on this and I used to do the same thing with my girls. Okay this is important, I'm concentrating... but sometimes I'm giving them some papers, this is just like a conclusion, a summary, for everything. And they like it.



sometimes you know I'm telling them not especially in writing and everything, this is very important thing, concentrate on it, they like this.

**Researcher:** yeah, right, well, what about teaching grammar lessons in the writing classes?

**Interviewee:** *It is important to give them some grammar hints but not to teach them grammar. For example, 'use simple present when you are not sure about the tense*

**Researcher:** so you mean teaching grammar lessons through writing

**Interviewee:** yes, exactly, we should teach grammar through writing. For example, when referring to common and repeated mistakes by student. Or when finding out a deadly mistake for example when the student does not use the third person singular in all her writing.

**Researcher:** I see. What else do you think would help improve students' writing?

**Interviewee:** highlighting students' common errors orally in class is really important. When students find that the error they did is common by most students, they will pay more attention to these errors.

**Researcher:** what about commenting on students' writing by giving written feedback?

**Interviewee:** for sure, because you know writing is to develop, you know it has two benefits, one of them is discovering, while you are writing you will use everything on your mind, when you make, you know brainstorm everything comes to your mind, you have to be accurate about everything, you have to be specific about everything. While I'm teaching speaking, speaking you know there is no limit for the way of speaking. You can speak anything, you can tell anything, you can talk with anyone, it's okay. But when we go to writing, we have to be accurate about unity, coherence, language, the form, everything. You have to be accurate about everything. You have to concentrate. the way of discovering, while you are writing, especially essay, you start with an idea then we have the development plan, you know this, then paragraph one and two you have two make sentence supporting the piece statement. Now, while you are writing, sometimes an idea comes to your mind, you must know where to put it and this you know will develop your way of writing. Look, when you are good in writing you will be really a good reader. That's what develops your way of reading, for sure. Because you start to know everything about writing you'll be a good reader.

**Researcher:** well do you think that teachers should provide feedback comprehensively by correcting all errors or selectively by concentrating on particular types of errors?

**Interviewee:** for sure we should comment on all errors. This is our job we have to tell the girl where is your mistakes and we have to evaluate her according to her mistakes.

**Researcher:** well, what type of errors you think should receive more attention?

**Interviewee:** More focus should be given to deadly or important errors.

**Researcher:** *what do you think are these serious errors?*

**Interviewee:** errors related to how the essay is organised and presented following the argumentative essay. For example, the thesis statement should be clearly presented and it should fulfil the requirement of argumentative thesis. Because if]did not follow the correct procedures or structure, [the teacher] will not understand anything even her topic, her thesis statement and if it is related to the body or not, she will end up taking zero.

**Researcher:** Do you believe that the organisation of the essay is more important than the errors in the language (e.g. grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization)?

**Interviewee:** yes for sure you know what in Jordan my doctor xxx tells us that the language can be easily improved through practice. So, the focus should be given on the organisation and the ideas and the language will come automatically.

## Appendix I: Think-aloud protocol instruction

In this task, I want you to **correct this paper** as if you are correcting your student's writing.

I am interested in what you think about when you correct. In order to find out, I ask you to **THINK ALOUD** as you correct the paper. What is meant by "think aloud" is to say aloud everything that you would say to yourself silently while you think. Just act as if you were alone in the room speaking to yourself.

Here are some suggestions for you while thinking-aloud:

1. Keep talking to yourself without stopping. When you stop talking, I will remind you to continue talking.
2. Do not try to explain to justify your thoughts.
3. You are free to verbalize in English or Arabic.

Did you understand the task? Do you have any questions?

## Appendix J: Think-aloud protocol warm-up task

In this task, I want you to analyse the meaning of the paragraph and try to guess the meaning of the unknown word(s).

I am interested in what you think about when you correct. In order to find out, I ask you to **THINK ALOUD** as you correct the paper. What is meant by “think aloud” is to say aloud everything that you would say to yourself silently while you think. Just act as if you were alone in the room speaking to yourself.

### Acid Rain

Ozone and acid rain leave our forest more susceptible to drought, insects, and disease through weakening their resistance to such natural cycles. Sorting out the effects of a particular chemical agent in the midst of these ongoing cycles, further complicated by the effects of the massive degradation of forest ecosystems from logging and mining activity, has made understanding the population issue difficult indeed. Much of the research that has been conducted studies either acid deposition or ozone singly; it is rare that the question of synergistic relationships between these two chemicals is asked. It is clear that in the face of these various stresses that establishing large, contiguous forest reserves where human activity is limited would help reduce these impacts, allowing the ecosystems to naturally develop ways to deal with human activity. But in order to see any meaningful change we as a society must discontinue the practices that have led to high levels of pollution in our atmosphere. We can help by reducing our emissions of these pollutants and leaving these areas of forest alone so they can recover on their own. Logging, roads, and traditional forest management only serve to further stress the forest ecosystem and aggregate cultivated forest decline. Changing the way wood is used and obtained can also help reduce stress on these already overtaxed ecosystems while actually increasing the way the number of jobs available for people in rural areas near forests. Eliminating or reducing the amount of machinery involved in the process uses less fossil fuels, reduces soil compaction, slows the rate of consumption of resources, and increases the number of hands needed to get the job done. Such a strategy is good for sagging economics as well as declining forests, but political pressure from profit-driven corporation impede such progress.

## Appendix K: Excerpt from the transcription of a think-aloud protocol on a poor student's writing

Teacher (reads): "Advantage of Study English in This College"

Teacher: as a beginning this is not the form of the essay. The title in two lines... and it is not correct... It should be 'Advantages of studying English in This College'... incorrect structure ... this is not supposed to be in the title... Again the format... the margin is not in one line... (teacher writes) **"it is not the form of the essay"** ...Especially traditional essay... now let me see... where is the thesis.

Teacher (reads): "When I studied in this department I gain many experiences in language".

Teacher: okay ... there is a topic sentence and introductory statement ...let us see.

Teacher (reads): "There are many advantage study English in this college but I'm talking about the most For me."

Teacher: okay but the language... grammar mistakes.. (teacher underlines and write) **"GR"**.

Teacher (reads): "there are many advantage study English in this college" ...This is grammatical mistakes... (teacher underlines and writes) **"for studying"** .. and "many advantages" not "many advantage" ... is it possible that she did \_

Teacher (reads): "but I talking" there is something missing here "I'm going to talk about the most important for me" ... I do not know why did she capitalize the 'F'. It is even a preposition... and the sentence is a very poor one... (teacher underlines) wrong structure... missing words... and unclear thesis statement .

Teacher (reads the correction) **"there are many advantages for studying in this college but I'm talking about the most important for me"**... now, it is readable at least...

Teacher (reads silently): this is general not clear... unclear ... general thesis statement.. it is an announcement for the essay... I told them not to use this style 'I am going to talk about... I am talking about' ... this is very weak one... and still thesis statement should be more specific... she should discuss what she is going to talk about in the body... this is not a good one... (teacher underlines and writes): **"unclear general thesis statement"**. Okay...And here we have grammatical mistakes we have also (teacher underlines and writes) **"GR"**.

Teacher (reads): "when you want to study a new language you should study the culture and the original of the language"

Teacher "the origins of language" this is also a grammatical mistakes... she is in her third year and still using 'adjective' after 'the'... this is totally unacceptable...(teacher underlines and writes): "**GR**".

Teacher (reads): "my department use this way a lot in most subject. When you want to study a new language you should study the culture and the original of the language".. is this her topic sentence? Yes it should be... *ok*.

Teacher: (reads): "my department uses this way a lot in most subject"

Teacher (writes): "**in most of the subject**". Students have the problem with the article 'the'... they do not know when to use it.

Teacher (reads): "We are studying the origin of nation and the". Oh my God this is a very long run on sentence what is wrong with her\_

Teacher (reads): "and the original of language". Oh my God ... this is totally unacceptable.. I hate correcting such run on sentences... It is impossible for me to correct such sentences... I just underline and write (teacher underlines and writes): "RO"... you cannot just write without even thinking of what you are doing and expect me to be an editor for your paper... this takes time.

Teacher (reads): "many of teacher like study by self depend and using out source this way help us". Oh my God ... spelling...spelling and grammar... the most irritating errors (she writes) "**a lot of spelling mistakes and grammatical mistakes**". Now it is (she writes) "**not in the form of essay**" ...Second, there are many "**grammatical and spelling mistakes**" and "**unclear general topics**".

Teacher (reads): "many of teacher like study by self depend and using the out source"  
Teacher: this is not English ... this is Arabic... *as if she wrote it in Arabic and then translated it*. She means that most teachers like or prefer their students to be independent. That they want them to study by themselves not to be spoon fed and to be able to use extra sources" ... this is what she wants to say... but she could not express it correctly... The one who reads it will think that 'the teacher likes to study by themselves.... This changes the whole meaning.

Teacher (reads): "this way help us to how to search and help us to acquire many information"

Teacher: what is this (teacher writes) "**what is this**". Let us see the conclusion... Oh, there is no conclusion (teacher writes) "**without conclusion!**"

## Appendix L: The unstructured observation

### Observation sheet

<b>Teacher's name:</b> Amal	<b>Students'</b> <b>Level: 5</b>	<b>Observation</b> <b>No. 3</b>	<b>Materials available:</b> <b>Book and handout</b>
<b>Date:</b> <b>30/10/2012</b>	<b>Students'</b> <b>Number 32</b>	<b>Class duration</b> <b>2 hours</b>	<b>Textbook(s) used:</b> <b>Refining Composition Skills</b>
<b>The writing lesson:</b> <b>Writing thesis statement for the argumentative essay</b>			

### Free field notes

- Teacher teaches students how to refute the thesis statement by using phrases such as “It is may be true but ....” and “While it is true,...”.
- Teacher tells the student that if the opponent says something reasonable, you have to concede them, say yes it is true, agree with them and then you refute.
- Teacher gives the student the steps of writing the argumentative essay:

In the first paragraph, you say your reasons

In the second paragraph, you say the other opinion and the reasons for the other opinion and you agree with the reasons, concede that point but try to convince them with your ideas.

- **[Model essay]**  
Teacher engages student to read an essay about the issue of whether old people should be allowed to drive or not. The teacher asks the students to find out the thesis statement and to comment in it.

- **[Outline]**  
Teacher gives the students the structure of the argumentative essay parts.  
Teacher writes on board:

I. Introduction

II. Body

1<sup>st</sup> paragraph: The first developmental paragraph: your reasons - two supporting sentences and for each supporting you should provide at least one detail

2<sup>nd</sup> developmental paragraph: the refutation- you take all other opinions and you refute them.

III. In the conclusion either advice or recommendation, or a question.

- **[Exam]** Teacher reminds the students to use the same structure in the final exam.
- **[Teacher-led class discussion]** Teacher practices writing an argumentative essay with students on board (Side effect of TV).

**Teacher:** Now we will discuss a common topic, the TV. some people believe that it is useful while others believe it is harmful. The best way to write an AE is to start with their opinion about this issue, then you give your own opinion which will be your thesis statement. Let us say that we are against TV. let us start with the outline for the body:

IV. Useful (T: how: s: we can watch the news and intellectual and scientific programs)

V. Harmful (T: How? S: affect the social life T: excellent S: causes diseases T: excellent let us discuss this issue (causes diseases – so what are your supporting? S: the diseases. T: yes the kind of diseases like what? S: getting fat T: obesity excellent what else? S: the eyes T: excellent, it affects on the eyesight.

A. Eyesight – (either you give examples of people whom you know. (For example your brother was watching and he is now wearing a glasses \_ or you can state why it affects the eyesight? Because we spend hours staring at it)

B. Obesity – (either you give examples of yourself or example – or fact that people keep sitting for hours and tend to eat while watching TV.)

I. most people believe that TV. is very useful, and they cannot even live without it. Yet, I strongly believe that TV. is very useful. (Teacher comments: now as you can notice we started with the other opinion and then we stated our opinion which serves as a thesis statement)

II. I think that TV is very harmful because it exposes us to many diseases. For example, watching a lot of TV. affect our eye sight in a bad way since we spend a lot of time staring at it.

T: how shall we continue?

S: also

T: we cannot start a sentence with ‘also’

S: besides

T: excellent, “Besides.....”

III. The refutation

Be careful, when you are giving examples, be precise, do not tell me the story of your brother for example. Be focused, the more you get focused and precise, the more your essay will be free from irrelevant materials.

## Appendix M: Excerpt from observation lesson transcript

**Teacher:** Girls it is not that important as it talks about the different types of argumentative essay, but we will only cover one type of argumentative essay which is persuasive type of argumentative essay. Now, girls, the most important thing is the form of argumentative essay. This is why the first thing I look at is the form of the essay. The introduction, the body, the conclusion, the indentation, the margins, all of these are important. The editing and the language is also important. Now, we will read a passage, one example of argumentative essay about on-line courses. What do you notice girls? It is a long essay right? Why?

**Students:** because it is argumentative

**Teacher:** yes, excellent in argumentative essay I am talking about two point of views. Each point with the positive viewpoint. This is why we have the first way or writing argumentative essay is to present your own point of views in one paragraph and then refute it in the other paragraph. The second way is to represent one of your point of views and refute it in one paragraph, and in the second paragraph you represent your second point of view and refute it and so on and so forth. But concentrate that you have to support these ideas with examples, facts, or details. We have three topics that I cannot make them argumentative essay (belief or faith – facts - preference). I cannot make an argumentative essay about “cappuccino tastes better than mochaccino” somebody will come and say “I do not like it and the purpose for argumentative essay is to convince the reader and such topics might not convince them”. This is why I cannot make these three argumentative essay.

**Student:** but I can make preference and support it with fact.

**Teacher:** you can in traditional essay say why mochaccino is better than cappuccino. Can I convince you about something you do not like? At the end you will say “I do not like it”. The reader will reach to this conclusion.



## Appendix N: Excerpt from a the post-observation stimulated-recall interview transcript

**Researcher:** Well, in all your classes, you explained these theoretical rules and you asked the students to study the rules of writing argumentative essay [playing the audio tape].

**Interviewee:** Yes. Well they have to have this in mind. I mean they constitute a kind of skeleton in term of which they are going to organise their ideas, their organisation of the essay... they have to know how an argumentative essay is organised. They have to know in what way is it different from other types of essays and again sometimes when you delve too deeply in the details the students become confused... become at a loss. They do not know where this fits. So the rules would really help them organise their essays. Also, students like to study rules more than practicing.

**Researcher :** Yeah. In one of your classes, you analysed a model essay entitled ‘Once over likely’ [playing the audio tape]. You said to the students “by analysing these argumentative essays you are going to be aware of how it should be written”. Can you tell me about this and what was in your mind at that time?

**Interviewee:** Yes, they have to see a model of how all the theoretical stuff that we have been talking about all the time is actually practiced. They would see a professional essay and know for themselves how to identify the thesis statement, how it is written and how it is developed into topic sentences and then supported by details and so on. So far of course, I do believe that writing should be incorporated with reading. I mean you should study to teach writing so reading sometimes. This is one of the structures actually. One important technique of teaching writing.

**Researcher:** Yeah, Ok. While analysing the model, you analyse paragraphs in the terms of the topic sentences and the thesis statement of the model of this essay. So you focus mostly in the thesis statement and the topic sentences [playing the audio tape]. Can you talk me through this?

**Interviewee:** Well, again this could be accepted in the very beginning. You have to make sure that the students are on the right track by at least identifying the framework for writing an argumentative essay. And then I will not be worried any more about the essay because they are on the right track.

**Researcher:** Yeah, you also analysed the ideas, so you asked the students to find the topic sentence for each paragraph and to look for irrelevant sentence [playing the audio tape].

**Interviewee:** Yes, here we move to the next stage where we are going to focus on the details; the supporting details. Now, I would expect them not only to provide a topic sentence but also to provide the details, the necessary supporting details for this topic sentence.

**Researcher:** ok

**Interviewee:** So I mainly analyse the ideas and the details and the organisation. When I found that they are ok, I moved to the next step.

**Researcher:** the language form you mean.

**Interviewee:** Yes, when I check the framework, the organisation of the essay then I move to the grammatical mistakes, language mistakes, the grammar whatever.

**Researcher:** why?

**Interviewee:** This is not a grammar lesson actually. This is an essay lecture and you know what.. just you have to tell them how they would write. I mean talking too much about the rules and the grammatical rules will not really benefit the students. They want to know how this can be a phrased and a correct manner whatever, and actually language is not only grammar. Sometimes it has to do with the style, the vocabulary and here we can't explain rules. I think that the writing teachers' job is not to teach grammar. This is not their job. He has to do both but again give much importance to the ideas, how to connect ideas, how to follow the format of argumentative essay or any other type.

**Researcher:** I see

**Interviewee:** I am not going to teach unless there's a very common error among all the students. But I do believe that there is one important grammatical rule that they have to be taught, which is the clauses. Yes, clauses are very important to how to joint sentences. This is actually very important.

**Researcher:** Well, actually you asked the students to write one draft? Can talk to me through this?

**Interviewee:** Well they are supposed to go through drafts but because I did not have enough time in class to ask for another draft. And I cannot ask them to write another draft which I will not correct because you know the students, they do not do anything unless when they know that their teacher will correct. Well, I suppose they should redraft at home.

## Appendix O: Excerpt from a teacher WCF stimulated-recall interview transcript

**Researcher:** I noticed that you sometimes provide corrections directly by providing the correct answer when the error is related to the language form [RESEARCHER SHOWS THE TEACHERS SOME CORRECTED PAPERS]. Can you talk me through this?

**Interviewee:** Yeah Well sometimes the students do not know what do you mean by this line and you have to tell him this should be written this way. This can be done when correcting the slight mistakes, minor errors I mean you tend to correct them. Because they are quick to do and do not take much from the teacher's time.

**Researcher:** so when the error is serious, related to the content or the organisation, you only underline the error without correction [RESEARCHER SHOWS THE TEACHER SOME CORRECTED PAPERS]?

**Interviewee:** exactly, because you cannot rewrite the essay for her if the ideas are wrong or if they are not presented correctly. Similarly, you cannot change the thesis statement and the organisation. If you underline the verb or the s that's not required. Whatever you would do. So, when the sentence needs to be rephrased I cannot do it myself. I cannot correct it so I ask the students just to rephrase it or I just underline so that they understand that the whole sentence is wrong, But when there's a simple error in the language I would correct it, sometimes. I know I said to you earlier that simple errors do not need to be corrected explicitly but in practice it is easier to amend simple language errors.

**Researcher:** Yeah, but again sometimes, you would work on the sentence like you would add some ideas like in the sentence you added [RESEARCHER SHOWS THE TEACHERS SOME CORRECTED PAPERS]: "It is a waste of time children may become violent because..." so you added two sentences.

**Interviewee:** Ah yes. You know sometimes you tend to give direct answer with the content. Here because the sentence is not well supported.. Then I suggest some alternatives.. so I add a sentence that makes function that has supporting details here, I should show the student how he should have supported this idea. Because if you just tell them that here it lacks supporting details. She cannot really imagine what supporting details could be said here. Then when we should suggest something. so that the student will say "Oh yes I could have said this in this way".... then later on he knows what kind of supporting evidence he may add. But to be honest we do now do this it is very difficult and time consuming so we correct simple errors more directly than errors related to sentence level.

**Researcher:** I noticed that with good students, you tend to provide direct feedback [RESEARCHER SHOWS THE TEACHERS SOME CORRECTED PAPERS], while with poor ones, you mostly underline the error without correction [RESEARCHER SHOWS THE TEACHERS SOME CORRECTED PAPERS]. Can you explain your strategy behind this?

**Interviewee:** yes because good students have a few errors and you should uplift them to be more advanced students. So I tend to focus on each and every error. While poor students have a lot of errors and many repeated errors. If I corrected all of their errors, I will waste the

whole day correcting her paper. Plus, the student will be demotivated when she received her paper and find it covered with the corrections.

**Researcher:** And when the paper is very poor, you do not correct her paper [RESEARCHER SHOWS THE TEACHERS SOME CORRECTED PAPERS]. Can you talk me through this?

**Interviewee:** When the student has got good ideas, when she has got very good organisation, I am obliged to go through the details and correct even if there were a lot of errors. But when you do not have language nor ideas such as those papers, it goes without saying that I leave the paper without feedback.. I do not continue reading such papers.

**Researcher:** do you follow any procedure in mind while correcting regarding how explicit you are in giving the correction to the students or it comes spontaneously?

**Interviewee:** that's a very good question actually. I do not follow and strategy. I correct without paying attention to whether this error is related to language or ideas. I correct randomly focusing and referring to whatever errors I found and giving direct or indirect correction without being thinking about that.

## **Appendix P: List of codes**

### **RQ1:**

#### **A. [Teacher's Profile]**

**A1. [Qualification]**

**A2. [Teaching writing]**

**A2.1. [Duration]**

**A2.2. [Reasons for teaching writing]**

**A2.3. [Resources]**

**A2.3.1. [Books/Internet]**

**A2.3.2. [Teachers' advice]**

**A2.3.3. [Experience as a student]**

**A2.3.4. [Practical Experience]**

**A2.3.5. [Other]**

**A2.3. [Materials]**

**A2.4. [Writing tasks]**

**A2.5. [Other]**

#### **B. [Writing beliefs]**

**B1. [Beliefs about teaching writing]**

**B.1.1. Attitude**

**B1.2. Challenges in teaching writing**

**B1.2.1. Classroom related problems**

**B1.2.2. Students related problems**

**B1.2.3. Teachers' related problems**

**B1.2.4 Authority/ administration related problems**

**B.1.2. [Beliefs about teaching writing]**

**B1.2.1. Usefulness of teaching writing**

**B2.1.2. Techniques in teaching writing**

**B2.1.2.1. Grammar teaching**

**B2.1.2.2. Oral comments**

- B2.1.2.3 Written comments**
- B2.1.2.4. Practice writing**
- B2.1.2.5. Multiple-drafts writing**
- B2.1.2.6. Outlining**
- B2.1.2.7. Practice reading**
- B2.1.2.8. Imitating model writing**
- B2.1.2.9. Taking students' preferences**
- B2.1.2.10. Other**

**C. [Beliefs about WCF]**

- C1. Purpose of WCF**
- C2. Amount of WCF**
  - C2.1. Selective**
  - C2.2. Comprehensive**
  - C2.3. Other**
- C3. Focus of WCF**
  - C3.1. Language form**
  - C3.2. Organisation**
  - C3.3. Content**
- C4. Explicitness of WCF**
  - C4.1. Direct**
  - C4.2. Indirect**
    - C4.2.1. Coded**
    - C4.2.2. uncoded**
    - C4.2.3. other**
- C5. Source of WCF**
  - C5.1. Teachers**
  - C5.2. Peer**
  - C5.3. Teacher-led discussion**
  - C5.4. Self-editing**
- C6. Positive versus negative feedback**
- C7. Change in WCF**

**RQ2:**

**A. [Writing instruction Practices]**

**A1. Focus of writing instruction**

**A1.1 Language form**

**A1.2 Organisation**

**A1.3. Content**

**A.1.4. Others**

**A2. Writing activities**

**A2.1. Grammar teaching**

**A2.2. Outlining**

**A2.3. Imitating model writing**

**A2.4. Common errors**

**A2.5. Other**

**A3. Source of feedback**

**A3.1. Peer feedback**

**A3.2. Self-editing**

**A3.3. Teacher-led class discussion**

**A3.4 Others**

**B. [WCF practices]**

**B1. Amount of WCF**

**B1.1. Selective**

**B1.2. Comprehensive**

**B1.3. Other**

**B2. Focus of WCF**

**B2.1. Language form**

**B2.2. Organisation**

**B2.3. Content**

**B3. Explicitness of WCF**

**B3.1. Direct**

**B3.2. Indirect**

**B3.2.1. Coded**

**B3.2.2. uncoded**

**B3.2.3. Other**

**B4. Positive versus negative feedback**

**B5. Change in WCF**

**RQ3:**

**A. [Beliefs and practices regarding Writing instruction]**

**A1. Focus of writing instruction**

**A1.1 Language form**

**A1.2 Organisation**

**A1.3. Content**

**A.1.4. Others**

**A2. Writing activities**

**A2.1. Grammar teaching**

**A2.2. Outlining**

**A2.3. Imitating model writing**

**A2.4. Common errors**

**A2.5. Other**

**A3. Source of feedback**

**A3.1. Peer feedback**

**A3.2. Self-editing**

**A3.3. Teacher-led class discussion**

**A3.4 Others**

**B. [Beliefs and practices regarding WCF practices]**

**B1. Amount of WCF**

**B1.1. Selective**

**B1.2. Comprehensive**

**B1.3. Other**

**B2. Focus of WCF**

**B2.1. Language form**

**B2.2. Organisation**



- B2.3. Content**
- B3. Explicitness of WCF**
  - B3.1. Direct**
  - B3.2. Indirect**
    - B3.2.1. Coded**
    - B3.2.2. uncoded**
    - B3.2.3. Other**
- B4. Positive versus negative feedback**
- B5. Change in WCF**

**RQ4:**

**A. *[Factors on teachers' writing instruction practices]***

- A1 [Teachers' related factors]**
  - A1.1 Teachers' past learning experience**
  - A1.2 Teachers' practical experience**
  - A1.3 Lack of L1 shared with students**
  - A1.4 Teachers' Heavy Teaching Loads**
  - A1.5 Others**
- A2. [Students' related factors]**
  - A2.1. Students' proficiency level**
  - A2.2. Students' expectations**
  - A2.3. Large students' numbers**
  - A2.4. Students' class behaviours**
  - A2.5. Others**
- A3. [Context related factors]**
  - A3.1 Exams' requirements**
  - A3.2 Cultural effect**
  - A3.3 Others**

**B. *[Factors on teachers' WCF practices]***

- B1. Teachers' related factors**
  - B1.1. Lack of L1 shared with students**
  - B1.2 Teachers' Heavy Teaching Loads**
  - B1.3. Teachers' emotional response**
  - B1.4 Others**
- B2. Students' related factors**
  - B2.1. Students' proficiency level**
  - B.2 Students' expectations**
  - B2.3 Large students' numbers**
  - B2.4 Others**

**RQ5:**

**A. [Students' attitudes towards teachers' WCF]**

**A1. Liking**

**A2. Usefulness**

**A2. Understanding**

**A3. Reaction**

**B. [Preferences regarding amount of WCF]**

**B1. Comprehensive**

**B2. Selective**

**B3. Others**

**C. [Preferences regarding focus of WCF]**

**C1. Language form**

**C2. Organisation**

**C3. Content**

**C4. Others**

**D. [Preferences regarding explicitness of WCF]**

**D1. Direct WCF**

**D2. Indirect WCF**

**D2.1. Coded**

**D2.2. uncoded**

**D3. Other**

**E. [Preferences regarding source of WCF]**

**E1. Teachers**

**E2. Peers**

**E3. Teacher-led class discussion**

**F. [Preferences regarding positive versus negative feedback]**

**G. [Preferences regarding change in WCF]**

## Appendix Q: List of selected codes with their definitions and extracts from the raw data

### Coding and Sub-coding RQ1 (i.e. teachers' beliefs regarding WCF)

Code	Description	Example from teachers' interviews
<b>A. <i>[Teacher's Profile]</i></b>		
<b>A1. [Qualification]</b>	Teachers' academic information such as years of teaching , courses taught , major ,degree...etc.	"I have got PhD in linguistics"
<b>A2. [Teaching writing]</b>	Teachers' information about their previous teaching of the writing course.	
<b>A2.1. [duration]</b>	years of teaching writing	<i>Researcher:</i> for how long you have taught writing? <i>Interviewee:</i> I have been teaching I think for two years almost now
<b>A2.2. [Reasons for teaching writing]</b>	Why did teachers teach the writing course?	"I do not have much choice and actually may be because I taught the same course last year so I thought I could do better now because I'm quite familiar with the course"
<b>A2.3. [Resources]</b>	The different methods teachers used to prepare themselves to teach writing at the beginning of their academic career.	<i>"Researcher:</i> how did you prepare yourself to teach the writing course early in your career?
<b>A2.3.1. [Books/Internet]</b>	Whether teachers consulted extra resources by reading books or surfing the net.	"sometimes I surf the internet and I also see books in order to choose any supplementary material if available"
<b>A2.3.2. [Teachers' advice]</b>	Whether teachers took some advice from other colleagues or expert teachers.	"for teaching writing, honestly, I used to talk with those who are experienced in teaching the course like T. Leila"
<b>A2.3.3. [Experience as a student]</b>	Whether teachers use experience of how being taught writing as a student.	"I always remember how I think about the essay when I was a student, how writing was interesting when I write about a topic that is attractive to me to write about, something I like, and how it wasn't when the teacher chooses topics that I do not like"
<b>A2.3.4. [Practical Experience]</b>	Whether teachers use their practical experience now (i.e. after teaching for more than two years) and whether they still prepare themselves using the above-mentioned methods or mainly depend on their practical experience.	"I do not depend totally on my own experience. I may also consult others. I may refer back to books of whatever material I have got in order to have a general guideline for me to go through and of course I use my experience a lot in dealing with situations in class"

<b>A2.3. Materials</b>	The textbooks and other resources used in teaching writing and whether teachers have the freedom to add to these materials or not.	“the text book we teach is called ‘ ---’. We have got the course syllabus and a course specification from previous years that we should follow of course we may made certain modifications of course to the syllabus of course. so I am free to add I mean but we have to agree among ourselves upon the things that we have to add”
<b>A2.4. Writing tasks</b>	The different tasks (i.e. in-class writing, assignments, quizzes) given by the writing teachers.	“I give much more weight to home assignments and class room assignments or tasks more than quizzes; quizzes are by their very nature “
<b>B. [Writing beliefs]</b>		
<b>B1. [Beliefs about teaching writing]</b>	Teachers’ beliefs about the teaching of writing.	
<b>B.1.1. Attitude</b>	Whether teachers like or dislike teaching writing.	“I just do not think I like teaching writing especially the way we are teaching it here”
<b>B1.2. Challenges in teaching writing</b>	The difficulties teachers go through/find when teaching writing.	
<b>B1.2.1. Classroom related problems</b>	Difficulties caused by the classroom such as students’ numbers, time factors, room size,...etc.	“it really needs time, especially if you have a huge number of girls. Imagine that I have 37 students in one of my classes”
<b>B1.2.2. Students related problems</b>	Difficulties caused by the students such as their low language proficiency, their discipline, their background, , etc.	“it is really hard, to let students participate with you, to attract their attention, especially here, because I know Saudi girls, they hate English”
<b>B1.2.3. Teachers’ related problems</b>	Difficulties caused because of the teachers such as when teachers’ L1 is different or when teachers lack knowledge of subject matter.	“I want to make my students understand more but the problem is that I lack Arabic language... if I know the language I can teach them in a very better way, in a far better way”.
<b>B1.2.4 Authority/ administration related problems</b>	Difficulties caused by people who are authorised such as selection of materials, and the other university rules.	“The department should reduce the work of the writing teachers. They should assign two writing teachers, one to teach writing and another to correct students’ papers.”
<b>B.1.2. [Beliefs about teaching writing]</b>	Teachers’ beliefs regarding writing instruction	
<b>B1.2.1. Usefulness of teaching writing</b>	The benefits for teaching writing	“I think the writing course is the total outcome through which all other language skills could appear or could manifest themselves”

<b>B2.1.2. Techniques in teaching writing</b>	The methods teachers believe should be used when teaching writing	
<b>B2.1.2.1. Grammar teaching</b>	Whether teachers believe in Teaching Grammar lessons during the writing classes	“I believe that some teachers find it easier to teach grammar instead of focusing on the process of writing itself in order to be able to attract students’ attention because actually when you are teaching writing it's very difficult to attract the students’ attention”
<b>B2.1.2.2. Oral comments</b>	Whether teachers believe in commenting on students’ errors Orally	“commenting orally is very much important also to the students because that would really stick to their minds more in my opinion”
<b>B2.1.2.3 Written comments</b>	Whether teachers believe in giving written commenting on students’ errors	“Teachers should write comments on students’ papers because teachers can't tell them everything orally and write everything on the board”
<b>B2.1.2.4. Practice writing</b>	Whether teachers believe in asking students to practice writing a lot in class.	“practice writing would really enrich their style and make it better”
<b>B2.1.2.5. Multiple-drafts writing</b>	Whether teachers believe in asking students to write more than one drafts about the same topic.	“the second draft could be useful in certain ways in perhaps the grammar mistakes much more than organisation of ideas, the organisation of ideas I believe should be clear from the very beginning”
<b>B2.1.2.6. Outlining</b>	Whether teachers believe in asking students to make an outline before start writing.	“working on the outline organising ideas from the very beginning saves the students the troubles of reorganising the whole essay later”
<b>B2.1.2.7. Practice reading</b>	Whether teachers believe in asking students to practice reading in class.	“reading is part of writing I think if you read about something then you will be able to recall back and use it in some way or another in the essay”
<b>B2.1.2.8. Imitating model writing</b>	Imitating a professional writing/ model	“it is very important to analyse other essays and to understand how it's built and then in the background of their mind they may know to recall it back when necessary”
<b>B2.1.2.9. Taking students’ preferences</b>	Whether teachers believe in taking students’ needs and preferences into consideration (e.g. choosing a topic they like)	“I just come to the conclusion that you have to choose a topic that is appealing to the students so that may facilitate the active writing on the part of the student
<b>C. [Beliefs about WCF]</b>		

<b>C1. Purpose of WCF</b>	Aim(s) of giving students feedback in their writing	“it's really important to draw the students' attention to their mistake and errors and of course that will enhance their writing for next time they try to avoid these mistakes and that would really stick to their minds”
<b>C2. Amount of WCF</b>	Whether teachers believe in mark all types of errors in the text, or focus on particular errors while leaving others uncorrected	
<b>C2.1. Selective</b>	Marking all types of errors in the text.	“I guess they [teachers] do not have to focus on all errors , they have to encourage the students to write so actually commenting on every error would really disappoint the student”
<b>C2.2. Comprehensive</b>	Focusing on particular errors while leaving others uncorrected	“all errors must be corrected”
<b>C3. Focus of WCF</b>	The types of errors that should receive more attention	
<b>C3.1. Language form</b>	The extent to which teachers believe in the importance of focusing on language errors (grammar, spelling, capitalisation, and punctuation).	“Teachers should ignore some of them grammatical mistakes because we're talking about essay writing. we are not correcting grammar exercises”.
<b>C3.2. Organisation</b>	The extent to which teachers believe in the importance of focusing on errors related to how the essay is organised (i.e. introduction, body, and conclusion)	“The focus should be on how the essay is organised”
<b>C3.3. Content</b>	Which is more important according to teachers, Content (e.g. ideas/development) or form (e.g. grammar, spelling, punctuation).	“The ideas are not as important as following the essay form and the language because everyone knows the information.. it's a rubbish I want to see the form or how you present this information”
<b>C4. Explicitness of WCF</b>	Whether teachers believe in making the feedback direct or indirect	“At the beginning when they are still not advanced we should point it and correct it for the girl later on when they are good enough, they should just put her a mark ,not even put for her any symbol”
<b>C4.1. Direct</b>	Giving explicit feedback by providing the correction through the addition of the missing form, crossing out the wrong form and writing out	“I would tell him you should have written it this way for example or sometimes I tell him what is wrong with the sentence and I tell him to rephrase it right now in the class so that I'm trying to illicit

	the correct form, or by writing the cause of the error and how it can be corrected (e.g. use present perfect with 'since')	answers for them but if they fail I tell them the answer"
<b>C4.2. Indirect</b>	Giving implicit feedback by crossing out/underlining/circling without providing the correction (uncoded) or putting a code such as 'v' for verb (coded)	"they [teachers] should write grammatical error and underline the part that contains that grammatical error so if it is a verb I underline the verb if it is a whole close for example I make a circle around the whole close"
<b>C4.2.1. Coded</b>	in which the type of error, such as "vt" for <i>verb tense</i> or "ro" for <i>run on</i> is indicated)	"they should write grammatical error and underline the part that contains that grammatical error"
<b>C4.2.2. uncoded</b>	in which the instructor circles or underlines an error but leaves it to the student writer to diagnose and solve the problem).	"when they are good enough, they should just put her a mark ,not even put for her any symbol"
<b>C5. Source of WCF</b>	Teachers' beliefs regarding who should provide feedback on students' writing	
<b>C5.1. Teachers</b>	Whether teachers should be the key providers of feedback	Researcher: who, do you think, should give feedback on students' writing? Interviewee: "I think it's our job"
<b>C5.2. Peer</b>	Whether teachers believe in letting students correct for their classmates	"one of my procedures, I ask the girls to exchange their essays, this is a great way, they [students] will know how to correct their own mistakes"
<b>C5.3. Teacher-led discussion</b>	Whether teachers believe in commenting on students directing the whole class discussing students errors.	"one of my procedures I ask the girls to exchange their essays this is a great way, they will know how to correct their own mistakes"
<b>C5.4. Self-editing</b>	Whether teachers believe in asking students to self-edit their errors	"at least there should be self editing and this is actually done when I ask them to write something in class and then they work on it later at home and I develop this activity to be assignment"
<b>C6. Positive versus negative feedback</b>	Any motivating term used such as (good introduction)	"feedback should cover strength and weaknesses because if you focus on the strength this would really encourage the students this is one this and this is really make a model for the other students to follow see how this is perfect how this is good whatever"
<b>C7. Change in WCF</b>	Whether teachers change/vary their feedback strategies depending on students' different ability levels.	"the feedback should not be too much on poor students because they hate it when there is much correction and feedback"

**Coding and sub-coding RQ2 (Teachers' practices regarding WCF):**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example from teachers' interviews</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b><u>[Writing instruction Practices]</u></b>	
<b>A1. Focus of writing instruction</b>	The linguistic focus of the writing teachers in the writing class	
<b>A1.1 Language form</b>	The extent to which teachers explain rules of language in the writing class	"Now we will explain the differences between present perfect and past simple tense"
<b>A1.2 Organisation</b>	The extent to which teachers explain how the essay should be organised in the writing class	"the introduction should have an argumentative thesis statement which people can refute"
<b>A1.3. Content</b>	The extent to which teachers help students with the ideas	"the ideas should have logical flow"
<b>A2. Writing activities</b>	The different activities the writing teachers implement in the class	
<b>A2.1. Outlining</b>	The extent to which teachers engage students in outlining activities.	"we will write on board an outline for the essay "the advantages of TV"
<b>A2.2. Imitating model writing</b>	The extent to which teachers ask students to work on model essays	"I want you to read the essay in the textbook and we will discuss the different parts and the language of the essay".
<b>A2.3. Common errors</b>	The extent to which teachers explain the common errors that most students in class share.	"I noticed that most of you make spelling mistake when writing the word <i>exercise</i> "
<b>A3. Source of feedback</b>	The extent to which teachers encourage students to take part in the feedback process	
<b>A3.1. Peer feedback</b>	The extent to which teachers ask students to comment on their classmates' writing	"I want each student to correct her classmate paper."
<b>A3.2. Teacher-led class discussion</b>	The extent to which the teacher lead the classroom in the feedback process.	"now I will ask each student to write on board the introductory paragraph of her essay and I want you girls to comment on her writing."



**Coding and sub-coding RQ4 (The factors that affect teachers' WCF practices):**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example from teachers' interviews</b>
<b>A. [Factors on teachers' writing instruction practices]</b>		
<b>A.1. Teachers' related factors</b>	The various factors related to the teachers and which affect their writing instruction practices.	
<b>A.1.1 Teachers' past learning experience</b>	The extent to which teachers' previous learning at schools affect their writing instruction.	<i>"I always remember the way that my teachers used to teach me and I adopt the approach yeah when I teach writing"</i>
<b>A.1.2. Teachers' practical experience</b>	The extent to which teachers' gained experience in teaching writing affect their writing instruction.	<i>"With practice, I learned that it is not useful to interrupt their process of thinking"</i>
<b>A.1.3. Lack of L1 shared with students</b>	The extent to which teachers' lack of L1 (Arabic language) affect their writing instruction.	<i>"I believe that writing should be taught by teachers who understand students' L1"</i>
<b>A.1.4. Teachers' Heavy Teaching Loads</b>	The extent to which the heavy teaching loads that the writing teachers have affect their writing instruction.	<i>"I have to teach two other modules other than writing and I have a lot of work to do"</i>
<b>A2. Students' related factors</b>	The various factors related to the students and which affect their writing instruction practices.	
<b>A2.1 Students' proficiency level</b>	The extent to which students' proficiency level affect teachers' writing instruction practices.	<i>"I could not ask them to correct for each other because of their level"</i>
<b>A2.2. Students' expectations</b>	The extent to which students' expectations and needs regarding how teaching writing should be affect their writing instruction practices.	<i>" We have to teach students the different language issues... This is how students assume the writing class will be discussing"</i>
<b>A2.3. Large students' numbers</b>	The extent to which students' large numbers in class affect teachers' writing instruction.	<i>"Students' large number is one of the biggest constraints that we face"</i>
<b>A2.4. Students' self-control/</b>	The extent to which students' lack of control/discipline in class affect teachers' writing	<i>"I had to ask them to stop working on the editing exercise because students were noisy"</i>

<b>behaviours</b>	instruction practices.	
<b>A3. Context related factors</b>	The various factors related to the culture and which affect their writing instruction practices.	
<b>A3.1 Exams' requirements</b>	The extent to which teachers focus on what will come in the writing exam.	"Because in the final exam, they will be asked to write an argumentative essay. If they do not know the basics for writing, they will fail"
<b>A3.2 Cultural effect</b>	The extent to which teachers are influenced by the cultural background in which they teach at.	"I could not implement peer feedback because students will take it personal"

**Coding and sub-coding RQ5 (students' preferences regarding WCF):**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example from teachers' interviews</b>
<b>A. <i>[Students' attitudes towards teachers' WCF]</i></b>		
<b>A1. Liking</b>	The extent to which students like the writing course	"I like the writing course because it helps me k
<b>A2. Usefulness</b>	The extent to which students benefit from the writing course and teachers' WCF	"Teachers' feedback help me to understand my errors and improve my writing"
<b>A2. Understanding</b>	The extent to which students understand teachers' WCF	"I do not understand all of my teachers' WCF"
<b>A3. Reaction</b>	The way in which students deal with teachers' unclear feedback	"When I do not understand a word, I ask my friend or sometimes I ask the teacher"