CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN L2 WRITING:

A Study of Practices and Effectiveness in the Bahrain Context

By

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ABSTRACT

This study had the following aims: (1) to investigate the feedback and teaching practices of L2 writing at the University of Bahrain through classroom observations; (2) to investigate the effectiveness of two types of written corrective feedback (a. direct corrective feedback in the form of corrections of errors next to or above the original errors and b. indirect corrective feedback in the form of error underlining) through a 12 week quasi-experimental study that involved 46 Bahraini media students assigned to one of three groups (experimental group A receiving direct corrective feedback, experimental group B receiving error underlining and the control group C receiving no corrections but rather simple and summative comments on performance) and evaluated through pre-, post- and delayed post-tests; (3) to investigate teachers' and students' beliefs about feedback through interviews and questionnaires. The following are the most important findings. (1) Classroom observations showed that there were several problems in the teaching of L2 writing and feedback methods at the University of Bahrain. (2) The quasi-experimental study showed that even though the students improved in the course of the experiment, neither type of corrective feedback had a significant effect on their accuracy, grammatical complexity or lexical complexity in writing, and that there was no difference in the effectiveness between the first type of feedback compared to the second. (3) Interviews and questionnaires showed that the students preferred direct corrective to indirect corrective feedback (i.e. they preferred it when their errors were corrected by providing the corrections on their scripts to underlining) and that the teachers and the students valued feedback and believed it was beneficial. Interviews and questionnaires also showed that even though the teachers used a variety of feedback methods, they did not follow up students after the first draft was produced. In the light of the findings, some recommendations are made in the final chapter of the thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis, from inception to finish, is of my own execution, unless otherwise indicated, that no one can make any claim to any part of it, and that it has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree to any other University or Institution.

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List of Abbreviations

ESL	English as a Second Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESP	English for Specific Purpose
EAP	English for Academic Purpose
EGP	English for General Purpose
EGAP	English for General Academic Purpose
ESAP	English for Specific Academic Purpose
EFT/T	Error-free T-units per T-unit
EFC/C	Error-free clauses per clause
E/T	Error per T-unit
NE/50W	Number of errors per 50 words
DC/T	Dependent clauses per T-unit
DC/C	Dependent clauses per clause
LWT/WT	Lexical word types per word types
WT/W	Word types per words
SWT/WT	Sophisticated word types per word types
LW/W	Lexical words per words

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background and Purpose

This study investigates the effect of two types of written corrective feedback (direct error correction and underlining with description of error type) on media students' writing accuracy and complexity in the context of tertiary level students in Bahrain. It also investigates L2 writing teaching practices and the methods of providing feedback at the University of Bahrain. Media students were selected for two reasons; first because I have been teaching L2 writing to media students for a long time, and second because there is a growing demand in the Bahraini public and private sectors for employees specializing in this field.

There is an increasing research focus on the role of teacher feedback as a key element of students' writing development (*e.g.* Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 2006; Hyland and Hyland, 2006). This has been influenced by the process approach in the 1970s which considered students' errors as part of their learning process and not a negative factor. Thus, the focus shifted from the product to the process of writing and to the cognitive behaviour of students before, while and after writing.

The effectiveness of feedback in the context of error correction is very important (Hyland and Hyland, 2006) but the question of whether error correction can positively influence students' writing is still uncertain.

This study employs two types of research method; quantitative, which includes a quasi-experimental study to investigate the efficacy of feedback on students' writing, and qualitative, where results are collected from observation and interviews conducted with students and teachers to investigate the teaching methodologies, the feedback practices and the attitudes and beliefs of teachers and students about feedback.

1.1 The Study Motivation

This study has two aims; first, to investigate teacher practices in teaching L2 (English) writing at the University of Bahrain with a view to developing recommendations for improving these practices; and second, to make a small contribution to the debate on the effectiveness of corrective feedback in L2 writing by conducting a quasi-experimental study that investigates the relative effectiveness of two types of feedback versus no feedback (*see Chapter 3*).

The debate on the effectiveness of feedback has been ongoing for some time. An important early contribution was that of Truscott (1996), who, influenced by SLA research indicating that grammar teaching of specific forms was only effective if learners were at the appropriate developmental stage to acquire that form, argued that corrective feedback was substantially ineffective. This position was maintained and developed in future studies (*e.g.* Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2004; Truscott and Hsu, 2008). There are, however, a number of researchers who have argued, against Truscott, that feedback could be effective. For example, Ferris (1999) argued that teachers should continue to provide grammar correction because it could be useful, and Chandler (2003) claimed that grammar correction could improve students' writing.

The study undertaken as part of this thesis examines the relative effectiveness of two types of feedback, as well as feedback compared with no feedback, in terms of the input on the accuracy and complexity of students' writing (*see Chapter 5*). While similar studies have been conducted, this study is an original contribution in that it focuses on a relatively little-studied population, Arab learners, who, compared with other students, are at a fairly elementary level. The study offers an opportunity, therefore, to see if previous findings can be generalized to a wider population. The study also makes a more practical contribution to the improvement of teaching practices at the University of Bahrain through an observational study of feedback teaching practices; and the development of recommendations based on these observations. The main research questions are outlined in the section below.

1.2 Background to the Study

In the following sections we will provide some background about school and university education in Bahrain. First, the educational structure in Bahrain is explained, followed by a discussion on the role of English. Then, problems of teaching and learning English in schools and at the University of Bahrain are analyzed and discussed, focusing on issues such as recruitment of teachers and admission policy. Finally, some background is provided about the University of Bahrain and issues concerning teaching and learning English at the University are outlined, focusing on media students and other matters.

1.2.1 The Structure of Education in Bahrain and the Role of English

Schooling in Bahrain lasts for twelve years. The government provides free education and it is compulsory for students aged between 6 and 14. The structure of education in Bahrain consists of two stages which are basic education and secondary education. The basic education stage has three cycles which involve students aged between 6 and 14 (primary and intermediate). The secondary education stage is for students aged between 15 and 17 and involves general, commercial and technical education. Table 1.1 below shows the structure of education in Bahrain:

Table 1.1 –Structure of Education in Bahrain – Adapted from the Ministry of Education Website: (www.moe.gov.bh/en/).

Grade	Age	Stage			Religious Education (Primary, Intermediate, Secondary)
12	17	Secondary Education	General	Technical & Vocational (Specialized Track – Advanced Track)	
11	16				
10	15				
9	14	Basic Education	3rd Cycle (Intermediate)		
8	13				
7	12				
6	11		2nd Cycle (Primary)		
5	10				
4	9				
3	8		1st Cycle (primary)		
2	7				
1	6				

Table 1.2 below shows the number of students and classrooms in government education in 2012-2013:

Table 1.2 –Number of Students and Classrooms in Government Education - Adapted from the Ministry of Education Website: (www.moe.gov.bh/en/).

Level	Type of Education	Students			Classrooms		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Primary	General	30378	32146	62524	1073	1112	2158
	Religious	1365		1365	44		44
	Total	31743	32146	63889	1117	1112	2229
Intermediate	General	15819	16106	31925	505	511	1016
	Religious	577		577	20		20
	Total	16396	16106	32502	525	511	1036
Secondary	Science	7	1	8			-
	Literacy	4		4			-
	Commercial	3	3	6			-
	Track unification	9332	14920	24252	318	497	815
	Technical	1765		1765	76		76
	Vocational training	396		396	19		19
	Vocational apprenticeship (Technical)	3068		3068	118		118
	Vocational apprenticeship (Commercial)	122	847	969	6	34	40
	Religious	122		122	7		7
	Total	14819	15771	30590	544	531	1075
Grand Total		62958	64023	126981	2166	2154	4340

The credit-hours system is employed in the secondary education which allows students to register courses based on their chosen vocation. Once students are awarded the secondary education certificate, they can enter the University.

In 2001, the Ministry of Education accepted applications to establish private universities. The applications came mainly from Bahraini businessmen and well-known merchants and between 2001 and 2004, eight private universities were established to provide higher education to students who could not enter the University of Bahrain because of their overall score. However, these universities caused some problems as the Ministry of Education questioned the quality of education they provided.

Though the official language in teaching the curriculum in Bahraini schools is Arabic, English is important and commonly used. Since 2004, English is taught to students from first year of primary instead of fourth year of primary as in the past. It is

considered a core subject along with Arabic and Mathematics. The government of Bahrain views English as an important asset for economy and university education and individuals see it essential for their personal growth within public and private organizations. For example, in April 2008, the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Bahrain organized its second international conference, entitled '*Language, Literature and Translation in an Interdependent World.*' The conference represented an eclectic mixture of theoretical and pedagogical research in language, translation and literature. The guest speaker of the conference was Anwar Mohamed Abdulrahman, the editor in chief of 'Akhbar Al Khaleej' newspaper, which is Bahrain's first and most popular newspaper. He delivered a speech entitled '*The Power of English,*' in which he said, addressing an audience of students from different departments at the University "If one day you were unlucky to come and work in my newspaper, then make sure that the first thing I would be checking is your English."

In 2004, the Economic Development Board in Bahrain (EDB), embarked on a general strategy to reform the labour market by conducting a series of workshops and carrying out various studies. One study states that 70% of Bahraini school graduates are unable to pass the TOEFL examination and suffer from weaknesses in English, though it is one of the main requirements to find a suitable career in the market (R.B.L.M.R., 2004:4). Ggraduates in Bahrain do not attract employers because of their poor English, particularly in speaking and writing, in addition to other problems. The study attributes the language weakness to inappropriate teaching methodologies and unskilled language teachers.

The teaching of English in Bahrain has developed in the last 50 years. The Ministry of Education has implemented different educational strategies to enhance the teaching methodologies and curricula in this subject. This has been done by carrying out specialized studies and consulting teaching experts from the United Kingdom, in addition to continued cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the British Council in Bahrain and other international educational institutions inside and outside the country. In addition, many workshops, seminars and conferences have been held to improve English language teaching. Bahraini educationalists believe that the teaching of English in Bahraini public schools has improved during the last five years. The government realizes that English is important for job opportunities. This is apart from

the historic strong relationships between the governments of the two countries, Bahrain and the United Kingdom, which came to existence more than 150 years ago and influenced the formal educational system, the culture, the nature and the needs of the Bahraini community.

1.2.2 Analysis of Problems of Learning and Teaching English in Bahrain

There are several factors influencing the quality of the teaching and learning of English at the University of Bahrain. These are students' pre-existing English skills, inefficient teaching, inadequate textbooks, students' attitudes to English and other factors discussed below.

Students' Low Proficiency in English

Students of government-funded schools are weak and suffer from problems in writing in English, mainly in vocabulary, syntax and grammar and discourse. The Quality Assurance Authority (QAA) in Bahrain issued an annual report, QAA (2011), evaluating English proficiency of random samples of students from primary, intermediate and secondary schools. Students were fair in reading and listening but very weak in writing (pp. 41-43).

In syntax, for example, students' writing contain errors in the use of correct verb tense, auxiliaries, word order, cohesion, linking words, parts of speech such as *adverb/adjective* confusion, definite and indefinite articles, prepositions and many other features of syntax. Their writing also has lexical problems such as the inability to retrieve and use appropriate words.

At the discourse level, students are unable to write cohesively and often fail to produce well-connected sentences. In general they are unable to write different genres and they have no awareness of the nature of the language, vocabulary and style that are required to fulfill a writing task; for example, writing a formal letter or a short story

In organization, students face difficulties in setting their writing goals and prioritizing their ideas. They do not consider their audience when they write because they are unaware of the importance of the impression they make on their readers. They cannot introduce their compositions with proper topic sentences or divide their writings into an introduction, main body and conclusion. They do not know when to use paragraphs and how to separate their ideas into independent units of thought.

Influence of Teaching and Learning L1 on L2

It is worth mentioning that in Bahrain, as in the rest of the Arab countries, students learn two types of Arabic. The first is the colloquial Arabic (slang) and it is not taught at school but naturally acquired at home. It is used for daily normal communication between people. The second is classical Arabic, which is the very formal version of the language and is taught at school and used in educational and academic settings. Students in Bahrain are taught writing strategies and skills in Arabic from the first primary level. Although they are also introduced to English from the first primary level, they are not asked to write in English until they go to the fourth primary level. The teaching of Arabic to students can have a number of effects on their learning of writing in English. These effects can be negative in one side and positive in another, For example, when students develop good writing skills in Arabic such as summarizing, editing, revising etc., it is likely that they will use these skills when writing in English which might enhance their writing product. However, Arabic can also have a negative effect on writing in English in the form of interlanguage or language transfer. This means that students, being influenced by their mother tongue (Arabic), might transfer ideas, meanings, structures, forms and even idioms and collocations from their L1 into L2, resulting in conflict in the language system which leads to errors. In my Master's attempt (Mubarak, 2003) to investigate the types of interference errors in the English writing of sophomores at the University of Bahrain, many types of interference errors at the grammatical and lexical levels were found.

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Chapter 1

The Gap between School and University English

Students coming to university are surprised that school English is totally different from university English. Teaching methodologies are also different as students are no longer spoon-fed everything by their teachers. At university level, students discover that they lack vocabulary and grammar, and the knowledge of genre and discourse to meet the requirements of their colleges and specializations. The current school education does not prepare students for university level English, and thus many students quit university from the first year or continue struggling with their poor language skills.

That said, when students join the University of Bahrain, they go through an English orientation programme of nine hours for one semester. However, they can advance to the first year even if they do not pass the orientation programme. The result is a large number of students of poor proficiency enter their first year at the University, even though many of them have not been able to pass the orientation programme.

Poor English at schools may be attributed to reasons related to inefficient teaching and courses of low proficiency. The teaching approach to L2 writing at the University is product-centered and old-fashioned, neglecting the importance of students' writing process. The records of the University show no single research carried out by the faculty members on the situation at the University and particularly the teaching of L2 writing and how it can be improved. The Quality Assurance Authority report, Q.A.A. (2011), evaluated the general performance of primary, intermediate and secondary schools. The results showed that 12% of primary schools, 28% of intermediate schools and 46% of secondary schools had unsatisfactory performance (p. 25). Teaching methodologies of English were also evaluated in all schools and the results showed that 33% of methodologies were unsatisfactory. The report described the results as "worrying" because teachers suffered from weakness in English and, therefore, could not teach efficiently (p. 29). One of the problems of English study in government-funded schools is inefficient teaching. In many cases, teachers teach English through Arabic by translating most what they say into Arabic because students do not understand English (Mubarak, 2003). They are untrained and lack the awareness of techniques of teaching ESL. Due to inefficient teaching, students have deficiencies

communicating in speaking and writing (Q.A.A., 2011:29). English classes are teacher-centered and students' assessment is mainly content-based and depends on memorization.

Students' Motivation

There is a wide cultural gap between Arabic and English in the minds of students. Although they acknowledge that mastering English could secure a decent job in the future, they seem unmotivated to learn it. They are often nervous about communicating in English and prefer Bahraini and Arab teachers of English to native teachers because Bahraini and Arab teachers can communicate with them in Arabic during class and this may be attributed to several reasons. For example, inefficient teaching may make students distant from English. Since the curriculum used focuses mainly on grammar, this may also be another reason why students do not like English as they are not engaged with learning by the materials used. They may also be unmotivated if they feel that their failure to communicate in English could embarrass them in front of their peers or if they have bad experiences with previous English teachers.

Teachers' Recruitment in Bahraini Schools

English teachers are mainly recruited from Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan as well as locally from Bahrain. Many expatriates are not evaluated before they are hired and the qualifications are not checked. As mentioned earlier, many teachers lack efficient teaching and have problems with English speaking, pronunciation, vocabulary and teaching methodology.

Political Factors

In Bahrain, some government decisions are made under pressure by parliament or political parties. Recruitment of teachers in the government-funded schools is undertaken in many cases to avoid pressures imposed by parliament or political parties on the government to provide jobs for university graduates. Teachers are sometimes hired for reasons of political pressure without consideration of their competence to

teach, which negatively influences the quality of teaching in government-funded schools. For example, 'Al-Bilad,' a Bahraini newspaper, published on April 25th, 2012 an official statement from the Ministry of Education, indicating that 47% of university graduates fail to pass the teachers recruitment examination run by the Ministry as in Table 1.3 below (*see Appendix I-1 for copy of the original newspaper report*):

Table 1.3 –Number of Passing and Failing Applicants for Teaching Posts - 2011

No. of Applicants for Teaching Posts	Passed	Failed
2507	1353 (53%)	1174 (47%)

In the same newspaper report, a Member of Parliament criticized the Ministry of Education for not recruiting all applicants and suspected the numbers released by the Ministry. He demanded that the Ministry reconsider its recruitment policy. In another case, 'Al-Waqt' newspaper published on April 22nd, 2010 a statement issued by a Member of Parliament (*see Appendix I-2 for copy of the original statement*) criticizing the Ministry of Education recruitment examinations, describing them as "incapacitating" and urging the Ministry to change its recruitment policy. In a more serious case, a Member of Parliament demanded recruitment of all university graduates regardless of their examination performance.

In many cases, and due to political pressure, the Ministry of Education was forced to recruit many teachers even though they were inefficient.

Students' Financial Background

Another issue is students' financial background, resulting in differences between their levels of English in the first year of primary school. Some students can do better than others because their parents are financially able to send them to kindergarten where they are taught English. Other students, who did not go to kindergarten, would need very basic English. These differences create a serious problem for students and teachers as well who need to cater to students' individual needs.

University Admission Policy

Students entering university in Bahrain do so on the basis of the school leaving exam. They do not take an English test such as IELTS or TOEFL for admission. While this gives school graduates opportunity to take university education, it also means that many students of poor level are in the first year.

1.2.3 The University of Bahrain Media Students and English

The University of Bahrain was founded in 1986, merging two educational institutes, the University College of Arts, Science and Education and the Gulf Polytechnic, which were established in the 1960s. The two institutes became the University of Bahrain, the first national university in the Kingdom. It first consisted of five colleges, which were the colleges of Arts, Engineering, Business, Science and Education and in 1999, four new colleges were added: the colleges of Information Technology, Law, Applied Studies and the Teachers' College.

These colleges offer undergraduate B.Sc. degrees and some postgraduate degrees, mainly M.A. The University has a total enrollment of 12000 students at undergraduate level and 680 employees as academic and teaching staff and 1200 employees as administrative staff. Table 1.4 below shows the number of students admitted to the University of Bahrain based on statistics released in 2010:

Table 1.4 –Students' Enrollment at the University of Bahrain in - 2010

College	Number of Students Admitted
Business Administration	1548
Arts and Humanities	475
Applied Sciences	575
Law	249
Science	437
Engineering	562
Information Technology	632
Total	4478

The Department of Media

In 1997-1998, the University of Bahrain started a B.A. programme in Media. Initially, the programme was offered by the Department of General Studies in the College of Arts but in 1999, an independent Department for Media, Tourism and Fine Arts was established, offering B.A. degrees in Media and Tourism in addition to several elective modules in Fine Arts. Two years later, the Department of Media, Tourism and Fine Arts revised all its academic programmes and re-introduced them, focusing on practical skills. In 2004, the University of Bahrain established the Bahrain Credit Media Centre, which was a specialized centre in media at the very heart of the University.

In 2002, the number of Arabic and English newspapers increased from four between 1976 and 2002 to ten between 2003 and 2008. In addition, many media organizations offering consultancy and information solutions were established. Different public relations bodies in the public and private sectors started to respond to whatever was written in newspapers. Because of the change the Bahraini community has witnessed, the demand for employees specializing in media and public relations, (*e.g.* editors, journalists, reporters, columnists and other related professions) has increased considerably. These, being professions sought by employers in the Bahraini local market, require English language skills because English is gradually becoming as important as Arabic in many governmental and private organizations in the Kingdom of Bahrain due to the large number of expatriates living in the country. Unless journalists and reporters have full mastery of the language, they will not be successful in accomplishing their assignments.

Chapter 1

Media students at the University of Bahrain will enjoy great opportunities in the future due to the growing demand in media graduates in the Bahraini market. Yet it is a fact that most Bahraini institutions, if not all, consider the mastery of the English language, particularly written and spoken, a principal requirement for recruitment. Every candidate's English is tested. In fact, these institutions seek help from educational organizations to design and supervise tests given to job applicants in order to shortlist them.

English Courses in the B.A. Programme of Media

Students who join the Department of Media at the University of Bahrain have to complete an academic programme of 147 credited hours taught through 61 courses. The programme includes five three-credit ESP modules. The foundation language modules are English 111, English 112 and English 203, which focus on all language skills with particular emphasis on writing, grammar and vocabulary. The other two modules are English 352 and English 453, which are introduced to the students during their third and fourth year. There are also media courses that are taught to students in English; either by faculty members of the Department of English or by faculty members of the Department of Media. These modules include a great deal of English terminology and usage. Students take the following compulsory courses taught in English:

1. *Media 272: Communication Theories*

2. *Media 352: English for Media I*

3. *Media 453: English for Media II*

4. *Media 371: Means of Media in Bahrain*

5. *Media 355: Translation of Media Language*

6. *Media 471: International Media*

7. *Media 318: Internet Press*

8. *Media 432: Organisational Communication*

9. *Media 336: International Media and Public Relations*

10. *Media 343: Visual Digital Design*

11. *Media 442: Internet Website Design*

12. *Media 446: 3D Graphics Design*

More than 20% of the whole programme is in English. Students have to produce written assignments in English and hand them in to their teachers as part of their assessment portfolio.

The Course English 111

The course English 111 is a first year college requirement for students of media, which is a prerequisite for English 112, in the first semester. This means that students are not allowed to proceed to another English course unless they have passed English 111 with a minimum score of D, which is 60 out of 100.

English 111 is the first of a series of integrated courses designed to develop all-round operational proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is not only a writing module, but includes reading, grammar, listening, speaking and vocabulary. The emphasis in English 111 is on writing, grammar and vocabulary. Students go through seven units, each of which is on a specific topic related to different fields of knowledge. Throughout each unit, students have to deal with grammar, vocabulary and writing in addition to reading and listening. They are taught writing skills twice in each unit. The following section presents the course materials, syllabus and assessment scale followed in the module.

Chapter 1

Materials, Syllabus, Objectives and Assessment

The textbook used for English 111 is '*Going for Gold Intermediate Course Book',* by Acklam & Crace (2003). The course covers the first seven units, from pages 4 to 63. The rest of the units, from pages 64 to 133, are covered in English 112 in the next semester, which means that the same textbook is used for both courses. The topics of the first seven units cover the primary language skills (reading, listening and writing) and also focus on grammar and vocabulary. Students have writing classes once or twice a week (*see Appendix G for copy of the syllabus*). They have to write one or two compositions starting from week 2 until the end of week 12 and they are assigned writing tasks related to the topic of the unit. Every unit of the textbook includes sections on grammar and vocabulary. These are introduced to students almost every day.

The course objectives are as follows. In writing, the module aims to familiarize students with different genres, such as informal letters, stories, writing short reports and filling in forms. It also introduces the students to some necessary structural and organizational items and rules in writing, such as linking words, vocabulary and a variety of sentence structures. The course also aims to help students edit their own work. In vocabulary, the module aims to help students work out meaning from context, use strategies for recording vocabulary and derive words by using common suffixes. In addition, the module targets the use of adverbs of frequency, adverbs of manner and common collocations. In grammar, the module's objectives are to help students form direct and indirect questions, and use different present and past tenses and modal verbs. It also familiarizes students with reported statements, and reported questions.

Table 1.5 below presents the assessment scheme followed in the course. Tests 1, 2 and the final examination include a lengthy writing question:

Table 1.5 –Assessment Scheme for the Course ENGL 111

Assessment Tool	Percentage out of 100%
Test 1	20%
Test 2	20%
Listening Test	10%
Final Examination	50%

1.2.4 Conclusion

Education in Bahrain has many challenges. Though the government is spending a great deal on education, providing proper school buildings and equipment, and recruiting many teachers whenever there is need, there are problems in the educational system such as the gap between school and university education, inefficiency teaching at schools, improper recruitment and evaluation policies, the University orientation and other problems (*see Chapter 7 for recommendations*).

1.3 The Research Questions

a) Based on Observation:

1. What are the methodologies employed in teaching L2 writing in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Bahrain?

2. What types of feedback practices are employed by writing teachers in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Bahrain?

b) Based on the Quasi-experimental Study:

1. Does corrective feedback lead to an increase in the accuracy and complexity of student writing compared to no or minimal feedback?

2. Which of two types of corrective feedback (a. direct corrective feedback in the form of written corrections of errors on students' compositions and b. indirect corrective feedback in the form of error underlining) has greater influence on the accuracy and complexity of student writing?

Details of the methodology employed and the operational definitions of key terms (*e.g.* accuracy, complexity, types of corrective feedback) are provided in Chapter 3.

c) Based on Interviews and Questionnaires:

1. How do students view the feedback provided by teachers?

2. What form of feedback do they prefer?

3. How do teachers view students' responses to the feedback they are given?

1.4 Thesis Structure

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 reviews the literature concerning approaches to teaching L2 writing, approaches to teaching academic writing and key issues in feedback, discussing different types of teacher response to students' writing with emphasis on the role of written corrective feedback.

Chapter 3 explains the research methodologies employed in the study. This covers the procedures employed in the quasi-experimental study on the effectiveness of feedback, the methods used in the observation of teaching and feedback practices at the University of Bahrain and the details of interviews and questionnaires conducted with teachers and students.

Chapter 4 details the findings of observations, describing and analyzing the L2 writing teaching methodologies and feedback practices of four teachers from the Department of English Language and Literature. It also discusses the advantages and problems of the teaching methodologies and feedback practices employed.

Chapter 5 outlines the findings of the quasi-experimental study, detailing the results of the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test and providing a comparison between the results of the three groups of the experiment and a within-group comparison as well.

Chapter 6 details and summarizes the findings of the interviews and questionnaires conducted with students and teachers, discussing their beliefs and attitudes about the effectiveness of feedback regardless of their actual practices.

Chapter 7 summarizes the research findings and discusses their theoretical and practical implications. It also develops recommendations to deal with the problems raised and suggests issues for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: Feedback in L2 Writing

2.0 Introduction

There is a very large body of literature on L2 writing, covering a) cognitive processes in writing; b) comparison between L1 and L2 writing; c) comparison between skilled and unskilled writers; d) approaches and practices in teaching L2 writing; e) academic and general writing; and f) feedback in L2 writing. However, the focus in this review is mainly on written corrective feedback in L2 writing and its effectiveness.

First we introduce the dominant teaching approaches to L2 writing, focusing on the product approach, the process approach and the genre approach. We present a historical background of these approaches and discuss their characteristics, advantages and limitations. We also shed some light on how feedback is provided to L2 writing students in each approach.

Then academic writing is discussed, with emphasis on the teaching approaches to academic writing (study skills, academic socialization and academic literacies), focusing on their characteristics, and their advantages and limitations. We also compare and contrast specific and general academic writing and discuss issues on the specificity debate. Feedback in academic writing is also discussed.

Finally, we focus on written corrective feedback in L2 writing and outline the main types of feedback such as direct correction, indirect correction, error correction codes, reformulation, peer feedback and teacher-student conferencing. The main modes of corrective feedback (direct correction, underlining and coding) are discussed. We also examine previous empirical research, review articles on the effectiveness of feedback and summarize the findings of studies that compare the effectiveness of different types of feedback or compare feedback to no feedback. This is followed by a discussion of the similarities and differences between the current study and previous

studies that have investigated the effectiveness of feedback in order to position the current study among others in the literature.

2.1 Approaches to the Teaching of L2 writing

2.1.1 Historical Background

Until recently, relatively very few studies had looked into teaching L2 writing. The main focus had always been on teaching L1 writing:

> **"…it is disappointing to find that, except for one pilot study (Briere 1966) almost no research has been done in the teaching of composition to learners of a second language."**

> **[Zamel, 1976:67]**

However, the situation has changed now as more studies have approached L2 writing as different from L1. This change occurred in the 1980s when EFL/ESL writing became an important area of research and attracted the interest of language researchers. Hyland (2003) claims that theories on teaching L2 writing have been enthusiastically adopted into teaching practices in classrooms. But even now, the area of L2 writing is described, according to Ferris and Hedgcock (2005:3), as lacking "a tidy corpus of conclusive theory and research on which to base a straightforward introduction to processes of learning and teaching." They even go further to say that despite the significance of L2 writing as an area of research, it is still too early to claim that a comprehensive theory of L2 writing has been established. Cumming and Riazi (2000) observe that the field of L2 writing needs to be understood better, for people still do not know how to learn to write and teachers have an incomplete knowledge of how teaching can contribute to the learning of L2 writing. Hyland (2002:78) addresses the question of how writing should be taught and concludes: "unfortunately writing research provides no cut-and-dried

answer to this question." In other words, we still do not know enough about teaching L2 writing.

Writing teachers have to be careful in choosing a suitable approach or combining a number of approaches, taking into account the classroom situation and individual differences between students. As Horowitz (1986:144) puts it: "teachers should be extremely cautious about embracing an overall approach." Below we review a range of approaches in the teaching of L2 writing.

2.1.2 The Product Approach: History and Characteristics

The product approach emerged as a combination of structural linguistics and behaviorist learning theory, which was popular in the 1960s (Silva, 1990). It is also known as a product oriented-approach as described by Kroll (2001) or the "traditional paradigm" in the context of English language education in the U.S. (Berlin, 1987; Bloom, Daiker et al., 1997).

The focus of the product approach is on formal text units or the grammatical characteristics of a text. Research (*e.g.* Badger and White, 2000; Hyland, 2003; Pincas 1982a) viewed writing in this approach as a product, produced and controlled by the writer based on his knowledge of linguistics, vocabulary, syntactic patterns and cohesive devices. The emphasis in this approach is on the final outcome of writing and it considers language proficiency as the most important element of writing (Sommers, 1982). Learners are given writing models to imitate before they are evaluated by their teachers (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005) and writing is taught through four stages, which are familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing and free writing. Below is a description of each stage:

a. Familiarization: in this stage students are exposed to grammatical and lexical exercises through a text. Frodesen and Holten (2003) say that there is no doubt about the importance of grammar as an element of L2 writing teaching, but it is the way grammar is incorporated with other components of writing which makes the difference to its best effectiveness. This technique operates by

setting writing tasks that draw the students' attention to organization while they also work on grammar and syntax. Raimes (1983) explains how this technique works:

"…to write a clear set of instructions on how to operate a calculator, the writer needs more than the appropriate vocabulary. He needs the simple forms of verbs; and organizational plan based on chronology; sequence words like first, then, finally; and perhaps even   sentence structure like "When…, then…"

[Raimes, 1983:8]

While students are preparing for the task, the teacher will present language items to them. Then, students will have to find the relationship between what they want to write and the language tools they need to perform the writing task. The aim of this technique is to connect the objective of a writing task, and the tools or forms needed to achieve the objective.

b. Controlled writing: in which learners utilize fixed writing patterns using substitution tables as shown in Table 2.1 below, from Hamp-Lyons and Heasley (1987:23):

Table 2.1 – A Substitution Table – Hamp-Lyons and Heasley (1987:23)

There are The	Y	types kinds classes categories	of X	: A, B and C. . These are A, B, and C are A, B, and C
X	consists of can be divided into classes	Y	categories classes kinds types	. These are A, B, and C. : A, B, and C.
A, B and C are	Kinds types categories	of X.		

c. Guided writing: in which learners are given model texts, such as a letter to a friend or a letter of complaint, to imitate.

d. Free writing: where the learners write compositions using the writing patterns they have developed.

Raimes (1983) described stages 2, 3 and 4, (i.e. controlled writing, guided writing and free writing) as a sequential technique, or a controlled-to-free-technique, in which the teacher involves students in a series of activities progressing from sentence exercises to paragraph exercises. Students then copy or manipulate language items; for example, changing forms from questions to statements, or present to past, linking sentences and working on given material. The teacher will not shift to free writing or to a higher level unless students have shown mastery of writing skills. For example, in a product approach based writing class, students would first be familiarized with a number of items to describe a setting such as a classroom. They would be taught the adjectives and the prepositions used to describe the classroom. The teacher would read a model text and highlight the features of its genre. He would then shift to the controlled writing stage, where students would develop simple sentences using a substitution table. In the guided writing stage, the teacher may present a picture of a classroom and students would describe what they see in the picture. In the final stage, students could describe a classroom or any other setting using their own imagination and their own words and applying the structure they were taught.

The product approach places emphasis on the written text and on the linguistic knowledge of writers. It also considers the development of writing as resulting mainly from the teacher's input (Badger and White, 2000).

The Functional Approach

Another method that falls under the product approach is the functional approach. This approach focuses on functions in writing. It was introduced in the 1960s and was substantially influenced by the product approach. Raimes (1983) refers to the functional

approach as paragraph pattern writing because students are taught to divide their writing into an introduction, a body and a conclusion. Raimes (1983) states that the functional approach aims to familiarize students from different cultural backgrounds with the features of English L1 writing through a number of exercises:

> **"...copy paragraphs, analyze the form of model paragraphs, imitate model passages, put scrambled sentences into paragraph order, identify general and specific statements, choose or invent an appropriate topic sentence and insert or delete sentences."**
>
> **[Raimes, 1983:8]**

It focuses on the purpose of writing a particular text and the rhetorical functions in that text. Students produce effective paragraphs through developing topic sentences until they end up writing full cohesive and coherent paragraphs. Each paragraph is seen as a unit that contains sentences and aims to convey a particular message or describe a specific process. This approach requires a functionally-oriented textbook. Table 2.2 below is a contents page illustrating the functional approach with units on rhetorical functions such as descriptions, definitions and classifications:

Table 2.2 –A Functionally Oriented Syllabus – (Adapted from Jordan, 1990 as cited in Hyland, 2003:7)

Unit 1	Structure and cohesion
Unit 2	Description: Process and procedure
Unit 3	Description: Physical
Unit 4	Narrative
Unit 5	Definitions
Unit 6	Exemplification
Unit 7	Classification

The units have exercises that aim to help writers express a particular function. The writing tasks also often involve generating a composition from an outline, or imitating a model text.

Another method used in this approach, especially in cause and effect compositions, is block and chain organization. This approach uses different structures of words to discuss reasons and results. Oshima and Hogue (1991, 2007) explain that in the block organization, the teacher will first discuss all the causes of a phenomenon in a block. Each cause is written in a paragraph. Then all the effects are discussed in a block. In chain organization, one cause is discussed followed by its effects and then a second cause is discussed followed by its effects. Table 2.3 below illustrates block and chain organizations:

Table 2.3 –The Block and Chain Method – Adapted from Oshima and Hogue (1991: 34)

Block Organization	Chain Organization
Introduction	Introduction
First cause	First cause
Second cause	Effect
Transition paragraph	Second cause
First effect	Effect
Second effect	Third cause
Third effect	Effect
Conclusion	Conclusion

2.1.2.1 Feedback in the Product Approach

In the product approach, the emphasis of feedback on students' writing is on structure and lexis, and is known as corrective feedback. Feedback can take the form of written or oral comments. Swain (1995) and Lyster (1994) claim that focus on form can improve learners' performance. Ellis (1994) explains that the focus on form is done by providing corrective feedback.

The grammar correction method pays attention to students' structural errors by either directly providing the correct form of a structure on students' scripts or indirectly guiding students by underlining or circling the incorrect forms and leaving it to students

to look them up. Another method is using codes such as 'WO' to indicate a word order error, 'WW' to indicate a wrong word error or 'T' to indicate a tense error.

2.1.2.2 Advantages and Limitations of the Product Approach

Since the focus in the product approach is on form, it is easy to use with large classes. It is also easier to mark compositions because the teacher can easily direct his or her attention to the form while correcting. This approach is useful for situations where the emphasis on form is important or where the focus on structure is the main target. It has been widely used and teachers are quite familiar with it. It might also be suitable for lower level learners because it helps them correct and eliminate their errors (Tribble, 1996).

However, even though the structural approach dominated the area of L2 writing for many years, it has a number of limitations. First, as Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) explain, this approach does not pay attention to strategies of learning and cognitive processes of writing. In other words, it focuses on the writing structure and use of vocabulary as the main indicators of writing development, neglecting the writing processes that students go through in writing (pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing). Second, it may create problems as it restricts the teaching of writing to syntactic and grammatical accuracy, thus limiting students' understanding of good writing (Hyland, 2003). Third, the focus on grammar skills has not proved to be effective in improving writing ability and many researchers reject the emphasis on grammar, arguing that it has little to do with the act of writing (Zamel, 1976). While Hinkel and Fotos (2002) believe that grammar teaching can be helpful and productive in ESL and EFL writing classrooms, other studies take the opposite view. Hudson (2001) argues that to prove that teaching grammar improves writing, further research needs to be carried out. Another weakness in the approach lies in the assumption that good writing can be achieved by applying certain functional rules. In fact, writing is much more than that (O'Hare, 1973). Fourth, it restricts students' creativity as it relies on imitation (Hyland, 2003). Fifth, the use of language in this approach is restricted to fixed patterns that are learned by imitating other models (Pincas, 1962).

The product approach is widely followed in Bahrain. From my experience, many teachers both at schools and universities focus on grammar and vocabulary before asking students to write and also when providing feedback. I detail the methods followed in teaching L2 writing at the University of Bahrain in Chapter 4.

2.1.3 The Process Approach: History and Characteristics

The process approach came into existence in reaction to product approach pedagogies (Miller, 1991). It had a strong effect on L1 and L2 writing instruction and opened new horizons in L1 and L2 writing research (Coe, 1987; Miller, 1991). In the 1970s and 1980s, the focus of L2 writing research shifted from grammar teaching, grammar correction and writing mechanisms to the cognitive processes of writing, and these processes became an important concern for L2 instructors (Matsuda, 2003). Zamel (1976) stresses that we have to approach writing from a different aspect from grammar if we want to understand the processes writers engage in.

Tribble (1996) defines the process approach as:

"...an approach to the teaching of writing which stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and which pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models."

[Tribble, 1996:160]

This approach leads students to the phase of a finished text publication as it goes beyond linguistic knowledge to focus on linguistic skills and involves identifiable stages (Merriwether, 1997). Reid (1993) describes writing as a multi-stage process. Goldstein and Carr (1996) refer to the process of writing as a range of strategies that include pre-writing, planning, drafting and revising. Hedge (2005) explains that the process of composing a text goes through different stages of revision, editing and generating. Figure 2.1 below illustrates these stages:

being motivated to write	getting ideas together	planning and outlining	making notes	making a first draft	revising replanning redrafting	editing and getting ready for publication
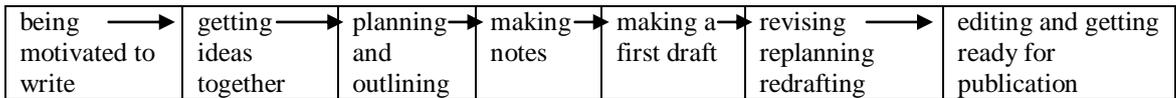
Figure 2.1 –The Stages of Writing Process – Adapted from Hedge (2005:51)

Raimes (1985) and Smith (1982) state that the writing process is not linear but recursive; that is, students may plan, revise and edit, and then revise and edit again. Figure 2.2 below from Coffin et al. (2003) shows how writing process is recursive:
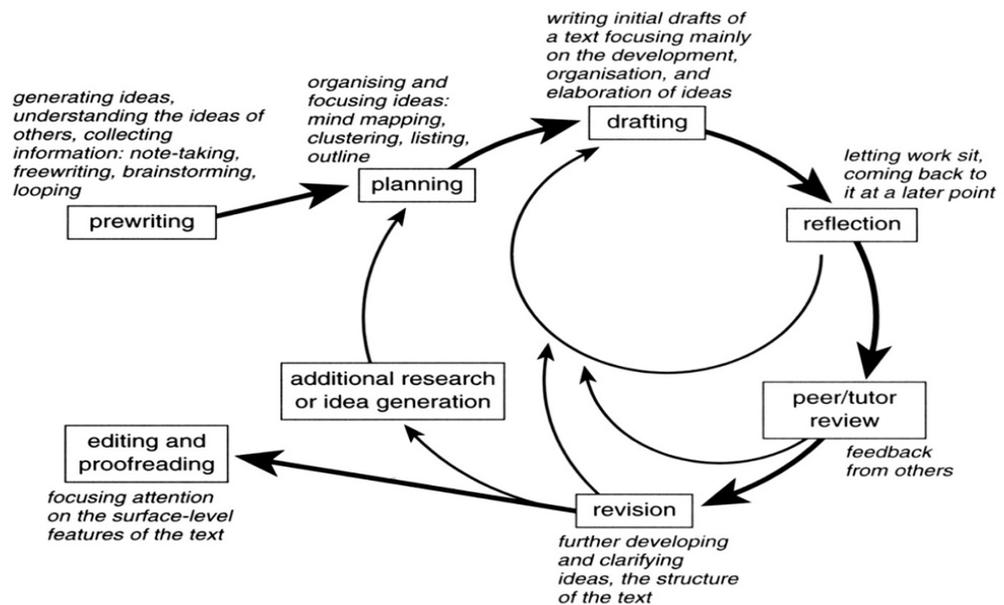
Figure 2.2 –The Recursiveness of Writing Process – Coffin et al. (2003:34)

Research (*e.g.* Bechtel, 1979; Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987; Emig, 1971; Flower & Hayes, 1980a, 1980b, 1981a, 1981b; Metzger, 1976; Mischel, 1974; Perl, 1980; Pianko, 1979; Stallard, 1974; Stein, 1986) has shown that: a) writing processes are recursive and b) writing processes occur through different writing patterns which can be seen in the writings of skilled and unskilled writers. Pennington and So (1993) explain the characteristics of the process approach as:

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"…multifaceted, with many of its elements functioning simultaneously and/or recursively for both skilled and unskilled writer"

[Pennington and So, 1993:42]

In a process-based class, students first brainstorm on a topic, thinking about relevant ideas. Brainstorming activities can play an important role in helping students generate ideas and produce relevant vocabulary. These activities can be done in several ways. As Raimes (1983:10) says: "Brainstorming can be done out loud in a class or group on paper." This is known as the pre-drafting stage. Then they structure these ideas to come up with a plan on how to write the composition. The first draft students produce is not corrected by the teacher but the ideas expressed are discussed. Learners might revise their first draft, working either individually or in pairs. Finally, learners can edit or proof-read their composition. The teacher's role in a process-based class is to facilitate writing and encourage learning rather than provide input (Badger and White, 2000). He should also guide the writing activity to focus on audience, generating ideas, organization of text and purpose of writing (Hedge, 1988). Hyland (2003) explains that in the process approach, the teachers' role is not to put emphasis on form but to help students develop their cognitive processes of writing through a number of pedagogical techniques such as brainstorming, planning, multiple drafting, peer collaboration, delayed editing and portfolio assessment. Kostelinck (1989) argues that process oriented pedagogies have two main elements, which are awareness and intervention. The former means the activation of the students' awareness that writing is a process and that there are different processes for different types of writing. The latter implies the involvement of the teacher during the writing process. In other words, the process approach relies heavily on responses by the teacher to the students' writing.

The process approach views writing development as an unconscious process resulting from exercising writing skills, and the writing process as the practice of language skills (Badger and White, 2000). It also views the final written text as a secondary concern (Silva, 1990). Jordan (1997) argues that the process approach helps

students decide upon the direction of their writing and makes them feel responsible for making improvements "by means of discussion, tasks, drafting, feedback and informed choices" (p. 168).

The Expressivist Approach

A branch of the process approach is the expressivist approach. It emerged in the 1980s and has mainly been followed by researchers of L1 writing who believe that learners should use their own personal experiences to express themselves and produce a creative piece of writing (Elbow, 1998a, 1998b; Murray, 1985).

There is some similarity between the process approach and the expressivist approach as both view the writer as a generator of a text. The difference in the process approach, however, is that it goes beyond this to address several issues as to how teachers can help their students in the art of writing.

The main idea behind the expressivist approach is that writing is regarded as an act of self-discovery and that it is not taught but learned (Hyland, 2003). This approach is implemented through a number of pedagogical techniques such as reading, pre-writing, journal writing, multiple drafting and peer critiques. The main role in these techniques is played by the learner rather than the teacher. The expressivist approach urges writers to respond to other writings by using their own personal beliefs. For example, students are given rubrics demonstrating experiences in other people's lives and are asked to describe their own experiences.

2.1.3.1 Feedback in the Process Approach

If the main cognitive writing processes, according to Flower (1989) and Flower and Hayes (1981a), are planning, writing and reviewing, then the focus of the process approach is to develop the students' planning, writing, and reviewing. This is done through a number of feedback tools such as one-to-one conferencing, peer feedback, audiotaped feedback and reformulation (Hyland, 2003).

Revision is an essential element in the process approach (Wallace and Hayes, 1991) because it helps students make changes to their writing. One of the main revision methods followed is peer feedback. Students evaluate their peers' writing and offer comments and suggestions. Paulus (1999) argues that peer feedback (also referred to as peer revision) encourages students to revise and improve their writing. Research (*e.g.* Berg, 1999; Hyland, 2003) claims that feedback enhances students' critical thinking and evaluation. However, there are situations where students do not trust their peers' feedback such as the situation in Bahrain where the level of their English is low and they prefer the teacher's feedback.

Teacher-student conference is another feedback method through which the teacher meets with the students face-to-face individually or in groups to discuss their writing problems and clarify issues related to their performance. However, this method consumes time and might require the teacher to cancel classes and schedule appointments with students.

2.1.3.2 Advantages and Limitations of the Process Approach

Freeman and Freeman (2004) identify a number of advantages in the process approach. First, it motivates students to deliver their own messages and become creative. Second, it involves teachers and students in responses to texts through peer feedback and discussions. Third, it deals with mistakes in writing skills such as spelling and grammar through teacher-student conferencing. Fourth, it naturally moves writing from invention to convention (i.e. writing becomes a practice of a set of cognitive process instead of a demonstration of linguistic knowledge).

However, the process approach has some limitations. First, it is time-consuming, especially with large classes. Second, teacher-student conferences could be difficult to schedule due to time pressure. Third, it requires a great deal of marking. Fourth, it might discourage students who are not familiar with the process writing as they may consider revision as failure (Corpuz, 2011).

I indicated earlier that the expressivist approach was also a branch of the process approach. Despite its influence in L1 writing, it has been criticized on a number of grounds. Hyland (2003), for example, argues that it is not appropriate for L2 writers with different cultural values regarding self-exposure. Also, it offers no clear principles for the teaching of L2 writing.

The process approach is almost never followed in Bahrain. Teachers do not focus on the writing process but rather on textual structure products and on vocabulary. In some cases, they may make students brainstorm at the beginning of a writing task, but this is not followed by intervention in the drafting and post-drafting processes (i.e. teachers do not intervene to facilitate the writing process while students are composing and do not make students hand in a second draft). This is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

2.1.4 The Genre Approach: History and Characteristics

Although the genre approach is a recent pedagogical method in ELT, it is considered to be an extended version of the product approach (Badger and White, 2000). The two approaches (product and genre) are similar in the sense that they focus on linguistic knowledge as an input to text creation. However, the genre approach views writing as a multifaceted in a social context. In other words, the main element in the genre approach is the purpose of writing in addition to the subject matter and the nature of the relationship between the writer and the reader (Badger and White, 2000). It categorizes writing into different kinds of text, such as articles, research proposals, legal reports, and business memos (Flowerdew, 1993).

There are three main traditions in genre analysis: a) the ESP school, b) the Sydney school and c) the New Rhetoric. Below we discuss these traditions.

The ESP School

The ESP school, also known as the Swalesian approach, is the tradition commonly followed in ELT writing. Swales (1990) defines genre as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" (p. 58). Hyland (2007) defines it as: "abstract, socially recognized ways of using language" (p. 149). The definitions explain that the purpose of a piece of writing is associated with a set of conventions.

Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) developed the ESP school tradition, aiming to establish a systematic connection between the communicative purposes and properties of texts. Swales (1990) explains that communicative purposes can be expressed through a sequence of moves and steps that may be obligatory or optional. These steps can take a variety of sequences, can be repeated, or take a recursive move, and can also be embedded. Swales' (1990) model of generic staging, known as "Create a Research Space" (CaRS) is one of the best models of introducing a research article. It consists of three moves: a) establishing a territory, b) establishing a niche and c) occupying the niche. Each move has its components as shown in Table 2.4 below, from Swales (1990):

Table 2.4 –Swales' Model –Swales (1990:141)

Move 1: Establishing a territory
        Step 1: Claiming centrality
                and/or
        Step 2: Making topic generalization
                and/or
        Step 3: Reviewing items of previous research
 	
Move2: Establishing a niche
        Step 1A: Counter-claiming
                or
        Step 1B: Indicating a gap
                or
        Step 1C: Question-raising
                or
        Step 1D: Continuing a tradition
 	
Move 3: Occupying the niche
        Step 1A: Outlining purposes
                 or
        Step 1B: Announcing present research
        Step 2: Announcing principal findings
        Step 3: Indicating research article structure

As Flowerdew (2011) explains, communicative functions exhibit verbalization patterns or realizations that are typically conventionalized and recognized by the discourse community. Swales (1990) provides examples of authentic realizations of step 1 of move 1 from the model above (claiming centrality) as in Table 2.5 below, adapted from Swales 1990, showing research introductions. Emphasis has been underlined:

Table 2.5 –Research Introductions – Adapted from Swales (1990:144)

1. <u>Recently</u>, there has been a spate of <u>interest</u> in how to … 2. <u>In recent years</u>, applied researchers have come increasingly <u>interested</u> in … 3. The possibility … has generated interest in … 4. Recently, there has been a wide <u>interest</u> in …

Typical verbalization patterns can be noticed in the repeated use of '*recently*' and '*in recent years,*' and '*interest*' or '*interested*' in introductions 1, 2, 3 and 4 above.

Performing a genre in the ESP tradition requires knowledge of its stages and their specific form-function correlations. Someone who is performing a genre but does not know these two elements is easily identified by others who write in the same genre.

Bhatia (1993) and Swales (1990) argue that ESP helps non-native speakers of English develop their writing by introducing the functions and linguistic conventions they require in their professions and disciplines. For example, researchers who analyzed scientific genres (*e.g.* Gosden, 1992; Love, 1991) argue that they helped students develop the organization and style of the texts. Genres are used to teach students the types of written texts they need in their target setting. For example, when writing a letter, students need to understand the difference between a personal letter and a formal letter. The latter normally begins with an informal question because its purpose is to convey a friendly message to the reader, who might be a friend or a relative, while the former starts with a very formal statement.

The Sydney School

In the Sydney school, also known as the Australian tradition, which originates with Michael Halliday, genre-based pedagogy draws on systemic functional linguistics theory, emphasizing the relationship between language and its function in social contexts. The focus in a text is on the specific features of the language (Hyon, 1996). For example, Hammond et al. (1992:57) describe the organizational structure of a letter of complaint as including the sender's address, the receiver's address, salutation (*e.g.* Dear Sir/Madam), identification of complaint, etc. Paltridge (1996) compares the organizational structure of a letter of complaint to a personal letter and states that in the latter, components such as the receiver's address is not necessary. As for the linguistic features, Paltridge (1996) provides a set of genres and describes their linguistic features as shown in Table 2.6 below:

Table 2.6 – Text Type of Genres – Adapted from Paltridge (1996:239), based on Hammond et al., (1992)

Genre	Text Type
Recipe	Procedure
Film review	Review
Formal letter	Exposition
Advertisement	Description
Student assignment	Recount
Biology textbook	report

Halliday's systemic functional linguistic model identifies form and function correlations within particular genres, positing three contextual parameters: a) field, which refers to the subject matter and nature of text activity, b) tenor, which means the relations connecting the participants in the text and c) mode, which stands for the discourse function and rhetorical channel (Flowerdew, 2011). This model also identifies the unique relations between linguistic form, context features and purpose. It was developed into genre pedagogy, introducing five steps of classroom instruction: a) building the context, b) modeling and deconstructing the text, c) joint construction of the text, d) independent construction of the text and c) linking related texts (Fees, 2002; Fees and Joyce, 1998, cited in Flowerdew, 2011:10).

The New Rhetoric Tradition

In the New Rhetoric tradition, the focus is on the sociocontextual aspects of genre (Hyon, 1996). While ESP and the Australian genre traditions focus on linguistic aspects of genres, the emphasis in the New Rhetoric tradition is on the social context and the ethnographic description of genre (Kim, 2007). In other words, students are introduced to the social context of texts, helping them identify an appropriate rhetoric for their writing.

The New Rhetoric views the ESP and Sydney school traditions as similar in that both emphasize the relations between communicative function and linguistic form. The New Rhetoric scholars criticize the ESP and Sydney school traditions for a number of limitations, arguing that they are too deterministic and simplistic in following a

linguistic orientation and for not considering the different purposes of genre readers, writers, speakers and hearers (Johns, 2003). They also claim that by following a linguistic approach to genre, the ESP and Sydney school traditions suppress creativity within genres by over-emphasizing the form-function relations at the clause level (Flowerdew, 2011).

For the reasons mentioned above, New Rhetoric scholars prefer to focus on situated contexts and emphasize the actions resulting from social purposes, considering different aspects of the discourse community participating in the genre such as attitudes, beliefs and activities. An example of the social nature of the New Rhetoric emphasis can be found in Schryer (1993), who investigated the written communications of clinicians and researchers and their attitudes toward these communications rather than the texts written in the manuscripts. Another example is provided by Casanave (1992), who carried out a case study of a Hispanic woman in a doctoral programme in sociology and how she felt isolated from the discipline because of the types of texts she was required to produce. Flowerdew (2011) argued that the New Rhetoric stressed that genres were flowing and manipulable, which was an issue that Swales (2004) and Bhatia (2004) accepted and developed later in the ESP school.

The New Rhetoric also views genre as reflexive; that is, generic structures are reflected by society and society is reflected by generic structures. This means that genre analysis should study both the society employing the genre and the generic structures themselves (Flowerdew, 2011).

Other Approaches to Genre

Cope and Kalantzis (1993) discuss three phases of genre literacy which are: a) modeling the target genre, b) text construction and c) independent text construction. In the first phase, students are provided with samples of the target genre. In the second phase, the teacher helps students construct a text. In the final phase, students construct a text on their own.

Another genre-based approach to teaching L2 writing is that of Dudley-Evans (1997), who suggests three phases. In the first phase, students are presented with a sample model of the target genre. The teacher analyzes and discusses the sample with students. In the second phase, students are provided with relevant exercises that help them practice the language forms in the sample. In the final phase, students produce a text on their own.

2.1.4.1 Feedback in the Genre Approach

Feedback in the genre-based approach may not be so different from other approaches, except in drawing students' attention to genre conventions. Since genre knowledge and conventions associated with community are emphasized, feedback is provided to make students aware of these two elements when they write. Thus, teacher feedback should focus on all aspects of writing, from structure and organization to content and presentation. However, it is not necessary to tackle all these aspects in each draft. Group discussions can be used to give broader attention to most of these aspects and this may benefit all students because their writing involves the same terminology and text features (Hyland, 2004).

Marshall (1991) argues that feedback can emphasize genre knowledge and community conventions in students' writing using computer-generated feedback that applies specific schemata to help teachers provide feedback on students' written reports. Students of civil engineering wrote more than 120 reports on "bridge building" and received extensive feedback from both language and engineering instructors (p. 6). First, the teachers designed a set of feedback guidelines to be fulfilled when marking students' compositions. Six formal schema were identified by the teachers which were: a) providing a qualitative evaluation, b) outlining what the student did well, c) giving suggestions to improve writing, d) explaining the improvement required from the student, e) reminding the student to maintain the specific text features and f) providing a qualitative evaluation. The instructors also agreed on a set of criteria and comments, which finally constituted the content schema of the target genre. All these details were used to design a computer programme that generated extensive feedback on all student

reports (p. 6). Genre-based feedback not only assigns a grade to students' writing, but also justifies it and explains what needs to be done for improvement (Hyland, 2004).

Another example of genre-based feedback is given by Feez (1998) where a specifically designed checklist is used to provide feedback on students' writing. The checklist includes a set of criteria to evaluate the fulfillment of different aspects of the writing task. For example, it examines whether a number of elements were accomplished in the writing, such as the purpose and staging, the text unity (*e.g.* lexical sets, conjunction, reference, etc.), the clause grammar (*e.g.* noun groups, verb groups, prepositional phrases, etc.) and other aspects (p. 131).

2.1.4.2 Advantages and Limitations of the Genre Approach

The genre approach to teaching L2 writing has several advantages and limitations. On the positive side, it is valued by students because it shows them what they need to do through examples. Through a reflection of its social purpose, it helps students understand the nature of a communication style (Kim, 2007). The genre approach makes students aware of the strong relationship between formal and functional features of writing in a language and rhetorical organization of particular types of text (Kim, 2007; Swales, 1990).

Hyland (2004:10-16) provides a thorough discussion of the advantages of genre-based L2 writing instruction, which are:

- Explicit: states very clear what is going to be taught to students. In other words, it activates students' awareness of the exact purpose of the lesson.

- Systematic: establishes a coherent and solid plan to focus on language and context.

- Needs-based: focuses on students' needs by tailoring the course objectives and content to fit these needs.

- Supportive: teachers play a central role enhancing the learning and creativity of students through building their confidence.

- Empowering: helps students develop meanings and discourse texts that are valued in the English language community. In other words, students are motivated to come close to the social usage of the English language in the discourse group.

- Critical: equips students with the resources that can be used to understand and challenge valued discourses.

- Consciousness raising: advantages teachers' awareness of texts which, consequently, gives them more confidence in advising their students.

On the other hand, there are several criticisms of the genre approach. Byram (2004) argues that the genre approach underestimates the necessary writing skills and neglects the fact that learners may have sufficient knowledge to accomplish their task. The genre approach also is said to overemphasize the role of conventions and text features. Some critics (*e.g.* Benesch, 2001; Coe, Lingard and Teslenko, 2002) argue that genre-based teaching simply reinforces dominant discourses as students are encouraged into a reproduction of existing disciplinary discourses.

It is also argued that genre-based pedagogies can suppress the creativity of students and deprive them of the ability to freely express themselves. Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998), for example, carried out a survey on groups of teachers from different countries and multicultural environments. They found that the genre approach to writing might undermine students' independence in writing. They might always be waiting to be instructed and informed of what to write and how to write. This is believed to be the result of the explicit nature of the genre approach. This particular criticism of genre seems, however, somewhat unfair. Students can to some extent exercise creativity within a genre. Students can be given the freedom to add whatever they find appropriate or necessary to the form of writing they are following based on the writing situation. For example, if students are required to write a job application letter, then the content of the letter can be manipulated based on the requirements of the job they are applying for. In this case, students do not have to adhere strictly to the writing sample they are given at the beginning of the class. The most important requirement is that they know the features and structure of the application letter.

2.1.5 A Synthesis of Three Approaches

The process approach has been described as a reaction to the disadvantages of the product approach and the genre approach has been described as a reaction to the disadvantages of the process approach (Gee, 1997). For example, as discussed in the previous sections, the product approach neglects the writing process and the learner's knowledge. The process approach has been criticized for assuming that all types of writing go through the same process and for neglecting the importance of linguistic knowledge to produce a good text (Badger and White, 2000). It is also criticized for lacking input (White and Arndt, 1991). Meanwhile, the genre approach has been criticized for underestimating students' knowledge and for viewing them as passive (Badger and White, 2000).

One way to deal with these disadvantages is to combine the better elements of each approach. For example, White and Arndt (1991) suggested involving group work and teacher-student conferences to overcome the lack of input in the process approach. Badger and White (2000) presented another way to overcome the disadvantages through establishing a synthesis of the three approaches, resulting in a new approach they referred to as the process-genre approach. They introduced a process-genre based teaching model that offered more focused use of writing models and acknowledged the features of other approaches at the same time. Figure 2.3 below, from Badger and White (2000), illustrates process-genre approach model:

Possible input

Situation

Purpose → Teacher

Consideration of model field tenor → Learners

Planning
Drafting
Publishing → Texts
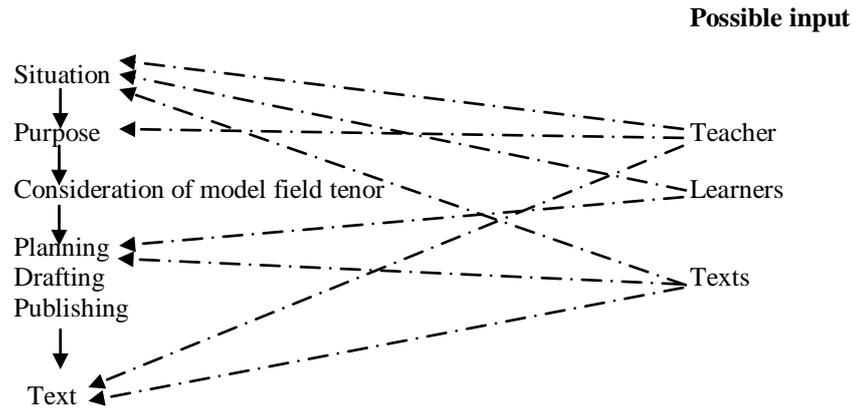
Text

Figure 2.3 – A Process-Genre Model of Writing – Badger and White (2000:159)

Based on this model, students first are made aware that writing a text should always have a specific purpose and that writing is associated with its social context and situation. Badger and White (2000) explain how this model works by identifying four elements of a text which are purpose, tenor, field and mode. An example is given of a real estate agent who wants to sell a house and needs first to write a description of it. Students should identify the purpose of the writing (selling a house), the tenor (person/group of persons who want to buy a house), the field (information included in the description) and the mode (the way a house description is presented). Once students have understood these elements, they can write a description of a house, using their knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and organization and also the appropriate skills to the genre such as re-drafting and proof-reading.

Nordin and Mohammad (2006) applied Badger and White's (2000) process-genre model to writing a recommendation report to purchase new elevators. Students were first introduced to the purpose of writing and then had to relate it to other elements (subject matter, writer/audience relationship and the mode or organization of the text). Students were also exposed to the organization, grammar and language style before they started writing multiple drafts. Then they were given different types of feedback such as peer feedback and teacher written feedback.

2.1.6 Summary

Having examined various approaches to L2 writing, we have seen that they have advantages and limitations. It would appear that no one approach alone provides 'the answer' as to how to teach L2 writing. A combination of different approaches depending on the type of student and the context is likely to yield more favourable results in L2 teaching.

2.2 Approaches to the Teaching of Academic Writing

This section discusses approaches to teaching academic writing because the current study's subjects are university students. They are expected to use academic writing to fulfill their university tasks, especially in writing reports and articles when they advance in their studies. Therefore, I found it important to include this section on approaches to teaching academic writing and discuss other related issues such as specificity (i.e. whether teachers should introduce academic writing specifically or generally) and feedback in academic instruction.

The teaching of academic writing occupies an important place in teaching L2 writing. Street (1995) describes three teaching approaches to academic writing which are a) study skills, b) academic socialization and c) academic literacies. Below we discuss these approaches.

2.2.1 The Study Skills Approach

The study skills approach views writing as a set of atomized skills learned and transferred to other contexts by students. It suggests that students suffer from deficits that should be remedied by emphasizing aspects of language knowledge such as surface features, grammar and spelling (Picard, 2006) This approach draws from behavioural psychology and training programme sources and conceptualizes writing as technical and instrumental (Lea and Street, 1998). For example, university students using English language textbooks need skills such as adjusting their reading pace depending on what

is being read, looking up meanings in a dictionary, predicting meanings from context, understanding graphs and diagrams, taking notes and summarizing (Richards et al. 1992). Table 2.7 below is adapted from Trzeciak and Mackay (1994:v), illustrating a set of study skills for academic settings:

Table 2.7 – Study Skills for Academic Writing – Adapted from Trzeciaka and Mackay (1994:v)

Surveying Material
• Surveying a book or an article
Note-taking and summarizing skills
• Different types of summarizing
• Avoiding plagiarism
Writing Skills
• Incorporating source material
• Dividing a text into paragraphs
• Writing introductions and conclusions
• Synthesizing from different sources
Extended Writing
• Choosing a topic and collecting data
• Including tables and figures
• Revising and proof-reading
• Using abbreviations

However, this approach has been criticized for being unrefined and insensitive (Lea and Street, 1998) and for oversimplifying writing literacy from a complex process to a set of atomistic skills viewed as automatically transferable (Picard, 2006).

2.2.2 The Academic Socialization Approach

This approach emerged in reaction to the limitations of the study skills approach, putting more emphasis on many language and social context issues.

In the academic socialization approach, the teacher explains to the students that academic writing is a means of communication with an intelligent audience and that the text they produce on a particular topic is the fruit of this communication (Adams, 2008).

Academia is portrayed as a social context within which there is an ongoing conversation between experts in a specific community. Students' first task is to familiarize themselves with the content of the conversation and then add their point of view to it through writing an academic composition. Beginner students are not expected to reach the publication level unless they have acquired the conventions of academic discourse by being involved in activities such as conference discussions and presentations. Adams (2008) claims that academic socialization builds students' confidence in expressing their reading and research outcomes by following conventions. He also claims that it helps students comprehend the socio-cultural expectations of their compositions.

The academic socialization approach has been criticized on a number of grounds. First, it assumes that students' writing is a "transparent medium of representation" (Lea and Street, 1998:159), implying that this writing will automatically reflect the level of their socialization to the academic culture. Second, it lacks institutional practice and does not tackle processes of change and power and the rhetorical features of writing. Third, it takes for granted that there is one academic culture that can be accessed by simply learning its norms and practices (Lea and Street, 1998; Picard, 2006).

I would argue that the study skills approach and the academic socialization approach overlap, as they both rely on how teachers prioritize academic literacy requirements (i.e. whether to focus on generic skills or familiarize students with academic culture assuming that generic skills have already been learned).

2.2.3 The Academic Literacies Approach

'Academic literacies,' emerged from the social and ideological orientation of the New Literacies Studies research (*e.g.* Barton, 1994; Baynham, 1995; Gibbs, 1994) and became a significant influence in the teaching of academic writing in L2. It is concerned with the idea of social identity in writing and adapting language use to particular academic contexts. Henning and Rensburg (2002) argue that the academic literacies approach views students' literacies as new identities. They are required to adjust their linguistic practices, shifting them from one to another, depending on the setting of the

writing text. For example, students might face the challenge of deciding whether to reveal their identities in a text, using the personal pronoun 'I' or become less present by using the passive voice (Hyland, 2002). Another challenge is when students face a mismatch between their individual primary discourses (*e.g.* Islamic and Arab discourses) and Western academia and have to switch their linguistic practices (Picard, 2006).

The academic literacies approach is more complex compared with the study skills and academic socialization approaches as it engages closely with the processes of students' writing rather than focusing on skills or deficits (Lea and Street, 1998) It also views academic institutions as sites of discourse and power and makes a distinction between academic discourse (*e.g.* in a university) and other discourses outside academic institutions (Picard, 2006). Communicative notions such as genres, fields and disciplines are important (Lea and Street, 1998).

In conclusion, I would argue that it is among the key issues of EAP to research the three approaches to academic literacies more widely. Although the third approach is considered more comprehensive than the first and second, the main reservation, as Hyland (2006) explains, is that it does not have clear teaching methodologies to implement.

Other Approaches

Harwood and Hadley (2004) have distinguished three further specific approaches to teaching academic writing, which are the pragmatic approach, the critical approach and the critical pragmatic approach.

The pragmatic approach is that students should be taught a set of major academic discourse norms. It focuses on equipping students with the knowledge of the necessary writing discourse they need at the secondary or university level. Therefore, it is described as a skill-based approach, preparing students to function in an academic setting and within a discourse community. The critical approach, however, is opposed to the pragmatic approach. It is based on the argument (*e.g.* Benesch, 2001; Giroux, 1988) that discourse norms are not fixed or immutable and that students should be treated as

intellectual researchers who have their own choices and ways of thinking. The critical approach questions the desirability of imposing discourse norms in the pragmatic approach and, thus, suggests that these norms are socially generated and can be changed by learners. The third approach, the critical pragmatic, combines features of both these approaches. On the one hand, it acknowledges the pragmatic approach by suggesting that students need to be inducted into major discourse norms, but it also gives students the right to adopt the practices they find dominant based on their beliefs and observations in line with the critical approach.

2.2.4 Specificity Debate: Specific vs. General Academic Writing

The issue of specificity in teaching academic writing is important for determining how academic writing should be introduced. At the University of Bahrain, students are expected to produce academic texts in advanced courses. However, they are not taught academic writing in advance. I would argue that answering the question about specificity may be useful to improve the teaching of academic writing at the University.

Since Halliday et al.'s (1964) concept of ESP, there has been an ongoing debate on specificity in academic writing; that is, the difference between general academic writing, EGAP, and specific academic writing, ESAP. The debate has raised questions such as: What is the difference between general and specific writing and in what context should teachers introduce academic writing?

In general academic writing, teachers provide skills, language forms and study activities that constitute common writing practices across all disciplines (Hyland, 2006). For example, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) consider activities such as listening to lectures, participating in supervision and seminars, reading textbooks and articles and writing compositions, examination answers and reports as generic academic practices that provide knowledge of academic writing. In general academic writing, students use their writing skills and cognitive efforts to transform knowledge, analyze data, derive ideas and draw conclusions to fulfill their university tasks. Campbell (1990) states that general academic writing involves:

> **"…the ability to integrate information from previous research in relevant areas of study. Even the most original academic paper integrates facts, ideas, concepts, and theories from other sources by means of quotations, paraphrases, summaries, and brief references"**
>
> **[Campbell, 1990:211]**

Students need to master popular academic genres such as essays, dissertations and academic papers. Rosenfeld et al. (2001) (as cited in Hinkel, 2004) surveyed 155 undergraduate and 215 graduate L2 NNS students from 21 U.S. universities. The survey identified the most important L2 writing skills in a variety of academic courses such as psychology, business and chemistry. On a scale of 0 to 5, the responses of the undergraduate and the graduate students rated the organization of writing to "convey major and supporting ideas" as the first priority among other writing skills. The second priority was using "relevant reasons and examples to support a position." Other priorities were mastering standard written English including "grammar, phrasing, effective sentence structure, spelling and punctuation," demonstrating "facility with a range of vocabulary appropriate to the topic" and showing "awareness of audience needs and write to a particular audience or reader" (pp. 18-19).

On the other hand, there are more differences than similarities between the skills and conventions of specific academic writing and general academic writing. Specific academic writing involves writing skills necessary to fulfill the writing requirements of a specific discipline or department within an academic institution (Hyland, 2006). Below is a quotation from Rose (1985) describing writing in disciplines as requiring:

> **"…a complete, active, struggling engagement with the facts and principles of a discipline, an encounter with the discipline's texts and the incorporation of them into one's own work, the framing of one's knowledge within myriad conventions that help define a discipline, the persuading of other investigators that one's knowledge is legitimate"**
>
> **[Rose, 1985:359]**

Therefore, general academic writing is less complex than specific academic writing. The former requires the mastering of universal academic writing skills and the latter goes far beyond language skills to deal with the facts and principles of a particular discipline. What makes specific academic writing even more complex is that in every discipline there are sub-disciplines and in sub-disciplines there are other sub-disciplines, which makes this type of writing this genre very specific (Spack, 1988).

The diversity in academic disciplines has raised a question of whether writing teachers should teach academic writing following an EGAP or ESAP approach. Spack (1988) and Hyland (2002) debated the issue of specificity. Spack (1988) argued that English composition courses should teach students reading and writing and help them develop their ethics and intellects. She also claimed that teaching writing in a discipline required the teacher to be immersed in the subject matter. Though Spack (1988) acknowledged that teaching writing in a discipline could yield good results, she suggested that English teachers should introduce writing as general academic writing rather than specific. She also argued that the task of teaching writing in a discipline should be done by teachers specializing in the target disciplines.

Hyland (2002) responded to Spack (1988), offering a critique of her article, considering its findings as out of date. He argued that teaching academic writing should be as specific as possible. He also claimed that ignoring specificity may create a gap between students' literacies and what they are expected to find at university. In an extended response, Hyland (2006:10-13) discussed six reasons to teach academic writing following an EGAP approach and six reasons in favour of teaching writing in specific disciplines. These reasons are summarized below:

Reasons for EGAP

- Language teachers are not trained and lack the expertise and confidence to teach subject-specific conventions.

- Students of low English proficiency will find it hard to learn discipline-specific language.

- Teaching specific academic English limits the benefits of academic writing, serving the needs of particular academic departments and making it a low status service, which may deprofessionalize teachers and marginalize EAP units.

- Course content based on specific academic writing does not help students tackle unpredictable assignments and limits their imagination.

- There are many universal generic skills that are very similar to each other across the disciplines, such as skimming, scanning, summarizing, taking notes, and contributing to seminars. These can be taught in general rather than specific academic writing.

- Academic writing courses should teach students forms and skills that are common across varieties and that can be transferred across contexts.

Reasons for ESAP

- Subject specialists do not have the expertise, the desire and the time to teach students specific academic writing. It is the task of EAP teachers to do so.

- There is no research evidence in SLA that supports the argument that students of low proficiency level need first to control core form before learning specific academic writing.

- The concern of professional EAP teachers is not only to be able to teach students vocabulary, structure and lexical phrases but also to be familiar with the different uses of language within a variety of disciplines.

- The claim that teaching subject-specific skills limits the benefit of teaching academic writing and restricts it to meet demands of particular departments can be disputed. In fact, a specific academic writing approach recognizes the complex process of writing in specific disciplines.

- The notion of 'common core' has a serious disadvantage as it focuses on a formal system of language items, neglecting the fact that a form can have different possible meanings. In this regard, the notion of common core cannot be defined when meaning and use are introduced.

- The teaching of academic writing involves activities that focus on both form and subject-specific communicative skills. Students rarely need to master common core grammar features in order to be able participate in these activities.

However, I find some of Hyland's justifications for ESAP implausible. For example, students with a low proficiency level, especially in Arab countries where the teaching of English is inefficient, may find it extremely difficult to learn specific academic writing before improving their English proficiency.

2.2.5 Feedback in Academic Writing Instruction

Feedback is a key element for academic writing development. The emergence of the process approach to teaching L2 writing in the 1980s influenced feedback in academic writing. Researchers (*e.g.* Gibbs and Simpson, 2004) argue that the process approach shifted the focus of teaching L2 writing from product to process, thus influencing attitudes towards how feedback should be provided. For example, feedback should be given during the writing process rather than after it. Providing feedback in an academic writing context is more complex than providing it in other contexts as it requires more effort from teachers. Students are encouraged to produce more than one draft in order to achieve a good grade.

Williamson (2009) identifies a number of feedback strategies to develop academic writing, applied in three stages which are: a) before the assessment, b) in marking the assessment and c) after the assessment. These strategies are summarized below:

Before the Assessment

In the first stage, teachers discuss with students the important writing conventions, provide students with examples and explain assessment criteria. They should also plan their feedback in advance, focusing on a number of major issues (*e.g.* argument construction, use of evidence, textual cohesion, etc). Feedback should be provided as early as possible in the semester as this gives time to students to act on it. Teachers also use assessment scaffolding and encourage process writing.

In Marking the Assessment

In the second stage, teachers should meet with other teachers who teach the same course to agree on words or phrases which characterize students' writing. For more efficient feedback, teachers should structure their response into language areas such as structure, cohesion and language conventions. They may also micro-mark a small portion of the first assignment for writing aspects such as style and organization. Grammar should not be ignored, especially when it is problematic to students. Grammatical errors can be explained or corrected. Providing generic feedback along with individualized comment and preparing a list of common writing problems students face is also useful.

After the Assessment

In the third stage, teachers develop their own bank of comments which tackles students' needs along with a list of academic skills that can be aligned with the comments. Building reflective activities in class can also help students engage in the

feedback they receive. Teachers should use students' first assignment to develop a diagnosis of students' writing problems.

Ivanic et al. (2000) observed the teaching of five subject tutors and four EAP teachers in two academic institutions, which were a university in the UK and another in South Africa. The purpose of the research was to identify the types of feedback provided on students' academic writing. Observation targeted six categories of teacher responses to students' writing which were: a) assigning a grade and writing negative and positive comments to explain the grade, b) evaluating students' compositions based on an ideal answer, c) correcting or editing students' work, d) debating and engaging in dialogue with students, e) giving advice that may be useful for the following composition and f) giving advice on re-drafting the current composition.

2.3 Feedback in L2 Writing

Feedback in L2 writing research is a controversial issue and an important factor in learning. This section tackles a variety of issues related to feedback in L2 writing. I first give a historical background on feedback, then outline the different types of feedback, focusing on the characteristics, advantages and drawbacks of each type. Key issues in feedback and research studies are also tackled, with emphasis on the effectiveness of different types of corrective feedback on students' writing. Finally, this study is positioned by discussing differences from previous studies.

2.3.1 Defining Feedback

Feedback is defined as teacher's input to a writer's composition in the form of information to be used for revision (Keh, 1990). It is also defined as information provided by teachers to help students trouble-shoot their performance (Nicole and Macfarlane, 2006). I would define it as teacher's response to students' writing in the form of oral or written comments that aim to help them improve their writing performance.

Feedback may be either written or oral in form. Written feedback usually takes the forms of direct correction, indirect correction and coding. Direct correction is when the teacher corrects students' errors on their scripts by writing the correct structural or lexical form (Lalande, 1982; Robb et al., 1986; Semke, 1984; Van Beuningen et al, 2008, 2012). Indirect correction is when the teacher indicates that there are errors in students' writing by underlining errors or circling them without providing corrections (Bitchener and Knoch, 2010b; Van Beuningen, 2008). Coding is when the teacher uses codes to indicate the location and type of error without correcting the error (*e.g.* S for spelling, T for tense, WW for word order). Other forms of teacher written feedback are marginal comments, content comments and meta-linguistic explanation.

On the other hand, oral feedback can take many forms (*see Park, 2010*) but are mainly: a) one-to-one conferencing or dialogue (Williams, 2002), b) positive or negative oral recast where the teacher confirms an utterance by repeating it, or indicates that it is inaccurate by reformulating it (Afitska, 2012) and c) explicit correction by directly indicating that what the student uttered was wrong (Lyster and Ranta, 1997). However, the focus of this study is on written rather than oral corrective feedback.

Feedback is essential for encouraging learning (Anderson, 1982; Brophy, 1981) and the development of L2 writing (Hyland and Hyland, 2006). It emerged as an important tool of language development in the 1970s, emphasized by learner-centered approaches to writing instruction in North American L1 writing classes (p. 1). Before the process approach emerged, the typical method of responding to students' writing was through assigning a grade on a paper (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). Teachers assumed that students would see their errors, correct themselves and understand why their writings were marked in red. Yet, according to Grabe and Kaplan (1996), this system of response confused students. The process approach, however, has changed the way responses to students' writing have been handled as more methods of feedback have been developed. For example, teachers have encouraged their students to re-draft their writing and have also discovered different strategies in giving feedback to students (Ferris, 1997). The emergence of the process approach to L2 writing resulted in a shift in focus in feedback methods from product to process, encouraging teachers to provide feedback to writers during the writing process through multiple drafts.

Some researchers are discouraged by the effect of feedback on errors, describing it as unhelpful. Zamel (1985) suggests that teachers should give more attention to meaning instead of errors. Others find that error correction has some positive effects (*e.g.* Bitchener and Knoch, 2009b; Chandler, 2003; Polio et al., 1998) while there are researchers who doubt the role of feedback on errors, describing it as harmful (*e.g.* Truscott, 1996, 1999; Truscott and Hsu, 2008). Studies that compared the effect of direct feedback (error correction) to indirect feedback (circling, underlining, coding, etc.) on students' writing also reached different findings. For example, Lalande (1982) found no significant difference between direct error correction and indirect coding, though some advantage was reported for indirect coding. Semke (1984) found no difference between direct error correction, content comments, direct error correction together with content comments and indirect coding. Robb et al. (1986) found no difference between direct error correction, indirect coding, indirect highlighting and indirect marginal error totals. Van Beuningen et al. (2008) compared direct error correction, indirect feedback, writing practice and self-correction revision and found direct corrective feedback more effective on students' writing on the long-term and both direct and indirect feedback effective on students' writing on the short-term. Van Beuningen at al. (2012) found direct feedback effective for students' grammar but indirect feedback effective for non-grammar errors. Bitchener and Knoch (2010b) found direct error correction more effective in the long-term, while in the short-term direct and indirect feedback were equal. So, we can see the diversity in the research attitudes to feedback, which points to the need for further research. That said, previous research needs to be closely examined because many of these studies have limitations that could have influenced their findings. The focus of this review is on written feedback and covers other types such as peer feedback, conferencing and computer mediated feedback.

2.3.2 Types of Feedback

In this section, different types of feedback are defined and discussed with examples. Their characteristics and limitations are also outlined. First, we start with written corrective feedback, with emphasis on direct and indirect feedback and error

correction codes. Then we move to reformulation strategy followed by teacher-student conferencing. Peer and computer-mediated feedback are also discussed.

2.3.2.1 Written Corrective Feedback

There are two main categories of written corrective feedback; the first is direct and the second is indirect. Direct corrective feedback is defined as a type of correction that draws students' attention to the error and provides a solution to it. In other words, the teacher shows students where their errors are and corrects these errors by providing the correct form. Indirect corrective feedback is defined as drawing students' attention to the locations of their errors without providing corrections (Bitchener and Ferris, 2012).

Direct Corrective Feedback

This type of correction takes a variety of forms such as a) cross-outs: when the teacher omits any wrong addition from students' original texts, b) rewrites: when the teacher rewrites a word, phrase or a sentence, providing the correct spelling, structure or form on students' original texts and c) additions: when the teacher adds any missing items on students' original texts (*e.g.* prefix, suffix, article, preposition, word, etc). Figure 2.4 below shows the three forms of direct correction:
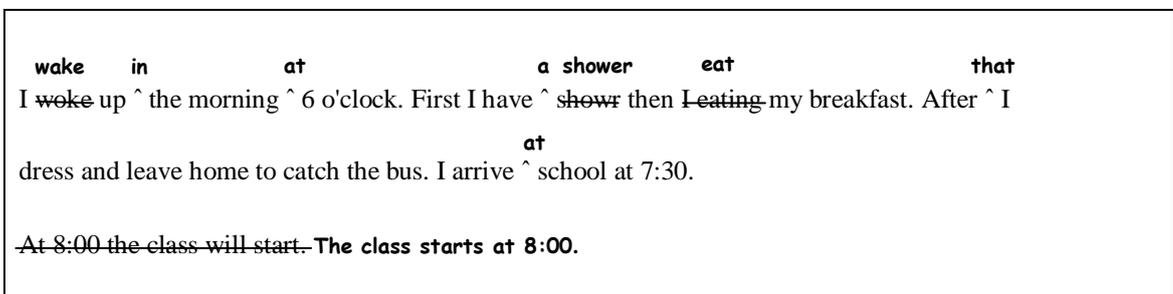
Figure 2.4 – Forms of Direct Corrective Feedback

The figure shows that direct corrective feedback can cover a variety of issues in students' texts.

Direct corrective feedback aims to help students edit their writing and improve their performance in future tasks (Bitchener and Ferris, 2012). Ferris (2002) argues that it is useful in treating errors of prepositions and other issues of idiomatic lexis. She also claims that it is useful in the final stages of the writing process to help students focus on the remaining errors in their texts and refer to them in future tasks. Students' linguistic proficiency is important to determine the amount of direct corrective feedback they receive as advanced learners are more likely to benefit from it.

Indirect Corrective Feedback

Indirect corrective feedback is when the teacher underlines, circles or highlights errors on students' original texts, indicating the location of these errors without correcting them Students are asked to study their errors and correct them (Ferris, 2002). In other words, indirect corrective feedback emphasizes the role of students in understanding and correcting their errors rather than being provided with the corrections.

Indirect feedback is applied by underlining students' writing errorsso that students understand that there is a problem that should be 'fixed.' Teachers may use lines, circles or highlighting to indicate the location of errors. They also need to decide how explicit indirect feedback should be based on the goals they want to achieve by providing feedback.

The effectiveness of written corrective feedback on L2 writing is discussed in detail in Section 2.3.3.2.

Error Correction Codes

Error correction codes are considered an implicit type of correction. The use of codes involves symbols (*e.g.* 'ˆ' for a missing item) and abbreviations (*e.g.* Pl/Sing for

Plural/Singular errors) through which students know the locations and the types of errors on their original texts (Hendrickson, 1984).

Hyland (1990) argues that the use of codes in error correction helps teachers provide effective implicit feedback while maintaining the positive effects of error correction. Harmer (1991) claims that the use of codes reduces the negative psychological effect of red ink on students' texts.

Ferris (1997, 2002) carried out two studies that surveyed students' preferred types of feedback and found that they most valued the use of codes. She also found that students considered implicit written corrective feedback as more effective than other types. Many teachers also believe that feedback should be provided implicitly through the use of error correction codes because this gives students the opportunity to look up their errors (Corpuz, 2011).

Limitations of Written Corrective Feedback

Direct and indirect written corrective feedback have several disadvantages. First, they are time-consuming and frustrate teachers if identical errors are repeatedly made by students. Students may also be embarrassed and lose confidence if they see many corrections on their compositions. Some students may lack the proficiency level that helps them identify their errors and correct them. (Bitchener and Ferris, 2012; Corpuz, 2011; Hendrickson, 1984)

Indirect written corrective feedback limits teachers' contribution to students' texts. Some students may not be able to identify the nature of their errors when the teacher underlines them (Bitchener and Ferris, 2012).

One of the main concerns with correction codes is that they are limited and cannot address all types of errors in students' writing (Corpuz, 2011). I would argue that despite the advantages of the use of codes, students need to be trained to understand what the codes mean. They may not be able to recall the meaning of codes while revising their work, which may make it difficult to re-draft adequately.

2.3.2.2 Reformulation as a Type of Feedback

Reformulation is a technique used to produce a more native-like composition, with the emphasis on rhetorical rather than grammatical factors (Levenston, 1978). Allwright et al. (1988) define reformulation as an attempt, by a native writer, to reproduce a non-native writer's composition, making the necessary changes in syntax, lexis, cohesion and discourse, while preserving the ideas in the original text. Cohen (1989) explains that a reformulator rewrites a text in his own words, making it sound more native-like while preserving the original writer's ideas.

Allwright et al. (1988) explain that reformulation is applied by starting a common writing task. Students are supplied with the basic propositional content in a scrambled form. They are encouraged to discuss the best way of organizing the ideas then start producing the first draft. Once they complete the task, the teacher selects one draft and reformulates it. Table 2.8 below is adapted from Luchini and Roldan (2007:236), showing an original text and its reformulated version:

Table 2.8 – Example of Reformulation - (Luchini and Roldan, 2007:236)

Original Text	**Reformulated Version**
It was a beautiful spring day and the boys and girls still be in the camping. The sun was shining and the sky was blue. The teacher, Susan, wake the student up and they started the day.	It was a beautiful spring day. The sun was shining and the sky was blue. The children had spent an exciting night and they were enjoying the camp. Their teacher, Susan, had woken the children up and they started with the activities.

Copies are made of the original and the reformulated texts. All students receive copies of the two texts (the original and the reformulated) and they are asked to inspect them to discuss the similarities and differences and understand the reasons for the changes made and their effects. This discussion is essential as it constitutes the core of reformulation. The next step is to ask students to write a second draft based on the discussion. When they have completed the task, the drafts are handed in to the teacher, who comments on them without providing corrections.

Teachers may follow Allwright et al.'s (1988) method, seeking help from a native tutor to reformulate students' texts, or they can do it on their own if they have efficient L2 level as in Myers (1997).

Hedge (2000) describes reformulation as a useful procedure, especially for students who have produced a first draft and are looking for local possibilities for improvement. Students can compare the target model on their own to notice the differences. This strategy also provides a wide range of useful discussions on the development of ideas and the use of structure, vocabulary and conjunctions.

Limitations of Reformulation

Reformulation has been criticized for being time-consuming, as it requires a whole text to be rewritten (Hairston, 1986). Some critics argue that it provides students with a model to imitate, thus limiting their creativity (Luchini and Roldan, 2007). Jimena et al. (2005) argue that students of a low proficiency level may not be able to benefit from reformulation as it is primarily appropriate for intermediate and advanced L2 learners. In addition, the task of a reformulator is not easy as he is not supposed to twist or change the meaning but to improve the text while preserving the ideas of the original writer. Non-native teachers who cannot find a native reformulator should have a sufficient L2 level to be able to reformulate students' texts. Finally, I would argue that reformulation may not be suitable with large classes because it consumes time and requires a great deal of marking.

2.3.2.3 Teacher-Student Conferencing

L2 writing instruction adopted teacher-student conferencing as a feedback tool from L1 pedagogies (Freedman and Sperling, 1985; Williams, 2002). Conferencing can be defined as discussion between teacher and individual students or a group of students of graded or corrected compositions.

Research suggests that conferencing with students can lead to better revision and its effects last longer in the minds of the students (*e.g.* Patthey-Chavez and Ferris, 1997). Other research shows that through conferencing students receive clearer comments from their teachers (*e.g.* Zamel, 1985). There are also researchers (*e.g.* Hyland, 2000) who explain that through writing conferences students can learn more about their strength and weakness, ask questions and become more independent.

Belk (2012:2-4) identifies three conferencing styles and discusses their limitations: a) teacher-centered, b) student-centered and c) collaborative. In the teacher-centered style, the teacher sets the agenda of the items to be discussed in the meeting and does most of the talking. This style was criticized because students found it boring and intimidating. In the student-centered style, students decide what they want to discuss and they are encouraged to direct the conference. The teacher's task is to encourage students to engage in the discussion and to answer their questions. One disadvantage of this style is that it may frustrate students as they may find it difficult to articulate their concerns while facing the teacher. The collaborative style is a combination of the teacher-centered and student-centered styles. Teachers balance the discussion between their authority and students' authority depending on the situation and the task's requirements.

Belk (2012:5-6) also identifies three conferencing formats and discusses their limitations: a) one-to-one conference, b) group conference and c) online conference. The first format is conducted as a meeting with an individual student. It is described as very focused and productive. This format is beneficial for students who go to see the teacher on their own and students who need extra attention. However, it is time-consuming and difficult to apply to all students. The second format is an alternative to the one-to-one conference. The teacher can conference with students in groups of five or six students to discuss issues related to their writing. Students find this format comfortable as their presence among other students relieves them from formality and

pressure. The third format is described as a non-traditional form of conferencing. It is conducted through computers and students find it interesting because they explore the role of technology in developing their writing. However, even though students value this format, it is time-consuming and teachers may not be able to involve all students in online conferencing. It also requires an internet connection and other equipment that might not always be available.

Limitations of Conferencing

There are several further disadvantages of conferencing. Hyland and Hyland (2006), for instance, indicate that L2 students might not always have the ability to make use of the individual attention that is paid to them through conferencing. They also might also be unable to talk to their teachers face-to-face because they feel that teachers represent higher authorities, which creates psychological pressure. In addition, students might not have the speaking skills they need to benefit from their oral conferencing with their teachers. Power relations are also an issue that might represent an obstacle (*e.g.* Goldstein and Conrad, 1990; Powers, 1993). For example, due to cultural issues, students might find it difficult to discuss issues with teachers freely or even address questions to them because they assume it is impolite to do so or because they feel that their teachers are superior to them.

There is a need for further investigation into teacher-student conferencing. Research has detected some advantages and disadvantages of this type of feedback but it is still not common among teachers (Hyland and Hyland, 2006).

2.3.2.4 Peer Feedback

Peer feedback was originally introduced into L1 contexts on the assumption that good strategies in L1 were automatically good in L2 (Hyland and Hyland, 2006).

Some of the research on peer feedback has found that it has social and cognitive advantages; for example, through using their peers' comments in re-drafting, students can improve their revision and produce better drafts (*e.g.* Mendonca and Johnson, 1994;

Rollinson, 2005; Villamail and de Guerrero, 1996). Also, from a socio-cognitive point of view, peer feedback is a "formative developmental process" (Hyland and Hyland, 2006:6), which means that writers develop the ability to exchange views on how they interpret the writings of other students and how other students interpret their writing. Other studies, however, have either raised more research questions on peer feedback (*e.g.* Connor and Asenavage, 1994) or found it of limited use (*e.g.* Flower, 1994; Spear, 1988).

Recent studies on peer feedback have focused on studying the interactions of peers in writing sessions. For example, Villamil and de Guerrero (1996) argue that peer responses observed in a writing workshop have a number of qualities, such as social affectivity through which students develop good communication. Hyland (2000) also examined students' interactions in a writing workshop and found that a positive aspect of peer feedback was its informality. This means that students freely assist each other and provide advice during the process of writing rather than at the end of the writing session. There are also other studies such as Rollinson (1998) and Caulk (1994), which found that their students made many valid and correct comments on their classmates writing. Berg (1999) and Chaudron (1984) argue that students make more specific comments to their peers' writing and, therefore, they consider feedback complementary to teacher feedback.

Ferris and Hedgcock (1998:170-171) also provide an outline of the advantages of peer feedback, for example that peer feedback gives students the ability to a) play an active role in learning writing (Mendonca and Johnson, 1994), b) use their peers' ideas to redraft their writings (Mendonca and Johnson, 1994), c) receive reactions from an authentic audience (Mittan, 1989), d) receive more than one point of view about their writing from different peer groups (Chaudrun, 1983; Mittan, 1989), e) receive clear and direct feedback from their about what they have done well and what they still have to improve (Mittan, 1989; Moore, 1986; Witbeck, 1976), f) improve their critical and analytical skills through responding to peers' writing (Leki, 1990a; Mittan, 1989) and g) develop self-confidence by comparing their own abilities to their peers' strengths and weaknesses (Leki, 1990a; Mittan, 1989).

Zhang (1995) analyzed the questionnaire responses of 81 ESL students who received different styles of feedback. The results showed that L2 writers preferred teacher feedback to peer feedback.

Ferris (2003a) summarized the findings of research on peer feedback, making the following points: a) students utilize their peers' feedback as much as they do with teacher's feedback, b) they think positively of their peers' feedback and believe that it can help to improve their writing, c) they enjoy listening to their peers' commentary on their writing and d) when peers look at each other's texts they comment on a wide range of issues. On the other hand, Ferris (2003a) indicated that some researchers concluded that students might sometimes doubt the value the of their peers' feedback and, therefore, might hesitate to use it to redraft their writing.

Although peer feedback can be effective because there are no psychological boundaries between peers, and this makes their interactions comfortable and, therefore, becomes influential, the ongoing debate on peer group feedback has not yet suggested that this type of feedback has a better influence on students' writing than written teacher-student feedback.

Limitations of Peer Feedback

There are, however, a number of doubts that have been expressed about peer feedback. For example, Allaei and Connor (1990) argue that multi-cultural collaborative peer response may result in conflict or discomfort. Carson and Nelson (1994, 1996) and Nelson and Murphy, (1992) argue that if the interaction between L2 peer groups is poor, due to cultural or educational different backgrounds, then the changes and corrections students are supposed to make in their writings based on their peer feedback are likely to be poor too. Moreover, Rollinson (2005) claims that peer feedback is lengthy and time-consuming.

Other concerns about peer feedback are raised by Amores (1997), who argues that students may find it difficult to accept criticism from their peers and may respond defensively to their feedback. Keh (1990) claims that peer responses address surface issues rather than problems of meaning. Leki (1990a) states that inexperienced students

may not be able to tell whether their peers' comments are valid. Horowitz (1986) argues that students may find it difficult to identify errors in their peers' writing, thus offering inadequate feedback. Connor and Asenavage (1994) argue that teacher feedback is more influential and that only 5% of peer feedback helps students improve their writing.

2.3.2.5 Computer-Mediated Feedback

Electronic or automated feedback is a new approach to L1 and L2 writing that has emerged in the past fifteen years. There has been a great deal of interest from writing researchers regarding the possibility of integrating technology into the teaching of writing and thus using it to provide instant automated feedback to students.

Automated feedback is generated by special software that reads written texts to produce feedback on writing (Ware and Warschauer, 2006). The software provides feedback on grammar and usage. Researchers (*e.g.* Chen, 1997; Yao and Warden, 1996) argue that the ability to generate computer or web-automated feedback can save teachers' time in that they can give more attention to students and focus on other aspects of writing instead of spending time on correction. However, there is a counter question here which is: is the faster feedback produced by an automated computer system better than the typical hand-written feedback provided by the teacher? Ware and Warschauer (2006) and Hearst (2000) say that there is no definite answer yet and that further research is needed to address this issue.

Developers of web or electronic feedback systems recommend that automated feedback should be used as a supplementary tool in writing classes and not as replacement of the interactive feedback that the teacher provides (Burstein et al., 2003; Burstein and Marcu, 2003).

Another aspect of automated feedback is peer feedback. Research has investigated the possibility of utilizing computer-mediated feedback to create interaction between students. Researchers (*e.g.* Greenfield, 2003; Sullivan and Pratt, 1996) argue that nonnative speakers become more active and motivated when they are provided with the opportunity to interact and share their writing through a computer. Palmquist (1993) claims that it is more efficient when students exchange their writing drafts through computer network whereas, Liu and Sadler (2003) argue that face-to-face

communication results in a better response from students and that online communication results in superficial responses and comments. Pennington (1993) argues that the success of interaction through technology is governed by factors such as the context of use and the type of software chosen for the activity. Belcher (1999) claims that it may negatively influence students who do not have access to sufficient computer facilities.

Other research has focused on the effect of computer-mediated feedback and discussion on students' accuracy and complexity of L2 writing (*e.g.* Pellettieri, 2000; Kern, 1995). For example, Warschauer (1996a) found that students wrote more complex sentences and used better lexical range when they performed online. Pellettieri (2000) found that students who used online writing paid more attention to form, the negotiating of meaning and linguistic modifications, while Kern (1995) found that students who were exposed to online interaction used simple sentences.

Researchers of computer-mediated feedback seem to be optimistic about its effect on students' writing. However, the literature on automated and online feedback is scarce as the interest in this issue started only 15 years ago. Further investigation is needed as it is premature to claim that this type of feedback is better than the typical teacher-student feedback.

2.3.3 Research on Feedback Issues

In this section, we address several research issues regarding corrective feedback through considering a number of questions around the topic. These questions are not about whether corrective feedback is effective but are about in what manner it should be given. Then we move on to address the issue of effectiveness of corrective feedback, discussing the findings of a number of important studies.

2.3.3.1 Specific Issues Concerning the Implementation of Feedback

- *What is more beneficial to students, direct or indirect feedback?*

Direct and indirect corrective feedback, meaning providing the corrections of errors on students' scripts or just underlining them (*see Section 2.3.2.1 for further detail*) have been investigated with a focus on which type contributes more to students' writing. However, research has not reached a definite answer as to which is more useful. Although some studies (*e.g.* Kepner, 1991; Robb et al., 1986; Semke, 1984; Sheppard, 1992) have investigated the effect of different types of feedback, none of them found a significant difference between direct and indirect feedback. In other words, students apparently benefited from feedback regardless of the type provided.

However, there is a different view that sees direct corrective feedback as more useful. For example, Chandler (2003) argued that direct corrective feedback was more useful for producing more accurate drafts as students applied the teacher's corrections to improve their writing. Ferris (2006) found that students produced better second drafts after receiving direct corrective feedback while indirect corrective feedback led to better long-term accuracy (*see Sections 2.3.3.2 and 2.3.3.3 for further detail*).

- *How explicit should corrective feedback be?*

This issue leads us to discuss, again, the difference between direct and indirect feedback. The former is considered more explicit and the latter is less explicit. Several studies suggest that the less explicit feedback can benefit students. For example, Chandler (2003) found underlining students' errors useful for improving accuracy over time. In other words, students' retained improvement for a longer period of time after they received less explicit feedback. However, she also argued that more explicit feedback (i.e. direct correction) could help students produce a better second draft by using the teacher's corrections. Ferris (2006) and Haswell (1983) also argued that minimal marking helped students reduce error ratios.

Other studies (*e.g.* Ferris and Roberts, 2001) found no difference between more or less explicit feedback in that both were useful in helping students improve.

The tendency seems to be that using more or less explicit feedback makes no significant difference in that both can benefit students. However, the explicitness of feedback should be determined by the teacher's goal in providing feedback and, in some cases, students' preferred method of feedback. Further research is needed to investigate this issue over a larger population and at different proficiency levels.

- *When should corrective feedback be given?*

Advocates of the process approach (*e.g.* Bitchener and Ferris, 2012; Hariston, 1986; Krashen, 1984; Zamel, 1985) criticize the product approach for providing feedback focusing on grammar and vocabulary in the early stages of writing. However, I would argue that in the product approach, feedback is also given after writing is finished in the form of summative feedback when it is too late to improve that piece of writing. Therefore, feedback in the product approach may be difficult to time. The researchers mentioned above provide three reasons why feedback should not be given too early in the writing process. First, students go through a number of writing processes such as planning, drafting, revising and editing. Thus, it would be a waste of the teacher's time and effort to provide feedback too early when students' texts may be changed later. Second, focusing on grammatical and lexical errors too early may confuse students and make it difficult for them to develop their arguments. Third, when teachers focus excessively on grammatical and lexical errors, students may receive the wrong message that writing is about the final product rather than engaging in a series of processes to produce an interesting piece (Bitchener and Ferris, 2012). Table 2.9 below shows conclusions drawn by a number of studies:

Table 2.9 – Conclusions on Feedback Timing

Study	Conclusion
Burt (1975)	Teachers should be selective when providing corrective feedback based on the importance of errors.
Horwitz (1988)	Teachers should first know their students' beliefs about language learning in order to adopt effective learning strategies.
Raimes (1983)	Students should revise the first draft and the teacher should give correction on the second draft.
Schulz (1996)	While teachers do not always favour it, students always expect to receive corrective feedback. This conflict between teachers' and students' expectations may reduce students' motivation.
Krashen (1998)	Learners may need corrective feedback only when they are unable to distinguish between the target language and their interlanguage.
Ancker (2000)	76% of students think that teachers should correct all errors while only 25% of teachers think they should do so.

While advocates of the process approach argue that corrective feedback should be given in the final stage of writing when a composition has been finalized, and that feedback given in the early stages should focus on generating ideas and organization, others believe that it is the task of the teacher to decide when to provide corrective feedback by considering the importance of the errors made and students' expectations.

- *Is corrective feedback more effective with some types of errors than other types?*

Although research suggests that some types of feedback are more useful in treating some types of error than others, there is no definite answer to this question. The research of Ferris (1995a), Ferris and Roberts (2001), Ferris (2006) and Ferris et al. (2010) found variation between students as regards this issue (i.e. some types of feedback helped some students improve in some aspects of writing). This is supported by Hendrickson (1984), who stated that many teachers used different types of corrective

feedback based on the goal of the writing task and the targeted errors. However, he also argued, with Brown (2007), that even when teachers provided specific types of feedback to target specific errors, students of low English proficiency would find it difficult to benefit.

Ferris (2002), for example, argued that direct corrective feedback may be useful for treating errors of prepositions and also for drawing students' attention to remaining errors after their compositions were finalized. By contrast, Bitchener et al. (2005) claimed that corrective feedback with meta-linguistic explanation was useful in treating errors in the use of tenses and the definite article, but not prepositions. This suggests that further research is needed on this issue and that again no clear or definite pedagogical conclusions can be drawn. Table 2.10 below is a summary of findings of previous studies on whether corrective feedback is effective on types of errors than others:

Table 2.10 – Conclusions on the Influence of Corrective Feedback on Specific Errors

Study	Conclusion
Truscott (1996)	No form of error correction can help students improve their linguistic knowledge.
Truscott (2007)	Corrective feedback may help students revise their texts and deal with simple errors.
Mackey and Oliver (2002)	Corrective feedback may deal with complex structures such as question forms.
McDonough (2006)	Corrective feedback may improve the use of dative constructions.
Bitchener et al. (2005)	Combining corrective feedback with meta-linguistic explanation can deal with errors of tenses and the definite article.

Although the studies of Mackey and Oliver (2002) and McDonough (2006) above are on oral corrective feedback, Bitchener and Ferris (2012) argue, based on the "hypothesized advantages" of written corrective feedback over oral corrective feedback,

that written corrective feedback may deal with complex structures even better than oral corrective feedback   (p. 36).

- *Can specific language areas be treated by providing individualized and selective feedback?*

Ferris (1995a) and Ferris et al. (2010) argued that individualizing feedback helped students improve in specific areas. In Ferris (1995a), 30 ESL learners received feedback on individualized error patterns over 15 weeks. All the students, except two, showed improvement in the individually targeted error patterns in written accuracy.

In Ferris et al. (2010), 10 ESL learners received corrective feedback on four error patterns. They were asked to revise their compositions and were also interviewed individually to discuss their understanding of the feedback given. All students improved in some ways, specifically in the use of definite and indefinite articles and individualized feedback was found useful for improved accuracy. However, improvement in both studies varied across different students and types of errors.

However, research on the effectiveness of individualized feedback is somewhat limited and no definite pedagogical conclusions can be drawn. Further research is needed on this issue.

- *Should teachers provide content-based and form-based feedback on separate students' drafts?*

Research suggests that students can revise content-based and form-based feedback given on the same composition sheet to produce a better draft. For example, Fathman and Whalley (1990) experimented with corrective feedback, using four groups of intermediate ESL college students. One of the groups received grammar correction by underlining errors of verb forms, tenses, articles and agreement and feedback on content. Students were given 30 minutes to write their compositions in class and after they received feedback they were given 30 minutes to re-draft. The results showed that

this group improved along with another group that received feedback on grammar only. The point is that students who received feedback on form and content on the same composition paper managed to revise and improve.

Ashwell (2000) provided form and content-based feedback to three groups of students. They wrote 500 word compositions which were then corrected and returned for revision and re-draft. Experimental group 3 received a combination of form and content-based feedback while experimental groups 1 and 2 received feedback on form then content and content then form. The results showed that all three groups were almost equal, implying that students who received form and content-based feedback were able to revise and redraft.

Although the number of studies on this issue is limited, the tendency seems that feedback on form and content can be combined or separated as in both cases students will be able to revise and re-draft.

2.3.3.2 The Effectiveness of Corrective Feedback

In this section, we tackle the major issue in feedback, namely the effectiveness of different types of written corrective feedback and the effect of feedback against no feedback. Studies on the effect of written corrective feedback on second language acquisition are also discussed.

Research has suggested that ESL students consider their teachers' feedback on their writing motivating and very important (*e.g.* Leki, 1991a; Saito, 1994; Zhang, 1995). Others (*e.g.* Arndt, 1993; Brice, 1995; Cohen, 1987; Ferris, 1995b; Radecki and Swales, 1998) have found that it is not only that students consider their teachers' feedback important and helpful, but they also value this feedback on "a variety of issues, not just language errors" (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005: 188). However, they have also found that students do not like feedback which involves confusing symbols, codes that are difficult to interpret, unclear questions or suggestions that are difficult to understand and apply. Therefore, research on L2 writing feedback now explores the

effectiveness of teacher-student feedback in the improvement of students' writing (Hyland and Hyland, 2006).

The debate on the effectiveness of corrective feedback in L2 writing was initiated in 1996 in an article by Truscott (1996), who argued that grammar correction should be avoided in L2 writing and stressed that teachers should not correct grammar because of its potentially harmful impacts. He presented three arguments against error correction. The first was that the learning process was too complex to believe that students could improve through providing them with corrective feedback. The second was that giving corrective feedback to students at a time when they were ready to learn a specific language form or structure was barely possible. The third argument was that whatever knowledge students acquired as a result of correction would dissipate over a short period. These arguments led to an increase of research focusing on the effectiveness of corrective feedback on students' writing.

Ferris (1999) criticized Truscott, pointing out that grammar correction could improve students' accuracy and that a critical discussion of correction should not mean that we abandon it entirely.

Another issue that has been debated is whether corrective feedback can lead to long-term improvement in writing. For instance, Haswell (1983) experimented with minimal marking, using three groups of university freshmen. Error ratios at the beginning and end of the semester were compared, showing that the number of errors declined and improvement was retained over time. Ferris (1995a) carried out a 15 week experiment in the context of correcting specific error patterns. The subjects were a group of 30 ESL freshmen. Almost all the students showed improvement over time. Chandler (2003) also argued that students who received corrective feedback then revised their writing improved over time.

Bitchener and Knoch (2009b) carried out a thorough study of written corrective feedback over 10 months. The research investigated the effect of feedback on the English article system (the definite article 'the' and the indefinite article 'a'). The subjects were 52 students from the English language department of a university in Auckland. Most of the students were from Asian countries. They were randomly placed in one of four groups, of 13 students each. Each group received a different treatment.

Group 1 was given direct error correction with written and oral meta-linguistic explanation. Group 2 was given direct correction with written meta-linguistic explanation. Group 3 received only direct error correction. Group 4 (the control group) did not receive any feedback. The pre-test was administered on day one of the experiment. The first post-test was administered one week after the pre-test, during which treatments were given to the experimental groups as outlined above. A first delayed post-test was administered in week eight. A second delayed post-test was given after six months and a final delayed post-test was administered after 10 months. The experimental groups outperformed the control groups on all post-test results, though no difference was found in the effectiveness of the type of feedback given between the treatment groups.

On the other hand, some research (*e.g.* Cohen and Robbins, 1976; Polio et al. 1998) took the opposite view, arguing that error correction did not lead to improvement in writing accuracy. A recent study is that of Truscott and Hsu (2008), who claimed that students who were provided with corrective feedback and then re-drafted their compositions did not show improvement in accuracy over time.

Table 2.11 below is a summary of studies of corrective feedback, providing details of research focus and findings. Some studies compare the effect of feedback to no feedback (*e.g.* Ashwell 2000; Bitchener et al., 2005; Bitchener and Knoch, 2008; Bitchener and Knoch, 2010b; Ferris and Roberts, 2001). Other studies compare different types of feedback treatments (*e.g.* Chandler, 2003; Robb et al., 1986; Lalande, 1982; Semke, 1984; Van Beuningen et al., 2008). There are also studies that review previous articles on corrective feedback or respond to other studies (*e.g.* Ferris, 1999; Knoblauch and Brannon, 1981; Leki, 1990a; Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2004).

Table 2.11 – Summary of Previous Studies on Corrective Feedback

Author	Study Description	Treatment	Major Findings
Studies Comparing the Effect of Different Types of Written Feedback			
Cohen and Robbins (1976) (Language Learning, 26, 45-66)	An investigation into the effect of error correction on the use of verbs in the L2 writing of 3 Chinese learners.	Error explanation interviews and error correction.	No influence for correction.
Lalande (1982) (Modern Language Journal, 66, 140-149)	An investigation into the effect of two types of written feedback on the writing of 60 intermediate German FL learners.	Group 1: Direct error correction Group 2: Indirect coding	Learners reported advantage for indirect feedback over error correction. No statistical difference was reported between the two treatments.
Semke (1984) (Foreign Language Annuals, 17, 195-202)	A comparison between the effects of 4 types of feedback on the writing of 141 German FL learners.	Group 1: Direct error correction Group 2: Content comments Group 3: Direct error correction and content comments Group 4: Indirect coding	No difference was found between the four types of treatment.
Robb et al. (1986) (TESOL Quarterly, 20, 83-93)	A comparison between the effects of 4 types of written feedback on the writing of 134 Japanese FL learners.	Group 1: Direct error correction Group 2: Indirect coding Group 3: Indirect highlighting Group 4: Indirect marginal error totals	No difference was reported between the four types of treatment.

Sheppard (1992) **(RELC Journal, 23, 103-110)**	An investigation into the effect of two types of feedback (discrete -item attention to form and holistic feedback on meaning) on the writing accuracy of students.	Group 1: Discrete-item attention on form Group 2: holistic feedback on meaning	Feedback on content improves students' writing accuracy.
Hedgecock and Leftkowitz (1994) **(Journal of Second Language Writing, 3(2), 114-163)**	ESL and EFL students' preferences for receiving feedback.	Analysis of a 45-item survey.	EFL writers prefer corrective feedback on grammar, vocabulary and surface-level features. ESL writers prefer feedback on content.
Van Beuningen et al. (2008) **(ITL International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 156, 279-296)**	A comparison between the effects of 4 types of written feedback on students' writing.	Group 1: Direct error correction Group 2: Indirect feedback Group 3: Writing practice Group 4: Self-correction revision	Long-term effect of direct error correction is more than the other types. On short-term, direct and indirect feedback are both effective.
Suzuki (2012) **(Language Learning, xx(x), 1-24)**	An investigation into the effect of languaging (students own written explanation of their errors) and direct correction on writing revision.	Group 1: Direct corrective feedback followed by languaging.	Written languaging and direct correction help students perform a better revision and improve accuracy.

Studies Comparing the Effect of Different Types of Written Feedback with no Feedback		
Ashwell (2000) **(Journal of Second Language Writing, 9(3), 227-257)**	An investigation into the effect of four patterns of teacher feedback on accuracy.	Group 1: Feedback on content then form Group 2: Feedback on form then content Group 3: Feedback on form and content then form and content Group 4: Control	No significant difference between the three patterns. No feedback resulted in either no change or deterioration.
Ferris and Roberts (2001) **(Journal of Second Language Writing, 10(3), 161-184)**	An investigation into the effectiveness of explicit and implicit feedback on students' writing.	Group 1: Errors marked with codes from five different error categories Group 2: Errors in the same five categories underlined but not otherwise marked or labeled Group 3: Control	No difference between codes and no codes. Less explicit feedback helps students to self-edit.
Chandler (2003) **(Journal of Second Language Writing, 12, 267-296)**	Study 1: An investigation into the efficacy of the correction of grammatical and lexical errors. Study 2: An investigation into how error correction should be done.	**Study 1** Group 1: Correction of grammatical and lexical errors Group 2: Control **Study 2** Group 1: Direct correction Group 2: Underlining and description of error type Group 3: Description of error type Group 4: Underlining	Study 1: Correction is significantly effective. Study 2: Direct correction and simple underlining of errors are significantly superior to describing the types of errors for reducing long-term error. Direct correction is best for accurate revision.

Bitchener et al. (2005) (Journal of Second Language Writing, 14, 191-205)	An investigation into the effects of different types of indirect written feedback applied in advanced-proficiency levels.	Group 1: Direct error correction Group 2: Direct error correction and oral meta-linguistic explanation Group 3: Control	Direct error correction and meta-linguistic explanation is more effective than direct error correction and no feedback.
Bitchener and Knoch (2008) (Language Teaching Research, 12(3), 409-431)	An investigation into the effects of different types of written corrective feedback on students' writing.	Group 1: Direct error correction, written and oral meta-linguistic explanation Group 2: Direct error correction and written meta-linguistic explanation Group 3: Direct correction Group 4: Control	All groups outperformed the control group but no difference between the treatments.
Bitchener and Knoch (2009b) (ELT Journal, 63(3), 204-211)	A 10 month experiment investigating the value of focused corrective feedback compared with no feedback	Group 1: Direct error correction with written and oral meta-linguistic explanation. Group 2: Direct correction with written meta-linguistic explanation Group 3: Direct error correction. Group 4 Control	No difference between the treatments. Focused corrective feedback improved accuracy in the use of the indefinite article 'a' and the definite article 'the'.
Ellis et al. (2008) (System, 36, 353-371)	The effect of focused and unfocused corrective feedback compared with no feedback.	Group 1: Focused feedback on articles Group 2: Unfocused feedback Group 3: Control	Focused and unfocused corrective feedback improved students' accuracy but no difference between the two types of feedback. Teachers should provide corrective feedback to students.

Truscott and Hsu (2008) (Journal of Second Language Writing, 17, 292-305)	The effect of underlining writing errors on students' revision and learning.	Group 1: Underlining Group 2: Control	Corrective feedback does not improve students' grammar in writing.
Binglan and Jia (2010) (Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics, 33(2), 18-34)	An investigation into the effect of corrective feedback on long-term writing accuracy.	Group 1: Corrective feedback and explicit explanation Group 2: Control	Direct error correction is helpful for long-term progress in writing accuracy.
Bitchener and Knoch (2010b) (Applied Linguistics, 31, 193-214)	A comparison between the effects of 4 types of feedback on students' writing.	Group 1: Direct meta-linguistic explanation Group 2: Indirect circling Group 3: Direct meta-linguistic explanation and oral explanation Group 4: Control	Direct error correction's effect on students' writing is retained for a longer period of time and both direct and indirect feedback have the same effect in the short-term.
Van Beuningen et al. (2012) (Language Learning, 62(1), 1-41)	An investigation into the effect of direct and indirect feedback on writing accuracy.	Group 1: Direct corrective feedback Group 2: Indirect feedback Control 1: Self-editing but no feedback Control 2: No self-editing and no feedback	Direct and indirect feedback improved writing accuracy. Direct corrective feedback is effective for better grammatical accuracy and indirect feedback is better for nongrammatical accuracy.
Review Articles			
Knoblauch and Brannon (1981) (Freshman English News, 10, 1-4)	A review article comparing between different types of instructor's comments on L1 writing.	_	None of the comments had much influence on students' writing.

Keh (1990) **(ELT Journal, 44/4, 294-304)**	A review article of studies on different types of feedback	_	Written feedback is useful for specific errors and for explanation.
Leki (1990a) **(In B. Kroll (Ed.), Second Language Writing: Research insights for the classroom, 57-68)**	A review of research on written commentary on students' writing.	_	No usefulness of written commentary and difficult to interpret and act upon.
Truscott (1996) **(language Learning, 46:2, 327-369)**	A review article of research on grammar correction.	_	Grammar correction is ineffective and can have harmful effects.
Ferris (1999) **(Journal of Second Language Writing, 8(1), 1-11)**	An evaluation of Truscott's (1996) argument on grammar correction.	_	Grammar correction should be used.
Truscott (1999) **(Journal of Second Language Writing, 8(2), 111-122)**	A response to Ferris' (1999) response on error correction.	_	Error correction is never a good idea.
Truscott (2004) **(Journal of Second Language Writing, 13, 337-343)**	An evaluation of Chandler's (2003) two studies on the influence of error correction on students' writing.	_	Correction is ineffective.
Guénette (2007) **(Journal of Second Language Writing, 16, 40-53)**	A review article of studies on corrective feedback.	_	Teachers should provide corrective feedback.

Although the literature suggests that corrective feedback is useful for improved accuracy, there are some conflicting results that take the opposite position, claiming that corrective feedback is ineffective. I would argue that these varying results can be attributed to several factors such as: a) the use of different research methodologies, b) the use of different teaching and feedback techniques, c) the use of different levels of research subjects, d) the use of different ways to measure accuracy and complexity in writing and c) the use of different statistical tests in analyzing scores.

2.3.3.3 Description of Studies on Corrective Feedback

Below I select particular studies from Table 2.11 above for detailed discussion. These studies are Binglan and Jia (2010), Bitchener et al. (2005), Bitchener and Knoch (2009b), Chandler (2003), Ferris and Roberts (2001), Kepner (1991), Suzuki (2012), Truscott and Hsu (2008) and Van Beuningen et al. (2012). These studies have been selected for the following reasons: a) most of them are recent, b) they have a sound methodology and experimental design, c) they reached a variety of influential results and e) they are relevant to the current study. The studies are arranged on the following order based on date (older to recent) and author.

- *Kepner (1991)*

  Kepner (1991) investigated the relationship between the types of written corrective feedback given to students and the development of second language writing skills. Based on a collection of sample texts, Kepner (1991) used a sample of 60 students distributed between four groups of a Spanish module (Spanish 201). The researcher cooperated with the course instructors to design eight writing tasks that were given to students over twelve weeks. The course instructors supplied the researcher with the assignments of students every time a task was accomplished. The researcher then used a green pen to write feedback on students' compositions. The feedback given was of two types, the first was feedback on the writing content, and the second was error-correction. Half of the subjects received feedback on content and the other half received grammar and vocabulary correction. Kepner (1991) selected the sixth assignment of the

subjects produced after 12 weeks of instruction and counted all grammatical and vocabulary errors to measure grammatical accuracy. She also measured the number of "high-level propositions" to check the writing content. Kepner found that students who received feedback on accuracy did not make any significant improvement, while students who received feedback on content showed a significant improvement in writing proficiency in L2 writing in terms of quality and accuracy.

- *Ferris and Roberts (2001)*

Ferris and Roberts (2001) carried out an experimental study to answer the question of whether corrective feedback (marking with codes or underlining without marking) should be more or less explicit and to investigate its effect (i.e. of corrective feedback) on students' writing accuracy and overall quality of their writing. The subjects were 72 students enrolled in ESL classes at California State University, Sacramento. The majority (82%) were immigrants from Southeast Asia and China. Forty-four students were attending three sections of a composition class below the freshman composition level and 36 were attending a "Grammar for Writers" class. All students were assigned to one of three treatment groups (two experimental and one control). Experimental group 1 had 28 students, experimental group 2 had 25 and the control group 14.

In week 1, all students were asked to respond to a short reading by writing a composition in 50 minutes to give their opinion and support it. Both classes, forming the three treatment groups, wrote on different topics but the researcher did not indicate what the topics were. The compositions were collected and word-processed by the researchers without changing them. Five categories of error were corrected in the compositions of experimental groups 1 and 2: a) verb errors, b) noun ending errors, c) article errors, d) wrong word and e) sentence structure. Errors made by students in experimental group 1 were underlined and coded by drawing a line under each error and writing a code to indicate the type of error made. Errors made by students in experimental group 2 were only underlined but not coded. The control group received no feedback. Two weeks later, students received their word-processed and marked (if applicable)

compositions with corrections. All three groups received instruction sheets. Students in experimental group 1 were given instructions explaining the meaning of the codes written on their compositions. Students in experimental group 2 were given prompts guiding them to study all the corrections made. Students in the control group were given instructions to re-read their compositions, look for errors and correct them. All students were then given 20 minutes to complete the self-editing of their compositions. They had to write the corrections on the word-processed compositions and these were then collected again.

The researchers marked the changes made by students and obtained a word count for each composition. Descriptive statistics comparing the mean scores between the pre-test and the self-edited compositions were calculated by a means of *ANOVAs* and a *t-test*. The results showed that the experimental groups significantly outperformed the control group in accuracy and overall quality of writing but no difference was found between the two treatment groups. Ferris and Roberts (2001) concluded that both types of corrective feedback given (more explicit and less explicit) helped students improve their writing accuracy.

- *Chandler (2003) – Study 1*

Chandler (2003) investigated the effect of corrective feedback on students' grammar and vocabulary in writing. The subjects were music major freshmen or sophomores at an American conservatory placed in two groups. The experimental group consisted of 15 students and the control group 16. They were from different East Asian language backgrounds: Korea, Japan, China and Taiwan. They attended a course to improve their reading and writing in English twice a week. Each class lasted for 50 minutes over 14 weeks, which made the total number of classes attended 24. Both groups were taught by the researcher. Students practiced a number of activities: a) reading and discussing autobiographical writings by published writers and other students, b) watching and discussing videos of autobiographical stories, c) doing pre-writing activities and d) discussing common writing errors made by other students. Throughout the semester, students wrote five autobiographical assignments. Writing

activities were process-based, involving free writing and peer discussion. Students were asked to produce multiple drafts and received feedback on grammar and usage errors, either by a) underlining these errors, or b) through general and specific comments on the content. The two groups were taught in the same way and received the same type of feedback. The difference was that the experimental group corrected the underlined errors of each assignment before handing in the next assignment, while the control group was asked to do the corrections after the first drafts of each of the five compositions were handed in, and after the data collection process of the study was completed. Grades were assigned to the final product at the end of the semester and students' error rates were calculated on the first and fifth compositions.

Chandler (2003) found a significant difference between the two groups as the experimental group, which corrected the errors after receiving feedback, outperformed the control group in accuracy. Therefore, Chandler concluded that making students correct their errors after receiving feedback could improve their writing accuracy.

- *Chandler (2003) – Study 2*

In the second study, Chandler (2003) investigated the effect of four types of corrective feedback on students' accuracy. The subjects were 36 students from two sections attending the same course described in the first study above to improve their reading and writing in English. Students were taught in the same way and by the same teacher (the researcher). The first section contained 20 Asian students and 1 Hispanic and the second contained 15 students from different East Asian language backgrounds. They were asked to write 40 pages of compositions on autobiographical topics over one semester. Each student received four types of corrective feedback throughout the semester: a) direct corrective feedback by providing the correction above each error, b) underlining with description of error type by drawing a line under each error and indicating its type by symbol or code, c) description of error type only and d) underlining only. After receiving the treatments, all students were asked to correct their errors.

After students had finished writing all the required compositions, the mean scores of the number of grammatical and lexical errors per 100 words of compositions 1 and 5 were calculated. Then, a *t-test* was conducted to find the difference between the mean scores. The results showed significant improvement in accuracy and complexity across all students. Direct corrective feedback was best for producing a better revision and producing accurate second drafts, while students believed that they benefited more from simple underlining based on their response to a questionnaire.

- *Bitchener et al. (2005)*

Bitchener et al. (2005) investigated the effect of direct corrective feedback and student-researcher conferencing on overall accuracy and accuracy in the use of prepositions, the simple past and the definite article. The subjects were 53 adult post-intermediate migrant students to New Zealand, mainly from China and other countries including Sri Lanka, Romania, Iran, Turkey, Serbia, Russia, Korea, Indonesia Taiwan, Japan and India. Most of the participants came to New Zealand two years before the research was carried out. They were enrolled in a course to improve their communicative skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. The researchers assigned them to three treatment groups. Nineteen students were assigned to experimental group 1, 17 to experimental group 2 and 17 to the control group. They were all given the same amount of instruction on grammar and writing. The experiment lasted for 12 weeks and in weeks 2, 4, 8 and 12 each student completed four 250 word compositions on a similar topic. No details were provided about the topics but one example given was writing an informal letter to a friend who used to live in New Zealand and then left to work in the student's original country and tell him or her (i.e. tell the friend) what he or she had been doing since he or she left. Each task was to be completed in 45 minutes.

Compositions written by students in experimental group 1 were corrected by underlining all errors of preposition, the simple past and the definite article and writing the corrections above the original errors. When the students in this group received their compositions back, each of them had a 5 minute conference

session with the researcher to discuss the errors corrected in his or her composition. The conferences were conducted by one of the study's researchers who did not participate in the teaching. Compositions written by students in experimental group 2 were also corrected by underlining all errors of preposition, the simple past and the definite article and writing the corrections above the original errors, but students did not have conference sessions after receiving the compositions. Compositions written by the control group were not corrected but for ethical reasons feedback was given on content quality and organization.

All the four compositions written in weeks 2, 4, 8 and 12 were then analyzed by calculating overall accuracy and specific accuracy in the use of prepositions, the simple past and the definite article. An *ANOVA* test was applied to compare the mean scores of all the students in the three groups together in overall accuracy and then in each accuracy measure.

Although the results did not show any significant differences between the groups in overall accuracy, experimental group 1, which received direct corrective feedback and conferencing, significantly outperformed the other two groups in the use of the simple past and the definite article. Bitchener et al. (2005) concluded that combining direct corrective feedback with one-to-one conferencing could improve specific accuracy patterns such as the simple past and the definite article. They also claimed that direct corrective feedback, if combined with conferencing, could have a greater effect than indirect corrective feedback on improved accuracy overtime.

- *Bitchener and Knoch (2009b)*

  Bitchener and Knoch (2009b) carried out a 10 month study to investigate the effects of three different types of corrective feedback on students' writing accuracy as measured by the handling of two functional uses of the English article system (the definite article 'the' and the indefinite article 'a'). The experiment involved a pre-test, a post-test and three delayed post-tests. The subjects were 52 ESL students from a university in Auckland representing different language backgrounds from East Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Africa

and South America with an average age of 31.7 years. New students were first given a standardized grammar test and a writing test and were interviewed individually. Other students who studied at a lower proficiency level were placed in the low-intermediate level. Then, they were randomly assigned to one of four treatment groups (13 students in each group).

Throughout the experiment, students were required to write a total of five compositions. Before each task, they were given a picture of a social gathering and they had to write a composition describing the picture. The topics of the five compositions were based on pictures of a beach, a picnic, a campsite, a family celebration and sporting event. On day one of the experiment, students were given a pre-test and the compositions were returned one week later. Experimental group 1 received direct corrective feedback by means of a correction above each functional error and written meta-linguistic explanation on an attached paper that contained an explanation of the rules of the use of the articles 'the' and 'a' with examples, as well as a 30 minute oral meta-linguistic explanation of the rules written on the attached papers. Experimental group 2 received direct corrective feedback by means of a correction above each functional error and meta-linguistic explanation as mentioned above. Experimental group 3 received only direct corrective feedback in the same manner outlined in groups 1 and 2 above. Group 4 (the control group) received no feedback. Once each experimental group had received feedback and considered the correction given, an immediate post-test was undertaken in the same way as outlined for the pre-test above. The control group took the post-test immediately after receiving the uncorrected compositions written in the pre-test. The compositions were returned one week later. A first delayed post-test was administered in week 8 and the compositions were returned one week later. A second delayed post-test was administered after 6 months and a final delayed post-test was administered after 10 months.

All the compositions were then analyzed by calculating accuracy based on a percentage of correct usage of the two articles 'the' and 'a.' Inter-rater reliability calculations revealed a 95% agreement on the identification of targeted errors and a 98% agreement on assigning errors to the targeted categories. Although

the three experimental groups outperformed the control group in the use of the articles 'the' and 'a,' there was no significant difference on *ANOVA* testing in the performance between the experimental groups.

Bitchener and Knoch (2009b) concluded that corrective feedback helped students improve their writing accuracy in the use of 'the' and 'a' on the long-term and that they benefited from corrective feedback, although there was no significant advantage for one type of feedback compared to another.

- *Truscott and Hsu (2008)*

Truscott and Hsu (2008) investigated the effect of corrective feedback on students' revision and learning. The subjects were 47 students from different colleges at a university in Taiwan (Science, Engineering, Life Sciences, Nuclear Science and Technology Management). They were first enrolled in an orientation seminar that prepared them to use basic writing and specific genres which were narration, description, argumentation, comparison/contrast and process. They also took a diagnostic test and, based on the results, they were placed in appropriate level course. The test required students to write a 150-180 word composition within 40 minutes, stating their view about the Public Welfare Lottery (i.e. whether they supported or opposed it) and also discuss its influence on society. The compositions were graded by two writing instructors and a mark (out of 60) was assigned to each composition. Students who scored from 30 to 40 were placed in the experimental course which involved three sections. They were taught by two experienced teachers. One taught two sections and the other, who was also one of the researchers of the study, taught the third section. The two instructors taught the students in the same way, used the same materials and collected data in the same manner. Data collection was done as follows.

The students were first divided into two groups (21 in the experimental group and 26 in the control group). They were tested after 11 weeks of instruction during which they wrote in the genres of narration, description and argumentation. First, they were given 30 minutes to write Narrative 1 based on a sequence of eight pictures and prompts. They were asked to write a story using the prompts in 30 minutes. Once they had finished, their compositions were

corrected by underlining their grammatical and spelling errors. The compositions were returned to students in week 13 and they were given 30 minutes to revise. Students in the control group were not provided with corrections. In week 14, students were asked to write Narrative 2, which was another sequence of eight pictures they had to use to write a narrative story. Thirty minutes were given to finish the task. The compositions were marked by a different researcher who did not teach any of the sections.

The results were calculated based on the total number of errors divided by the total number of words as an error rate. Although the results of the experimental group in Narrative 1 revision were significantly better than the control group (i.e. the experimental group made fewer grammatical errors than the control group), the two groups were identical in Narrative 2. Truscott and Hsu (2008) argued that correction did not improve students' writing and the significantly improved writing of experimental group in Narrative 1 revision could not be attributed to correction.

- *Binglan and Jia (2010)*

  Binglan and Jia (2010) investigated the effectiveness of combining direct corrective feedback with explicit explanation on the long-term accuracy in writing. The subjects were 44 second year Chinese EFL students in a university in Hefei, majoring in Computer Science and Maths. They had the same overall proficiency in English. Students majoring in Computer Science were assigned to the experimental group and those majoring in Maths were assigned to the control group (experimental group = 25 students and the control group = 19 students).

  The experiment involved the researcher and a participating teacher, who had more than 20 years of experience in teaching reading and writing. Over 17 weeks, the classes met twice a week and each lesson lasted for 90 minutes. Students were given instructions on writing before they started each task and were also given the freedom to set their own writing topics in a variety of genres such as summary, argumentation and narration. These genres were associated with previously read topics in a course taught by the participating instructor.

After each task, the researcher corrected the compositions written by the experimental group, providing corrections of grammatical errors and content with explicit explanation of errors and grammatical rules on the margin. The participating instructor corrected the compositions written by the control group, providing only a general commentary by writing suggestions to improve the compositions. Students produced a total of six compositions throughout the experiment. No word or time limit was set by the instructor and the compositions were collected whenever students finished.

Using a measure of [total number of errors/total number of words]×100, the mean scores of students' first and sixth compositions were calculated and then compared. The results showed a significant difference between the two groups as the experimental group outperformed the control group in general writing accuracy. Binglan and Jia (2010) concluded that combining direct corrective feedback with explicit written explanation helped students improve their accuracy in writing.

- *Suzuki (2012)*

Suzuki (2012) investigated the effect of a feedback method called "written languaging"; that is, when students receive corrective feedback on their compositions then write a composition providing their own explanation of the corrections they received, followed by re-drafting a previous composition. The participants in the study were 24 Japanese students (9 males and 15 females) attending an English composition course at a Japanese public university. They all had a high school diploma in Japan and 83% of them learned English as a foreign language at or after the age of 10 years with an average of 7.91 years of learning English. Two participating instructors helped in carrying out the study. One was an experienced native speaker of Japanese who assisted throughout various phases of the experiment but was not present in the classroom when the languaging procedure was conducted. The second was a native speaker of English and his task was to provide corrective feedback on students' writing. The study lasted for two weeks.

In week 1, students were given 30 minutes to write a composition based on written prompts: 1) prompt A: "If you could travel back in time to meet a famous person from history, what person would you like to meet?" and 2) prompt B: "If you could meet a famous entertainer or athlete, who would that be, and why? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice" (Suzuki, 2012:9). The compositions were then collected and photocopied. The copies were given to a native English instructor to provide direct corrective feedback on accuracy (grammar and vocabulary) by writing corrections next to or above the original errors. In week 2, students were given their compositions back with direct correction and were asked to start writing a languaging task in Japanese. They were also provided with prompts that explained what languaging was and what they were required to do. Languaging involved students explaining on a separate sheet, after receiving corrective feedback, why their linguistic forms had been corrected. They were given 30 minutes to perform the task. The languaging sheets were then collected and a background questionnaire was immediately administered to students. The aim of the questionnaire was to elicit students' demographical information (*e.g.* age, gender, language learning background, etc.). Once the questionnaire was completed, students received clean copies of their compositions (i.e. copies that did not have corrections) and were given 20 minutes to revise and produce a second draft. The compositions were then collected for analysis. The number of words, sentences and errors in the compositions were counted and the average mean scores were calculated for each student across the two tests. A *t-test* was conducted to measure the difference in students' performance in grammar and vocabulary in the first and second draft. The languaging data was also analyzed by *one-sample chi-square test*.

The results showed a significant improvement in the second draft as students managed to revise and correct their grammatical and lexical errors. Suzuki (2012) argued that written languaging with direct corrective feedback provided on linguistic errors could improve students' writing in the revised version. She also claimed that written languaging was associated with improved accuracy.

- *Van Beuningen et al. (2012)*

  Van Beuningen et al. (2012) investigated the effectiveness of direct and indirect corrective feedback on students' overall accuracy, grammatical accuracy, non-grammatical accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical diversity in L2 writing. The subjects were 268 students from four secondary schools in the Netherlands. All were born in the Netherlands, but the majority, 80%, came from non-Dutch language backgrounds (Moroccan, Turkish and Surinamese) and started learning Dutch at the age of four. They were assigned to four treatment groups, two experimental and two control. The first experimental group received direct corrective feedback by indicating the corrections of errors beneath the original errors. The second experimental group received indirect corrective feedback by indicating the location and category of each error through the use of symbols and codes (*e.g.* '_ _' for a wrong word and 'S' for a spelling error). The students in control group 1 received no feedback but were asked to revise and self-correct their compositions. The students in control group 2 received no feedback but were involved in a new writing task. The experiment included a pre-test, a post-test and a delayed post-test. Students were required to produce four compositions on biology related topics. The first was on butterflies, the second on honeybees, the third on ladybirds and the fourth on wasps. The researcher explained all the tasks and topics for students and marked the compositions.

  In week 1, all the students were given a vocabulary test to evaluate their overall language proficiency, a questionnaire eliciting responses on their language background and the first writing task. Twenty minutes were given for the writing task and the students were instructed to write a minimum of 15 lines. The compositions were then collected and marked based on the treatments outlined above. The compositions of the control group groups were not corrected. In week 2, the experimental groups received the compositions with corrective feedback and were asked to revise all the errors and copy the text again. They were provided with written and oral explanation of the meaning of error codes and how to use them. The students in control group 1 were asked to self-correct their compositions which they produced in the pre-test and the students in

control group 2 were given a new writing task. All the groups were then given 20 minutes to finish the next writing task. A post-test and a delayed post-test were then administered in weeks 3 and 6. In week 3, students were asked to write a third composition and in week 6 a fourth composition. The researcher introduced both topics shortly before the task started and 20 minutes were given for each task.

Students' written texts were transcribed by two assistant researchers and coded for linguistic errors and clause types by the author with a CLAN programme of CHILDES (MacWhinney 2000). Overall accuracy was measured by [number of linguistic errors divided by total number of words]×10. This ratio was used because students' texts were short. Structural complexity was measured by [number of subclauses divided by total number of clauses] and lexical diversity was measured by [type/token] ratios correcting for text length. Differences between the groups were calculated by *ANCOVAs* test and the results were as follows.

Direct and indirect feedback was useful in improving grammatical and non-grammatical accuracy as both experimental groups outperformed the control groups. For overall accuracy, the effect of direct corrective feedback was greater than indirect corrective feedback as experimental group 1 outperformed experimental group 2. For grammatical complexity and lexical diversity, Van Beuningen et al. (2012) wanted to examine Truscott's (2007) claim that corrective feedback resulted in simplified writing. However, no significant difference was found between all groups in structural complexity or lexical diversity.

Overall, Van Beuningen et al. (2012) argued that comprehensive corrective feedback improved students' writing accuracy and that it could be used as a useful educational tool.

2.3.3.3.1 Summary and Discussion

Research on corrective feedback has resulted in a variety of findings. The studies discussed in the previous section covered some of the findings in 12 years of

research on the effectiveness of corrective feedback, in addition to one study that dated back to the early 1990s, which was that of Kepner (1991).

The tendency in research findings seems to have established evidence in support of corrective feedback, arguing that it can help students improve their accuracy in writing. However, the studies of Bitchener and Knoch (2009b) and Ferris and Roberts (2001) found no significant difference between direct and indirect corrective feedback in that both helped students to improve accuracy in writing.

Van Beuningen et al. (2012) also found that both direct and indirect corrective feedback were useful for improved accuracy but also argued that direct corrective feedback was better for improving overall accuracy than indirect corrective feedback.

There are also studies that found a significant effect in favour of direct corrective feedback on writing accuracy if combined with other feedback methods. For example, Bitchener et al. (2005) argued that direct corrective feedback had a more significant effect on students' accuracy in writing when followed by one-to-one conferencing and Suzuki (2012) claimed that direct corrective feedback could improve accuracy in writing if combined with languaging activities; that is, when students wrote a composition to explain why their forms were corrected.

Chandler (2003) found that students believed that they benefited more from simple underlining than direct correction although the results showed that direct corrective feedback was more useful for improved accuracy.

However, there are studies, such as Kepner (1991) and Truscott and Hsu (2008), which claimed that corrective feedback had no effect on accuracy in writing.

As mentioned above, we may conclude that research on corrective feedback has resulted in conflicting findings (*see Section 2.3.3.2 for further explanation*), even though the tendency seems to be that corrective feedback is useful for improved accuracy in writing.

2.4 The Present Study

One of the aims of this study is to make a contribution to the literature investigating the effectiveness of feedback on writing accuracy and complexity. There are a number of studies which are somewhat similar to the one presented. These are the studies of Kepner (1991), Chandler (2003) and Bitchener et al. (2005).

Kepner's (1991) investigated the effect of two types of feedback on L2 writing skills as outlined above. The main differences between this study and Kepner's are: a) that this study does not seek to investigate the effect of feedback on content; b) that unlike Kepner's, it includes a control group; c) that in this study the researcher was also the teacher of the experimental and control groups.

The present study is also similar to Chandler's (2003) in the specific respect that both investigate the effect of corrective feedback but differ in that while Chandler investigates the effect of four types of corrective feedback (direct correction, underlining with description of error type, description of error type and underlining), this study only investigates two types. The subjects in Chandler's study are from East Asia whereas in this study they are Arab learners. Finally, this study, unlike Chandler's, has a control group.

Finally, Bitchener et al.'s study (2005) is similar to this study in that both investigate the effect of different types of feedback but differ in some dependent variables. Bitchener et al.'s study (2005) investigated the effect of corrective feedback on accuracy in prepositions, articles and the simple past. This study, by contrast, investigates the effect of corrective feedback on overall accuracy, accuracy in the use of tenses and articles and grammatical and lexical complexity.

This study is innovative in that it makes a number of contributions that can be explained as follows:

- It studies the effect of written corrective feedback on the writing accuracy and complexity of Arab learners. In fact, there are relatively few studies of Arab learners, especially in the context of Bahrain.
- It focuses on low proficiency students. There are relatively few studies of low proficiency learners. Most of the previous studies that investigated the effectiveness of corrective feedback on students' writing involved students of good or fair English language levels.
- It provides a combination of different research instruments, including observations, interviews and questionnaires, in addition to experimenting, which intended to develop practical recommendations for change and more theoretical insights.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN and METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and the instruments used to undertake the quasi-experimental study, classroom observations, questionnaires and interviews. First, the design of the quasi-experimental study is discussed, explaining the experiment variables, the subjects of the study and the treatments employed. The teaching procedure followed in the quasi-experimental study and the measures used to analyze students' writing are also explained. Then, the instruments and procedures used in collecting classroom observation, interviews and questionnaires data are described. The last section is for research ethics.

3.1 The Design of the Experimental Study

The design of the quasi-experimental study aims to provide specific answers to the research questions (b1) and (b2), outlined in Chapter 1, as follows:

- b1: Does corrective feedback lead to an increase in the accuracy and complexity of student writing compared to no or minimal feedback?

- b2: Which of two types of corrective feedback (a. direct corrective feedback in the form of written corrections of errors on students' compositions and b. indirect corrective feedback in the form of error underlining) has greater influence on the accuracy and complexity of student writing?

The components of the quasi-experimental study are explained below:

3.1.1 Experiment Variables

In this study the independent variable is the type of treatment given to the students, while the dependent variable represents the effect of the treatment on students' writing. Figure 3.1 below explains the relationship between these two variables:

Independent Variable		Dependent Variable

X ——————————————————————► **Y**

Giving feedback: Effect on students' accuracy and

(direct error correction, underlining with description   complexity in writing

of error type and no feedback)
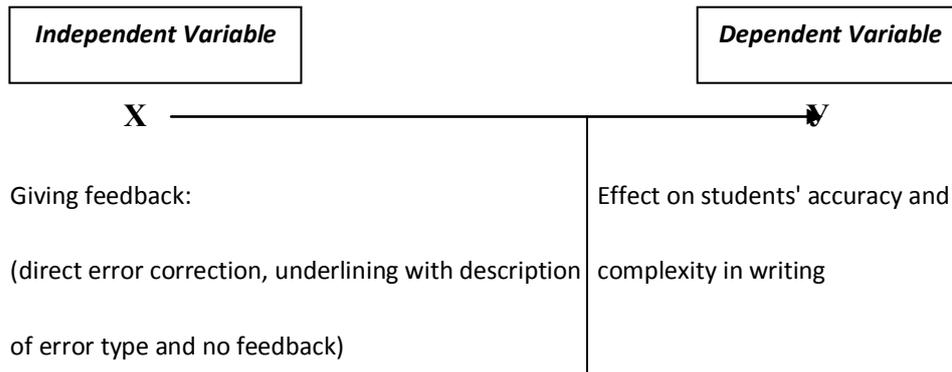
Figure 3.1 - Experiment Independent and Dependent Variables

There is one independent variable with three conditions, which are treatment type 1, treatment type 2 and no feedback. The first condition is direct error correction, defined as correcting students' errors by providing the correct form or structure on their composition papers. For example, if a student makes an error by using the simple present in a situation where he or she is supposed to use the simple past, then direct correction here means that the instructor will write the correct form of the verb in red next to or above the original error so that the student knows that he or she has made an error and that the word written in red is the proper form of the verb as in the example in Figure 3.2 below:

> bought a   house   made   a   but my mother didn't like it
> My father ~~buy~~ ˆ new ~~home~~ and ~~makes~~ it ˆ surprise ~~mother don't like.~~
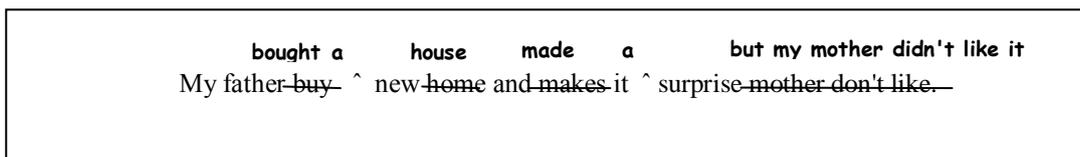
Figure 3.2 – Direct Error Correction

The second is error underlining with description of error type, defined as indicating the location of students' errors by underlining their errors and describing the types of errors made by codes or symbols. For example, if a student makes an error using a wrong preposition like '*in*' instead of '*on*' then the instructor will underline '*in*' and write the code '*Prep.*' so that the student knows where his or her error is and what type of error he or she has made. To know how to correct that error, the student will have to put in more effort outside the classroom by looking up the answer in a grammar book, or consulting a teacher or a classmate. Figure 3.3 below shows underlining with description of error type:

<div style="border:1px solid">

         Tense   **Prep.**   **Tense**   **Tense**

It was <u>rained</u> heavily <u>in</u> night when I <u>hear</u> someone <u>screamed</u>

</div>
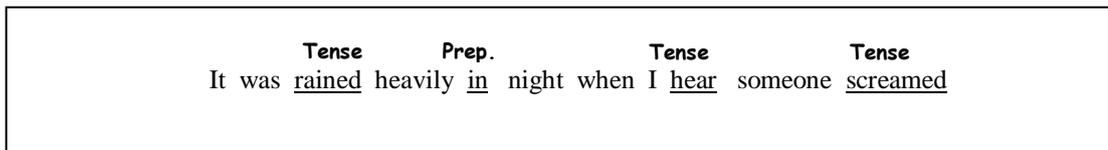
Figure 3.3 – Underlining with Description of Error Type

The third condition is giving no or minimal feedback in the form of general and summative written comments on students' writing without providing correction.

The dependent variable in the experiment is the effect on students' general accuracy, specific accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity in writing. Accuracy refers to correct use of grammar and vocabulary. Complexity means the use of more complex syntactic items such as participles and passive voice and the use of more complex lexical items such as prefixes and suffixes.

3.1.2 Subjects

The subjects of this experiment were 46 students from the Department of Media at the University of Bahrain. These students were attending a compulsory language development course (English 111) for media students run by the Department of English Language and Literature (*see Chapter 1*). Although the students were randomly placed in three groups, it was important to ensure that their language backgrounds were similar to each other. This was done through examining their previous scores in English in the orientation programme.

3.2 Treatment: Teaching and Feedback Procedure

I taught the three groups for 12 weeks (*see Appendix G for copy of the syllabus*). Students wrote 12 compositions in 12 weeks. Experimental group A was given the first type of treatment, which was direct corrective feedback. Every composition the students of group A handed in was corrected directly. I went through all the errors they made and corrected them with a red pen. The compositions were given back to the students to be re-drafted and handed in again. The compositions were then corrected again, photocopied and returned to the students. They were then requested to read the corrections. This process continued throughout a whole academic semester (12 weeks). Experimental group B was given the second type of treatment, which was underlining with description of error type. Every composition the students handed in was read and the errors they made were underlined with a red pen and a brief description of the type of error underlined was written in the margin of the paper or above the error. All the compositions were then returned to them and they were asked to look at their errors, re-draft their compositions and hand them in again. The compositions were then corrected, photocopied and returned to the students. They were then asked to read the corrections. This process continued for a whole academic semester (12 weeks). The students of group C, the control group, were given no corrective feedback on their writing for 12 weeks. However, they received general feedback by writing simple comments on their performance, following the procedure of Bitchener et al. (2005). The details of the teaching and feedback procedures are explained below.

3.2.1 Teaching Procedure

I combined a number of pedagogical approaches to teach L2 writing following the guidelines of researchers (*e.g.* Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005; Grabe and Kaplan, 1996; Hyland and Hyland, 2006; Kroll, 1990, 2001, 2003; Raimes, 1983; Silva and Matsuda, 2001). These were the process approach, the genre approach and the product approach (*see Chapter 2 for explanation of these approaches*). I also used some L2 writing pedagogical techniques proposed by Raimes (1983) for classroom planning, teaching organization, using controlled writing and teaching practical writing. The main teaching material of the course English 111 for the three groups in the experiment (*see Chapter 1*) was the course regular textbook '*Going for Gold'* by Acklam and Crace (2005). Other materials used were a language workbook with audio CD set and selected external handouts from language and grammar books (*e.g.* Murphy 1999; West 1993).

At the beginning of each writing class, I first told the students that what they wrote was not necessarily their final product and that their writing could always be modified and changed until it achieved a better draft. Then I focused on the pre-drafting process by introducing the topic through a number of activities such as brainstorming, discussion, reading and list making, following (Raimes, 1983). Students would be asked a number of general questions about the target topic to refresh their thinking. In other situations, they were given readings on the target topic to supply them with ideas. After finishing the reading task, I would discuss the writing topic to generate ideas that could be used in their compositions. The discussion could often lead to list making as the students would make a list of ideas that could be incorporated in their writing. They would always be given enough time to explore the topic and make their own decisions on how to write a particular composition and how to start.

Then I would shift to the drafting process. Over 12 weeks, the students wrote all the required compositions in class because I wanted to make sure that they performed the writing without the help of others. They were reminded at the beginning of the writing process of the importance of grammar, vocabulary, organization and writing mechanics. While they were writing, I walked around to monitor the activity and

sometimes I conferenced with students by sitting next to individual students, reading what they had written and discussing their ideas and what they were going to write next. At the end of the class, I asked them to hand in their scripts. They were always told that they would receive feedback on their writing the following class.

The next step would be the post-drafting process. This was done through correcting students' writing, giving written feedback on their scripts and then returning them for re-drafting. Each experimental group received one type of feedback (*see Section 3.2.2*). After returning the scripts, the students were given time for peer discussion and exchange of ideas about their performance. I initiated a general discussion on major writing errors and give examples and explanations on the board. They were asked to re-draft their writing and pay attention to the corrections I had made of their scripts. They were also given the time (10 to 15 minutes) to re-draft. The scripts would be collected again at the end of the task and would be returned to the students with feedback on them the following lesson. This would bring each writing task to its end.

By following the three phases described above (pre-drafting, drafting and post-drafting) I aimed to give more attention to the writing process. First, I prepared the students for the writing task through brainstorming, discussion, reading and list making. Second, I gave them time to perform the writing task in class and I monitored the activities and in many cases intervened by conducting a one-to-one conference. Third, I gave written feedback on students' writing, explained their errors generally and asked them to re-draft their compositions and pay attention to their errors.

It is important to mention that the regulations of the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Bahrain state that before granting access to the department's resources, researchers must be notified that they are not allowed, under any circumstances, to change or modify the content of the Department's modules. Therefore, I had to abide by the regulations of the University by not changing or modifying the composition topics of the module textbook. Below is a table showing the topics students had to write compositions on throughout an academic semester of 12 weeks:

Table 3.1 – Writing Topics over 12 Weeks

Week	Composition Topic
1	Describing Family
2	Inviting a Friend to the Country
3	Story 1
4	Informal Letter 1
5	Informal Letter 2
6	Story 2
7	Messages and Notes
8	Transactional Letter
9	Discursive Composition
10	Argument
11	Report
12	Article

We can see that some topics were on autobiography, such as the topics of weeks 1, 2, 4 and 5. The other topics were related to a variety of genres such as letters, and reports (*see Appendix L for a Sample Page from the Course Textbook*).

3.2.2 Feedback Procedure

As explained above, the students received 3 types of feedback. Experiment group A received direct corrective feedback, which meant that their errors were corrected on their scripts. The procedure followed in giving this type of feedback was that every time the scripts were collected, I went through all papers and read them carefully. The grammar and vocabulary errors found were corrected on the scripts (i.e. errors were crossed out, underlined or circled and the corrections were written for the students next to the errors). Students' scripts were returned to them once they were corrected. They were then asked to re-draft their writing and hand it in for correction. Figure 3.4 below is an example of error correction for experimental group A (*see Appendices J-1 and J-2 for more sample compositions*):
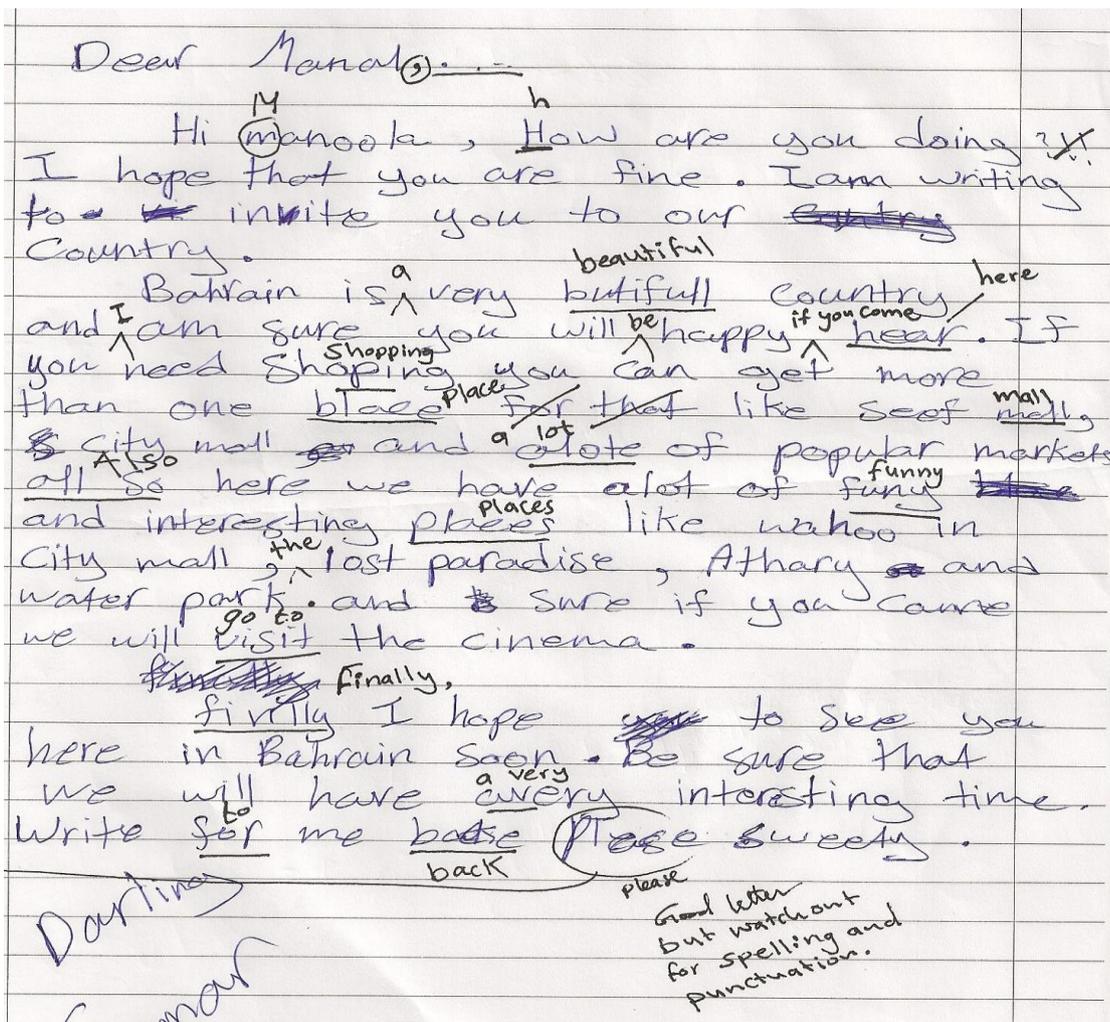
Figure 3.4 –Sample of Direct Corrective Feedback

The second experimental group B received underlining with description of error type given by code or full word, which meant that the students' errors were only underlined on the scripts and the type of the error was written on the margin or above the error without writing the correction for students. After the scripts were returned, students were asked to re-draft their writing and hand it in for correction. Because the errors were not corrected, the students were instructed to look up their errors in a grammar book or use the internet to find out why this word or that phrase was underlined. Figure 3.5 below shows how errors were underlined and described in experimental group B (*see Appendices J-3 and J-4 for more sample compositions*):

Dear Reem,

Thanks for your last letter, it was good to hear from you.

I am writing to tell you about a really good film I've seen recently, called (.....) The story is about an disabilty girl who lives with her family; every one love her because she is very kind, but the parents in the neighbourhood don't want her to live with him in the nighbourhood, they wont send her to the mentol hospital; but one day a man come and change everything, I won't tell you any more because you should go and see it.

It is an unusual unusual plot and brilliant film. The acting is perfect, because the actors are proffeisonal. I am planning go go to the cinema tommorow.

OK attention to pay attention simple present and spelling.

Love
Ablee

Figure 3.5 –Sample of Underlining with Description of Error Type

The control group C was given general feedback comments at the end of their scripts with no detailed error correction. Figure 3.6 below is an example of how general feedback was given to the control group C (*see Appendices J-5 and J-6 for more sample compositions*):

I woke up at 2:00 after midnight to have a glass of water...sarpisingly, my father and mother were not at home. I felt that samthing wrong happend. So I tried to call my mother but she didn't answer. I was very worried and kept calling again and again but still no answer. I awakened up my sister and I told her about what happened. And I was shocked that she already knew that our parent were not at home. She told me that my grandmother was sick and they took her to hospital. After tow hours they come back and they brought our grandmother with them. She was feeling a bit better.

Revise grammar
Organization (paragraphs)
Punctuation

Figure 3.6 –Sample of General Feedback without Correction

Types of Errors Corrected

The students received feedback almost entirely on grammatical and lexical errors. Students' errors were categorized into two types based on previous research (*e.g.* Aarts and Aarts, 1982; Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005; Engber, 1995). The first was grammatical errors, sub-divided into syntactic and morphological errors. The syntactic errors included tenses, prepositions, relative clauses, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs and word order. The morphological errors included subject-verb agreement, determiner/article and singular/plural. The second category was vocabulary errors and was sub-divided into two sub-categories: lexical choice errors and lexical form errors. Lexical choice errors included wrong word choice, wrong combination/phrase and

missing a word from a combination. Lexical form errors included derivational errors and wrong singular/plural form. Table 3.2 below defines the categories and sub-categories of all errors and gives empirical examples from students' writing:

Table 3.2 – Definitions and Examples of Errors Corrected

Error Type	Definition	Example
Grammar/ Syntactic Errors		
Tense	Wrong use of a tense.	They _go_ (went) to the supermarket yesterday.
Prepositions	Missing preposition or wrong use of a preposition.	He is looking _about_ (for) his keys.
Relative clause	Wrong structure of a relative clause.	This is the man _whose_ (who) sold me the car.
Conjunction	Missing conjunction or wrong use of conjunction.	My friend studied hard _and_ (but) he failed.
Auxiliary verb	Missing auxiliary or wrong use of auxiliary.	She _are_ (is) working for ten hours a day.
Word order	Wrong word order in a sentence or a clause.	My grandfather _next week is visiting us_. (My grandfather is visiting us week).
Grammar/ Morphological Errors		
Subject-Verb agreement	Wrong structure of subject-verb agreement.	The players was tired (were).
Determiner/Article	Missing article or wrong use of an article, including 'zero article'.	I go to _the_ school at seven o'clock. (I go to school at seven o'clock).
Singular/Plural	Wrong use of singular or plural.	How many _sandwich_ (sandwiches) did you eat?
Vocabulary/ Lexical Choice Errors		
Wrong combination/ phrase	Wrong use of a word in a combination of words.	We knew one other for a long time (each other).
Missing word from a combination	Missing word from a combination of words that would usually be used together.	The murderer suicide at the end (committed suicide).
Vocabulary/ Lexical Form Errors		
Derivational error	Missing prefixes or suffixes or wrong use of prefixes or suffixes to derive a word.	I need your _co-operate_ (co-operation).
Wrong singular/ plural form	Using the wrong form of a singular or plural noun.	My grandfather bought three sheeps (sheep).

Error Count

Table 3.3 below summarizes the types and number of errors corrected in weeks 2, 6 and 10 of the experiment:

Table 3.3 – Types and Numbers of Errors Corrected

Type of Error Corrected	**Number of Errors Corrected per Week**				
	Week 2	Week 6	Week 10	Total	Percent
Tense	225	296	270	791	30%
Preposition	101	50	73	224	8%
Clauses	52	62	54	168	6%
Conjunction	75	45	40	160	6%
Auxiliary verb	28	25	21	74	3%
Word order	48	41	23	112	4%
Subject-verb agreement	20	10	8	38	1%
Determiner/Articles	137	109	70	316	12%
Singular vs. plural	29	33	15	77	3%
Wrong word choice	151	126	125	402	15%
Wrong combination/phrase	54	25	41	120	5%
Missing word from a combination	22	20	16	58	2%
Derivational errors	34	40	20	94	4%
Wrong singular plural form	7	9	4	20	1%
Total				2654	

Most of the errors corrected in weeks 2, 6 and 10 were in the use of tenses (30%), articles (12%), word choice (15%) and prepositions (8%) (*see Appendices D-1, D-2 and D-3 for detailed tables*).

3.2.3 Obtaining Writing Samples: Pre-, Post- and Delayed Post-test

De Larios, Murphy and Mar`in (2002) provide a detailed discussion of this issue. They present different approaches to collecting representative samples of second language writing. They say:

"there is considerable debate about what constitutes a representative sampling of second language writing, whether brief tasks or students' written samples collected during a period of time (Hamp-Lyons, 1990; Henry, 1996; Raimes, 1998). Although in a few cases researchers collected a number of course-related assignments on the assumption that this procedure would be in consonance with ordinary class writing (Edelsky, 1982; Zamel, 1983), the vast majority of studies, in line with the problem-solving approach followed (Pozo, 1989), opted for short time-compressed compositions."

[De Larios, Murphy & Mar`in, 2002: 17]

They also mention further factors that might affect how representative the collected written samples are, such as the time within which participants have to finish writing the composition, the types of topics and texts the students are asked to write and whether they can use external aids. They also indicate that most of the studies in which a specific time is given allow between half an hour and two hours.

Obtaining writing samples can reveal students' levels of English at the beginning of the experiment and help to track their improvement at the end of the experiment. This was mainly done through conducting a pre-test, a post-test and a delayed post-test, following Bitchener et al. (2005) and Bitchener and Knoch (2009b), (*see Section 2.3.3.3*) for all subjects (*see Appendices F-1, F-2 and F-3 for copy of the pre-, post- and delayed post-test sheets*). All three groups in the experiment were given a pre-test in writing at the beginning of the academic semester. The process of conducting the pre-test was as follows. All the students were seated in a hall in the Department of English Language and Literature. Chairs were arranged in a way that allowed enough space between them. Each student was given a sheet of paper which had the following simple question: *In no less than 120 words, write a composition on the happiest moments you have ever experienced in your life*. The students were given 60 minutes to write the composition. They were also monitored carefully with the help of a colleague from the Department. By the end of the time, the students were asked to stop writing, leave their papers on their desks and leave the hall. The papers were then collected. Chandler

(2003) used autobiography as the main genre and I found this type of writing useful because it encouraged the students to write freely.

At the end of the experiment, all the three groups were given a post-test. The same process was followed when conducting the post-test as in the pre-test. The students had to produce a composition of around 120 words in 60 minutes. They again were asked to write an autobiographical composition following Chandler (2003). The topic, however, differed from that of the pre-test: *In no less than 120 words, write a composition on your present and future plans in life*.

A delayed post-test was conducted 10 months later. The purpose of the delayed post-test was to detect any improvement or decline in the students' writing. The same process as the one for conducting the pre-test and the post-test was followed. The students had to produce a composition of no less than 120 words in 60 minutes. The topic was: *In no less than 120 words, write a composition on the main difficulties facing you in life*.

3.3 Measurement of Accuracy and Complexity

This section details the methods of measurement used in measuring accuracy and complexity (*see Appendix K for a Sample Marked Script*). I first review previous ways of measuring accuracy and complexity. Then I discuss the methods employed in this research and explain the reasons for choosing these methods.

3.3.1 Measuring Accuracy

Skehan (1996:23) defines accuracy as "how well the target language is produced in relation to the rule system of the target language". A simpler definition of accuracy is given by Foster and Skehan (1996) as "freedom from error." Another definition of accuracy is given by Wolf-Quintero et al. (1998:33), "the ability to be free from errors while using language to communicate in either writing or speech." In other words, any

violation of the target language's system will negatively influence accuracy, and this applies to both grammar and vocabulary.

This raises the controversial question of what is meant by an error. Here we need to emphasize a distinction between speech and writing. In speech, the notion of a standard English is not entirely clear and there is considerable scope for variation between varieties of English and L1 and L2 users. With writing, however, the situation is different in that written language is much more uniform and invariable. It largely conforms to the norms of standard English. For the purposes of the study therefore, error is operationally defined (as in other studies) as deviation from British or American standard English as used by idealized educated native speakers.

Analyzing writing accuracy requires finding the number of errors in a written text. As Wolf-Quintero et al. (1998:33) put it, finding accuracy means "counting the errors in a text in some fashion". Researchers (*e.g.* Henry, 1996; Hirano, 1991; Homburg, 1984; Larsen-Freeman, 1978, 1983; Sharma, 1980) have used a variety of procedures, but two main approaches have been developed to analyze writing accuracy. The first approach is to find out whether clauses, sentences or T-units are error-free. The measures used in this approach are "the number of error-free T-units per T-unit (EFT/T) or the number of error-free clauses per clause (EFC/C)" (Wolf-Quintero et al., 1998:35). To follow either of these two measures, especially the error-free T-unit, it is important to decide what constitutes an error (i.e. what the researcher considers an error and what he will not). Researchers (*e.g.* Henry, 1996; Hirano, 1991; Homburg, 1984; Larsen and Freeman, 1978, 1983; Sharma, 1980) have used different concepts of what constitutes an error, and in many cases it is the researcher's preference that decides (Wolf-Quintero et al., 1998:35). Some studies considered all morphosyntactic, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation faults as errors (*e.g.* Henry, 1996; Larsen-Freeman, 1978, 1983). Other studies considered all the above as errors except punctuation (*e.g.* Homburg, 1984). There are studies that counted only morphosyntactic errors (*e.g.* Scott and Tucker, 1974) while other studies counted morphosyntactic and lexical errors (*e.g.* Vann, 1979; Arnaud, 1992). In general, studies that used error-free T-unit measures did not follow specific error rubrics, which has provoked criticism.

Some researchers (*e.g.* Arthur, 1979; Bardovi-Harlig and Bofman, 1989; Homburg, 1984) have developed another approach to measuring accuracy and "how many errors occur in relation to production units such as words, clauses, or T-units" (Wolf-Quintero et al., 1998:36). This approach does not require counting strings of error-free language products as it deals with the number of errors in a text, for which errors can be categorized into types such as syntactic, lexical, etc. or classified by dividing them into three different levels (normal, serious and grave errors). This approach was developed by Homburg (1984). Alternatively, Zughoul's (1991) method can be used through analyzing different types of lexical errors. Yet researchers who followed this approach still had to make decisions on what was and what was not considered an error.

A review of previous studies that measured accuracy shows that the error-free T-unit measure is the most common approach used to analyze accuracy. Error count and classification approach also achieves high reliability, as indicated by Polio (1997: 128). This approach requires counting errors in T-units and then classifying them into types which, in my view, is a more detailed approach because it can help in pinpointing the levels at which students have improved instead of dealing with all errors as one type.

I have, therefore, opted to apply the most frequently used measure to analyze accuracy which is the number of error-free T-units divided by the total number of T-units (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998: 44). Some studies have found significant correlation between error-free T-units per T-units and writing proficiency (*e.g.* Arnaud, 1992; Hirano, 1991; Larsen-Freeman, 1978; Larsen-Freeman and Storm, 1977), which makes the measure (EFT/T) one of the most reliable methods of measuring accuracy although it has been criticized for not being clearly related to programme or school level (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998: 62). However, this is also the case with other frequently used measures for accuracy such as error-free T-units (EFT) and error per T-unit (E/T).

In order to apply this measure, the first 150 words of each student's composition were selected and divided into three chunks of 50 words. Error-free T-units were counted in each chunk and the total was calculated. Then the total number of T-units was also calculated. To find the ratio of accuracy for each student, the total number of error-free T-units was divided by the total number of T-units.

For the sake of greater reliability of measurement, a second method was also used to calculate accuracy which was error count. I used this method because I wanted to find out if students' improvement could be attributed to the feedback provided to them during the quasi-experimental study. This method can be applied in several ways. For example, Fischer (1984) counted the number of errors (grammar and vocabulary) per clause. Zhang (1987) counted the number of errors per 100 words to calculate linguistic accuracy. Carlisle (1989) counted the number of errors per T-unit to calculate frequency. Kepner (1991) counted all grammatical, vocabulary and syntactic errors at sentence level to analyze the effect of two types of feedback on students' writing. We can see that different methods of counting errors can be employed, depending on the researcher's purpose. In this one, following Zhang (1987) with a minor adaptation, accuracy was also calculated by counting the number of errors per 50 words.

Specific Accuracy

To calculate specific accuracy, that is, the correct use of specific language items (*e.g.* articles, prepositions, tenses), I followed Bitchener (2008) and Bitchener and Knoch (2009a, 2009b). Obligatory cases of the use of the targeted items (tenses and articles) were counted and the percentage of instances of the correct use of tenses and articles were calculated. Specific accuracy is defined as the percentage of correct use of an article or a tense relative to obligatory occasions of use of that article or tense. An inter-rater, who was an ESL teacher from the Department of English at the University of Bahrain, counted the instances of correct and wrong use of tenses and articles in the students' post-test and delayed post-test scripts. The percentage agreement between my count and the inter-rater's count was 88% in error categorization and 90% in error location.

3.3.2 Measuring Grammatical Complexity

Grammatical complexity is defined as "the extent to which learners produce elaborated language." (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005: 139). It is also defined as "writing

primarily in terms of grammatical variation and sophistication" (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998: 69). A third definition is given by Foster and Skehan (1996), which is "progressively more elaborate language" (p. 303). In general, grammatical complexity means that the writer can use both basic and sophisticated structures (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998: 69).

The analysis of grammatical complexity deals with the sophistication of the grammatical content of language units rather than the number of error-free language units or the number of errors in language units. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) explain that there are two ways to decide whether a language is elaborated. The first way, suggested by Skehan (2001), considers students' language which is "at the upper limit of their interlanguage system, and thus is not fully automated" to be more complex (p. 139). The second is based on students' willingness to take risks and experiment linguistically through the use of more complex structures in their writing. There are two types of complexity measures as explained by Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998). The first are measures that analyze language units (clauses, sentences or T-units) based on the presence of these units within each other (*e.g.* clauses per T-unit, clauses per sentence or dependent clauses per T-unit). The second type of measures analyzes the presence of certain structures in a language unit (*e.g.* passive voice per T-unit or articles per clause).

In order to decide which measure to follow in analyzing complexity, I reviewed previous research and the grammatical structures it targeted in students' writing. For example, Homburg (1980: analysis 1 and 2) counted dependent clauses and (in analysis 2) all types of connectors to analyze grammatical complexity. Karmeen (1979) counted passives, dependent clauses, adverbial clauses, adjective clauses and nominal clauses. Sharma (1980) counted all prepositional phrases, adjective clauses and preposed adjectives. Evola et al. (1980) counted all types of pronouns, articles and connectors to analyze grammatical complexity, and in this particular study they found a moderate correlation between the use of pronouns, articles and connectors with proficiency (r=.45-.64).

To analyze grammatical complexity, I have opted to follow Homburg (1984), who counted the total number of dependent clauses, because this method is described as valid by Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998). They describe the measures of clause types such

as dependent clauses per clause DC/C and dependent clauses per T-units DC/T as measures of construct validity as they "exhibit a linear relationship to proficiency level" (p. 99). Homburg (1984: analysis 1) found a significant relationship between DC/T and holistic rating level, while Vann (1979) did not find any significant relationship between them; the ratio means to analyze grammatical complexity was not provided in the study.

It is important to define what a dependent clause is to apply this measure. Homburg (1984: analysis 1) considered subordinate and relative clauses as dependent clauses, Kameen (1979) counted adverbial, adjectival and nominal clauses as dependent clauses while Vann (1979) did not define dependent clauses to analyze grammatical complexity. There are two reasons for following Homburg (1984); the first is that in previous studies of complexity, Homburg (1984: analysis 1) found a correlation between the measures used in the study and proficiency. This encourages me to use the same measures and see whether there is any correlation between these measures and improvement in grammatical complexity in writing. The second reason is that the measures used by Homburg (1984) were among the errors corrected in students' writing throughout 12 weeks of experimenting. Therefore, it might be possible to attribute any improvement in student's grammatical complexity in writing to the feedback students received during the experiment.

To utilize this measure, the first 150 words of the students' compositions were selected and divided into three chunks of 50 words. Dependent clauses were counted in each chunk and the total number of dependent clauses in each student's compositions was calculated. Dependent clauses are defined in this study as relative clauses and subordinate clauses following Homburg (1984: analysis 1). T-units were also counted in each chunk and the total was calculated. To find the complexity score ratio for each student, the total number of dependent clauses in each composition was divided by the total number of T-units.

3.3.3 Measuring Lexical Complexity

Hyltenstam (1988:71) defines lexical complexity as "the possession of a reasonably large lexicon." It is also defined by Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998:101) as the

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availability of "a wide variety of basic and sophisticated words." This means that the more words a writer has and is able to use, the greater his lexical complexity in writing.

There are different ways to analyze lexical complexity in writing. Revision of the available literature shows that only one study, by Harley and King (1989), used a frequency measure to analyze lexical complexity. This included counting types of verbs in students' writing. Because their study compared the number of verb types produced by bilingual and second language sixth-grade students, they found significant difference between the two groups as native writers had access to more verbs than second language students. The remaining studies used ratio measures focusing, specifically, on type/token ratio measures. Type/token ratio measures means "the ratio of word types to total words (WT/W)" (Wolfe-Quintero et al. 1998:101). Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) also mentioned other measures such as type/type ratios (*e.g.* "the ratio of sophisticated word types to total number of word types (SWT/WT)") and token/token ratios (*e.g.* "ratio of lexical words to overall words (LW/W)") (p. 101).

The three ratios above have been used to measure variation, density and sophistication. Figure 3.7 below shows the ratios used to measure variation, density and sophistication:

variation	type/token	word types per words
		verb types per verbs
		lexical word types per lexical words
density	token/token	lexical words per words
sophistication	type/token	sophisticated verb types per verbs
	type/type	sophisticated word types per word types
		basic word types per word types
	token/token	sophisticated lexical words per lexical words
		individual lexical words per lexical words

Figure 3.7 – Ratios for Analyzing Variation, Density and Sophistication - Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998:102)

As mentioned earlier, while only one study, Harley and King (1989), used frequency measures, the rest of the studies used ratio measures. For example, Cumming and Mellow (1996) used type/token ratios to calculate the ratio of word variation. Laufer (1994) used a lexical sophistication measure, such as type/type ratios, to calculate the ratio of sophisticated word types to the overall number of word types. Token/token ratios such as lexical density measure was used by Linnarud (1986) to calculate the ratio of lexical words to overall words.

I have opted to use one measure to analyze lexical complexity, a type/token ratio measure, to calculate lexical variation LWT/WT; which can be calculated by counting the total number of word types and dividing it by the total number of tokens (Laufer and Nation, 1995: 310). This measure was used by Engber (1995) and Linnarud (1986) and it "captures the intuition that second language writers at a higher proficiency level will command a larger vocabulary and will be able to use significantly more lexical word types" (Wolfe-Quintero et al. 1998: 109). The measure has been criticized for being affected by length of composition, which means that a longer composition will result in higher variation and a shorter composition will result in lower variation (Laufer and Nation, 1995). To solve this problem, I have opted to draw a fixed number of words for each composition. Yet two other problems are still present. The first is what defines a word and whether derivatives will be considered as different words or one word. The second is the difficulty of determining whether learners who, for example, know 3000 words will have a higher score for complexity than learners who know 1000 words. In other words, 100 types of a word can be used by both students, one knowing 3000 and the other knowing 1000, and in this case it can be difficult to know which learner has higher variation. The first problem can be dealt with by not considering derivatives as different words, because in this case it might be possible to differentiate between students who use different word families and those who just use many derivatives.

3.4 Observations, Interviews and Questionnaires

Classroom observations were conducted to investigate the research questions (a1) and (a2), outlined in Chapter 1, as follows:

- a1: What are the methodologies employed in teaching L2 writing in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Bahrain?

- a2: What types of feedback practices are employed by writing teachers in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Bahrain?

Interviews and questionnaires were conducted with teachers and students to investigate the research questions (c1), (c2) and (c3), outlined in Chapter 1, as follows:

- c1: How do students view the feedback provided by teachers?

- c2: What form of feedback do they prefer?

- c3: How do teachers view students' responses to the feedback they are given?

Permission was obtained from the academic council of the University of Bahrain to be able to carry out the research at the Department of English Language and Literature and the Department of Media and to observe classes, administer questionnaires and conduct interviews with students and teachers.

3.4.1 Classroom Observation Sessions

Observation is a useful research instrument that helps researchers investigate the environment in a real learning setting and obtain direct answers to questions related to certain teaching and learning practices. According to Delamont and Hamilton (1984), Dornyei (2007), Good and Brophy, (2000) and Mackey and Gass (2005), classroom observation allows researchers to investigate the processes of education in a natural setting and provides more details and specific evidence than other ways of collecting data. The aim of conducting observation sessions was to investigate how teachers taught L2 writing and provided feedback to students at the University of Bahrain. Observation requires more efforts from the researcher, as Wragg (1999) states: "Classrooms are exceptionally busy places, so observers need to be on their toes" (p. 2).

Observations can be conducted in different ways, depending on the purpose (*see Dornyei, 2007*). In this research, the type of observation used is nonethnographic, as

named by Polio (1996), which focuses on specific areas of the classroom (the teaching of L2 writing and providing feedback) rather than provide a full ethnographic description of the classroom (*see Appendix E for a sample of observation form*).

I observed four teachers of writing classes in different English courses (*see Chapter 4 for details of the l$essons observed*). For each teacher I observed two lessons. Observation was carried out with the aid of a checklist, which had entries to be filled in during observation (*see Appendix E for copy of the checklist*). Unfortunately, the audio-recording of lessons was not possible as the teachers involved refused permission to record their lessons. I wrote class information such as date, time, number of observation session, the name of the course, number of section, name of teacher, etc. I also used the checklist to write down my own field notes on the topic of the lesson and its focus and objectives. Notes were also taken on teaching methodology and material.

The next section on the form was filled in by writing notes on the use of feedback by the teacher and the students' behaviour after receiving feedback. After that I wrote general notes on the whole class. Before the end of the class, I obtained writing samples from the students after they had received feedback from the teacher and also some of the handouts given to them. The samples were photocopied and returned to the students. My main focus during the observation sessions was on the teaching of writing and the types of feedback used in responding to students' writing and on the students' interaction with the teachers. Some observation sessions were followed by short individual discussions with the respective course teacher or with students from the class observed. From these observations, I gathered data on the types of feedback given by teachers, how and when feedback was given and the approaches used in teaching writing.

3.4.2 Oral Interviews

Interviews are among the most frequently used research methods in applied linguistics (Block, 2000), partly because they can help researchers investigate phenomena that are difficult to investigate through observation. In this case interviews

are used to investigate teachers' and students' beliefs about issues relating to feedback, and supplement or clarify questionnaire responses.

Oral Interviews with Media Students

Before starting the experiment, individual interviews were conducted with 13 first-year media students and then, after the end of the experiment, 6 students were re-interviewed. I elicited the students' responses to several questions on feedback such as which types of feedback they preferred, how they behaved when a writing task was assigned to them by their teachers and what difficulties they faced in L2 writing. According to Dornyei (2007), there are different types of interviews that can be used in qualitative data collection. The first type is "single or multiple sessions," in which the researcher conducts either a "one-off" interview lasting for 30 to 60 minutes or a sequence of interviews with the same participant to ensure a rich description of findings (pp. 134-135). The second type is the "structured interview," in which the researcher prepares a set of focused questions to be answered by the participant. There is no room in this type of interview for questions from outside the prepared list and the participant will have to be focused in his/her answers (p. 135). The third type is "unstructured" or "ethnographic" interviews in which the researcher gives maximum flexibility to the participant to speak freely in a friendly atmosphere. The researcher prepares a short list of 1 to 6 questions only to start the interview, while any other necessary questions can be addressed to the participant during the interview (p. 135-136). The fourth type is a "semi-structured interview," which is mainly used in applied linguistics research. The researcher prepares a list of all the questions to be addressed to the participant. Yet the format of the interview is open-ended, as the participant is encouraged to express ideas freely, elaborate and even ask questions (p. 136).

The format followed in conducting the pre- and post-experiment interviews of this study was semi-structured, with a list of questions to be addressed to the participants (*see Appendices B-1 and B-2 for copy of the pre- and post-experiment interview prompts*). The participants were given time to answer and were allowed to interrupt, ask questions and comment. The questions of the pre-experiment interviews

were based on the pre-experiment questionnaire administered to the students, while the questions of the post-experiment interviews were based on the post-experiment questionnaire. The purpose of the interviews was to fill in the gaps left and to elicit answers to questions that could not be answered through the questionnaire. All interviews were conducted in my office at the University of Bahrain. The interviews were also recorded for later analysis. Duranti (1997) recommends that after a researcher has conducted interviews, copies of the original tapes are made as a precaution, and so I used two recording devices, one cassette recorder and one digital recorder, to ensure that all the interviews conducted were backed up and available on tape as well.

Oral Interviews with Writing Teachers

Semi-structured oral interviews were conducted with seven faculty members, (three associate professors, three assistant professors and one senior lecturer), who taught L2 writing to media students. They were asked questions on the teaching of writing and the use of feedback (*see Appendix B-3 for copy of the interview prompts*). The aim of the interviews was to gain further insights into the types of feedback the teachers gave to their students and their perceptions of their students' response to the feedback. The interviews also aimed to find out whether the teachers noticed any improvement in their students' writing based on the feedback. For this purpose, I developed a set of questions based on the questionnaire that was administered to teachers at the beginning of the academic semester. Most of the interviews were conducted in the participant teachers' offices, but two preferred to do the interviews in my office. The interviews were recorded on cassette tapes and also on a digital device for later analysis.

3.4.3 Administering a Questionnaire

Questionnaires are defined as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting them among existing answers" (Mackey and Gass, 2005: 6).

They are frequently used research instruments in applied linguistics because they help the researcher gather a large amount of data within a short time in a form that is easy to process. As Mackey and Gass (2005) put it: "The survey, typically in the form of a questionnaire, is one of the most common methods of collecting data on attitudes and opinions from a large group of participants; as such, it has been used to investigate a wide variety of questions in second language research" (p. 92).

In this study the questions addressed to students and teachers probe their beliefs about feedback in L2 writing. One type of question format employed is the Likert format, which provides five responses to each question or statement (a. strongly agree, b. agree, c. not sure, d. disagree, e. strongly disagree). Another question format is he frequency response format, providing four frequency responses (a. always, b. often, c. sometimes, d. never) to indicate how often students or teachers do a certain practice (*see Appendices A1, A3 and A5*).

Administering a Questionnaire to Media Students

I administered a questionnaire to the students before and after the experiment (*see Appendices A-1and A-3 for copy of the pre- and post-experiment questionnaires*). Both questionnaires were first written in English and then translated into Arabic so that the students would understand the questions and respond to them properly (*see Appendices A-2 and A-4 for Arabic translation of the pre- and post-experiment questionnaires*).

The questionnaire was first piloted on five students before it was fully administered. The students were seated in a hall in the Department of English Language and Literature and were given the questionnaire. This had a cover letter explaining its purpose and encouraging the students to give their own opinions even if these disagreed with the researcher. Students were also instructed to provide all necessary demographic and academic data before answering the questions. No time limit was set to complete answering the questionnaire to enable the students respond to essential questions and demonstrate their attitudes and beliefs about feedback.

The design of the questionnaire drew from previous research questionnaires (*e.g.* Chandler, 2003; Cohen, 1987; Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; McCurdy, 1992). However, many questions were either rephrased or adjusted to serve the purpose of this research. Most of the questions had the Likert Scale format with five choices of response: *strongly agree, agree, don't know, disagree* and *strongly disagree*. Some questions had responses of frequency: *always, often, sometimes* and *never*. There were also some questions which required the students to choose other responses such as questions of self-rating *excellent, good, fair* and *poor*. The questionnaire consisted of 6 sections and a total of 29 questions.

The post-experiment questionnaire was also based on previous research (*e.g.* Chandler, 2003; Cohen, 1987; Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; McCurdy, 1992). However, many questions were either rephrased or adjusted to serve the purpose of this research. Most of the questions had the format of the Likert Scale and some questions had the format of frequency responses: *always, often, sometimes* and *never*. There were also some questions which required the students to choose other responses such as questions of self-rating: *excellent, good, fair* and *poor*. The questionnaire was administered in the same way the pre-experiment questionnaire was administered as outlined above. It consisted of 6 sections and a total of 16 questions.

Administering a Questionnaire to L2 Writing Teachers

The questionnaire was piloted first on five teachers then administered to 23 teachers. It focused on the types of feedback given, its effectiveness and styles of feedback. Twenty questionnaires (out of 23) were received.

The design of the questionnaire was based on previous studies (*e.g.* Elawar and Corno, 1985; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Tunstall and Gipps, 1996). However, some questions were either rephrased or adjusted to serve the purpose of this research. The questionnaire consisted of 4 sections and a total of 18 questions. (*see Appendix A-5 for copy of the questionnaire*).

3.5 Research Ethics

This section describes the procedures followed to comply with research ethics.

Before commencing the experiment, the students were informed that they were going to be part of an academic study. The same thing was done with faculty members whose classes were observed and who responded to questionnaires and interviews. Informed consent was obtained from participants. Although no forms were given to students to be signed, since they would be attending their regular classes and doing their normal in-class activities, they were given the choice to accept or reject participation in the research. Faculty members also participated after they consented.

The procedures for administering questionnaires

A cover letter identifying the researcher and explaining the purpose of the questionnaire was attached to it. The students were also given instructions on how to answer the questions. They were assured that their responses would be considered as highly confidential data and that no one would have access to them but the researcher for research purposes only.

The procedures for conducting interviews

The interviewees were shown the recording device that would be used to record the interviews and were informed that their answers would be recorded only for research purposes and that only the researcher would have access to them. In order to ensure the participants' consent to record their answers, they were assured that all the data gathered would be destroyed once the research had been completed. The students were also assured that neither their responses to the questionnaire nor their answers in the interview would have any relationship to their mid-term or final examination scores at the end of the semester. They were informed that the research being carried out was trying to reach useful conclusions that could help in the development of second

language teaching, so students should feel free to express their opinions in the questionnaire and the interview openly.

The procedure of the experiment was designed to avoid any harm to the participants. The textbook used in teaching was the same textbook used by the Department of English at the University of Bahrain, and the same syllabus was followed so that participants would not feel that their peers in different groups were being taught something different. In cases, where any amendments were necessary to the module's contents, this was done after consulting the Department of English and obtaining the necessary approval.

Since this research investigates the effect of written feedback on students' accuracy and complexity, the control group was not meant to receive feedback at all. But because this might be negatively viewed as disadvantageous to the students in the control group, I decided to provide the control group with general feedback (i.e. general comments on students' writing). This was intended to ensure that the control group students would not be disadvantaged and that the goal of the research would not be at students' academic expense.

The procedures for conducting classroom observation

In classroom observation, the teachers who were willing to have their classes observed were assured that the researcher's presence during some classes would be for observation and academic purposes only and not for any type of formal evaluation and that the data obtained would remain confidential. The teachers were also requested to explain to their students that the researcher's presence in class was for observation and academic purposes and not meant to evaluate them for marks or final assessment.

CHAPTER 4

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION:

Findings and Discussion

4.0 Introduction

This chapter details the findings of classroom observation at the University of Bahrain. First, the aims of observation are discussed. Then the methods, procedures and limitations of observation are outlined. This is followed by a description of lessons observed, detailing the teaching and feedback procedures employed by teachers at the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Bahrain. Finally, teaching methodologies and feedback practices are analyzed and discussed, focusing on the characteristics and weaknesses.

4.1 Aims of Classroom Observation

There are three main aims in observing L2 writing teaching practices at the University of Bahrain and they are as follows:

a) to describe how L2 writing is taught, the teaching approaches followed and their focus;

b) to establish whether the teaching methodologies followed are effective and to identify any problems of teaching;

c) to identify the types of feedback provided and when and how they are provided and answer questions such as: are the feedback methods followed effective and what are their advantages and disadvantages?

d) to evaluate students' interactions with teachers' response;

e) to establish a context for the experiment and develop awareness of the nature of feedback and teaching methodologies at the University of Bahrain.

4.2 Methods and Procedures of Classroom Observation

Observations were based on detailed field-notes on classroom teaching practices and feedback. An observation plan was designed to take field-notes (*see Appendix E for copy of the observation plan*). It consisted of 10 entries as described in table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1 – Classroom Observation Checklist Entries

Entry Number	Entry Description
1	Class date, class time, observation session number, course name, students' section number, teacher's name, building number, room number, number of students, number of students attending, lesson topic, and lesson focus.
2	Checklist for observation tools: a) voice recording, b) note-taking and c) other.
3	Lesson details: topic, focus and objectives.
4	Notes on teaching methodology and materials.
5	Notes on teacher's feedback type and practice.
6	Notes on students' interaction and post-feedback practice.
7	General comments (e.g. students' discipline)
8	Checklist for any samples or hand-outs obtained by me from the teacher or students.
9	Comments based on researcher-teacher after-class discussion
10	Comments based on researcher-student after-class discussion.

Details of Modules and Teachers Observed

Four teachers were observed from the Department of English language and Literature on two occasions, making a total of eight classes observed. Following research ethics, the teachers' names have been replaced by pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. Table 4.2 below gives details of the teachers and the modules observed:

Table 4.2 – Teachers and Modules Observed

Teacher	Module	Duration	Textbook	Module Description
Fadia Saleem	ENGLISH 111 (Language Development 1)	1 hour	Going for Gold (Acklam & Crace, 2003)	This module is that taken by the subjects of this research. It is a language improvement module that comes as the first in a set of three courses. Learners are expected to develop the language skills required (reading, writing and listening) to carry out a limited range of routine language tasks, performed in familiar personal, social and college contexts at pre-PET, PET and FCE levels respectively. To be specific about writing, students should write a short (100-120 words) text on familiar topics with a variety of functions including descriptive, argumentative, narrative or other functions.
Abdulkareem Mohamed	ENGLISH 130 (Introduction to Reading and Writing)	1 hour	Set of selected stories and topics chosen by teacher	This module is an introduction to reading and writing. Students read short stories and write short assignments. The module is offered as an elective course that can be taken by all students of the college of arts.
Ahmed Sheikh	English 250 (Introduction to Writing Composition 1)	1 hour & 15 minutes	Successful Writing Proficiency: Upper-Intermediate (Evans, 2000), Chapter 1 to 9	In this module, students are introduced to the basics of composition writing. It aims to improve the style and effectiveness of students' writing by considering various writing techniques and the audience, and by extending students' working vocabulary. It also aims to build students' confidence and promote their enjoyment of writing. The module is taken by students from all departments of the College of Arts (i.e. Media, Arabic and Islamic Studies, English Language and Literature, Psychology and Social Studies).
Maha Tureik	English 350 (Introduction to Writing Composition 2)	1 hour	Successful Writing Proficiency: Upper-Intermediate (Evans, 2000), Chapter 10 to 19	This Module is a continuation of the previous writing module, ENGL250, and it aims to extend students' skills in writing, namely to express themselves in writing and to use this medium to communicate ideas. The presentation and practice of various genres such as reports is conducted within the communicative framework of the course.

The table shows that two prescribed textbooks are followed. 'Going for Gold,' by Acklam and Crace (2003), is used in the course ENGL 111 and 'Successful Writing Proficiency,' by Evans (2000), is used in the courses ENGL 250 and 350. Both textbooks were selected by a special committee whose members were associate and assistant professors from the Department of English Language and Literature.

The first textbook, 'Going for Gold,' provides a variety of contemporary topics for language and skills training. Through a wide range of activities in writing, speaking listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary, the textbook aims to prepare students for the Cambridge (FCE) examination and the Cambridge certificates in English language skills (CELS). Students do a variety of exercises and activities using the main textbook and a supplementary textbook from the same series for out-of-class tasks. It is motivational in that it includes pictures, colours and exercises that require classroom discussions and pair or group work activities. Figure 4.1 below shows writing exercises from 'Going for gold':
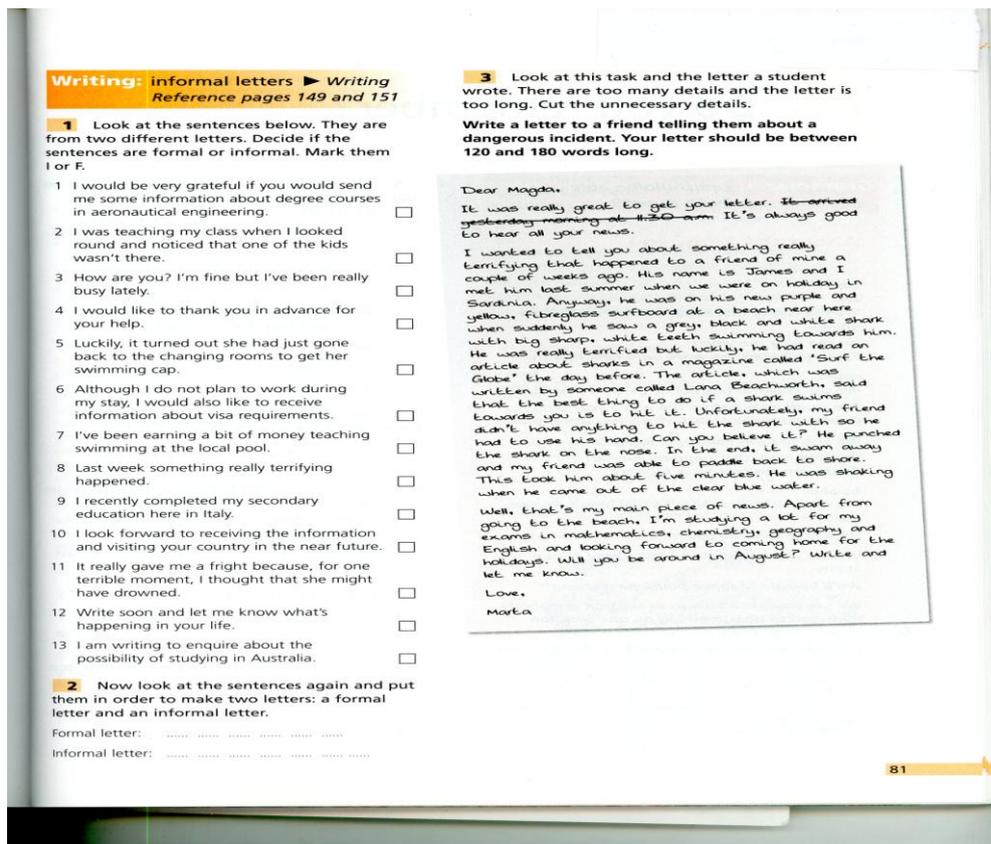
Figure 4.1 – Writing Exercises from 'Going for Gold' (p. 81)

The second textbook, 'Successful Writing,' aims to develop students' writing skills through providing a variety of writing topics and exercises in the form of gap-filling, reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary. It covers different types of writing such as narratives, letters, articles and essays and provides listening activities at the beginning of each unit through which students are introduced to the features of the target writing task. It also involves students in brainstorming activities. Figure 4.2 below shows writing exercises from 'Successful Writing proficiency':

Figure 4.2 – Writing Exercises from 'Successful Writing Proficiency' (p. 41)

Table 4.3 below gives details of the teachers' qualifications, experience and the courses they teach at the University of Bahrain:

Table 4.3 – Details of the Teachers Observed

Teacher	Academic Rank	Qualifications	Experience	Courses Taught
Fadia Saleem	Assistant Professor	Ph.D. and M.A. in applied linguistics from the U.S. (1993-1997) and a B.A. in English literature from Bahrain (1990).	15 Years	Syntax & Grammar
Abdulkareem Mohamed	Associate Professor	Ph.D. in English literature from the UK (1992), M.A. in English literature from the U.S. (1984) and a B.A. in English literature from KSA (1982)	20 Years	Literature & ESP
Ahmed Sheikh	Associate Professor	Ph.D. in applied linguistics from the UK (1988), dual M.A. in TESOL and curriculum and education from the U.S. (1978) and a B.A. in English language and literature from Libya (1965)	42 Years	Linguistics & L2 Writing
Maha Tureik	Assistant Professor	Ph.D. in applied linguistics from the UK (2009), M.A. in applied linguistics (2003) and B.A. in English literature (1990) from Bahrain.	10 Years	ESP & Composition Writing

Observation combined both formal and informal methods. In other words, even though a structured plan was used to observe teaching, I gathered information outside the scope of the plan whenever necessary. In each observation, I first wrote down the details of the lesson, including time, date, name of teacher, number of students attending, etc. Once the lesson started, details on the topic of the lesson and its objectives were also recorded. The focus then would be on the teaching methodologies and materials, noting procedures followed in teaching L2 writing and the types of exercises students were asked to do. Students' interaction with teachers was also observed. Notes were also taken on the types of feedback provided and how and when they were provided. Writing samples and handouts provided by teachers were obtained

and some students' compositions were photocopied and returned. Observations were sometimes followed by one-to-one discussions with individual students.

4.3 Limitations of Classroom Observation

Observation has a number of limitations as follows:

- Lessons were not audio-recorded because teachers did not welcome the idea of recording their teaching.

- Teachers and students may have been influenced by my presence. When teachers and students are aware that they are being observed, their behaviour may change, resulting in bias or anxiety. Although observational data allow researchers to observe actual behaviour, people being observed may adjust their behaviour to avoid criticism. Dornyei (2007:185-186) states that "the presence of an investigator can affect and bias the participants' behaviour."

- One common problem with observation is reliability. Teachers at the University of Bahrain teach three hours a day, 200 days a year, and it is difficult to assume that observing eight classes is enough to generate full picture of teaching methodologies and feedback practices. I was originally hoping to conduct at least 12 observations, which meant attending three sessions for each teacher. However, due to restriction of time and other data that had to be collected, I only managed to do eight observation sessions. In addition, the number of teachers observed (4 out of 30) might also not be enough.

- Although observation plan was designed to take notes, it is inevitable that some elements of teaching may have been missed, especially in the absence of audio-recording.

- Some of the classes attended followed on previous classes, so I had to ask the teachers about what had been done previously.

- In one case, students did not write anything for two classes because the teacher spent a great deal of time on grammar and vocabulary explanation. This made it difficult to observe how the teacher gave feedback on students' writing.

- One of the teachers observed is literature specialist. Teachers specializing in literature are allowed to teach first and second year language courses, which are called service courses, because the Department feels that these courses are elementary and do not require language specialists.

4.4 Description of Lessons Observed

Lesson 1, Teacher: Abdulkareem Mohamed

- Date: 4th April, 2010

- Time: 10:00 – 10:50 am

- No. of Students: 25

- Students' Level: Elementary

- Gender and Age: 19 females and 6 males aged between 18 to 20 years old.

- Seating Arrangement: students were seated in three rows facing the teacher and each student had his or her chair with a flexible writing tablet attached to it (NP examination chairs).

- Classroom Atmosphere: a large classroom; proper lighting; air conditioning and ventilation; two big windows behind students; data projector fixed to the ceiling (*see Appendix H for picture of the classroom*).

This class followed on a previous class that I did not attend as this was the first observation session. The topic of the lesson was reading a short story, *The Necklace*, and writing a composition on it. The students had already read the story in the previous class and written a composition in which they had to respond to a question which was:

Is Mme Loisel a static or developing character? If the latter, what points in the story does she change? The students had been informed that marks would be deducted for grammar and spelling mistakes as well as lack of good organization. The teacher collected their compositions in the previous class, marked them and returned them during the class I was observing. The objective of the lesson was to discuss students' writing errors in these compositions. Below is the teaching sequence of the lesson:

Step 1 [10 minutes]

The teacher started the lesson by taking a roll-call to know the present and absent students and then distributing students' compositions with feedback written on them. He also informed them that he would discuss their writing errors and, therefore, asked them to pay attention to the errors they had made. He brought copies of two samples written by different students. The names of the two students were removed from the papers. One composition was poor and scored 10 out of 15, while the other sample was good and scored 14 out of 15. Copies were distributed to all students.

Step 2 [10 minutes]

The teacher asked the students to look at the two samples and try to find out why the first one scored 10 while the second one scored 14. Some students said that the one that scored 14 had fewer errors. They were asked to identify the errors in the samples. The teacher elicited a few answers to be discussed, and put them on the board. Figure 4.3 below shows one of the samples given by the teacher:

The Necklace

1-   Is Mme Loisel static or developing character? If the later, at what points in the story does she change? Why?

> Mme loisel is a developing character, she went to be a rich women like Mme Forestier, when she gets to her home she feels engrey because she didn't have what Mme forestier have like (money, Necklaces and nice big house.
> Mme loisel is a vanity, she's prety and charming but she she doesn't have money.
> Also she wants every thing from her husbend but he don't have to buy every thing for Mm Loisel (her wife).
> ~~Mme loisel doesn't have party~~
> Mme loisel when her husbend tells her we have a party you want to yo? Mme loisel she goes but when her husbend buy for her a Necklace and she wearit, but when she back to the home the Necklace is missing, so Mme Loisel she change at this point.
> ~~She~~ She changes because the money and the Necklace on not every thing in the life.

(teacher's margin note) plot You are telling the story now Don't.

Figure 4.3 –Writing Sample with Feedback – Lesson 1

As Figure 4.3 shows, the sample had few corrections and comments written by the teacher. Some errors were only underlined but others were underlined and corrected. On both samples given by the teacher there was a general comment on the style of writing. The feedback given focused mainly on spelling and other aspects of the writing.

Step 3 [25 minutes]

The teacher initiated a discussion with the students on the main problems in their writing. This was done by asking one student to read the first sample aloud. The teacher asked the student to pause at every error underlined or corrected to explain why it was an error and how it should be corrected. Grammar errors consisted mainly of using the wrong tense, shifting from one tense to another in one sentence (*e.g. She was a pretty woman but was unsatisfied with her life, she was poor and <u>thinks</u> she married beneth her…*). The verb *thinks* in the example was underlined by the teacher because it represented a shift in tense from past simple to present simple. The teacher just underlined the word without correcting it but also drew an arrow from the second verb be in the sentence (*was*) to the verb *thinks* to tell the students that the whole structure of the sentence should be in the past simple. I noticed that within the same sentence there was a spelling error in the word *beneth* as the correct spelling was *beneath* but it was neither corrected nor underlined by the teacher. The teacher stopped at other examples of incorrect tense shifting (*e.g. She feels angry because she <u>didn't</u> have what Mme Forestier…*). The verb *didn't* was underlined and changed by the teacher to its correct form in the structure of the sentence *doesn't*.

Other grammatical errors discussed by the teacher on the board were the wrong use of the indefinite article *'a'* by using it before an uncountable noun (*e.g. a money*) and confusion of singular/plural (*e.g. to be a rich <u>women</u>*) instead of (*to be a rich <u>woman</u>*). The teacher also mentioned other errors such as spelling and wrong use of possessive pronouns (*e.g. Also she <u>went</u> everything from <u>his</u> husband but…*). The first error in this sentence was spelling as the correct spelling was *want+s* and the second error was the wrong use of the possessive pronoun *his* instead of *her*. The teacher gave a number of examples of students' writing errors from the samples distributed, then asked students to look at the errors in their own compositions to see if they had made similar errors. The teacher also explained some writing mechanics in writing the titles of stories, such as using quotation marks and underlining.

The students' contribution in the class was limited as only specific students participated and answered the teachers' questions. Feedback took the form of corrections and comments on the compositions in addition to oral comments.

Step 4 [5 minutes]

Finally, the teacher asked the students to read the general comments he had written on their compositions (*e.g. You are telling the story now. Don't*) or (*Don't change tenses without a good reason*). At the end of the class, the students were not asked to hand in a second draft of their writing and were not asked to do any reading or preparation for the next class.

We can see that the lesson was teacher-centered as the students' participation was very limited and the teacher did most of the talking. The feedback given was mainly on grammar and spelling and no focus was made on the writing process as students were not asked to hand in a second draft of the composition they wrote.

Lesson 2, Teacher: Abdulkareem Mohamed

- Date: 6th April, 2010

- Time: 10:00 – 10:50 am

- No. of Students: 25

- Students' Level: Elementary

- Gender and Age: 19 females and 6 males aged between 18 to 20 years old.

- Seating Arrangement: students were seated in three rows facing the teacher and each student had his or her chair with a flexible writing tablet attached to it (NP examination chairs).

- Classroom Atmosphere: a large classroom; proper lighting; air conditioning and ventilation; two big windows behind students; data projector fixed to the ceiling (*see Appendix H for picture of the classroom*).

The topic of the second class was writing a short story. The objective of the class was to introduce the students to how to write a short story using appropriate

grammar, vocabulary, organization in addition to a good combination of the main elements of a short story. Because there was no specific textbook for this module, the instructions and guidelines were provided by the teacher. Below is the teaching sequence of the lesson:

Step 1 [10 minutes]

The teacher started by taking a roll-call to know the present and absent students, then reminded the students of the activities in the previous lesson. Some students responded by talking about the main grammatical errors that had been made in the previous writing task. The teacher then introduced the new topic, which was how to write a story.

Step 2 [10 minutes]

The students brainstormed in a general discussion initiated by the teacher and were then asked to suggest the main elements a story should have. They responded by giving different answers, some of which the teacher wrote on the board (*e.g.* characters, setting and plot) and he also added other elements (*e.g.* conflict, theme, suspense, etc.) The teacher then asked them to explain each element. He nominated students to answer by choosing them after they raised up their hands. Some students gave accurate answers on the meaning of plot, theme and suspense and the teacher also expanded the meaning of these elements to make sure that they were aware of their role in story writing.

Step 3 [15 minutes]

The teacher then moved on to grammar. He targeted grammatical items that would be needed in writing a story. The teacher asked the students what they thought the best tense for writing a story would be. Some students gave the correct answer, saying it would be the past tense, while others said the present tense. The teacher then explained that when writing a story the main tense that would be used in narrating

events was the past tense; either it was simple past, past continuous or past perfect. The teacher asked the students whether they knew the differences between these three past tenses. They knew the past simple and the past continuous but were confused about the function of the past perfect. The teacher then defined the past simple, the past continuous and the past perfect and their functions. He also gave examples of how to combine the past simple and the past continuous in narrating a story (*e.g. I was having my dinner when I heard a strange voice coming from the neighbourhood*). He gave further examples on using the past simple and the past perfect in narrating a story (*e.g. When the police arrived, the criminal had already escaped*). The teacher instructed the students to focus on the past tense when writing the story and said that using the present tense was possible when using a direct quotation (*e.g. "I need to see a doctor," Tom said*).

Step 4 [15 minutes]

The teacher then asked the students to use their notebooks and write two sentences for each past tense, which meant that each student had to produce six sentences using the past simple, the past continuous and the past perfect. He gave them extra examples on the board to demonstrate what they had to do. The students spent 10 minutes individually writing down sentences, and then the teacher asked some students to read aloud what they had written. Some sentences were correct and other sentences needed correction.

Step 5 [10 minutes]

The teacher told the students that they had to write a short story combining the elements of a story that had been discussed in the class and using correct grammar and appropriate vocabulary. The task was due by the following class. At the end of the class I asked for the teacher's permission to obtain some of the compositions after they had been corrected. Five compositions were obtained one week later.

We can see that, again, the teacher focused on grammar and vocabulary. There was no focus on the writing process, especially post-drafting, as the students were not asked to hand in a second draft of the composition. In addition, the students' participation in the class was limited and the lesson in general was teacher-centered.

Lesson 3, Teacher: Ahmed Sheikh

- Date: 5th April, 2010
- Time: 1:00 – 2:15 pm
- No. of Students: 12

- Students' Level: Elementary
- Gender and Age: 10 females and 2 males aged between 18 to 20 years old.
- Seating Arrangement: students were seated in two rows facing the teacher and each student had his or her chair with a flexible writing tablet attached to it (NP examination chairs).

- Classroom Atmosphere: a large classroom; proper lighting; air conditioning and ventilation; two big windows behind students; data projector fixed to the ceiling (*see Appendix H for picture of the classroom*).

The objective of the lesson was to write a simple argument on any topic following the sample given in the textbook. The main focus was on using appropriate adjectives and verbs in addition to using linking words to connect sentences. The students were made to do several exercises in the textbook on the above mentioned objectives. Below is the teaching sequence of the lesson:

Step 1 [15 minutes]

The teacher started the lesson by asking for the meaning of the word *argument*. The students did not seem to know the meaning of the word, although they had been

asked to prepare in the class before. The teacher answered the question by explaining the meaning of the word and giving examples of topics that could be discussed in an argument (*e.g.* smoking, monopoly, globalization, etc). He then explained that an argument was the discussion of any topic in a for-and-against format, which required the organization of ideas and presentation of facts. He also used the board to write the main elements of writing an argument, which were: introduction, argument part 1 (for), argument part 2 (against) and conclusion. The teacher asked the students to think of topics that could have advantages and disadvantages. The students' response was limited as only one suggested mercy killing. The teacher agreed that mercy killing was a good topic for an argument and asked for more explanation, but the student could not say any more. The teacher explained the meaning of mercy killing to students by telling them that it was the idea of letting any human being who was suffering from a disease or sickness that had no cure die to relieve him from the incurable severe pain. The teacher said that the idea of mercy killing could have its supporters as well as its opponents which, therefore, made it a good topic for writing an argument.

Step 2 [20 minutes]

The teacher then asked the students to open their textbooks and read a sample argument. The argument was about watching television and was short and simple. It was followed by a list of vocabulary useful in constructing argument (*e.g.* on the one hand, on the other hand, in conclusion, etc). The teacher asked the students to notice the use of these expressions in the argument and demonstrated on the board how they were used. The teacher then asked them to look at the first exercise in the book. It had a number of pictures that represented the sequence of an argument on the advantages and disadvantages of using the internet. They were first asked to look at the pictures and discuss them in pairs using some given vocabulary (*e.g.* information, knowledge, entertainment, wasting time, harming eyes, etc). After that, they were asked to write a summary of the ideas presented in the pictures before they were asked to read aloud what they had written. While the students were reading, the teacher made them pause and commented orally on their writing, and sometimes wrote comments on the board. For example, a student read aloud: *Although using the internet has advantages and*

disadvantages <u>but</u> I think that the advantages are more than the disadvantages. The teacher then commented on this sentence by saying that it was not well-structured. He corrected the sentence on the board and wrote it as: *Although using the internet has advantages and disadvantages, I think the advantages are more than the advantages*. The correction here was made by omitting the conjunction *but* and preceding the personal pronoun *I* with a comma. The teacher then explained that when using conjunctions such as *although, despite* or *in spite of* in the first part of the sentence it was wrong to start the second part with conjunctions such as *but* or *however*. Similarly, the teacher also corrected other sentences given by the students.

Step 3 [15 minutes]

The teacher next asked the students to write a short argument, to watch out for grammar and vocabulary, and to express their own opinion in the conclusion by stating where they stood in the argument and which view they supported. The students were also instructed to refer to the sample in the textbook. They were given the freedom to write on any argument of their choice. The task started 10 minutes before the end of the class and students did not finish within the time remaining. The teacher, therefore, asked the students to finish the task at home and bring it with them to the following class.

From the lesson description we see that there was a strong focus on grammar and vocabulary, directing students to use specific adjectives, tenses and conjunctions. On the whole, this lesson was again mainly teacher-centered and did not involve pair or group work activities.

Lesson 4, Teacher: Ahmed Sheikh

- Date: 12th April, 2010
- Time: 1:00 – 2:15 pm
- No. of Students: 12

- Students' Level: Elementary

- Gender and Age: 10 females and 2 males aged between 18 to 20 years old.

- Seating Arrangement: students were seated in two rows facing the teacher and each student had his or her chair with a flexible writing tablet attached to it (NP examination chairs).

- Classroom Atmosphere: a large classroom; proper lighting; air conditioning and ventilation; two big windows behind students; data projector fixed to the ceiling (*see Appendix H for picture of the classroom*).

In the second class, the teacher was hoping to receive the argumentation compositions, but only one student handed in a composition. The teacher instructed the students that the following class would be the final deadline to submit the task and that he would assign marks to it. Below is the teaching sequence of the lesson:

Step 1 [5 minutes]

The teacher started the lesson with a roll-call to ensure that all students were present and then reminded them of the previous class on writing an argument. He also reminded them that they were not supposed to write a long and complicated composition, but a short one. The teacher then introduced them to the new writing topic, which was story writing. The focus of the class was writing a story using flashback device, chronological order, adjectives and phrases to describe senses and time.

Step 2 [20 minutes]

The first activity was reading the instructions of the textbook and looking at a handout describing the use of flashback device in story writing. Figure 4.4 below shows two extracts from a handout given to the students to explain the use of flashback device.

The first extract defines flashback device and the second explains the use of present and past tenses:
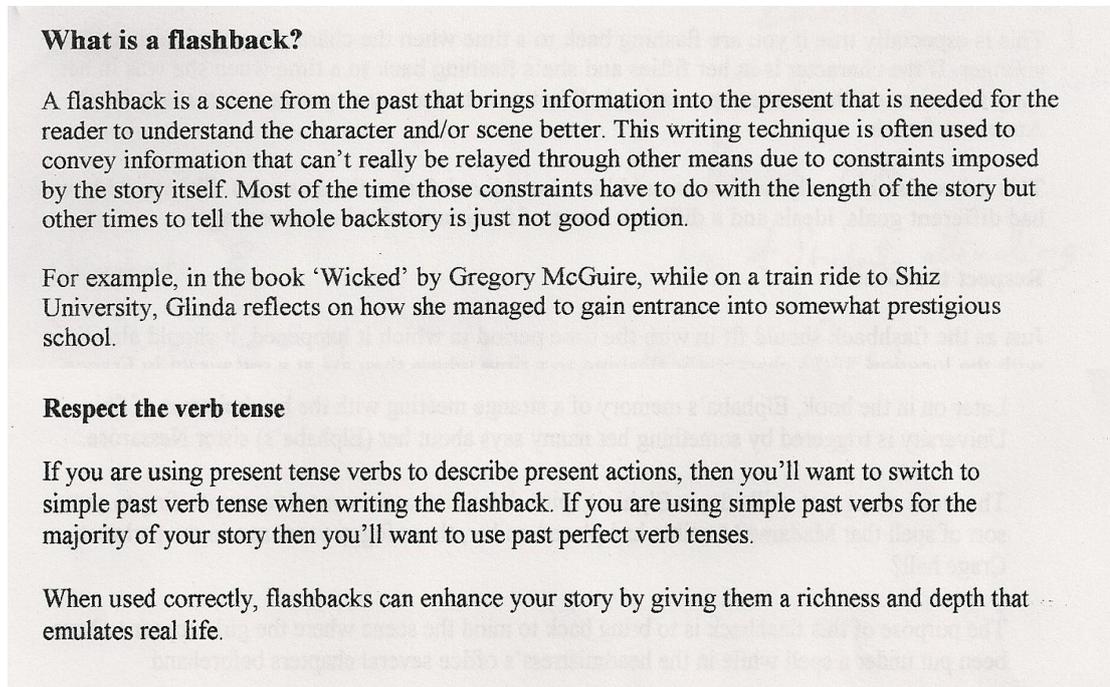
What is a flashback?

A flashback is a scene from the past that brings information into the present that is needed for the reader to understand the character and/or scene better. This writing technique is often used to convey information that can't really be relayed through other means due to constraints imposed by the story itself. Most of the time those constraints have to do with the length of the story but other times to tell the whole backstory is just not good option.

For example, in the book 'Wicked' by Gregory McGuire, while on a train ride to Shiz University, Glinda reflects on how she managed to gain entrance into somewhat prestigious school.

Respect the verb tense

If you are using present tense verbs to describe present actions, then you'll want to switch to simple past verb tense when writing the flashback. If you are using simple past verbs for the majority of your story then you'll want to use past perfect verb tenses.

When used correctly, flashbacks can enhance your story by giving them a richness and depth that emulates real life.

Figure 4.4 – A Handout Explaining the use of Flashback in Writing – Lesson 4

In the first exercise the students had to put the events of story in the correct order by re-ordering paragraphs. They had to find the correct chronological order of a story and at the same time use correct punctuation marks, such as period, question mark, exclamation and inverted commas. The students were given five minutes to accomplish the task. The teacher then asked them to answer the exercise orally and commented on their answers, either by describing why a particular answer was correct or by correcting an answer and explaining the punctuation on the board. The teacher stressed the importance of using punctuation to convey the correct message in writing.

The teacher asked the students to move on to the next exercise in the textbook, which was gap-filling. They had to work individually to use words and phrases given in a box to complete sentences by filling gaps. The words and phrases given were either

regular adjectives (*e.g.* strong, sick, and beautiful) or compound adjectives (*e.g.* ill-mannered, old-fashioned, and well-written). The students were given time to solve the task then the teacher asked individuals to read the sentences aloud and do the exercise. They were asked then to look at the next exercise, in which they again had to use phrases given in a box to fill in gaps. Some phrases described time, such as *until* and others described senses such as *blazing*. The students were given time to accomplish the task and then were asked to read the sentences aloud.

Step 3 [25 minutes]

The teacher next asked the students to start writing a short story of no more than 100 words using correct grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and the flashback device in part of the story. They started writing and the teacher monitored the activity by walking around. At the end of the class, the teacher collected the compositions. Some students complained that the time allowed was not enough for them to produce 100 words. The teacher assured them that it would not be a problem and reminded them to hand in the argument composition, which was the topic of the previous lesson.

The students had not followed the teacher's instructions as only one handed in the required composition. The lesson was teacher-centered and there were no pair or group work. The students' activities were restricted to gap-filling exercises followed by individual writing.

Lesson 5, Teacher: Maha Tureik

- Date: 18th April, 2010
- Time: 8:00 – 8:50 am
- No. of Students: 12

- Students' Level: Elementary
- Gender and Age: 12 females aged between 18 to 20 years old.

- Seating Arrangement: students were seated in two rows facing the teacher and each student had his or her chair with a flexible writing tablet attached to it (NP examination chairs).

- Classroom Atmosphere: a large classroom; proper lighting; air conditioning and ventilation; two big windows behind students; data projector fixed to the ceiling (*see Appendix H for picture of the classroom*).

The lesson I observed followed on a previous class in which the teacher collected the students' writing. Below is the teaching sequence of the lesson:

Step 1 [10 minutes]

The teacher started the class by telling the students that she had some comments on the pieces of writing they had handed in the previous class. The teacher did not distribute the students' compositions but explained some grammar errors they had made as follows.

Using the board, the teacher described and gave examples of students' errors, such as confusion of singular and plural person, using the present tense (*e.g. They <u>wants</u> a quite place to relax*), wrong use of numbers and percentages such as starting a sentence with a numeral rather than a word (*e.g. <u>5</u> residents had the same problem*), spelling (*e.g. <u>eving</u>* instead of *<u>evening</u>*) and wrong use of tenses within one sentence (*e.g. There are many malls in Bahrain and I <u>liked</u> shopping there* instead of *..I <u>like</u> shopping there*). The teacher spent the first 10 minutes of the class explaining the students' grammatical errors and giving them oral and written feedback on the board. Explicit grammar explanation was the main focus. The students took notes on the errors explained by the teacher.

Step 2 [10 minutes]

The teacher then introduced a new topic, which was writing a film review. The teacher brought with her a film leaflet from the cinema and showed it to the students to demonstrate what a film review might look like. The students' task was to produce a more detailed film review. The teacher asked them what information they expected a film review to include. The students contributed by indicating the main elements a film review should include, such as name of film, type of film, cast, plot and writer's recommendation. The teacher wrote these words on the board and then asked them to suggest the name of a film. One student suggested Titanic. The teacher asked them to talk about the most important events in Titanic. The students responded by narrating the plot of the film and its events.

Step 3 [20 minutes]

The teacher asked the students to open the textbook and read the explanation of the film review. They were given time to read the passage, then the teacher commented on the description of the textbook and told them that the film review could be written in two ways; the first was formal and the second was informal, depending on who the reader was. The teacher emphasized the importance of using the simple present tense in writing a film review. The students were then asked to do the first exercise in the book, which aimed to help them understand how a film review was written. The exercise required them to use a number of adjectives to describe plot and script (*e.g.* well-written, thrilling, shocking, highly entertaining, and excellent). The students had to divide the adjectives into two groups; one consisting of adjectives to describe the plot and the other consisting of adjectives to describe the script. They worked in pairs to solve the exercise. The teacher then answered the exercise on the board by drawing two spidergrams; one showing adjectives that described the plot and the other showing adjectives that described the script. The students copied both spidergrams in their notebooks. Figure 4.5 below shows both spidergrams as copied in a student's notebook:
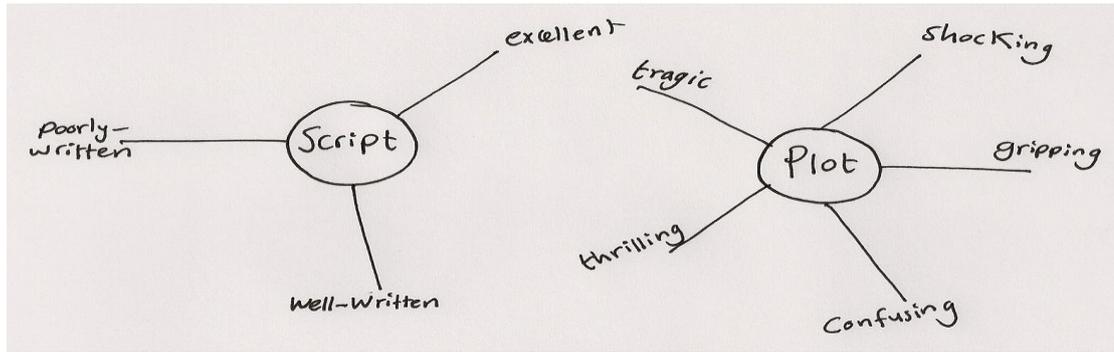
Figure 4.5 –Adjectives Describing Movie Plot and Script – Lesson 5

The teacher asked the students to move on to the next exercise. The exercise required them to think of a number of adjectives, positive and negative, to describe film characters. The teacher did not ask the students to do the exercise, as she wrote some positive and negative adjectives on the board and told them that these adjectives could be used to describe movie characters. The students copied the adjectives on the board into their notebooks.

Step 4 [10 minutes]

The teacher divided students into two groups of four. Each group was asked to think of a film and write a review of it. While the students were working, the teacher proposed that the whole class go and watch a film in cinema then write a review of it. The students liked this idea. The teacher asked one student to check the films showing in cinemas and come back with a list so that the whole class could decide which to watch in order to write a review. The students asked if they still had to write a film review before going to watch a film and the teacher said that they could wait until the next class to discuss few more things about film review and to see if watching a film in the cinema would be possible.

The lesson had some good teaching ideas such as watching a film before writing a review. This was the first lesson observed where students were asked to work in groups, though not all students were active in the group work. Similarly to other

lessons, the teacher focused on grammar and the use of adjectives and the lesson was teacher-centered as the teacher provided most of the answers because the students were not active. The students did not write a composition in this lesson and most of the time was spent on explanation of grammatical items and adjectives.

Lesson 6, Teacher: Maha Tureik

- Date: 20th April, 2010

- Time: 8:00 – 8:50 am

- No. of Students: 12

- Students' Level: Elementary

- Gender and Age: 12 females aged between 18 to 20 years old.

- Seating Arrangement: students were seated in two rows facing the teacher and each student had his or her chair with a flexible writing tablet attached to it (NP examination chairs).

- Classroom Atmosphere: a large classroom; proper lighting; air conditioning and ventilation; two big windows behind students; data projector fixed to the ceiling (*see Appendix H for picture of the classroom*).

The second class followed on the previous class about writing a film review. The focus was on describing characters, setting, plot, etc. This class had to end ten minutes early because there was a course evaluation that students had to do before the end of the class, during which the teacher and I had to leave. Below is the teaching sequence of the lesson:

Step 1 [15 minutes]

The teacher started the class by reminding the students of the previous lesson about writing a film review. The teacher drew spidergrams on the board to remind them

of the adjectives used to describe plot, script, characters, etc. The students contributed by saying some adjectives aloud. The teacher also reminded them to use the simple present tense in writing a film review. A student asked the teacher why it was particularly the simple present tense that was used and not the simple past tense. The teacher replied that when writing a film review in English, one would always use the simple present and should not confuse the difference between writing their own stories, which should normally take the past form, and reporting the events of stories written by other authors, which should take the present form.

Step 2 [10 minutes]

The students were given samples of short film reviews and were asked if they had ever seen the films in the handout. Figure 4.6 below is an extract from the handout given to the students on film review:

The Informant! (out 20 November)
Matt Damon swaps baby-faced charm and rippling pecs for a dodgy 'tache and spare tyre to play a deluded FBI informant in this hugely original comedy. Based on the true story of an employee at a lysine developing company (nope, no idea either) who blows the whistle on his bosses' price fixing, it doesn't sound too promising. But this is one of the most entertaining films we've seen in ages – Matt Damon is mesmerising as he gives us a funny, gripping and strangely moving glimpse into the mind of a man who hasn't got a clue what he's doing, but does it anyway.

Also out...
Me And Orson Welles (out 4 December) Zac Efron shines in this 1930s romance with Claire Danes, about a student cast in a play directed by the great Orson Welles.
The Box (out 4 December) stars Cameron Diaz and James Marsden as a couple who receive a strange box and face a serious dilemma. If they press the button inside, they'll gain $1m – but someone, somewhere will die.

Figure 4.6 –Extract from a Handout on Film Review – Lesson 6

The students said that they had not seen these films before. The teacher asked one student to read the film reviews aloud, and while reading, the student was asked to pause occasionally to comment on the style of writing a film review. Then the teacher

asked the students to read the rest of the film reviews and pay attention to the style and vocabulary.

Step 3 [10 minutes]

After giving the students time to read, the teacher asked them to open the textbook, and in pairs, describe characters, plot and script. In the exercise the students were given many adjectives and they had to think of films that could be described using them. While they were doing the exercise, the teacher moved around the class but did not sit with them to discuss their work. She then selected from the students who raised up their hands to respond to the exercise.

Step 4 [5 minutes]

The teacher asked the student who was supposed to check the films on show locally if she had done that. The student said that she had forgotten to do so. The teacher then said she would check the films herself and come back to the next class with suggestions. The students were not yet asked to write a film review. The class ended after 40 minutes.

We can see that during these two lessons the students did not write a composition. A considerable time was spent on explaining grammar and vocabulary and doing exercises in the workbook. Therefore, no feedback was given to students during these two lessons even though there was an unusual group work on one occasion.

Lesson 7, Teacher: Fadia Saleem

- Date: 20th April, 2010
- Time: 11:00 – 11:50 am
- No. of Students: 18

- Students' Level: Elementary

- Gender and Age: 11 females and 7 males aged between 18 to 20 years old.

- Seating Arrangement: students were seated in three rows facing the teacher and each student had his or her chair with a flexible writing tablet attached to it (NP examination chairs).

- Classroom Atmosphere: a large classroom; proper lighting; air conditioning and ventilation; two big windows behind students; data projector fixed to the ceiling (*see Appendix H for picture of the classroom*).

The topic of the lesson was how to write a story. Below is the teaching sequence of the lesson:

Step 1 [10 minutes]

The teacher started the lesson by writing two questions on the board: a) *What makes a good story good*? b) *How can you write a good story*? The teacher elicited answers from the students by nominating those who raised up their hands. They gave answers - some were correct (*e.g.* suspense; good characters; good plot; events). The teacher explained that there were several key elements in writing that would make a story good. Using the board, the teacher wrote some instructions (*e.g. organize your ideas and paragraphs*; *use good vocabulary*; *using linking words and correct tense*).

Step 2 [10 minutes]

The teacher asked the students to open their textbook and do an exercise on the use of tenses. The students were required to read sentences and say which past tense was used in each sentence. The teacher asked them to do the exercise. They were asked to identify the simple past and the past continuous, but the past perfect was difficult for them to identify. They asked the teacher for more examples on using the past tense and

the teacher spent most of the time explaining the past tenses and giving examples. The teacher then moved on to talk about the importance of using interesting vocabulary (*e.g.* enormous instead of big) and asked the students to think of more examples. The students were allowed to comment on each others' answers as the teacher used the board to write their suggested vocabulary.

The teacher then talked about linking words such as: *although, but, as a result, therefore,* etc. Using the board, she first explained that linking words were used to connect sentences and introduce the relationship between ideas. She wrote some examples on the board to demonstrate the idea of using linking words (*e.g. Although it was raining, we went out; Ali is an excellent student but he always comes late*). The students were then asked to do another exercise in the textbook on using linking words.

Step 3 [30 minutes]

The teacher distributed sheets of paper and asked the students to do the writing task explained on each sheet individually. Figure 4.7 below shows the instructions given to the students on the papers distributed:
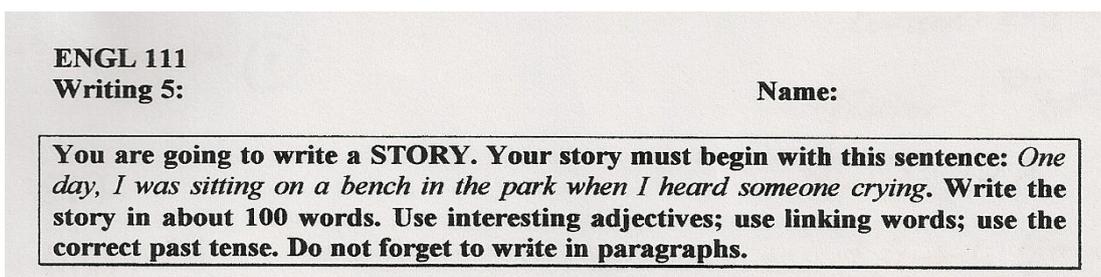
ENGL 111
Writing 5:   **Name:**

You are going to write a STORY. Your story must begin with this sentence: *One day, I was sitting on a bench in the park when I heard someone crying.* Write the story in about 100 words. Use interesting adjectives; use linking words; use the correct past tense. Do not forget to write in paragraphs.

Figure 4.7 –Writing Task Instructions – Lesson 7

They were given 30 minutes to carry out this task and the teacher walked around while they were writing. Most students handed in their papers by the end of the lesson but

some students needed extra time. The teacher told the students that their compositions would be brought to the next class for discussion.

The objective of this lesson appeared to be using a number of grammatical and vocabulary items to write a composition. The students had an exercise on tenses to identify the simple past, the past continuous and the past perfect. After that, the teacher explained the use of specific vocabulary and phrases and then came back to more exercises on grammar and the use of conjunctions before the students were asked to start writing the composition. So we can see that the pre-drafting stage is a combination of grammar and vocabulary explanation rather than brainstorming and eliciting ideas.

While students were writing the composition, the teacher did not walk to intervene in the writing process and conduct any conferences. The lesson was, again, teacher-centered and product-based, focusing on grammar and vocabulary. It did not involve any pair or group work activities.

Lesson 8, Teacher: Fadia Saleem

- Date: 22nd April, 2010

- Time: 11:00 – 11:50 am

- No. of Students: 18

- Students' Level: Elementary

- Gender and Age: 11 females and 7 males aged between 18 to 20 years old.

- Seating Arrangement: students were seated in three rows facing the teacher and each student had his or her chair with a flexible writing tablet attached to it (NP examination chairs).

- Classroom Atmosphere: a large classroom; proper lighting; air conditioning and ventilation; two big windows behind students; data projector fixed to the ceiling (*see Appendix H for picture of the classroom*).

The second lesson was a continuation of the previous one on writing a story. The teacher brought all the students' corrected compositions and distributed the papers to them. Below is the teaching sequence of the lesson:

Step 1 [10 minutes]

The teacher told the students that the class would be dedicated to discussing writing errors because errors were made at all levels (i.e. grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and organization). The teacher asked them to pay attention to their errors and to ask for explanation whenever they felt it necessary.

Step 2 [30 minutes]

Using the board, the teacher listed a number of the errors the students had made in their writing. For example, they had made many spelling errors such as *steped out* instead of *stepped out*; *heared* instead of *heard*; *hostipol* instead of *hospital*; *emergancy* instead of *emergency*; *trrified* instead of *terrified*. The teacher also pointed out many errors in using the past tense. In several situations, the students either used the simple present instead of the simple past (*e.g. When I walk I see a girl* instead of *When I walked I saw a girl*; *The ambulance came and I go with her to the hospital* instead of *The ambulance came and I went with her to the hospital*). The teacher reminded the students that they were supposed to use the past tense when narrating a story and that shifting from one tense to another would often be incorrect if there was no reason to do so. The students were given time to copy the corrections from the board.

The teacher then pointed out problems of organization, as some students wrote the story as one paragraph without dividing ideas and events into a number of separate paragraphs. Figure 4.8 below is an example of a composition without paragraphs, displaying the teacher's corrections and comments:

One day I was sitting on a bench in the park when I heard
Some one crying. Then I go to [past] follow the voice
and when I walk [past] I see a girl
crying. Shes falling down and her legs were
broken. Moreever she don't [past] know
any one to take her to the hostipol [spelling]. Then I
call to emergancy [spelling] to send the ambilince [spelling].
After few minites [sp.] the ambilnce [sp.] came
and I go [past] with her to the hospital and the
donctars [sp.] to treat remedy cure [?]. Then
her father and mother come [past] and thanks [past]
me because I help [past] her chaild [sp.].

This story is very short.
Where are the paragraphs.
Too many mistakes.

Figure 4.8 –Writing Sample with Corrections and Comments – Lesson 8

In figure 4.8 above, the composition was short and no paragraphs were used. The teacher emphasized the importance of separating ideas and arranging writing in paragraphs. Grammatical and spelling errors were underlined. Figure 4.9 below is a composition done by a student from the same class. The teacher used the sample to demonstrate to the students the idea of using paragraphs in writing a composition:

Figure 4.9 –Writing Sample to Demonstrate Using Paragraphs – Lesson 8

The students took notes on the teacher's comments. The teacher then moved on to vocabulary errors and explained that reading was an important factor in improving and enriching vocabulary. The teacher gave some examples to illustrate the students' vocabulary errors such as: *I asked the <u>selling man</u> if he had seen this girl before* instead of *I asked the <u>salesman</u> if he had seen this girl before* and *The father was so sorry because he <u>practice</u> Nawaf one time* instead of *The father was so sorry because he*

taught Nawaf one time. The teacher asked the students to avoid translating words from Arabic into English because this would lead to many errors in English. The students agreed that in many cases they translated from Arabic into English without realizing that this produced many of the errors.

Step 3 [10 minutes]

The teacher reminded the students of the most important elements to produce good writing: correct grammar, correct vocabulary, organization and correct mechanics. The teacher asked the students to use English-English dictionaries to learn more words and phrases that could help them write better.

The feedback given to students on their scripts focused mainly on the use of tenses, vocabulary and mechanics like punctuation and spelling, as can be seen in figures 4.8 and 4.9 The teacher also wrote comments at the bottom of each composition to encourage students or give them guidelines (*e.g. This story is very short*; *Where are the paragraphs?*; *Good story*; *Make sure you understand when past perfect is used*).

The lesson was teacher-centered and product-based. The teacher placed a lot of emphasis on grammar, vocabulary and mechanics and there were no pair or group work activities.

4.5 Analysis and Discussion of Teaching Methodology and Feedback Practices

Having described the teaching of four teachers from the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Bahrain, a number of issues regarding the teaching methodologies and feedback practices can be discussed:

Teaching Methods

- The lessons tended to be teacher-centered where the teachers did most of the talking and the students were mainly passive. In lesson 3, for example, the teacher asked questions and answered them and spent most of the lesson explaining the meaning of argument and mercy killing and commenting on textbook explanations.

- The teaching of writing was mainly product-focused with attention given to grammar and vocabulary. In lessons 7 and 8, for example, we see strong focus on grammar (tenses), linking words and vocabulary (*see Section 2.1.2.1*).

- The teachers tended to follow the textbook quite closely (*see Section 4.2 for description of the textbooks used*), for example, in selecting topics for writing (*see Lesson 2*). In a few cases, greater flexibility and freedom from the textbook was shown in that students were allowed to suggest topics (*see Lesson 3*).

In-Class and Out-of-Class Activities

- Most of activities were based on the course textbook (*see Section 4.2 for description of the textbooks used*) with a few deriving from material beyond the course textbook. Although the textbooks used were of good quality, it may have been more stimulating if teachers provided writing tasks and exercises from outside the textbooks.

Methods and Types of Feedback

- The teachers had different ways of providing feedback and they are as follows: a) direct corrective feedback (written recast) by writing corrections of students' errors next to or above the original errors (*see Lessons 1, 7 and 8*); b) indirect corrective feedback by underlining students' errors and/or writing codes and/or symbols to indicate the types of errors without providing correction (*see Lessons 1, 7 and 8*); c) cross-outs by drawing (X) shape on unnecessary inserted items

(*e.g.* articles or prepositions) to indicate that they should be cancelled (*see Lessons 1, 7 and 8*); d) general discussion after returning students' compositions by giving examples of the main errors and explaining the corrections orally and on the board (*see Lessons 1, 5, 7 and 8*); e) distributing two copies of one good and one weak compositions written by the students and asking them to find the differences between them and explain why one had a high mark while the other a low mark (*see Lesson 1*). In other words, we can say that the teachers used the main types of written corrective feedback, especially direct written corrective feedback and underlining (*see Section 2.3.2.1*).

Feedback Follow Up

- In the lessons observed, there was little follow-up to the feedback provided. For example, in the first lesson observed, students were only asked to read feedback comments. In lesson 8, the teacher explained the main errors and wrote examples on the board. Students took notes and copied the examples from the board. They were not in general instructed to hand in a second draft of their compositions or use the corrections to revise their work

We see that there are some sound aspects of the teaching of L2 writing at the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Bahrain. For example, as we have seen in the analysis, some teachers instructed students to brainstorm on a topic before starting the writing task. The teachers also focused on providing vocabulary relevant to the writing task. Sometimes they wrote sentences on the board to show students how to use certain words or phrases in the composition. In some cases, the teachers wrote ideas on the board that could be included in the composition. There were also some creative ideas, as we have seen in lessons 5 and 6, where the teacher suggested going to cinema with students to watch a movie before writing a film review. This idea was highly valued by students because it broke the daily routine of the lesson. In lesson 1, the teacher provided feedback in a way similar to reformulation by choosing two compositions produced by students, one weak and one good, and giving them copies of these compositions to compare. Teachers combined

direct and indirect corrective feedback in responding to students' writing. For example, when the students made spelling errors, the teachers just underlined the misspelled words and wrote the letter (*S*) on the margin to indicate that the error was spelling and that it should be corrected by checking the spelling of the word. When the errors made were in word collocation, however, the teachers had to directly correct the errors because it was unlikely that the students would know how to correct them due to the difficulty of the use of English collocations for Arab learners.

On the other hand, there are several weaknesses as follows:

- The teachers deal almost exclusively with students' writing as a product, focusing on the structure and vocabulary before and after assigning a writing task, even though this is understandable because students had a low proficiency level. This manifested itself in the teaching and in the feedback provided to the students as most of the teachers' comments were on grammar, vocabulary and mechanics. As indicated in Chapter 2 (*see Section 2.1.2.2*) the product approach is easy to use and mark because the teacher can easily control his attention and direct it toward the target form. However, this approach neglects strategies of learning and cognitive processes in that it considers grammar and vocabulary the main focus (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005). It is also simplistic in that it limits students' understanding of good writing when it just focuses on syntactic and grammatical accuracy (Hyland, 2003).

- The teachers did not make the students hand in a second draft of their compositions and thus they were not encouraged to utilize feedback after their compositions were returned. The teachers' behaviour seemed to reflect a lack of interest in giving feedback more than once on each composition.

- The teaching revealed a lack of awareness of teaching L2 writing methodologies. For example, one teacher started the lesson following the process approach by focusing on pre-drafting (*e.g.* brainstorming) and then suddenly shifted to using the product approach focusing on form. In another case, the teacher started following the genre approach (*e.g.* using genre models)

(*see Section 2.1.4*) and then suddenly shifted to using the product approach (*see Section 2.1.2*) until the end of the lesson. Although combining different approaches can be useful (*see Section 2.1.5*), the teachers did not seem to combine elements in a principled manner.

- The teachers spent much of the time explaining grammar (*e.g.* use of past tenses) without contextualizing the use of grammar in the discourse context. In other words, the teachers did not make any connection between the grammatical items they explained and how they could be applied in writing the composition (*see Lessons 1, 2, 3 and 4*). In other situations, they engaged in explaining grammar and giving vocabulary, but they asked their students to write the composition at home and bring them to the following class (*see Lessons 1 and 2*). In one case, the students did not start on the writing task even after two classes of grammar and vocabulary explanation (*see Lessons 3 and 4*).

  The teachers rarely encouraged the students to consult them in their offices for further explanation and clarification of errors corrected or underlined. In fact, that was normal among teachers because they believed that students would not come to consult them even if they were encouraged to do so. This is understandable because conferencing has limitations when used with students of low proficiency. For example, as indicated by Hyland and Hyland (2006), weak students might not be able to benefit from conferencing or might find it difficult to talk to their teachers fact-to-face due to feelings of insecurity (see Section 2.3.2.3).

- Because teachers followed prescribed textbooks and syllabus, there were similarities in the writing topics across the classes observed. For example, in lesson 1, students wrote a composition after reading a story. In lessons 2, 4 and 7, students' task was writing a story, and in lessons 5 and 6, the task was writing a film review, which was somewhat similar to writing a story. So, we can see that even though observations covered different writing courses, the writing topics were almost the same (*see Section 4.2 for description of the textbooks used*).

- In some cases, as in lesson 7, the purpose of the writing task was to teach students grammar and vocabulary through writing, even though the aim of the lesson as described in the course syllabus was to teach writing. For example, students were instructed on the composition scripts to write the task using interesting adjectives, linking words and the correct past tense (*see Figure 4.7*). In other words, grammar and vocabulary were explicitly emphasized in the writing task. This may be a disadvantage in the teaching because in this case students focus will be on grammar and vocabulary rather than on writing creatively (*see section 2.1.2.2*).

- Students were sometimes given writing tasks that were difficult for their level. For example, in lesson 4, they were asked to use the flashback device in writing a story. In fact, they did not understand the meaning of flashback even though they were given a handout to explain it (*see Figure 4.4*). As explained above, students suffered from problems in shifting from the past tense to the present tense and vice versa. Therefore, it would have been preferable to teach them to manipulate tenses before they undertook the writing task.

- Because the teachers did not ask students to hand in a second draft, they were unable to distinguish between errors and mistakes in students' writing. Errors indicate that students do not know how a specific form should be used and, therefore, they require explanation. Mistakes, however, are likely to disappear in the second draft because they occur due to lack of focus, and once a student's attention is drawn to such mistakes, they would recognize how to correct them (Adjemian, 1976; Corder, 1976; Nemser, 1971; Selinker, 1972) (*see Section 3.3.1 for explanation of what an error means*).

- In one case, the teacher provided oral feedback through general discussion of errors without returning the scripts to the students who, therefore, could not cross-reference the teacher's explanation with their writing (*see Lesson 5*).

4.6 Conclusion

We have seen that in classes at the University of Bahrain, there is some good practice in the teaching of L2 writing and providing feedback. However, there are also a number of weaknesses, as explained above, and they are summarized as follows: a) teachers mainly deal with students' writing as a product and predominantly focus on the structure and vocabulary before assigning a writing task and when providing feedback; b) students are not encouraged to hand in a second draft of their composition or to correct their errors after receiving feedback; c) teachers' practices seem to reflect a lack of interest in following up on the feedback given; d) pair and group work activities are rarely used; e) students are not encouraged to consult teachers for explanation and there is no teacher-student conferencing.

We can conclude that there is a scope for improving the teaching procedures and feedback practices at the University of Bahrain (*see Chapter 7 for recommendations*).

CHAPTER 5

EXPERIMENTAL STUDY:

Results and Discussion

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the experimental study on the effects of different types of feedback. First I outline the results of the pre-test, followed by the results of the post-test, and a discussion on the effects of feedback on the students' accuracy and complexity in the post-test. Then the results of the delayed post-test are presented, followed by an in-group comparison for the three groups of the study.

5.1 Results of Measuring Accuracy and Complexity

As explained earlier (*see Chapter 3*), the experiment had three groups; two experimental groups, A and B, and one control group C. Group A consisted of 17 students, group B consisted of 16 students and group C consisted of 13 students. The first 150 words of each composition were divided into chunks of 50 words. Two types of SPSS analysis were carried out to calculate the results, *One-way ANOVA* and *paired-samples t-test* at the level of 0.05 significance (*see Chapter 3 for explanation of key terms and the measures used to analyze students' writing*).

5.1.1 Pre-test Results for Groups A, B and C

The descriptive statistics in the pre-testing for measures of general accuracy, specific accuracy and complexity are presented in table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1 – Pre-test Results for Groups A, B and C

Group	General Accuracy (EFT/T)		General Accuracy (NE/50W)		Specific Accuracy (Tense)		Specific Accuracy (Article)		Grammatical Complexity (DC/T)		Lexical Complexity (LWT/WT)	
	Mean	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*
A	.395	.280	.100	.046	53.70	24.26	57.11	23.89	.310	.181	.720	.094
B	.446	.282	.105	.030	63.43	18.50	55.25	12.67	.333	.204	.694	.097
C	.545	.272	.093	.032	59.15	21.59	48.23	21.82	.190	.139	.737	.078

We can see that the means of the three groups in the pre-test are not significantly different in all measures. As measured by measure 1 EFT/T, there is no significant difference in general accuracy between the three groups in the pre-test, *ANOVA (F = 1.077;* d.f. = 2; *p* = .350). Using measure 2 NE/50W for general accuracy, we again see no significant differences between the three groups in the pre-test, *ANOVA (F = .357;* d.f. = 2; *p* = .702).

Turning to specific accuracy, there is no significant difference between the three groups in the use of tenses, *ANOVA (F = .838;* d.f. = 2; *p* = .439). Similarly, there is no significant difference between the three groups in the use of articles, *ANOVA (F = .776;* d.f. = 2; *p* = .467).

Looking at the results of complexity on pre-testing and using dependent clauses per T-units DC/T to measure grammatical complexity, we again find that there is no significant difference between the groups, *ANOVA (F = 2.552;* d.f. = 2; *p* = 0.90).

The low mean of group C does not necessarily mean a real difference between this group and the other two groups as indicated by the *ANOVA*. Some good students in group C, for example, used correct grammatical structures repeatedly in their compositions, which had to be counted every time as correct units. Since the measure used to analyze the students' grammatical complexity is DC/T, which is the number of dependent clauses per T-units, some students used the same dependent clauses many times in the right context in the same composition. This resulted in a larger number of correct dependent clauses, which did not really mean that students in group C were better than students in the other groups. The second possibility is that the low mean in

group C is a chance score. In other words, the group could have scored a similar mean to groups A and B provided the pre-test had been repeated. It seems quite unlikely that group C will really differ from the other two groups in grammatical complexity while it has scored the same mean scores in lexical complexity, as will be shown in the next table, as well as in general and specific accuracy.

Moving to lexical complexity, as measured by LWT/WT, lexical word types per word types, we again see no significant difference between the groups, *ANOVA (F = .830;* d.f. = 2; *p* = .443).

Having presented the results of the pre-test, we see that the students' mean scores are similar. The only difference in the mean scores of the students was in grammatical complexity where the control group C scored a lower mean than the experimental groups as explained above. The results show that there is no significant difference between groups at the start of the treatment. Thus, we should not attribute any improvement noticed in the post-test or the delayed post-test's scores to initial differences between groups before the experiment.

5.1.2 Post-test Results for Groups A, B and C

The descriptive statistics for the post-test measures of general accuracy, specific accuracy and complexity after the feedback treatment and 12 weeks teaching are presented in table 5.2 below:

Table 5.2 – Post-test Results for Groups A, B and C

Group	General Accuracy (EFT/T)		General Accuracy (NE/50W)		Specific Accuracy (Tense)		Specific Accuracy (Article)		Grammatical Complexity (DC/T)		Lexical Complexity (LWT/WT)	
	Mean	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*
A	.620	.237	.055	.023	76.05	19.04	71.76	25.80	.331	.219	.752	.056
B	.499	.279	.053	.026	73.68	15.40	75.87	18.82	.295	.265	.731	.100
C	.516	.267	.083	.028	73.46	17.34	64.76	21.43	.222	.125	.711	.075

The descriptive statistics show that the three groups' mean scores are higher in the post-test than the pre-test. The *One-Way ANOVA* test revealed no significant differences between groups on both measures of general accuracy: measure 1 EFT/T, *ANOVA (F = 1.031;* d.f. = 2; *p* = .365), or measure 2 NE/50W, *ANOVA (F = 5.517;* d.f. = 2; *p* = .007).

We again find no significant differences between groups for specific accuracy in the use of tenses, *ANOVA (F = .109;* d.f. = 2; *p* = .897), or articles, *ANOVA (F = .893;* d.f. = 2; *p* = .417).

As regards grammatical complexity, measured by DC/T, there is no significant difference between groups, *ANOVA (F = .947;* d.f. = 2; *p* = .396), and the same is true for lexical complexity as measured by LWT/WT, *ANOVA (F = .977;* d.f. = 2; *p* = .385).

The post-test results, to sum up, do not reveal any significant difference between the experimental and the control groups, which appears to suggest that feedback had little impact on accuracy or complexity as measured by the post-test. Previous research (*e.g.* Cohen and Robbins, 1976; Knoblauch and Brannon, 1981; Leki, 1990a; Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2004) has reached the same findings. However, the subjects of this study are different because they are Arab learners and have low proficiency in English.

5.1.3 Delayed Post-test Results for Groups A, B and C

In order to further examine any effect of feedback on students' writing, we will now look at the students' results in the delayed post-test undertaken 10 months after the original post-test. The purpose of the delayed post-test is to detect any improvement or decline in students' accuracy and complexity in writing in the long-term. The descriptive statistics in the delayed post-test for measures of general accuracy, specific accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity are presented in table 5.3 below:

Table 5.3 –Delayed Post-test Results for Groups A, B and C

Group	General Accuracy (EFT/T)		General Accuracy (NE/50W)		Specific Accuracy (Tense)		Specific Accuracy (Article)		Grammatical Complexity (DC/T)		Lexical Complexity (LWT/WT)	
	Mean	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*
A	.520	.205	.062	.027	67.17	20.10	63.76	19.25	.315	.212	.711	.124
B	.513	.195	.056	.025	67.75	14.43	65.62	9.84	.273	.120	.698	.142
C	.436	.204	.078	.032	67.07	13.41	61.00	14.66	.204	.095	.650	.180

Like the post-test results, the delayed post-test scores again show no significant difference between groups for general accuracy on measure 1 EFT/T, *ANOVA (F = .754;* d.f. = 2; *p* = .477), or measure 2 NE/50W, *ANOVA (F = 2.135;* d.f. = 2; *p* = .131). Figures 5.1 and 5.2 below illustrate the descriptive statistics for the general accuracy scores of the three groups on each of the three experimental tests as analyzed by EFT/T and NW/50W:
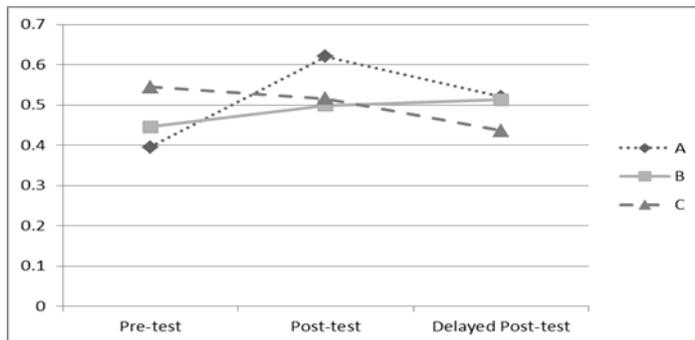
Figure 5.1 – General Accuracy Score (Measure 1) by Group and Time
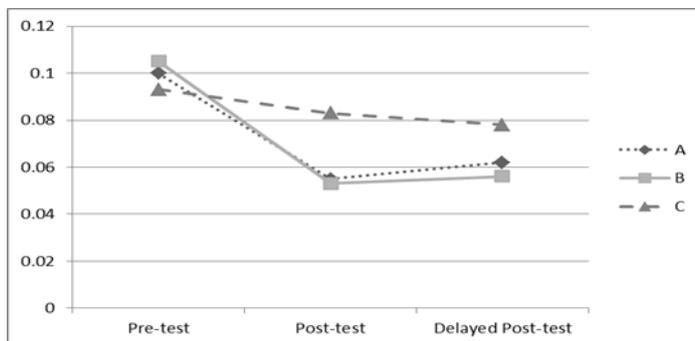
Figure 5.2 – General Accuracy Score (Measure 2) by Group and Time

The same is true for specific accuracy in the use of tenses as we see that the delayed post-test shows no significant differences between groups, *ANOVA (F = .007;* d.f. = 2; *p = .993)*, or the use of articles, *ANOVA (F = .332;* d.f. = 2; *p = .719)*. Figures 5.3 and 5.4 below illustrate the descriptive statistics for the accuracy scores in the use of tenses and articles for the three groups on each of the three experimental tests:
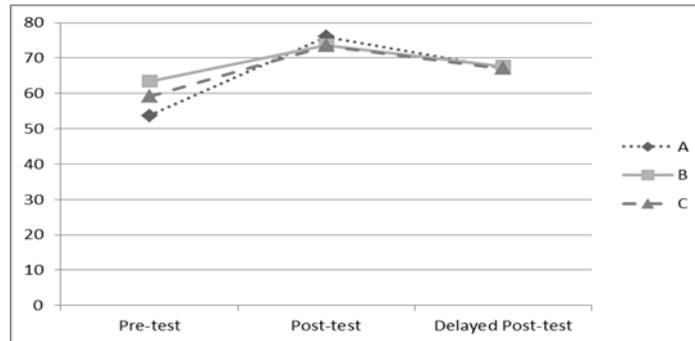
Figure 5.3 – Specific Accuracy Score (Tenses) by Group and Time
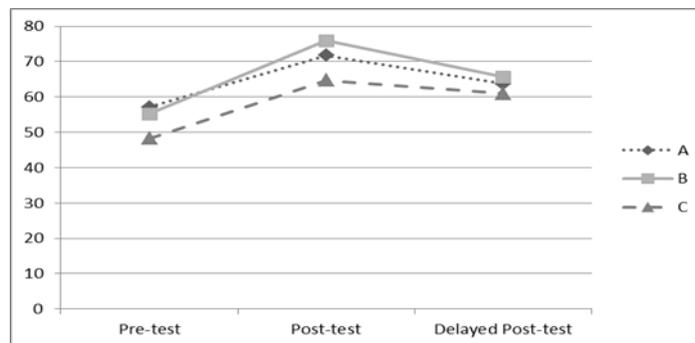
Figure 5.4 – Specific Accuracy Score (Articles) by Group and Time

Moving to grammatical complexity as measured by DC/T, there is no significant difference between groups, *ANOVA (F = .1.862;* d.f. = 2; *p = .168)*, and the same is true for lexical complexity as measured by LWT/WT, *ANOVA (F = .685;* d.f. = 2; *p = .510)*. Figure 5.5 and 5.6 below illustrate the descriptive statistics for the grammatical and lexical complexity scores for the three groups on each of the three experimental tests:
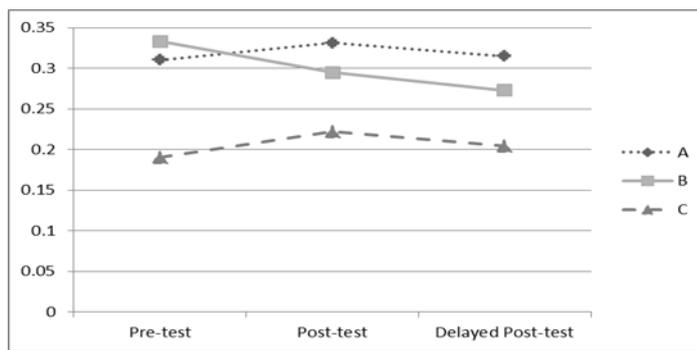
Figure 5.5 – Grammatical Complexity Score by Group and Time
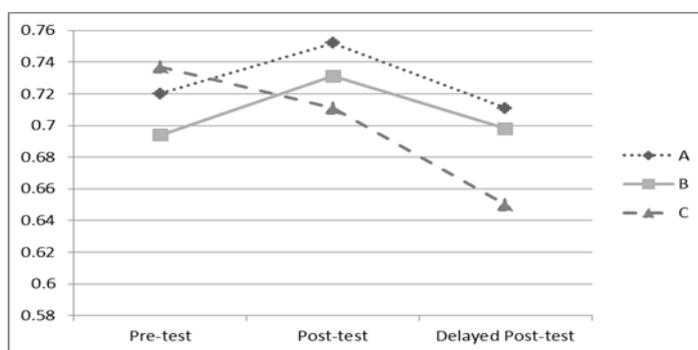
Figure 5.6 – Lexical Complexity Score by Group and Time

The delayed post-test results are not surprising, given that there was no significant difference between the groups on any of the measures in the post-test.

While the absence of any significant difference between the experimental and control groups is somewhat disappointing, there are a number of possible explanations. Firstly, it may be that feedback, of whatever type, does indeed have little or no effect on the accuracy and complexity of students' writing. Although this conflicts with previous research that found such an effect for feedback on students' writing (*e.g.* Bitchener and Knoch, 2009a; Chandler, 2003), it may be attributed to the difference in the experimental design of the research. For example, Bitchener and Knoch (2009a) investigated the effect of three types of feedback (direct correction of errors, written and oral meta-linguistic explanation; direct correction of error and meta-linguistic explanation; direct correction of errors only). These types of feedback were given to three experimental groups. Yet, the focus of the research was only on two functional

uses of the English article system (the indefinite article '*a*' and the definite article '*the*'), while this study's scope is broader as it focuses on general accuracy, specific accuracy and grammatical and lexical complexity. It is also important to mention that Bitchener and Knoch (2009a) did not use a control group but only three experimental groups, which, according to Truscott (1996, 1999, 2007), does not answer the question of whether there is difference between giving feedback or no feedback as this question can only be answered by comparing the results of students who received feedback to the results of students who did not receive feedback.

Turning to other studies which found an effect for feedback on writing (*e.g.* Chandler, 2003), we can also note a number of differences. For example, Chandler (2003) found that direct correction was "best for producing accurate revision" while simple underlining was best for students' learning and benefit (p. 267). That study had one experimental group and one control group with a total of 31 students. This study, however, differs from Chandler (2003) in the experiment design. The current study used three groups, two experimental and one control. Each experimental group received one type of feedback and the control group received no feedback in the form of general feedback. By contrast, Chandler (2003) gave two types of feedback to the experimental group and the control group as well which, I think, might raise the question of whether the experimental group differed from the control group. Chandler (2003) asked students in the experimental group to re-draft their writing after receiving feedback, while students in the control group received the same feedback given to the experimental group but did not have to re-draft their writing. In the current study, the students of the experimental groups were asked to re-draft their writing and the control group did not have to hand in a second draft. In this case, it seems that Chandler's (2003) study was supposed to test the influence of re-drafting on students' writing instead of the influence of feedback on students' writing. A further crucial point is that Chandler (2003) gave the experimental and the control groups frequent practice in the genre of writing they were tested on, "describing events, people, and places" (p. 272), and students were allowed to use the items they practiced in their assignments. In the current study, however, students were exposed to a variety of genres during the teaching, and the pre-, post- and delayed post-tests were based on topics different from what students learned

in class because I did not want students to write compositions based on previously practiced topics.

It is possible, therefore, that the differences in the results between this study and other studies stem from the differences in the research design (*see Chapter 2 for more discussion on the difference between this study and other similar studies*).

There are other possible explanations as to why the results did not show any effect for feedback of students' writing in the post- and delayed post-tests. First, it is possible that the duration of the experiment was insufficient. Although the experiment lasted for 12 weeks, which was a short period of time already, the treatment period was only 10 weeks because the students at the University of Bahrain did not attend during the first week of the semester (due to the add and drop period) and the last week (due to the final examinations period). By contrast, Bitchener and Knoch's (2009a) experiment lasted for 6 months. A period of 12 weeks of instruction (10 weeks treatment) may not be enough to reveal the influence of feedback on students' accuracy and complexity. However, I was unable to carry out the experiment for more than 12 weeks because that was against the University of Bahrain's regulations.

Second, it is also possible that the students did not benefit from the feedback given to them because their low level of English made them incapable of understanding how the feedback could be used to improve their writing. The subjects of the current research came from state-funded schools and their English proficiency was weak, which could be one reason why they could not benefit from feedback (*see Chapter 1 for students' background*).

Finally, another factor that could explain why feedback did not influence students' accuracy and complexity in writing could be the limited number of subjects in the study. There were 46 students, which was the maximum number that could be found for the research. It is possible that a larger sample might have produced different results.

5.1.4 Within-Group Comparison

In addition to an analysis using *ANOVA* of differences between groups, we also made a number of in-group comparisons to find out if individual groups improved in accuracy over the 12-week period of the experiment. The table below gives descriptive numbers for group A showing differences between pre-test and post-test:

Table 5.4 – Within-Group Comparison Results for Group A

Group A	Pre-test		Post-test	
Measure	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*
General Accuracy (EFT/T)	.395	.280	.620	.237
General Accuracy (NE/50W)	.100	.046	.055	.023
Specific Accuracy (Tense)	53.70	24.26	76.05	19.04
Specific Accuracy (Article)	57.11	23.89	71.76	25.80
Grammatical Complexity	.310	.181	.331	.219
Lexical Complexity	.720	.094	.752	.056

As measured by a *paired samples t-test* we find a significant difference for group A between pre-test and post-test for all measures of general and specific accuracy but not for complexity. The details of the scores are as follows:

There is a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test for general accuracy as measured by measure 1 EFT/T, *t-test* ($t = -4.366$; d.f. = 16; $p = .000$), and for accuracy as measured by measure 2 NE/50W there is also a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test, *t-test* ($t = 6.015$; d.f. = 16; $p = .000$). For specific accuracy in the use of tenses, there is a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test, *t-test* ($t = -5.245$; d.f. = 16; $p = .000$), and also in the use of articles, *t-test* ($t = -2.055$; d.f. = 16; $p = .057$). However, there is no significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test either in grammatical complexity as measured by DC/T, *t-test* ($t = -.468$; d.f. = 16; $p = .646$) or in lexical complexity as measured by LWT/WT, *t-test* ($t = -1.022$; d.f. = 16; $p = .322$).

Table 5.5 below shows the descriptive statistics for group B comparing the pre-test and post-test accuracy and complexity scores:

Table 5.5 – Within-Group Comparison Results for Group B

Group B	Pre-test		Post-test	
Measure	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*
General Accuracy (EFT/T)	.446	.282	.499	.279
General Accuracy (NE/50W)	.105	.030	.053	.026
Specific Accuracy (Tense)	63.43	18.50	73.68	15.40
Specific Accuracy (Article)	55.25	12.67	75.87	18.82
Grammatical Complexity	.333	.204	.295	.265
Lexical Complexity	.694	.097	.731	.100

Measured by a *paired samples t-test* we find significant difference for group B between the pre-test and post-test on both specific accuracy measures but only on one of the two general accuracy measures. The details of the scores are as follows:

There is no significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test in general accuracy as measured by measure 1 EFT/T, *t-test* ($t = -.839;$ d.f. = 15; $p = .415$) but there is a significant difference in general accuracy as measured by measure 2 NE/50W, *t-test* ($t = 7.864;$ d.f. = 15; $p = .000$), which means that using measure 1 revealed students' inability to produce error-free T-units, while measure 2 NW/50W showed improvement because it counted the errors per 50 words rather than the error-free T-units per total number of T-units. For specific accuracy, there is a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test in the use of tenses, *t-test* ($t = -2.449;$ d.f. = 15; $p = .027$), and also in the use of articles, *t-test* ($t = -5.183;$ d.f. = 15; $p = .000$). However, there is no significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test neither in grammatical complexity as measured by DC/T, *t-test* ($t = .562;$ d.f. = 15; $p = .583$), nor in lexical complexity as measured by LWT/WT, *t-test* ($t = -1.586;$ d.f. = 15; $p = .133$).

Finally, table 5.6 below shows the pre-test and post-test scores for the control group C, comparing the pre-test and post-test accuracy and complexity scores:

Table 5.6 –Within-Group Comparison Results for Group C

Group C	Pre-test		Post-test	
Measure	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*
General Accuracy (EFT/T)	.545	.272	.516	.267
General Accuracy (NE/50W)	.093	.032	.083	.028
Specific Accuracy (Tense)	59.07	21.45	73.46	17.34
Specific Accuracy (Article)	48.23	21.82	64.76	21.43
Grammatical Complexity	.190	.139	.222	.125
Lexical Complexity	.737	.078	.711	.075

Measured again by a *paired samples t-test*, we find a significant difference for group C between the pre-test and the post-test on both specific accuracy measures, but only on one of the two general accuracy measures. The details of the scores are as follows:

There is no significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test in general accuracy as measured by measure 1 EFT/T, *t-test* ($t = -.401;$ d.f. = 12; $p = .695$), but there is a significant difference in general accuracy as measured by measure 2 NE/50W, *t-test* ($t = 2.793;$ d.f. = 12; $p = .016$). There is a variation in students' scores between measure 1 EFT/T and measure 2 NE/50W because the first counts only error-free T-units and, therefore, requires higher proficiency, while the second counts individual errors per 50 words, giving more chances for better scores. For specific accuracy, there is a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test in the use of tenses, *t-test* ($t = -3.007;$ d.f. = 12; $p = .011$), and also in the use of articles, *t-test* ($t = -2.480;$ d.f. = 12; $p = .029$). For complexity, there is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in grammatical complexity as measured by DC/T, *t-test* ($t = -.536;$ d.f. = 12; $p = .602$), or in lexical complexity as measured by LWT/WT, *t-test* ($t = -1.259;$ d.f. = 12; $p = .232$).

These results show a significant level of improvement in the experimental groups A and B in general accuracy, though not in both measures (1 and 2), and in specific accuracy, but not in complexity. The results of the control group C, however, show a marginal significance of improvement in both measures of specific accuracy and on one of the two measures of general accuracy, but not in complexity.

We cannot attribute the improvement in students' general accuracy and specific accuracy to feedback, because the control group, which did not receive feedback, also showed improvement in general accuracy and specific accuracy in the use of tenses. Therefore, other factors, apart from feedback, might have influenced students' improved scores on general accuracy and specific accuracy. We can suggest a number of possible explanations for these effects that can be seen in the results of within-group comparisons. For example, it is possible that students improved because of the teaching they received throughout the experiment. Second, it is also possible that the intensive exposure to the English language students had for 12 weeks is one cause of improvement. Third, it is possible that students' improvement in general accuracy and specific accuracy could be attributed to the effects of the writing practice they had. Throughout the experiment, students had been writing frequently in the classroom and at home and this could be a reason why they improved. Fourth, the improvement found in general and specific accuracy could be attributed to a practice effect, but not likely as tests were 10 weeks apart.

I am not suggesting what Truscott (1996, 1999, 2007) suggests, (i.e. that feedback or correction can be considered as useless and that they should not be relied on). The results of the experiment do not give sufficient evidence to show the influence of feedback on students' general accuracy, specific accuracy and complexity because of the limitations of this study. There is need for further research with treatment extended over a longer period.

5.1.5 Examining Individual Cases

For further investigation into the effect of feedback on students' writing, individual cases from the experimental groups A and B were examined. Accuracy in the use of tenses and articles in the compositions produced by four students who achieved high scores (two from group A and two from group B) and four students who achieved low scores (two from group A and two from group B) in weeks 2, 6 and 10 was analyzed by calculating the percentage of the correct use of tenses and articles out of all

the obligatory instances of using tenses and articles. Figures 5.7 and 5.8 below illustrate the accuracy results in the use of tenses for students from group A:
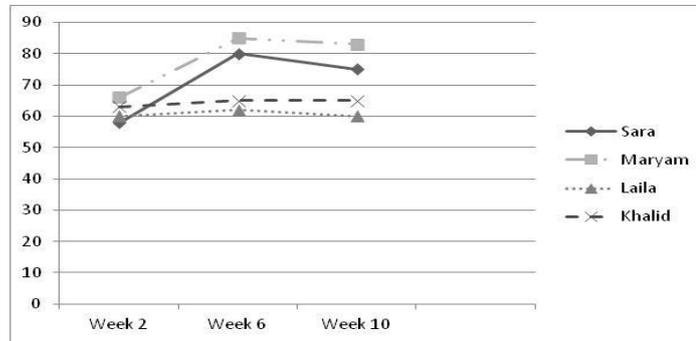
Figure 5.7 – Specific Accuracy (Tenses) – Group A
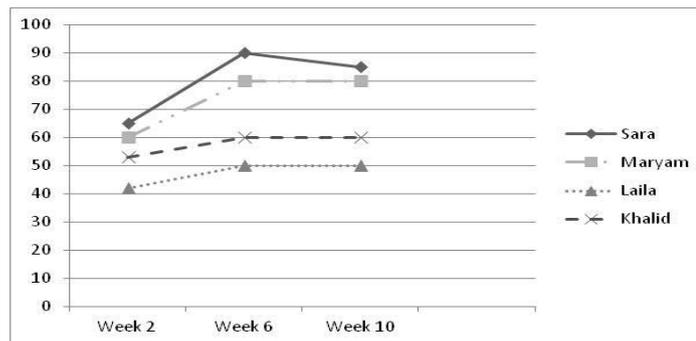
Figure 5.8 – Specific Accuracy (Articles) – Group A

As can be seen in Figures 5.7 and 5.8, the results of Sara and Maryam show significant differences in the use of tenses and articles between week 2 and week 6. This improvement slightly declined or was retained in week 10. The results of Laila and Khalid, however, do not show significant difference between the three weeks.

Figures 5.9 and 5.10 below illustrate the accuracy results in the use of tenses and articles for students from group B:
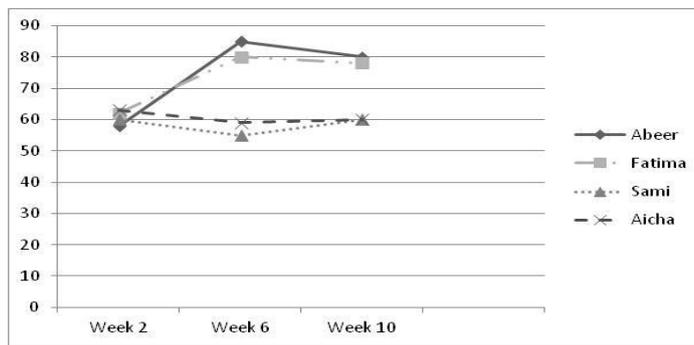
Figure 5.9 – Specific Accuracy (Tenses) – Group B
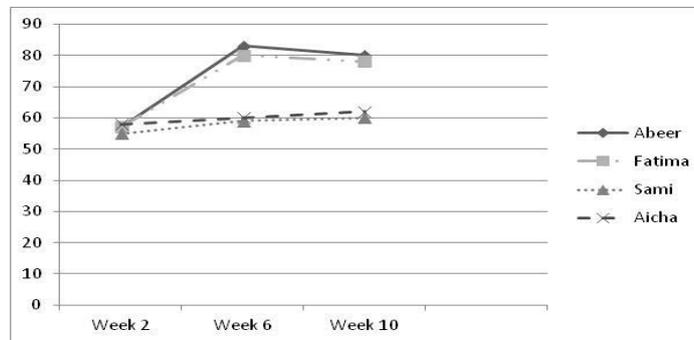
Figure 5.10 – Specific Accuracy (Articles) – Group B

As can be seen in Figures 5.9 and 5.10, the results of Abeer and Fatima show significant differences in the use of tenses and articles between week 2 and week 6. This improvement slightly declined or was retained in week 10. The results of Sami and Aicha, however, did not show significant difference between the three weeks.

Examining the achievement of individual students indicate that within experimental groups, there are high achievers and low achievers. This suggests that some students may have benefited from feedback but this benefit is not revealed through *ANOVA* because the number of high achievers in experimental groups is small and, therefore, does not affect the results overall.

5.2 Conclusion

Tests for significance (*ANOVA*) did not show any significant effect of feedback on the students' accuracy or complexity. This suggests that the students did not benefit from the feedback they received or that the benefit they made was not significant. Analyzing individual students' writing during revision (i.e. after the pre-test and before the post-test) showed improvement in specific accuracy (in the use of tenses and articles). Although this may be an indication, we cannot decisively attribute it to feedback. The results also suggest that the success of feedback could be negatively or positively influenced by factors such as students' proficiency level of English and the length of the experiment.

The findings of the quasi-experimental study are consistent with the findings of some previous research (e.g. Ashwell, 2000; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Truscott and Hsu, 2008) in that written corrective feedback did not show effect on students' writing. The findings are also consistent with studies that found no difference between different types of feedback (*e.g.* Lalande, 1982; Semke. 1984; Robb et al., 1986). However, there are studies which do show that written corrective feedback has a positive effect on the accuracy of students' written work (e.g. Bitcheher et al., 2005; Chandler, 2003; Ellis, 2008). In section 2.3.3.2 we have previously discussed some of the reasons for these contrasting findings, which include different research methodologies and different student samples.

CHAPTER 6

INTERVIEWS and QUESTIONNAIRES:

Results and Discussion

6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the questionnaires and interviews administered to students and teachers (*see Chapter 3 for further details*). The chapter will first discuss the students and the teachers' interviews, then the students' pre- and post-experiment questionnaire and finally the teachers' questionnaire. The purpose of the interviews and the questionnaires is to investigate students and teachers' beliefs and attitudes about feedback rather than their actual behaviour.

6.1 Interview Results

6.1.1 Description of Interview Methodology

Thirteen students were interviewed before and six after the experiment. A number of others declined to be interviewed. The purpose of interviewing the students before and after the experiment was to investigate if there was any development in their feedback attitudes and practices after the experiment in comparison to before. In addition, eleven teachers were interviewed to investigate their attitudes to feedback, their feedback practices and the most effective feedback methods in their opinion. The interviews were semi-structured; that is, a list of questions was addressed to students and teachers with a chance for discussion and sub-questions to be asked. The students' interviews lasted for 10 to 15 minutes and the teachers' interviews 25 to 35 minutes (*see Chapter 3 for detailed description of the interview design and procedure*).

6.1.2 Findings of Students' Pre-experiment Interviews

The students were asked whether they benefited from feedback to improve writing (*see Appendices B-1 and C-1 for the students' pre-experiment interview prompts and a sample interview script*). The majority commented that they felt they definitely did so though one, Khalid, said he thought that writing the correct form above the error was of greater benefit than underlining the error because in the latter case it could be difficult to work out what the error was:

Khalid: "I benefit only when the teacher corrects my error but when the error is just underlined, I find it hard to figure out why it is an errors."

On the question of whether the students had been influenced by the feedback received, the majority, unsurprisingly, claimed that they had. Here is Maryam, for example, and Rehab:

Maryam: "Yes, especially when I make punctuation mistakes I make sure I correct them in the second draft. I also correct my grammar and spelling errors."

Rehab: "Yes of course, not only my writing but also it improves my speaking because I read my composition aloud after making the changes and I train myself on speaking using the same structure."

However, some said that they found it difficult to understand what the error was:

Khalid: "No, I find it difficult to understand underlining so I cannot make changes."

In response to a question on whether the students thought the changes they had made had improved their writing, the majority claimed that they had. Here again is Khalid:

> **Khalid: "I cannot make changes because I do not understand how to correct my errors. The teacher just underlines the errors and it is difficult for me to understand what he means."**

Asked further what actions they took if they did not understand the teacher's corrections, the majority said they did not need to do so as they understood almost all the corrections. However, one student, Rehab, commented that she asked the teacher to explain the correction symbols written on her assignment:

> **Rehab: "I ask the teacher for explanation because sometimes teachers use symbols that I do not understand. For example, a teacher once drew arrows on my composition to tell me that I need to rearrange the paragraphs but I could not understand the meaning of the arrows and I had to ask the teacher."**

Students were also asked if the teacher made them re-draft their compositions. All the students replied that they were not asked to do so, though one commented that it would be useful:

> **Laila: "I do not re-draft at all. I'm not used to re-drafting the writing. Teachers do not ask for this but I think it is useful."**

The fact that the students do not re-draft their work and are rarely, if at all, asked to do so casts some doubt on claims in the questionnaire that they changed their writing in response to feedback.

Other findings from the students' answers were: a) the teachers returned the students' work with written feedback within a week but sometimes had to be reminded to return the assignments b) students ignored some of their teacher's corrections when

they did not understand them, and c) very few students consulted their teacher for explanation.

To sum up students' answers, we can see that they value and like their teacher's feedback. Students' attitudes to feedback are positive. We can also see that feedback is a common practice among the teachers and that they usually return the students' work quickly. The majority claim that they make changes to their writing based on the teacher's feedback. We can also see that some students said that they could not make changes after receiving feedback because they did not understand the nature of the errors underlined. The students also commented that they made changes to their compositions based on the teacher's feedback, but this claim was not supported by our observation. Some students claimed that they asked their teachers for explanation when they could not understand the corrections. However, this again is not supported by observation, which suggests that most students did not consult their teachers after receiving feedback.

6.1.3 Findings of Students' Post-experiment Interviews

Here we discuss the students' comments from the interviews conducted at the end of the experimental study. The interviews focused on the feedback given by me when teaching the experimental study (*see Appendices B-2 and C-2 for the students' post-experiment interview prompts and a sample interview script*). As indicated earlier, the purpose of the second interview with the students participating in the experimental study was to investigate any change in their attitudes to feedback and to see if the they have developed different post-feedback practices, taking into account that the findings this time are based on my own writing classes where students were asked to hand in a second draft. Though the students' answers were not detailed, the answers may help to amplify their responses to the questionnaire.

The students were asked to explain how they benefited from the teacher's feedback. Some said that they benefited in improving grammar and vocabulary and others claimed that they benefited from the teacher's comments on writing organization. For example, here is what Maryam and Sara said:

> **Maryam:** "By using the teacher's corrections, I benefit mainly in grammar and vocabulary because the teacher focuses on grammar and vocabulary in providing feedback."

> **Sara:** "I benefit from the feedback by following the teacher's corrections, especially writing organization."

The students were also asked whether they preferred the teacher to correct their errors on the scripts or to underline them. The answers indicated that the majority preferred it when the teacher corrected their errors on their scripts and believed that they could benefit more when their errors were corrected because it was easier for them to understand what was wrong. Below are two quotations from Abeer and Sara's answers:

> **Sara:** "I prefer underlining because this makes me work harder to correct my error."

> **Abeer:** "It is better to correct because it is easier for me to understand my errors and correct them."

On the question of whether students corrected their errors when they were underlined, responses indicated that they (sometimes) tried to understand and correct their errors when the teacher underlined them. One student, Khalid, said that he sometimes tried to use the internet but could not make any progress:

> **Khalid:** "Yes I try. I used the internet sometimes but I could not make any progress. I prefer error correction."

Another student said that she would ask the teacher for an explanation. However, the students claimed that they derived little benefit from the underlining of errors. Indeed, when I asked them to hand in a second draft, they copied the same composition again, paying no attention to the underlined errors. Below are the comments of Maryam and Sara to the same question:

Maryam: Yes I do. Sometimes I ask the teacher to explain but mainly I would look for the error correction myself."

Sara: "When the errors are just underlined I sometimes need to ask the teacher. Teachers who use symbols or questions marks confuse me. So, I sometimes ask for explanation."

On the question of whether students thought that re-drafting their compositions was important for improvement, their responses indicated that they valued the benefit of re-drafting their work though they found it more useful when the corrections were given to them. Our observation indicated that when feedback was given to students by underlining their errors, follow up was required to ensure that they undertook further work. Below are Maryam and Khalid's answers:

Maryam: "At the beginning of the course I thought it was not important to re-draft. I just looked at the corrections provided and felt that I didn't need to re-draft since I understood the feedback. However, when I practically re-drafted the composition, it made a difference."

Khalid: "It is important for improvement only when the teacher corrects my errors."

To sum up, the students' post-experiment interviews suggest that they appreciate feedback and re-drafting of their work. Students claim that they benefit from feedback on grammar, vocabulary and organization. They also appear to prefer error correction

with the insertion of the correct form above the original error to error underlining because it is easier to understand. There are also comments that the students do little or even nothing when the feedback they receive is error underlining because they find it difficult to understand the nature of the errors underlined.

6.1.4 Findings of Teachers' Interviews

The purpose of interviewing the teachers was to investigate their feedback practices and their attitudes to feedback and also to amplify the questionnaire responses (*see Appendices B-3 and C-3 for the teachers' interview prompts and a sample interview script*).

The teachers were asked initially about the main problems EFL/ESL students faced when writing a composition. They believed that the main problems when writing were grammar, vocabulary and lack of ideas. They claimed that students had particular problems in the use of the correct structure, word order, verb tense and prepositions, and that they had insufficient vocabulary to express themselves. In general, the teachers said that students lacked the fundamental elements that would help them to write well. These views of students' level of English is unsurprising because it is commonly known at the University of Bahrain that they come to the University with a weak background in English. Here, for example, is what the teachers Abdulkareem and Huda said:

> **Abdulkareem: "Some of the students of course are graduates of private schools and therefore they do not have problems in writing good essays [pause] but the majority of students are from government schools. When they come to university they are not equipped with the necessary tools by which they can write a very good essay. They are very poor at all aspects of the language [pause] the grammar, the reading, the listening, the speaking [pause] all kinds of skills and mainly the tenses. For example, they start using the present simple tenses and then go to the past and then back again to the future in the same sentence. The use of prepositions also [pause] sometimes they translate from Arabic into English**

and that's why they make a lot of errors. They even have punctuation problems because they are not used to the English system."

Huda: "Many of them are not really sure of the structure and the word order despite the fact that I start with a revision workshop. So, they would not automatically see that English sentence starts with a noun, for example (Mohamed went to school). They seem to struggle to get the structure right. Also, if you were to give them a topic then they would find it difficult to come up with an introduction. So, sometimes just to save time when I encourage them to do the writing inside the classroom, I would provide them with a few words so that *[sic]* to trigger thoughts."

On the question of how the teachers taught writing and what ways and methods they used in teaching writing, the teachers focused on the pre-drafting process through brainstorming and discussion, grammar explanation and the use of vocabulary. The majority of the teachers said that they explained the use of tenses. Based on observation, the time spent on grammar explanation often took a whole class and brainstorming did not take much time because students did not participate effectively in class discussion. Some teachers said that they allowed students to do their writing task at home and, therefore, they could not be supported during the writing process. Below are answers of Maha and Arabi:

Maha: "I try several ways. First I start with brainstorming and discuss the topic with them. Then I ask them to write about it. Sometimes they write in class and then they finish it at home. The second technique is by giving them the outline without interference, I just write the outline. Of course they have a background, for example, car accident, I just give them the place and what happened in one sentence at the end and they will go home and write a composition about it. The third way I put them in groups. Some of them resist working in groups and some of them like it. Some students like collaborative work to get ideas but they prefer to write on their own."

Arabi: "In one way, for example, I suggest a topic for students and I ask them to brainstorm because the lack of information is a problem actually. Some students

do not have the information and that is why they do not write. Sometimes, and I find that more interesting, I ask students to suggest topics and I found out that topics suggested by the students produce more in the length of writing than my topics. They like social topics and topics related to the use of technology and its effect in their life. When they get the information, I always ask students to write in class but before that I ask them to sort out the information and divide them into sub-topics. Why do I do this in class? Because usually if I ask them to do it at home they either copy or ask somebody else to do it for them."

On the question of how teachers delivered feedback, it appeared that some used error codes which they wrote on students' scripts. Others underlined errors or wrote the full correction on the script. In other words, the teachers gave feedback in a variety of ways as illustrated below in the comments of Huda, Maha and Arabi:

Huda: "I get the composition and I go for codes. So, if they had a spelling wrong I would have the code (SP) and if they got the verb wrong I would have (V). With my students I would go for exhaustive feedback where I would comment on everything that they got wrong. I would underline it and correct it,"

Maha: "When I get their writing, I go through it and I underline it. Sometimes, for example, I would put (G) for grammar or (S) for spelling or sometimes I put (P) for punctuation. I do not always give them the answer on their paper. I just underline it and at the end I write a general comment on their writing like three or four lines. If I find that students are repeating the same mistakes then maybe I will write the correction because it is an error"

Arabi: "I give individual feedback on paper. I just write notes like this is a grammar mistake or check vocabulary. I never give correction, I just put question marks and I ask them to come back to me on my comments and if they do not they lose the mark for the writing because they have to come to me with corrections. I know that if you leave them alone they will never come back to you. I also do another kind of feedback. I collect the common errors and I write them on paper and I ask them to find where the mistakes are and I also discuss common problems with students. Sometimes it is useful to give common feedback to save time."

On the question of which feedback method the teachers preferred, some commented that they preferred underlining errors with a brief comment at the end of the composition because they thought students would try to correct their errors by themselves. However, others indicated that they varied between underlining errors, correcting errors and discussing problems individually. However, the teachers do not seem to agree on one type of feedback being the most effective. Here are answers of Abdulkareem, Maha and Arabi:

> **Abdulkareem: "I prefer to underline the error and correct it right away and then I write notes at the end of the essay telling them exactly the way to improve but this depends if I have enough time but I do it and prefer it and I think it is effective. If I do not have the time then I would just underline the problems and would tell them to identify them by themselves."**

> **Maha: "I think the most effective way is to underline their errors and just give them simple comments at the end of their writing. Also maybe it is better to underline errors and use codes like (S) or (G) because students then have to sort it out themselves"**

> **Arabi: "Discussion of problems either individually or generally in class is more useful than any other form of feedback."**

Asked how they expected students to respond to feedback, the majority of teachers said they expected students to read through the corrected work and make attempts to correct their errors. They added that most students did not do this. A reason perhaps is that teachers did not follow up students after giving feedback, nor did they ask for a second draft. Huda and Maha commented as follows:

> **Huda: "I expect them just to realize where they go *[sic]* wrong and that's part of my comment on their papers as well. Some students do and some don't."**

> **Maha: "I would like them to come and ask if they didn't understand what I wrote,
> if they think that my comments are not clear. I expect them not to repeat the
> mistakes. I want them to come and tell me. They don't always meet my
> expectation. Some of them feel shy."**

Asked whether students valued the feedback they received, the teachers felt that they did. Observation also shows that students like feedback and in many cases they ask for it. Here are two quotations from teachers' responses:

> **Abdulkareem: "I think yes, they value the feedback. If I correct the mistakes and
> give them examples to illustrate the point they would learn a lot and they would
> improve. I can see that they [sic] appreciating what I do for them. That's why they
> keep thanking and coming and sometimes you can see the smiles on their faces."**

> **Huda: "I have some good students who appreciate feedback I can't deny that but
> also I have many students who just would not care."**

Finally, teachers were asked to give recommendations for ESL/EFL teachers for more effective feedback. The teachers' answers were quite limited, showing a certain lack of awareness of L2 writing methodology and feedback methodology. None, for example, recommended re-drafting or discussion of common errors. Below is a comment made by Arabi in which he disapproved of giving corrections:

> **Arabi: "Two things: you should not make any corrections. If you make corrections
> you will be defeating the purpose of your feedback. You should make the students
> think. Students, individually, should list their mistakes and create a journal for
> their mistakes and correct them. They have to try and show how they correct
> their mistakes. I find that quite useful."**

Another teacher, however, recommended the use of direct correction and explanation of students' errors, and another suggested using a combination of methods through a

unified set of guidelines that teachers should use across the board; for example, to use direct correction with freshmen and sophomore students and then gradually shift to using codes and underlining with more advanced levels. Below are the comments of Abdulkareem and Maha:

Abdulkareem: "They need to explain exactly [pause] I know a number of instructors who put symbols for students but I don't think this is very much working here [sic] because the student would lose the paper. You need to tell everybody in the class that these are common and general problems. With weak students, I [sic] will need to ask them to come to your office and spend time with them individually. I suggest writing notes with examples for students."

Maha: "Never return students' writing without feedback. We should watch the language and write encouraging comments. Teachers should be educated on the importance of feedback because many of them are not aware of it."

To sum up the teachers' interview responses, the teachers use different ways of giving feedback to students. Preference for feedback methods varies between direct correction of errors, underlining of errors or a combination of both methods. The teachers do not ask for a second draft from their students and they confirm that students do not do what they are expected to do after receiving feedback. In the final analysis, we can see that the process of giving feedback is incomplete as it is limited to giving corrections, underlining or comments. There is no further action taken by the teachers, which raises the need for specially designed training programmes for teachers on the teaching of L2 writing and giving feedback (*see Chapter 7 for recommendations*).

6.1.5 Interview Findings: Conclusion

Responses show that students in general value the teacher's feedback and that the teachers believe in the importance of giving feedback to students. However, they also show that the teachers use a limited range of feedback methods such as direct correction, underlining or codes. They also seem to have a limited understanding of L2 writing methodology. The process of giving feedback stops once students have received their scripts. The teachers do not follow up students after giving feedback and students in return do little after receiving feedback because they are not asked to write a second draft and they are not allocated classes for discussion of the main errors they make. The results are somewhat consistent with other studies that investigated students' attitudes and beliefs about feedback. For example, Mustafa (2012) interviewed 31 Saudi students in a private school in Canada. Although students valued the teacher's feedback and took it seriously, they were not fully satisfied with it. They preferred to receive feedback on a variety of writing aspects rather than feedback focusing on grammar, as they considered it "substantive" (p. 9).

The responses of the teachers and the students seem to agree and differ in several aspects. For example, both the teachers and the students value feedback and believe that it is important. The students tend to prefer the writing of the correct form next to their errors in preference to other methods of feedback. The teachers, however, tend to use a variety of written feedback methods. Some teachers say that underlining errors is more useful than providing corrections because they think that the students benefit more when they look up their errors, assuming that they will do so. In addition, the teachers and the students believe that feedback in general improves writing even though the students are not asked to hand in a second draft of their compositions.

In the final analysis, the interviews add more value to the research findings as they show the teachers and students' attitudes to feedback and provide ideas for recommendations. The interviews also amplify the observation results and show if there are differences between the beliefs and the practice of teachers and students.

6.2 Questionnaire Results

6.2.1 Description of Questionnaire Methodology

A total of three questionnaires were administered to students and teachers. The students were given a pre- and a post-experiment questionnaire, while the teachers were given one questionnaire. The students' pre-experiment questionnaire was administered to examine their attitudes toward feedback before the experiment and to investigate their previous experiences and attitudes regarding feedback. A post-experiment questionnaire was administered to investigate their attitudes toward the feedback they had received over the preceding 12 weeks.

The pre-experiment questionnaire consisted of 29 questions and the post-experiment questionnaire consisted of 16 questions. The teachers' questionnaire consisted of 18 questions. The questions fell into different types. For example, there were questions with a scale of four responses (*always*, *often*, *sometimes*, *never*), which required respondents to indicate the frequency of feedback-related practices. There were questions with a Likert scale with five responses (*Strongly agree*, *Agree*, *Don't know*, *Disagree*, *Strongly disagree*). The rest of the questions included either different types of answers or open questions that required respondents to explain their answers in their own words (*see Chapter 3 for detailed description of the questionnaires design*).

6.2.2 Findings of Students' Pre-experiment Questionnaire

First, we report students' responses to each question, bearing in mind that the focus in this case was on the their general experience with feedback in all their English classes (*see Appendix A-1 for the students' pre-experiment questionnaire*). The tables present results by type of question. Table 6.1 below shows responses to 11 questions:

Table 6.1 – Students' Responses to Four-Option Response Questions - Questions (1, 3-6 & 8-13)

Question	Students' Responses							
	Always		Often		Sometimes		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Question 1 **Does your instructor return to you the compositions you write?**	21	46%	18	39%	6	13%	1	2%
Question 3 **Do you get feedback on your writing from the teacher?**	16	35%	16	35%	13	28%	1	2%
Question 4 **Do other students read and comment on your composition?**	1	2%	3	7%	25	54%	17	37%
Question 5 **Does the teacher discuss your writing errors with you after he returns your composition?**	6	13%	5	11%	27	59%	8	17%
Question 6 **How often does your instructor ask you to re-draft your composition?**	4	9%	2	4%	21	46%	19	41%
Question 8 **Do you look up the corrections in a grammar book after you receive feedback?**	2	4%	5	11%	18	39%	21	46%
Question 9 **Do you consult a tutor for help after you receive feedback?**	4	9%	11	24%	12	26%	19	41%
Question 10 **Do you seek help from a classmate after you receive feedback?**	11	24%	16	35%	19	41%	0	0%
Question 11 **Do you ignore the whole task after reading your teacher's feedback?**	0	0%	4	9%	24	52%	18	39%
Question 12 **Do you find any comments or corrections that you do not understand?**	0	0%	5	11%	23	50%	18	39%
Question 13 **My teacher gives positive comments on my writing**	3	7%	20	43%	22	48%	1	2%

Table 6.1 above indicates that the students receive feedback from their teacher always or often (70%). However, it appears that once feedback has been received, very little or no further action is taken by either the teacher or the students. Students are not generally required to re-draft their work (87%). Although they claim that they re-write their work (50%), observation suggests that this is in fact rare. This may be a case of social desirability bias in the completion of the questionnaire; that is, when students give impressive answers they think are desirable, assuming that they will meet the expectations of the researcher or to avoid embarrassment.

Table 6.2 – Students' Responses to Likert Type Questions - Questions (14-27)

Question	Students' Responses									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Question 14 **I prefer to get feedback than no feedback**	31	67%	15	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0%	0%
Question 15 **My teacher's feedback makes me feel unwilling to do the task again**	0	0%	0	0%	11	24%	18	39%	17	37%
Question 16 **My teacher's feedback helps me improve my writing**	21	46%	22	48%	3	7%	0	0%	0	0%
Question 17 **My teachers' feedback makes me confident of producing a better draft**	22	48%	19	41%	5	11%	0	0%	0	0%
Question 18 **I prefer to receive no feedback from my teacher**	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	19	41%	27	59%
Question 19 **I prefer when the teacher writes the correction of the error on my paper**	31	67%	11	24%	2	4%	1	2%	1	2%
Question 20 **I prefer when the teacher just underlines the error without correcting it**	24	52%	14	30%	1	2%	3	7%	4	9%
Question 21 **I like my classmates to read and comment on my writing**	7	15%	18	39%	12	26%	8	17%	1	2%
Question 22 **I wish to receive more written feedback from my teacher**	15	33%	17	37%	11	24%	2	4%	0	0%
Question 23 **I prefer to discuss my errors with my teacher in the classroom**	9	20%	18	39%	7	15%	10	22%	2	4%
Question 24 **I prefer to discuss my errors with my teachers in his office or outside the classroom**	5	11%	15	33%	15	33%	10	22%	1	2%
Question 25 **The changes I make in the second draft make my writing better**	24	52%	21	46%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Question 26 **My English is very weak and I do not think I can benefit from feedback**	0	0%	0	0%	3	7%	26	57%	17	37%
Question 27 **I have improved my writing in English in the last year**	8	17%	26	57%	10	22%	2	4%	0	0%

Turning to table 6.2, which addresses the students' attitudes to feedback through Likert scale questions, we can see that they have a strong desire for teacher feedback, which seems to strengthen their confidence. Responses to questions 19 and 20 seem to have a slight contradiction because (67%) preferred when the teacher wrote the correction of the errors while, in the following question, (52%) preferred when their errors were underlined. In fact, this is understandable for two reasons. First, it is possible that students understood 'I prefer' as 'I like' and, therefore, did not know that they were supposed to make a choice. Second, it is also possible that they wanted to indicate that they approve of both underlining the error (87%) and writing the correct form on their assignment (91%). This degree of approval of feedback is unsurprising given the circumstances of the administration of the questionnaire, but nonetheless not without interest.

Table 6.3 – Students' Responses to a Four-Option Response Question – Question (2)

Question	Students' Responses							
	During the same class in which the composition is handed		The following class		No later than one week		Later than (a), (b) and (c)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Question 2 **When do you normally get your composition back from the teacher?**	5	11%	22	48%	13	28%	6	13%

Table 6.3 above shows that according to the students' responses, teachers return their compositions quickly, within a week (87%), although observation casts some doubts on this claim. We also notice that responses varied as (48%) said that they received their compositions back the following class, (28%) said that they received them within a week and (13%) later than a week. This is understandable because students were responding based on their previous experiences as they came from different courses.

Table 6.4 below shows the students' responses to question (7), asking about the focus of teacher feedback:

Table 6.4 – Distribution of Focus and Amount of Feedback Students Receive – Question (7)

Question	Amount of Feedback							
Question 7 **How much feedback do you receive on the following areas of your compositions?**	*A lot*		*Some*		*A little*		*None*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Organization	5	11%	19	41%	8	17%	4	9%
Content / Ideas	12	26%	15	33%	14	30%	5	11%
Grammar	27	59%	10	22%	7	15%	2	4%
Vocabulary	8	17%	23	50%	11	24%	4	9%
Mechanics	8	17%	11	24%	15	33%	12	26%

The tendency seems to be that there is an overwhelming focus on grammar and to a lesser extent on vocabulary and mechanics, which is supported by the observation showing that in class, teachers focused on grammar explanation.

Table 6.5 below shows the students' responses to questions (28 and 29) which asked them to rate their English language skills and their composition writing skills:

Table 6.5 – Students' Responses to Four-Option Response Questions – Questions (28 & 29)

Question	Students' Responses							
	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Question 28 **How would you rate your English language kills in general?**	5	11%	22	48%	13	28%	6	13%
Question 29 **How would you rate your skills in writing compositions?**	4	9%	17	37%	16	35%	9	20%

The purpose of the questions above is to see if the students' answers match their English language and composition writing skills. Table 6.5 above indicates that they are divided in their views. About half rate their skills as good while the other half rate their skills as weak. However, from my experience and also based on observation, the majority of students have low proficiency.

We can summarize the results of the questionnaire administered prior to the experiment as follows. First, and unsurprisingly, students confirm that the practice of giving feedback is common among teachers, which is also confirmed by observations. The students also indicate that they appreciate their teacher's feedback and think that it improves their writing. Second, although teachers give feedback on students' writing, they rarely ask them to re-draft their compositions; (41%) of the students indicate that they never re-draft because the teachers do not ask them to do so. The students claim that their teachers sometimes ask them to re-draft their writing but this is not supported by observation. Finally, some students do not give much attention to teacher's feedback as they do not look up their errors or seek help from classmates to understand how to use the feedback to improve their writing. Other findings are 1) that peer feedback is extremely rare and 2) that students prefer correction of their errors to be written on their compositions as opposed to underlining of errors.

6.2.3 Findings of Students' Post-experiment Questionnaire

Below we report the results of the questionnaire administered to students at the end of the experimental study (*see Appendix A-2 for the students' post-experiment questionnaire*). This focused on the students' impression of feedback given by me while teaching the experimental study. Therefore, the questionnaire was given only to the experimental groups because they received feedback. Table 6.6 gives the students' responses to the 13 Likert type questions:

Table 6.6 – Students' Responses to Likert Type Questions - Questions (1-9 & 13-16)

Question	Students' Responses									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Question 1 **I benefit from my teacher's feedback on my writing.**	20	61%	11	33%	1	3%	0	0%	1	3%
Question 2 **I understand my teacher's feedback.**	19	58%	12	36%	1	3%	1	3%	0	0%
Question 3 **I would like to receive more feedback on my writing in the future.**	21	64%	10	30%	1	3%	0	0%	1	3%
Question 4 **I prefer my teacher to correct all my writing errors on the script.**	20	61%	12	36%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Question 5 **I prefer my teacher to only underline my errors.**	2	6%	3	9%	4	12%	15	45%	9	27%
Question 6 **I prefer not to receive feedback on my writing.**	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%	12	36%	20	61%
Question 7 **I prefer my classmates' feedback to teacher's feedback.**	0	0%	3	9%	7	21%	11	33%	12	36%
Question 8 **I prefer to do my writing task in class.**	7	21%	7	21%	13	39%	5	15%	1	3%
Question 9 **I prefer to do my writing task outside the class.**	2	6%	14	42%	9	27%	6	18%	2	6%
Question 13 **I do my best to correct my errors if the teacher underlines them.**	6	18%	15	45%	7	21%	4	12%	1	3%
Question 14 **Writing a second draft helps me produce a greater piece of writing.**	20	61%	9	27%	4	12%	0	0%	0	0%
Question 15 **I should re-draft my writing three times for better improvement.**	7	21%	6	18%	8	24%	10	30%	2	6%
Question 16 **I feel that my writing has improved during this academic semester.**	8	24%	18	54%	7	21%	0	0%	0	0%

Table 6.6 shows that the students highly appreciate the teacher's feedback (94%) and that they would like to receive more feedback from their teacher (93%). Students also seem to have no great liking of peer feedback (68%). We can also see that most students (89%) believe that re-drafting their compositions for a second time makes them better. The table also shows that students prefer direct correction of errors as a method of feedback (77%) compared with errors being underlined by the teacher (72%), as can be seen in questions 4 and 5.

Table 6.7 below shows responses to 3 questions with 4 options:

Table 6.7 – Students' Responses to Four- Response Questions (10-12)

Question	Students' Responses							
	Always		Often		Sometimes		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Question 10 **I use a grammar book to look up my writing errors.**	1	2%	4	15%	19	57%	9	26%
Question 11 **I consult my teacher for explanation after receiving feedback.**	3	9%	2	7%	19	59%	9	26%
Question 12 **I use the internet to look up my errors after receiving feedback.**	4	13%	14	41%	11	33%	4	13%

Table 6.7 shows, unsurprisingly, that the majority do not look up their errors in a grammar book after receiving feedback (83%) and rarely consult the teacher for explanation after receiving feedback (85%). We can also see that (53%) of the students claim they use the internet to look up their errors, but this is not confirmed by observation, as the results suggest that the students take little action after receiving feedback.

To sum up, the students appreciate the teacher's feedback and would like to receive more. They prefer direct correction of errors to underlining. They also approve of writing a second draft of their compositions to produce a better piece of writing. They say that they do not usually consult the teacher for help or look up their errors in a grammar book after receiving feedback, which suggests that the students who receive

direct correction use the corrections while those who receive underlining do little after receiving feedback. Responses indicate that teachers do not usually meet students' expectations and this suggests that they should encourage students to revise their writing and correct their errors by asking them to hand in a second draft of their compositions. Students seem to perform better when they are followed up and encouraged to benefit from the feedback provided to them by re-drafting their writing.

6.2.4 Findings of Teachers' Questionnaire

Below we report teachers' responses to the questionnaire (*see Appendix A-3 for the teachers' questionnaire*). Table 6.8 gives teachers' responses to the questions which address teachers' attitudes and beliefs about feedback rather than their actual practice, which may be somewhat different:

Table 6.8 – Teachers' Responses to all Questions

Questions 1 to 4	Teachers' Responses							
	Always		Often		Sometimes		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Question 1 **Do you give feedback on your students' writing?**	18	90%	1	5%	1	5%	0	0%
Question 2 **Do you write comments at the end of the students' writing?**	11	55%	6	30%	3	15%	0	0%
Question 3 **Do you make students hand in a second draft of their writing?**	1	5%	8	40%	8	40%	3	15%
Question 4 **Do students consult you for more explanation after receiving feedback?**	0	0%	5	25%	15	75%	0	0%

Questions 5 to 18	Teachers' Responses									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Question 5 **Students benefit from the feedback I give them on their writing.**	7	35%	7	35%	6	30%	0	0%	0	0%
Question 6 **In general, students do not benefit from written feedback.**	0	0%	1	5%	4	20%	13	65%	2	10%
Question 7 **It is preferable not to give feedback to students at all.**	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	20%	16	80%
Question 8 **It is a good idea to write the correction of each error on students' scripts.**	2	10%	10	50%	2	10%	3	15%	3	15%
Question 9 **It is the duty of teachers to always provide feedback on students' composition.**	12	60%	6	30%	1	5%	1	5%	0	0%
Question 10 **It is beneficial for students to write a second draft of their composition after receiving feedback.**	8	40%	9	45%	2	10%	1	5%	0	0%
Question 11 **In general, students' improvement can be noticed in the second draft they produce.**	2	10%	13	65%	5	25%	0	0%	0	0%
Question 12 **It is preferable to just underline students' errors rather than provide the correction of the errors.**	2	10%	5	25%	3	15%	8	40%	2	10%
Question 13 **It is a good idea to allow students give feedback on each others' writing.**	3	15%	8	40%	6	30%	3	15%	0	0%
Question 14 **It is important to discuss students' errors individually after giving them feedback.**	3	15%	12	60%	1	5%	4	20%	0	0%
Question 15 **It is important to give students general oral feedback in class on their writing.**	9	45%	9	45%	2	10%	0	0%	0	0%
Question 16 **Oral feedback is of greater effect on students' writing than written feedback.**	1	5%	6	30%	6	30%	7	35%	0	0%
Question 17 **It is important to praise students' written work when giving feedback.**	5	25%	12	60%	1	5%	2	10%	0	0%
Question 18 **Praising students' writing might fossilize their errors.**	1	5%	4	20%	8	40%	5	25%	2	10%

As can be seen in table 6.8 above, almost all the teachers (95%) claim that they give feedback on students' writing and a majority (85%) also claim that they write feedback comments on students' writing, though very few report that students ask for further explanation of their errors or feedback comments. Of particular interest are the responses concerning the method of feedback, as (60%) of the teachers agree that it is useful to write the correction of students' errors on the manuscripts and prefer this to underlining only. A large majority of the teachers agree that it is a good idea to ask students to write a second draft after feedback, to discuss errors individually with students and to give general oral feedback in class, but there is little indication from observation of teaching and feedback practices that any of these are ever seriously implemented. It is possible that teachers' responses are biased because their actual behaviour did not reflect what they said.

To sum up, though the teachers' responses indicate that feedback is frequently given to students, there is little action taken by the teachers afterwards. They prefer direct correction of errors to underlining. However, some of the responses are unreliable because they conflict with the observation. The questionnaire elicits the teachers' beliefs about the manner and type of feedback that should be given but observation suggests that their claims (*e.g.* those on question 11 concerning writing a second draft and question 14 concerning discussing errors with students individually) do not match their actual practice.

6.2.5 *Questionnaire Findings: Conclusion*

The questionnaire responses provide only limited clarification regarding feedback attitudes. Responses seem to be influenced by a social desirability bias; that is, students and teachers responses seek to give a positive impression. Observation does not always confirm claims made by students and teachers. That said, the questionnaire responses do indicate that in theory, at least, feedback is highly valued by both students and teachers, and that students in general would like to receive more feedback from their teachers because they think it helps them improve their writing. On the other hand, there are studies that investigated students' attitudes about feedback (*e.g.* Sommers,

1982; Zamel, 1985; Conners and Lunsford, 1993) and found that feedback could be confusing and ineffective. Other studies (*e.g.* Ferris, 1995b; Conrad and Goldstein, 1999) suggested that students might misunderstand their teacher's feedback to not be able to use in correcting their errors. Ellis (2010) discussed the reasons for students' disengagement with teacher's feedback and stated that this could have several effects on students (*e.g.* cognitive (making them disinterested in feedback); behavioural (making them ignore the feedback provided); affective (making them demotivated by feedback)) (p. 342).

6.3 Comparing Findings from Observation, Interviews and Questionnaires

Findings of the observation, interviews and questionnaires are parallel in some parts and contrasting in others, as summarized below.

- Interviews and questionnaires confirm that teachers use feedback in response to students' writing, but observation shows that the range of feedback methods used is limited to direct and indirect written corrective feedback.

- Although interviews and questionnaires with teachers show that they believe that making students hand in a second draft is useful, observation shows that they do not ask students to do so (i.e. to hand in a second draft). In other words, there is contradiction between what the teachers believe is useful and their actual practices in the classroom.

- Interviews with teachers show that some of them preferred to discuss students' writing problems individually. However, observation, as well as interviews with students, indicate that teachers do not in fact conduct one-to-one meetings with students to discuss their writing problems.

- Interviews and questionnaires show that teachers and students value feedback and think highly of it. Nevertheless, observation shows that the process of giving feedback stops once students have received back their first draft with corrections. This casts some doubt on whether teachers' and students' interview

and questionnaire responses on feedback issues accurately reflect their actual practices.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS and CONCLUSION

7.0 Introduction

In this chapter, implications of the findings reported in the previous chapters are discussed. Then we discuss practical recommendations for dealing with the issues raised, focusing on the situation at the University of Bahrain. Recommendations for future research are also discussed, providing further research questions on the area of feedback that need to be addressed.

7.1 Summary of Findings

The quasi-experimental study did not find that feedback had any significant effect on students' accuracy and complexity. In addition, the results did not reveal significant differences between the first type of feedback and the second, (i.e. none between direct corrective feedback and error underlining). Though within-group comparison for each group showed significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test for all groups, this improvement could not be attributed to feedback because there was also an improvement in the control group which did not receive feedback. This is consistent with previous studies (*e.g.* Kepner, 1991; Polio et al., 1998; Semke, 1984; Sheppard, 1992; Truscott and Hsu, 2008) which found no significant effect for corrective feedback on students' writing. Other studies (*e.g.* Bitchener and Knoch 2009b) have also found no significant effect for one type of feedback compared to another though they have found that feedback has a significant effect on students' writing compared to no feedback. However, there are studies (*e.g.* Ashwell 2000; Ferris and Roberts 2001; Fathman and Walley 1990) which have found that feedback has a

positive effect on students' writing. A small number of studies (*e.g.* Fazio 2001; Lalande 1982) have found corrective feedback to have a negative influence, and Truscott (1996) argued that feedback is not worthwhile. However, I would argue that if the effect of feedback is not demonstrated in a study then we cannot jump to conclusions against feedback. We need to study other factors in the study itself and in the environment to see when feedback is likely to benefit students and when it is not likely to do so. Although this study did not show a positive effect for feedback on students' writing, there are reasons to argue that feedback can benefit students. The analysis of the compositions of eight students from the experimental groups in weeks 2, 6 and 10 revealed improvement in the use of tenses and articles in the compositions of four students while the results of the other four students did not show any change. Thus, it is possible for example that the good and enthusiastic students benefited from the feedback they received. It is also possible that benefits from feedback did not emerge because of some limitations in the study such as the length of the experiment, which did not give sufficient time for effects to emerge.

The classroom observation findings reveal several problems in the teaching of L2 writing at the University of Bahrain as well as in giving feedback to students. Some of the teachers lack awareness of L2 writing methodology and their teaching is weak. There is a great focus on grammar and vocabulary explanation and in many cases whole classes are spent on this. Furthermore, there is a great deal of lecturing at the expense of student participation and interaction and there is no focus on the process of writing. Most teachers seem to follow the structural approach in teaching writing, focusing mainly on the product of students. Whilst a writing task is going on, the teachers do not play any role in helping students improve their drafting process as they stand and watch students or walk around without intervening in their activities. In some cases students are asked to do their writing tasks at home, which might result in students asking someone else to do the task for them, which is likely to happen in some cases.

Though teachers give feedback to students in the form of written comments, underlining, coding or correction, there is little or no follow up. Students are not asked to hand in a second draft of their compositions, which does not encourage them to benefit from their teacher's feedback. The teachers do not allocate classes to discuss

students' main errors and there are no teacher-student conferencing sessions to discuss errors and writing problems. The practice of feedback is limited to giving written comments and corrections on students' scripts. With regard to observation findings on students' behaviour, it seems that weaknesses in teaching L2 writing have an influence on students' performance. Observation shows that they lack motivation and enthusiasm. Students do not participate in classroom discussion even when the teacher is brainstorming with them before assigning the writing task. The writing tasks are not undertaken enthusiastically as the focus in teaching and giving feedback is mainly on grammar and vocabulary and in some cases students do not even hand in the first draft. It seems that students do not benefit from the teacher's feedback probably because of a lack of motivation and follow up as mentioned. Furthermore, students suffer from many weaknesses in writing and teachers in return focus on grammar explanations to solve this problem. The situation of students' level in English at the University of Bahrain raises questions about their school education and about why they are taught in English at the University if they finish their secondary education with poor language skills.

Turning to the findings of interviews and questionnaires, there are many indications that feedback, as expected, is highly valued by students because they believe that using the teacher's feedback improves their writing, mainly in grammar, vocabulary and organization. The findings also show that students prefer teachers to correct their errors on the scripts instead of underlining them because they believe it is easier for them to understand the nature of the errors corrected. Students say that it is likely that they will not correct their errors if they do not understand the nature of the error corrected or underlined. Furthermore, students' answers amplify the observation results as they confirm that their teachers do not ask them to hand in a second draft and that they rarely consult their teachers for help or explanation. With regard to teachers, they also believe that feedback is important and that it benefits students and improves their writing. The teachers value feedback highly and feel that it is one of their responsibilities. Some teachers have reservations against direct error correction because they believe it is better to underline to encourage students to look up their errors while others find error correction of benefit to students. The teachers believe that students suffer from weaknesses in grammar and vocabulary, and lack ideas. However, one

should add that teachers' beliefs and attitudes about teaching L2 writing and feedback do not always match their actual behaviour.

7.2 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, a number of theoretical and practical issues arise regarding L2 feedback and the teaching of L2 writing at the University of Bahrain. The teaching of L2 writing is not effective and there is a lack of awareness of L2 writing methodologies. In addition, students have weaknesses in language skills and writing in particular. These are deeply-rooted in the University because of admission and recruitment policies, among other factors. For example, the recruitment procedure does not ensure that the teachers hired are competent. Moreover, the University's admission policy does not ensure that only good students are accepted. All students who score 70% overall in the general secondary leaving exam can join the University. The findings led also to some questions that can be investigated in future research, such as the effect of re-drafting on students' writing and the difference between writing a second draft of a composition and not doing so. In this section, we will discuss some recommendations for these problems and issues.

7.2.1 Practical Recommendations

The recommendations below focus on the situation at the University of Bahrain in terms of the teaching of L2 writing, giving feedback, students' motivation, and recruitment and admission policies:

Concerning Administration

1. The teachers at the University of Bahrain are not used to being visited in their classes for the purpose of inspection and evaluation. It might be useful to inspect and evaluate their performance through visits by the chairperson of the department or by a committee formed by the chairperson for the purpose of

assessing the teachers' pedagogical competency and to issue reports on their teaching. These visits might spread a sense of discipline among teachers.

2. It would be a good idea for the Department of English Language and Literature to conduct workshops for writing teachers where they are introduced to L2 writing theories and pedagogical trends. Workshops should be designed to train teachers how to teach writing productively and how to give feedback. The workshops could: a) introduce teachers to the process of writing, focusing on the pre-drafting, drafting and post-drafting processes, b) train them to use different methods in giving feedback (*e.g.* direct correction, underlining, coding, cross-outs, grading, reformulation etc.), d) demonstrate to them the usefulness of making students hand in a second draft, e) introduce them to ways to discuss the main errors with students, f) train them to set aside time for teacher-student conferences on the timetable during office hours, g) train them to conduct in teacher-student conferencing during the writing class. The workshops suggested can be designed in co-operation with British universities or teaching institutions.

3. The University of Bahrain should have an orientation programme that offers intensive language courses focusing on writing and other language skills. Students should not be allowed to proceed to their first year unless they meet the requirements of the foundation programme, but this may be difficult to implement for administration and practical reasons.

4. The University's evaluation procedure at the end of every semester should be taken more seriously. At present, students evaluate their teachers' methodologies and commitment to teaching at the end of every semester and write comments on their teachers' performance. However, maybe for practical reasons, this evaluation is not utilized by the University to decide upon renewal or termination of recruitment contracts, and teachers do not regard it as serious.

Concerning Methodology

5. Teachers' comments should convey clear messages to students, using a variety of styles (*e.g.* praise, criticism, suggestion, etc.) based on individual student needs. For example, praise could encourage some students and discourage others who become less careful when praised. Dealing with individual student by tailoring the comments is essential because this is currently not done.

6. As most learners at the University of Bahrain are of low proficiency, I suggest that errors should be corrected by writing the correct form next to the original error. Research suggests that error correction of this kind is more effective for better revision and a more accurate second draft. Ferris (2006) found a "strong relationship between teachers' error markings and successful student revision on the subsequent drafts of their essays" (p. 97). Chandler (2003) also found error correction best for a better draft. In this study, students' attitudes to feedback revealed that they preferred error correction to underlining because it helped them understand their errors.

7. Teachers could experiment with peer feedback. As Villamil and Guerrero (2006) claim, peer feedback allows "both reader and writer to consolidate and recognize knowledge of the L2 and make this knowledge explicit for each other's benefit" (p. 39). In fact, no peer feedback means no interaction between students. The teachers should give their students the opportunity to exchange their writing experiences and interact with each other.

7.2.2 Recommendations for Future Research

The recommendations below discuss issues that have emerged from this investigation of the effect of feedback on students' writing:

1. There is a need for research on the effect of feedback when students are asked to re-draft their writing compared with not doing so. Some previous research has

neglected the re-drafting process as students were only given feedback and not asked to re-draft. I think it is not enough to carry out research on the effect of written feedback without giving students the opportunity to revise their first draft and produce a second draft. This might also help the researcher distinguish between students' errors, which are made due to lack of knowledge and need to be corrected, and mistakes, which are made due to lack of attention and are likely to disappear in the second draft (*see Chapter 4, Section 4.5 for more explanation*).

2. There is also a need to investigate whether there is a connection between students' level of English and their capacity to benefit from feedback. Though this study provides a provisional answer, there is need for research that uses two experimental groups; one of lower and the other of higher proficiency students. Both groups should be given similar feedback treatment and then the results could be analyzed to detect any difference between and within groups.

3. There is also a need to investigate the effectiveness of focused and unfocused written feedback. A question is to be addressed here: does focused feedback (i.e. targeting few linguistic errors) benefit students more than unfocused feedback (i.e. comprehensive feedback)? This is a vital issue that has been subject to research (*e.g.* Ellis, 2005; Kepner, 1991; Sheppard, 1992) but further investigation is still needed.

4. The variation in individual student response to error correction should be investigated. Error feedback might work with one student but not with another. This variation is attributed to individual differences between students and thus could have important pedagogical implications, especially in that students have different expectations from their teachers. Though they appreciate their teachers' feedback, they also expect the teacher to understand their needs based on their proficiency levels.

5. A further question for research is: can excessive written feedback have a negative influence on students' writing? If so, how much written feedback should be given to students and what should be corrected? Another way to put

the question could be: to what extent does excessive and focused feedback help students develop their writing in comparison to less excessive and focused feedback?

6. Finally, I think there is need to investigate why teachers' beliefs about written feedback or feedback in general are different from their actual practice in the classroom. For example, the results of the questionnaire and interview conducted with teachers in this study showed that they had positive views about the effectiveness of feedback. However, observation revealed a conflict between what teachers believe and what they actually do. Lee (2009) found 10 mismatches between teachers' beliefs about feedback and their teaching practice. For example, she found that despite the fact that teachers focused on the form of their students' writing when they provided feedback, they believed that the focus should be on other aspects as well. However, there is an unanswered question, which is: why are some teachers' beliefs different from their practice?

7.3 Research Limitations

This study had a number of limitations and they are as follows:

1. The study lasted for only 12 weeks (10 week treatment), which is probably insufficient to establish whether regular feedback had an effect on students' accuracy and complexity but it was against the University's policy to use the research subjects for more than one academic semester and, therefore, I had to carry out this research within the period of time allowed.

2. One factor which makes it difficult to compare this study with previous studies is that the subjects of the research had a low level of English due to the nature of the secondary education outcome and the policy of admission at the University of Bahrain. Bitchener and Ferris (2012) raised the question of whether the L2 learning background of learners could influence their benefit from written feedback and described this issue as being "under-explored" (p. 70). It is

possible that students' poor English made it difficult for them to benefit from feedback.

3. Although the number of the research subjects was higher than many previous studies, it is possible that a sample of 46 students was not enough to show significant differences between the three groups. Had the study used a bigger sample, the results might have been different.

4. The fact that I was both the researcher and their teacher may have influenced the students' responses in the interviews and the questionnaires.

5. Though the students wrote three different compositions in the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test, the topics were from the same genre (autobiography). Thus, it is possible that the improvement in the within-group analysis of some students was due to the similarity between the topics of the three experiment tests.

6. My presence in the classroom for observation may have influenced the teachers and led to bias or anxiety (*see limitations of Chapter 4*).

7. I used a second rater to analyze specific accuracy in the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test. However, no second rater was used for corroborating the analysis of general accuracy and complexity owing to the excessive demands this would make on their time.

8. The fact that I had to teach a prescribed syllabus that could not be changed or adapted, based on the University's regulations, deprived me of the freedom to assign to students writing tasks of my choice.

9. Though the control group did not receive corrective feedback, short summative written comments were given on the students' scripts. It is possible that the students of the control groups benefited from these comments, thus showing improvement in the within-group analysis.

7.4 Conclusion

This study has answered some questions on the effect of teacher written corrective feedback on students' general accuracy, specific accuracy and complexity and resulted in a number or implications and recommendations that should be taken into consideration. It aimed to contribute to the literature of corrective feedback and to find solutions for improving the feedback practice and L2 writing teaching at the University of Bahrain. Although this study has accomplished its aim, the debate on the effectiveness of corrective feedback will be ongoing as further research is required to address the many unanswered questions.

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APPENDIX A-1

Pre-experiment Students' Questionnaire (English Version)

Dear student,

My name is Mohamed Mubarak and I am a Ph.D. student from the School of English Language and Linguistics at the University of Sheffield in UK. I would like to thank you for your co-operation by accepting to respond to this questionnaire. I am carrying out a research that investigates the effect of feedback on students' writing. Administering this questionnaire is one of the instruments I am using to gather data. Your response to all the questions will be of great significance for the research. Please do not hesitate to express your own beliefs when you respond to each question even if you feel that I disagree with your opinion. My sole aim from this questionnaire is to gather data for academic research and so I am not seeking answers that impress me. I assure you that your answers will remain confidential and anonymous and that the data you provide will not be used but for research purposes.

Responding to this questionnaire will not take more than 30 minutes. Please make sure that you provide all the required demographical and academic data and that you do not skip any question as this could harm the results of the research. The questions are simple and self-explanatory. Yet feel free to ask me if you find any of the questions unclear or confusing.

Thank you again for your co-operation,

Mohamed Mubarak

March, 2010

SECTION 1: Demographical Data

Name: Age:

Gender: Male / Female   E-mail contact:

SECTION 2: Academic Data

Academic ID: Academic Department:

Major Specialization: Minor Specialization:

Cumulative GPA: Academic Year: 1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th / 5th

SECTION 3: General Overview

Put a tick under the answer that best describes your response to the questions or the statements:

1. Does your instructor return to you the compositions you write?

a. Always	b. Often	c. Sometimes	d. Never

2. When do you normally get your composition back from the teacher?

a. During the same class in which the composition is handed	b. The following class	c. No later than one week	d. Later than (a), (b) and (c)

3. Do you get feedback on your writing from the teacher?

a. Always	b. Often	c. Sometimes	d. Never

4. Do other students read and comment on your composition?

a. Always	b. Often	c. Sometimes	d. Never

5. Does the teacher discuss your writing errors with you after he returns your composition?

a. Always	b. Often	c. Sometimes	d. Never

6. How often does your instructor ask you to re-draft your composition?

a. Always	b. Often	c. Sometimes	d. Never

7. How much feedback do you receive on the following areas of your composition?

	A lot	*Some*	*A little*	*None*
Organization				
Content/Ideas				
Grammar				
Vocabulary				
Mechanics (e.g. punctuation, spelling)				

SECTION 4: Post-Feedback Practices

8. Do you look up the corrections in a grammar book after you receive feedback?

a. *Always*	*b.* *Often*	*c.* *Sometimes*	*d.* *Never*

9. Do you consult a tutor for help after you receive feedback?

a. *Always*	*b.* *Often*	*c.* *Sometimes*	*d.* *Never*

10. Do you seek help from a classmate after you receive feedback?

a. *Always*	*b.* *Often*	*c.* *Sometimes*	*d.* *Never*

11. Do you ignore the whole task after reading your teacher's feedback?

a. *Always*	*b.* *Often*	*c.* *Sometimes*	*d.* *Never*

12. Do you find any comments or corrections that you do not understand?

a. *Always*	*b.* *Often*	*c.* *Sometimes*	*d.* *Never*

SECTION 5: Beliefs about Feedback

13. My teacher gives positive comments on my writing:

a. Always	b. Often	c. Sometimes	d. Never

14. I prefer to get feedback than no feedback:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

15. My teacher's feedback makes me feel unwilling to do the task again:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

16. My teacher's feedback helps me improve my writing:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

17. My teachers' feedback makes me confident of producing a better draft:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

18. I prefer to receive no feedback from my teacher:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

19. I prefer when the teacher writes the correction of the error on my paper:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

20. I prefer when the teacher just underlines the error without correcting it:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

21. I like my classmates to read and comment on my writing:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

22. I wish to receive more written feedback from my teacher:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

23. I prefer to discuss my errors with my teacher in the classroom:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

24. I prefer to discuss my errors with my teachers in his office or outside the classroom:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

25. The changes I make in the second draft make my writing better:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

26. My English is very weak and I do not think I can benefit from feedback:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

27. I have improved my writing in English in the last year:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

SECTION 6: Student Self-Rating of Learning and Composing Skills

28. How would you rate English language kills in general?

a. Excellent	b. Good	c. Fair	d. Poor

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

a. Excellent	b. Good	c. Fair	d. Poor

APPENDIX A-2

Pre-experiment Students' Questionnaire (Arabic Version)

عزيزي الطالب،

اسمي محمد مبارك، طالب دكتوراه من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية واللغويات بجامعة شفيلد البريطانية. أود أن أشكرك على تعاونك بالموافقة على الإجابة عن أسئلة هذا الاستبيان. إنني أقوم حالياً بإجراء دراسة أكاديمية تبحث في تأثير التغذية الراجعة على أداء الطلاب الكتابي في اللغة الإنجليزية. إن هذا الاستبيان ما هو إلا وسيلة من بين عدة وسائل أخرى أتبعها لجمع البيانات اللازمة للدراسة. أرجو ألا تتردد في التعبير عن قناعاتك الشخصية حينما تجيب عن كل سؤال حتى لو اعتقدت أنني أخالفك الرأي. إن هدفي الوحيد من إجراء هذا الاستبيان هو جمع بيانات للبحث العلمي وليس الحصول على إجابات تثير إعجابي. إنني أؤكد لك أن جميع إجاباتك ستبقى قيد السرية التامة، وأن البيانات التي ستوفرها لن تستخدم إلا لأغراض البحث العلمي فقط.

إن الإجابة عن أسئلة هذا الاستبيان لن تستغرق منك أكثر من 30 دقيقة. أرجو التأكد من توفير جميع البيانات الديموغرافية والأكاديمية على الصفحة التالية قبل البدء بالإجابة عن الأسئلة، والحرص على عدم نسيان الإجابة عن أي سؤال. ستجد أن جميع الأسئلة مبسطة وسهلة، لكن لا تتردد في الاستفسار إذا ما احتجت إلى أي شرح أو توضيح مني لأي سؤال.

شكراً على تعاونك،

محمد مبارك

مارس، 2010

البيانات الشخصية

الاسم: العمر:

الجنس: ذكر/أنثى   البريد الإلكتروني:

الهاتف النقال (اختياري):

البيانات الأكاديمية

الرقم الجامعي: الكلية:

القسم الأكاديمي: التخصص الرئيسي:

التخصص الفرعي: المعدل التراكمي:

السنة الأكاديمية: الأولى / الثانية / الثالثة / الرابعة / الخامس

** أجب عن (الأسئلة التالية) عبر وضع علامة (√) تحت الإجابة التي تعكس وجهة نظرك:

1. هل يعيد إليك مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية الواجبات الكتابية التي تقوم بتسليمها له؟

د. أبداً	ج. أحياناً	ب. غالباً	أ. دائماً

2. متى يعيد إليك مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية الواجبات الكتابية التي تقوم بتسليمها؟

د. بعد أكثر مما ورد في أ، ب، ج.	ج. خلال أسبوع	ب. في الحصة التالية مباشرة	أ. أثناء نفس الحصة التي تقوم فيها بتسليم الواجب الكتابي

3. هل يقوم مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية بكتابة تعليقات وتصحيحات على واجباتك الكتابية؟

د. أبداً	ج. أحياناً	ب. غالباً	أ. دائماً

4. هل يقوم زملاؤك في الفصل بقراءة واجباتك الكتابية والتعليق عليها؟

د. أبداً	ج. أحياناً	ب. غالباً	أ. دائماً

5. **هل يقوم مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية بمناقشة أخطائك الكتابية معك بعد أن يعيد إليك الواجب؟**

د. أبداً	ج. غالباً	ب. غالباً	أ. دائماً

6. **هل يطلب منك مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية أن تعيد كتابة الواجب الكتابي بعد أن يعيده إليك؟**

د. أبداً	ج. أحياناً	ب. غالباً	أ. دائماً

7. **كم هي نسبة التعليقات والتصحيحات التي تحصل عليها من مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية في عناصر الكتابة التالية:**

لا يوجد	القليل	البعض	الكثير	
				1. الترتيب
				2. المحتوى والأفكار
				3. القواعد النحوية
				4. مفردات الكلمات
				5. آليات الكتابة مثال: (علامات الترقيم وسلامة الإملاء)

8. **بعد الحصول على تعليقات وتصحيحات المدرس، هل تستعين بكتاب في القواعد لفهم أخطائك؟**

د. أبداً	ج. أحياناً	ب. غالباً	أ. دائماً

9. **هل تطلب مساعدة من مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية بعد أن تحصل على تعليقات وتصحيحات مدرسك على واجبك الكتابي؟**

د. أبداً	ج. أحياناً	ب. غالباً	أ. دائماً

10. **هل تطلب مساعدة من زملائك في الفصل بعد أن تحصل على تعليقات وتصحيحات مدرسك على واجبك الكتابي؟**

د. أبداً	ج. أحياناً	ب. غالباً	أ. دائماً

** اختر التعليق الذي يمثل وجهة نظرك تجاه (العبارات والأسئلة) التالية:

11. **لا أقوم بفعل أي شيء بعد أن أحصل على تعليقات وتصحيحات مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية على واجبي الكتابي.**

د. أبداً	ج. أحياناً	ب. غالباً	أ. دائماً

12. **هل تجد صعوبة في فهم تعليقات وتصحيحات مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية على واجبك الكتابي؟**

د. أبداً	ج. أحياناً	ب. غالباً	أ. دائماً

13. **يقوم مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية بكتابة تعليقات إيجابية على واجبي الكتابي.**

أ. دائماً	ب. غالباً	ج. أحياناً	د. أبداً

14. **أفضل الحصول على تعليقات وتصحيحات مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية على عدم الحصول عليها.**

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

15. **تعليقات وتصحيحات مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية تجعلني أفقد الرغبة في إعادة كتابة الواجب مرة أخرى.**

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

16. **تعليقات وتصحيحات مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية تساعدني على تحسين مهارة الكتابة.**

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

17. **تعليقات وتصحيحات مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية تجعلني واثقاً من كتابة الواجب للمرة الثانية بشكل أفضل.**

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

18. أفضل عدم الحصول على تعليقات وتصحيحات من مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية على ما أكتبه.

هـ. لا أوافق بشدة	د. لا أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	ب. أوافق	أ. أوافق بشدة

19. أفضل أن يقوم مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية بتصحيح أخطائي على ورقة الواجب.

هـ. لا أوافق بشدة	د. لا أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	ب. أوافق	أ. أوافق بشدة

20. أفضل أن يقوم مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية بوضع خط تحت أخطائي على ورقة الواجب.

هـ.لا أوافق بشدة	د. لا أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	ب. أوافق	أ. أوافق بشدة

21. أحب أن يقوم زملائي في الفصل بقراءة ما أكتب والتعليق عليه.

هـ.لا أوافق بشدة	د. لا أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	ب. أوافق	أ. أوافق بشدة

22. أتمنى الحصول على المزيد من التعليقات الكتابية من مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية على ما أكتبه.

هـ. لا أوافق بشدة	د. لا أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	ب. أوافق	أ. أوافق بشدة

23. أفضل أن أقوم بمناقشة أخطائي مع مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية أثناء الحصة الدراسية.

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

24. أفضل أن أقوم بمناقشة أخطائي مع مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية خارج الصف الدراسي.

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

25. التعديلات التي أدخلها بعد الحصول على تعليقات وتصحيحات المدرس تجعل الواجب الكتابي يبدو أفضل من المرة السابقة.

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

26. لا أستفيد من تعليقات وتصحيحات مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية على كتاباتي.

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

27. لقد تحسنت مهارتي الكتابية في اللغة الإنجليزية خلال العام الماضي.

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

28. ما هو تقييمك لقدراتك العامة في اللغة الإنجليزية؟

د. ضعيف	ج. مرضي	ب. جيد	أ. ممتاز

29. ما هو تقييمك لمهارة الكتابة في اللغة الإنجليزية لديك؟

د. ضعيف	ج. مرضي	ب. جيد	أ. ممتاز

شكراً جزيلاً على تعاونك.

APPENDIX A-3

Post-experiment Students' Questionnaire (English Version)

Dear student,

My name is Mohamed Mubarak and I am a Ph.D. student from the School of English Language and Linguistics at the University of Sheffield in UK. I would like to thank you for responding to the first questionnaire in March and for your co-operation by accepting to respond to this questionnaire too. I am carrying out a research that investigates the effect of feedback on students' writing. Administering this questionnaire is one of the instruments I am using to gather data. Your response to all the questions will be of great significance for the research. Please do not hesitate to express your own beliefs when you respond to each question even if you feel that I disagree with your opinion. My sole aim from this questionnaire is to gather data for academic research and so I am not seeking answers that impress me. I assure you that your answers will remain confidential and anonymous and that the data you provide will not be used but for research purposes.

Responding to this questionnaire will not take more than 30 minutes. Please make sure that you provide all the required demographical and academic data and that you do not skip any question as this could harm the results of the research. The questions are simple and self-explanatory. Yet feel free to ask me if you find any of the questions unclear or confusing.

Thank you again for your co-operation,

Mohamed Mubarak

June, 2010

SECTION 1: Demographical Data

Name: Age:

Gender: Male / Female   E-mail contact:

SECTION 2: Academic Data

Academic ID: Academic Department:

Major Specialization: Minor Specialization:

Cumulative GPA: Academic Year: 1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th / 5th

SECTION 3: General Attitude to Feedback

Put a tick under the answer that best describes your response to the questions or the statements:

    1. I benefit from my teacher's feedback on my writing.

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

    2.   I understand my teacher's feedback.

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

    3.   I would like to receive more feedback on my writing in the future.

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

SECTION 4: Preference of and Attitude to Feedback Type

Put a tick under the answer that best describes your response to the questions or the statements:

    4.   I prefer that my teacher corrects all my writing errors on the script.

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

5. I prefer that my teacher only underlines my errors.

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

6. I prefer not to receive feedback on my writing.

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

7. I prefer my classmates' feedback to teacher's feedback.

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

8. I prefer to do my writing task in class.

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

9. I prefer to do my writing task outside the class.

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

SECTION 5: Post-Feedback Behaviour

Put a tick under the answer that best describes your response to the questions or the statements:

10. I use a grammar book to look up my writing errors.

a. Always	b. Often	c. Sometimes	d. Never

11. I consult my teacher for explanation after receiving feedback

a. Always	b. Often	c. Sometimes	d. Never

12. I use the internet to look up my errors after receiving feedback.

a. Always	b. Often	c. Sometimes	d. Never

13. I do my best to correct my errors if the teacher underlines them.

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

14. Writing a second draft helps me produce a better piece of writing.

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

15. I should re-draft my writing three times for better improvement.

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

SECTION 6: Self-Rating of Improvement

Put a tick under the answer that best describes your response to the questions or the statements:

16. I feel that my writing has improved during this academic semester.

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

APPENDIX A-4

Post-experiment Students' Questionnaire (Arabic Version)

عزيزي الطالب،

اسمي محمد مبارك، طالب دكتوراه من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية واللغويات بجامعة شفيلد البريطانية. أود أن أشكرك على تعاونك في الإجابة عن الاستبيان السابق في شهر مارس الماضي، وأيضاً على موافقتك بالتعاون في الإجابة عن أسئلة هذا الاستبيان أيضاً. إنني أقوم حالياً بإجراء دراسة أكاديمية تبحث في تأثير التغذية الراجعة على أداء الطلاب الكتابي في اللغة الإنجليزية. إن هذا الاستبيان ما هو إلا وسيلة من بين عدة وسائل أخرى أتبعها لجمع البيانات اللازمة للدراسة. أرجو ألا تتردد في التعبير عن قناعاتك الشخصية حينما تجيب عن كل سؤال حتى لو اعتقدت أنني أخالفك الرأي. إن هدفي الوحيد من إجراء هذا الاستبيان هو جمع بيانات للبحث العلمي وليس الحصول على إجابات تثير إعجابي. إنني أؤكد لك أن جميع إجاباتك ستبقى قيد السرية التامة، وأن البيانات التي ستوفرها لن تستخدم إلا لأغراض البحث العلمي فقط.

إن الإجابة عن أسئلة هذا الاستبيان لن تستغرق منك أكثر من 30 دقيقة. أرجو التأكد من توفير جميع البيانات الديموغرافية والأكاديمية على الصفحة التالية قبل البدء بالإجابة عن الأسئلة، والحرص على عدم نسيان الإجابة عن أي سؤال. ستجد أن جميع الأسئلة مبسطة وسهلة، لكن لا تتردد في الاستفسار إذا ما احتجت إلى أي شرح أو توضيح مني لأي سؤال.

شكراً على تعاونك،

محمد مبارك

يونيو، 2010

البيانات الشخصية

الاسم: العمر:

الجنس: ذكر/أنثى   البريد الإلكتروني:

الهاتف النقال (اختياري):

البيانات الأكاديمية

الرقم الجامعي: الكلية:

القسم الأكاديمي: التخصص الرئيسي:

التخصص الفرعي: المعدل التراكمي:

السنة الأكاديمية: الأولى / الثانية / الثالثة / الرابعة / الخامس

** أجب عن (الأسئلة التالية) عبر وضع علامة (√) تحت الإجابة التي تعكس وجهة نظرك:

1. أستفيد من تعليقات وتصحيحات المدرس على ما أكتبه.

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

2. أفهم بسهولة تعليقات وتصحيحات المدرس على ما أكتبه.

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

3. أرغب في الحصول على المزيد من التعليقات والتصحيحات على ما أكتبه في المستقبل.

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

4. أفضل أن يقوم المدرس بتصحيح أخطائي الكتابية على ورقة الواجب.

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

5. أفضل أن يقوم المدرس بالاكتفاء بوضع خط تحت أخطائي.

هـ. لا أوافق بشدة	د. لا أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	ب. أوافق	أ. أوافق بشدة

6. أفضل عدم الحصول على تعليقات وتصحيحات من المدرس على ما أكتبه.

هـ. لا أوافق بشدة	د. لا أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	ب. أوافق	أ. أوافق بشدة

7. أفضل التعليقات والتصحيحات التي أحصل عليها من زملائي في الصف على تلك التي أحصل عليها من المدرس.

هـ. لا أوافق بشدة	د. لا أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	ب. أوافق	أ. أوافق بشدة

8. أفضل إنجاز الواجبات الكتابية داخل الفصل الدراسي.

هـ. لا أوافق بشدة	د. لا أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	ب. أوافق	أ. أوافق بشدة

9. أفضل إنجاز الواجبات الكتابية خارج الفصل الدراسي.

هـ. لا أوافق بشدة	د. لا أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	ب. أوافق	أ. أوافق بشدة

10. أستخدم كتاباً في القواعد لتصحيح أخطائي الكتابية.

أ. دائماً	ب. غالباً	ج. أحياناً	د. أبداً

11. أطلب من المدرس أن يشرح لي أخطائي بعد أن يعيد لي الواجب الكتابي.

أ. دائماً	ب. غالباً	ج. أحياناً	د. أبداً

12. أستخدم الإنترنت للبحث عما يفيدني في تصحيح أخطائي.

أ. دائماً	ب. غالباً	ج. أحياناً	د. أبداً

13. أبذل مجهوداً إضافياً لتصحيح أخطائي الكتابية حينما يكتفي المدرس بوضع خط تحت الأخطاء.

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

14. إعادة كتابة الواجب لمرة ثانية يجعله يبدو أفضل من المرة الأولى.

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

15. من الأفضل كتابة الواجب ثلاث مرات كي يطرأ عليه تحسن ملموس.

أ. أوافق بشدة	ب. أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	د. لا أوافق	هـ. لا أوافق بشدة

16. **أشعر أن مستوى مهارة الكتابة لدي قد تحسن خلال الفصل الدراسي الحالي.**

هـ. لا أوافق بشدة	د. لا أوافق	ج. لست متأكداً	ب. أوافق	أ. أوافق بشدة

شكراً جزيلاً على تعاونك.

APPENDIX A-5

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear colleague,

My name is Mohamed Mubarak and I am a Ph.D. student from the School of English Language and Linguistics at the University of Sheffield in UK. I would like to thank you for your co-operation by accepting to respond to this questionnaire. I am carrying out a research that investigates the effect of feedback on students' writing. Administering this questionnaire is one of the instruments I am using to gather data. Your response to all the questions will be of great significance for the research. Please do not hesitate to express your own beliefs when you respond to each question even if you feel that I disagree with your opinion. My sole aim from this questionnaire is to gather data for academic research and so I am not seeking answers that impress me. I assure you that your answers will remain confidential and anonymous and that the data you provide will not be used but for research purposes.

Responding to this questionnaire will not take more than 30 minutes. Please make sure that you provide all the required demographical and academic data and that you do not skip any question as this could harm the results of the research. The questions are simple and self-explanatory. Yet feel free to ask me if you find any of the questions unclear or confusing.

Thank you again for your co-operation,

Mohamed Mubarak

March, 2010

SECTION 1: Demographical Data

Name: Gender: Male / Female

E-mail contact:

SECTION 2: Academic Data

Academic Department: Academic Degree:

Academic Rank: Academic Specialization:

Years of Teaching Experience:

SECTION 3: General Overview of Feedback

Put a tick under the answer that best describes your response to the questions or the statements:

1. Do you give feedback on your students' writing?

a. Always	b. Often	c. Sometimes	d. Never

2. Do you write comments at the end of the students' writing?

a. Always	b. Often	c. Sometimes	d. Never

3. Do you make students hand in a second draft of their writing?

a. Always	b. Often	c. Sometimes	d. Never

4. Do students consult you for more explanation after receiving feedback?

a. Always	b. Often	c. Sometimes	d. Never

SECTION 4: Beliefs about Feedback Practices and Benefits

5. Students benefit from the feedback I give them on their writing:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

6. In general, students do not benefit from written feedback:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

7. It is preferable not to give feedback to students at all:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

8. It is a good idea to write the correction of each error on students' scripts:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

9. It is the duty of teachers to always provide feedback on students' composition:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

10. It is beneficial for students to write a second draft of their composition after receiving feedback:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

11. In general, students' improvement can be noticed in the second draft they produce:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

12. It is preferable to just underline students' errors than provide the correction of the errors. Look at the examples below before responding to the statement:

    went
    a. Error Correction: (I ~~goed~~ to the market).

    b. Error Underlining: (I <u>goed</u> to the market).

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

13. It is a good idea to allow students give feedback on each others' writing:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

14. It is important to discuss students' errors individually after giving them feedback:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

15. It is important to give students general oral feedback in class on their writing:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

16. Oral feedback is of greater effect on students' writing than written feedback:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

17. It is important to praise students' written work when giving feedback:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

18. Praising students' writing might fossilize their errors:

a. Strongly agree	b. Agree	c. Don't know	d. Disagree	e. Strongly disagree

APPENDIX B-1

Pre-experiment Students' Interview Prompts (English with Arabic Translation)

1. Do you benefit from your teacher's feedback to improve your writing?
   هل تستفيد من التغذية الراجعة في تطوير مهارة الكتابة في اللغة الإنجليزية؟

2. If yes, how? If no, why not?
   إن كان الجواب نعم، فكيف؟ وإن كان الجواب لا، فلماذا؟

3. How long does it take your teacher to return your writing with feedback?
   كم من الوقت يستغرق مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية حتى يعيدوا إليك واجباتك الكتابية مصحوبة بتغذية راجعة؟

* Students were shown samples of their own writing and were asked the following questions:

4. Do you know why your teacher has written these comments? Please explain.
   هل تعرف لماذا قام مدرسك بكتابة هذه التعليقات؟

5. Have you made any changes based on your teacher's comments?
   هل قمت بعمل أي تغييرات في هذا الموضوع بناءً على تعليقات مدرسك؟

6. Do you think the changes you have made have improved your writing?
   هل تعتقد أن هذه التغييرات التي قمت بإدخالها قت حسنت من قدراتك الكتابية؟

7. Do you ignore some of your teacher's corrections and comments on your writing? Explain why.
   هل تتجاهل بعض التعليقات والتصحيحات التي يقوم بها مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية على ما تكتبه؟ اشرح ذلك.

8. What do you do when you do not understand your teacher's comments and corrections?
   ما الذي تفعله حينما لا تفهم التعليقات والتصحيحات التي يضعها المدرس؟

9. How many times do you have to re-draft your writing? Does your teacher ask you to hand in a second draft?
   كم مرة تقوم بإعادة كتابة الواجب الكتابي؟ هل يطلب منك المدرس تسليم مسودة ثانية من الواجب؟

10. Do you feel there is real difference between the quality of the first and second draft you produce?
    هل تشعر بوجود فرق حقيقي بين المسودة الأولى والمسودة الثانية؟ اشرح ذلك.

APPENDIX B-2

Post-experiment Students' Interview Prompts (English with Arabic Translation)

1. How do you benefit from your teacher's feedback? Please explain.
   كيف تحقق استفادة من التعليقات والتصحيحات التي يجريها مدرسك على كتاباتك؟ اشرح ذلك.

2. Do you prefer that the teacher corrects your errors on the script or that he underlines your errors?
   أيهما تفضل، أن يقوم المدرس بتصحيح أخطائك على ورقة الواجب أم أن يقوم بوضع خط تحت الأخطاء؟

3. Do you try to understand and correct your errors if the teacher underlines them on your script?
   هل تبذل محاولات لفهم وتصحيح أخطائك لو قام المدرس بوضع خط تحت أخطائك على الورقة؟

4. Do you think that re-drafting your composition is important for improvement? Please explain.
   هل تعتقد أنه من المهم إعادة كتابة الواجب الكتابي مرة ثانية كي يطرأ عليه تحسن؟ اشرح ذلك.

5. Do you make changes on your writing based on teacher's feedback? Please explain.
   هل تقوم بإدخال تعديلات على ما تكتبه بناءً على تعليقات وتصحيحات المدرس؟ اشرح ذلك.

APPENDIX B-3

Teachers' Interview Prompts

1. What do you think are the main problems that EFL/ESL students face when they compose a text?

2. How do you teach writing? What ways and methods do you use in teaching writing?

3. In what way do you give feedback on students' writing? Can you explain?

4. Which way do you find more effective on students' writing?

5. How do you expect students to benefit from the feedback they receive? Do you find that students normally do what you expect?

6. Do you think that students value the feedback they receive from you? Please explain.

7. What do you recommend ESL/EFL teachers do for more effective feedback?

APPENDIX C-1

Students' Pre-experiment Sample Interview Script

This interview was held in the researcher's office at 10:45 a.m., March 15th, 2010 and lasted for 10 minutes. The interview had a semi-structured design. Some new questions were generated and others were altered or omitted during the interview based on the participant's answers. The interview was conducted in Arabic and then translated into English with correct grammar and punctuation.

[Researcher]: Do you benefit from your teacher's feedback to improve your writing?

[Participant]: Of course I do.

[Researcher]: Can you explain how?

[Participant]: Because in this case I would know my errors. I would know my grammar and spelling errors and correct them.

[Researcher]: How long does it take your teacher to return your writing with feedback?
[Participant]: Some teachers would return them shortly, like in one or two days, and other teachers would return them in a week or more.

The participant was shown a sample of her own writing obtained from the orientation centre and then was asked the following questions:

[Researcher]: Do you know why your teacher has written this comment?

[Participant]: Yes, I can see why.

[Researcher]: Can you please explain?

[Participant]: I mean I don't find it difficult to spot my errors once my attention is drawn to them.

[Researcher]: Have you made any changes based on your teacher's comments?

[Participant]: Yes, I think I have.

[Researcher]: Do you remember the changes you have made?

[Participant]: I think in spelling and punctuation, especially commas and capitalization.

[Researcher]: Do you think the changes you have made have improved your writing?

[Participant]: Of course. My compositions become much better.

[Researcher]: Do you ignore some of your teacher's corrections and comments on your writing?

[Participant]: I do ignore some of the corrections that I disagree with.

[Researcher]: Can you give me examples of these corrections that you ignore?

[Participant]: I don't remember a particular example but once I ignored the teacher's correction because I thought the way I wrote a sentence was better. May be I was wrong.

[Researcher]: What do you do when you do not understand your teacher's comments and corrections?

[Participant]: I always understand the corrections. It didn't happen with me that I couldn't understand the corrections.

[Researcher]: How many times do you have to re-draft your writing?

[Participant]: I don't re-draft.

[Researcher]: Does your teacher ask you to hand in a second draft?

[Participant]: The teachers do not ask me to re-draft my writing. I just have to look at the corrections made on the first draft and that's it, although I feel that re-drafting the composition would make it better.

[Researcher]: Don't you remember being asked to re-draft your composition even once?

[Participant]: Not even once.

APPENDIX C-2

Students' Post-experiment Sample Interview Script

This interview was held in the researcher's office at 11:30 a.m., June 20th, 2010 and lasted for 10 minutes. The interview had a semi-structured design. Some new questions were generated and others were altered or omitted during the interview based on the participant's answers. The interview was conducted in Arabic and then translated into English with correct grammar and punctuation.

[Researcher]: How do you benefit from your teacher's feedback?

[Participant]: I use the corrections made by the teacher to improve my writing.

[Researcher]: Can you explain more?

[Participant]: I think feedback improved my grammar and vocabulary in writing. I used all the corrections provided to re-write the composition in a better way.

[Researcher]: Do you prefer that the teacher corrects your errors on the script or that he underlines your errors?

[Participant]: Definitely to correct the errors because underlining will not help me learn anything.

[Researcher]: Can you explain more?

[Participant]: When the errors are corrected I first know where the errors are and how they can be corrected. Underlining the errors can be confusing because I have to spend time trying to understand what the teacher means.

[Researcher]: Do you try to understand and correct your errors if the teacher underlines them on your script?

[Participant]: I will need to ask the teacher for explanation in this case. I know a teacher who just puts a question mark and I always have to ask what the problem was.

[Researcher]: Do you think that re-drafting your composition is important for improvement?

[Participant]: Yes, of course. The second draft is usually more neat and organized.

[Researcher]: Can you explain more?

[Participant]: At the beginning of the course I thought it was not important to re-draft. I just looked at the corrections provided and felt that I didn't need to re-draft since I understood the feedback. However, when I practically re-drafted the composition, it made a difference.

[Researcher]: Do you make changes on your writing based on teacher's feedback?

[Participant]: It depends.

[Researcher]: Can you explain?

[Participant]: Sometimes I would make many changes based on the teacher's feedback and other times I would just make slight changes to improve the composition.

APPENDIX C-3

Teacher's Sample Interview Script

This interview was held in the researcher's office at 11:00 a.m., May 5th, 2010 and lasted for 20 minutes. The interview had a semi-structured design. Some new questions were generated and others were altered or omitted during the interview based on the participant's answers. The interview was conducted in English and was improved by inserting the necessary punctuations and transcription symbols (*e.g.* [sic] after each mistake to indicate what was actually said in the interview; [pause] for a long pause in the middle of a sentence).

[Researcher]: What do you think are the main problems that EFL/ESL students face when they compose a text?

> [Participant]: Some of the students of course are graduates of private schools and therefore they do not have problems in writing good essays [pause] but the majority of students are from government schools. When they come to university they are not equipped with the necessary tools by which they can write a very good essay. They are very poor at all aspects of the language [pause] the grammar, the reading, the listening, the speaking [pause] all kinds of skills and mainly the tenses. For example, they start using the present simple tenses and then go to the past and then back again to the future in the same sentence. The use of prepositions also [pause] sometimes they translate from Arabic into English and that's why they make a lot of errors. They even have punctuation problems because they are not used to the English system.

[Researcher]: How do you teach writing? What ways and methods do you use in teaching writing?

> [Participant]: I teach writing through writing. First of all I introduce a topic in the class and give them a reading passage regarding the kind of topic where they

need to read some kind of a story or an essay written by another student [pause] and then we discuss it in terms of organization and the use of language and we focus on conjunctions [pause] the linking words. Then I ask them to write something similar to this kind of writing and then they have to use their own [pause] of course methods, their own ideas and things like that. We start with brainstorming to generate ideas and then we try to organize these ideas and write a topic sentence as an introduction. Sometimes I follow the textbook which is giving a reading passage plus activities and then students have to reproduce what they have already been told in the reading. Other times, when I have to teach my composition classes, it is not like part of a multi skill course. I go through pre-drafting and we generate ideas and I ask them to go through the body by themselves and then finally to reach a conclusion regarding what they want to say.

[Researcher]: In what way do you give feedback on students' writing?

[Participant]: I take the papers [pause] you see I have two processes again. One time I ask [sic] to write in the class and while I'm sitting and waiting for students to come individually and as they come when they finish I sit with them and I correct in front of them. So I give them like instant feedback while they are sitting right to me. This is a good way because they can see their problems. I tell them this is not right, this is wrong. I write the right answer in front of them if I have the time. Sometimes if I have [pause] you know [pause] a good size class like ten students but if I have a large class then I don't have time. I take the papers with me, correct them at home and then come back in the class. I sometimes photocopy the best answers and maybe the worst answers or one of the best and one of the worst and put them in one sheet and I ask students to go through them and we correct the essays altogether.

[Researcher]: Which of these methods do you prefer?

[Participant]: I prefer to underline the error and correct it right away and then I write notes at the end of the essay telling them exactly the way to improve but this depends if I have enough time but I do it and prefer it and I think it is effective. If I do not have the time then I would just underline the problems and would tell them to identify them by themselves.

[Researcher]: How do you expect students to benefit from the feedback they receive?

[Participant]: I try to challenge them. I tell them "look you have made this and you need to find the answer." Sometimes they do that and that's when I use underlining but you have to follow it up with the students. I expect students to go over the mistakes and try to find out, take notes [pause] to come back to me and if they don't come back I go back to them and I ask them to really master the language.

[Researcher]: Do you find that students normally do what you expect?

[Participant]: Not all of them meet my expectations [pause] the good students only.

[Researcher]: Do you think that students value the feedback they receive from you?

[Participant]: I think yes, they value the feedback.

[Researcher]: Can you explain?

[Participant]: If I correct the mistakes and give them examples to illustrate the point they would learn a lot and they would improve. I can see that they [sic] appreciating what I do for them. That's why they keep thanking and coming and sometimes you can see the smiles on their faces.

Appendix C-3

[Researcher]: What do you recommend ESL/EFL teachers do for more effective feedback?

> [Participant]: They need to explain exactly [pause] I know a number of instructors who put symbols for students but I don't think this is very much working here [sic] because the student would lose the paper. You need to tell everybody in the class that these are common and general problems. With weak students, I [sic] will need to ask them to come to your office and spend time with them individually. I suggest writing notes with examples for students.

APPENDIX D-1

Errors Corrected in Week 2 (Writing Topic: Inviting a Friend to the Country)

Student Code	Length of Essay (per-word)	Grammar Errors Corrected											Vocabulary Corrected							Overall Total
		Syntactic Errors						Morphological Errors			Other Errors	Total	Lexical Choice Errors			Lexical Form Errors		Other Errors	Total	
		Tense	Preposition	Clauses	Conjunction	Auxiliary Verb	Word Order	Subject-Verb Agreement	Determiner/ Articles	Singular vs. Plural			Wrong Word Choice	Wrong Combination/ Phrase Errors	Missing Word from a Combination	Derivational Error	Wrong Singular/ Plural Form			
A1	177	6	5	4	2	0	1	1	3	2	0	24	2	0	2	3	0	0	7	31
A2	193	4	4	1	1	2	4	0	10	0	0	26	3	1	0	2	0	0	6	32
A3	201	7	4	1	2	1	2	0	3	0	0	20	11	1	3	3	0	0	18	38
A4	150	4	3	0	1	0	2	1	6	3	0	20	3	1	0	0	0	0	4	24
A5	149	7	2	2	2	1	1	0	4	0	0	19	9	1	1	1	0	0	12	31
A6	482	7	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	12	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	14
A7	152	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	9	3	1	0	0	0	0	4	13
A8	200	6	6	1	1	0	2	0	7	0	0	23	6	2	2	0	0	0	10	33
A9	288	13	3	3	7	0	2	2	4	3	0	37	9	3	0	1	0	0	13	50
A10	138	9	2	2	2	1	2	0	0	1	0	19	1	3	1	2	0	0	7	26
A11	194	6	2	1	7	0	1	1	7	0	0	25	6	0	0	0	0	0	6	31

A12	177	10	5	1	3	0	3	0	2	0	0	**24**	3	3	1	1	0	0	**8**	**32**
A13	139	6	3	1	0	0	2	1	6	0	0	**19**	7	2	0	1	2	0	**12**	**31**
A14	305	8	3	2	7	1	2	1	5	0	0	**29**	5	2	0	1	0	0	**8**	**37**
A15	128	13	1	2	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	**20**	3	2	1	0	0	0	**6**	**26**
A16	123	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	3	2	0	**10**	1	2	0	1	0	0	**4**	**14**
A17	190	10	3	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	**20**	5	1	0	1	0	0	**7**	**27**
B1	144	7	0	1	4	0	1	0	3	4	0	**20**	6	1	1	0	0	0	**8**	**28**
B2	187	3	2	1	2	1	2	1	3	2	0	**17**	5	1	1	0	0	0	**7**	**24**
B3	227	15	3	1	2	0	0	1	3	1	0	**26**	4	2	0	0	0	0	**6**	**32**
B4	119	3	5	2	3	0	2	1	3	0	0	**19**	10	2	0	3	0	0	**15**	**34**
B5	150	5	3	2	3	1	2	1	4	5	0	**26**	4	3	1	1	0	0	**9**	**35**
B6	125	4	4	1	2	0	0	1	3	1	0	**16**	4	1	1	1	1	0	**8**	**24**
B7	225	14	5	3	1	0	7	1	12	1	0	**44**	8	2	0	0	1	0	**11**	**55**
B8	194	4	5	1	5	2	3	0	7	3	0	**30**	5	2	7	6	2	0	**22**	**52**
B9	119	2	1	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	**9**	3	0	0	1	0	0	**4**	**13**
B10	132	15	5	3	1	6	0	4	1	0	0	**35**	5	3	0	4	0	0	**12**	**47**
B11	171	10	3	1	5	6	2	2	13	0	0	**42**	10	2	0	0	0	0	**12**	**54**
B12	163	9	5	2	8	2	1	0	9	0	0	**36**	3	0	0	1	0	0	**4**	**40**
B13	157	6	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**10**	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**	**11**
B14	179	3	3	1	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	**12**	2	7	0	0	1	0	**10**	**22**
B15	209	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	**10**	3	1	0	0	0	0	**4**	**14**
B16	146	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**7**	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**	**8**

APPENDIX D-2

Errors Corrected in Week 6 (Writing Topic: A Story)

Student Code	Length of Essay (per-word)	Grammar Errors Corrected											Vocabulary Corrected							Overall Total
		Syntactic Errors						Morphological Errors			Other Errors	Total	Lexical Choice Errors			Lexical Form Errors		Other Errors	Total	
		Tense	Preposition	Clauses	Conjunction	Auxiliary Verb	Word Order	Subject-Verb Agreement	Determiner/ Articles	Singular vs. Plural			Wrong Word Choice	Wrong Combination/ Phrase Errors	Missing Word from a Combination	Derivational Error	Wrong Singular/ Plural Form			
A1	185	4	2	3	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	14	2	0	0	2	0	0	4	18
A2	223	6	7	4	0	2	5	1	14	1	0	40	4	1	1	3	0	0	9	49
A3	181	5	3	1	0	0	1	1	5	0	0	16	8	0	2	1	0	0	11	27
A4	156	13	2	1	0	0	1	0	4	2	0	23	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	25
A5	168	17	0	2	0	0	2	0	3	2	0	26	10	0	1	0	0	0	11	37
A6	513	12	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
A7	144	2	0	3	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	8	2	0	0	1	0	0	3	11
A8	191	5	5	1	0	0	2	0	5	1	0	19	6	0	3	1	0	0	10	29
A9	311	19	2	1	6	1	3	1	5	2	0	40	12	0	1	2	0	0	15	55
A10	167	15	1	4	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	24	2	0	0	1	0	0	3	27
A11	182	11	0	1	6	1	0	2	4	1	0	26	7	0	0	1	0	0	8	34

A12	150	19	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	**24**	2	1	0	0	0	0	**3**	**27**
A13	123	4	0	2	0	1	1	0	4	2	0	**14**	5	0	0	2	1	0	**8**	**22**
A14	277	5	0	1	4	3	3	0	3	0	0	**19**	3	0	1	3	1	0	**8**	**27**
A15	149	17	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**21**	1	1	0	1	0	0	**3**	**24**
A16	152	4	0	1	0	3	0	0	4	1	0	**13**	2	1	0	0	0	0	**3**	**16**
A17	261	21	4	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	**31**	4	0	0	2	0	0	**6**	**37**
B1	151	9	1	3	5	1	1	0	0	4	0	**24**	8	0	0	1	0	0	**9**	**33**
B2	159	14	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	**19**	5	0	0	2	1	0	**8**	**27**
B3	306	18	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**21**	1	1	0	0	1	0	**3**	**24**
B4	133	4	1	3	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	**12**	8	0	0	4	0	0	**12**	**24**
B5	163	6	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	**14**	2	2	0	0	0	0	**4**	**18**
B6	141	6	0	2	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	**12**	0	2	1	2	0	0	**5**	**17**
B7	210	12	1	1	1	0	5	0	9	2	0	**31**	5	1	2	2	0	0	**10**	**41**
B8	175	1	3	1	2	1	2	2	3	1	0	**16**	3	0	1	1	1	0	**6**	**22**
B9	124	1	0	5	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	**11**	5	0	0	3	0	0	**8**	**19**
B10	129	12	4	1	1	4	1	1	2	0	0	**26**	2	2	2	3	1	0	**10**	**36**
B11	156	9	1	2	2	4	2	0	9	0	0	**29**	7	2	0	0	0	0	**9**	**38**
B12	150	12	3	1	6	0	0	0	10	1	0	**33**	5	0	0	0	0	0	**5**	**38**
B13	188	6	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	**13**	1	1	0	0	2	0	**4**	**17**
B14	213	4	2	1	2	0	2	0	4	2	0	**17**	1	9	1	1	1	0	**13**	**30**
B15	194	3	0	3	0	0	1	1	4	1	0	**13**	2	0	2	0	0	0	**4**	**17**
B16	151	0	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	**7**	1	1	1	0	0	0	**3**	**10**

APPENDIX D-3

Errors Corrected in Week 10 (Writing Topic: Argument)

Student Code	Length of Essay (per-word)	Grammar Errors Corrected											Vocabulary Corrected							Overall Total
		Syntactic Errors						Morphological Errors			Other Errors	Total	Lexical Choice Errors			Lexical Form Errors		Other Errors	Total	
		Tense	Preposition	Clauses	Conjunction	Auxiliary Verb	Word Order	Subject-Verb Agreement	Determiner/ Articles	Singular vs. Plural			Wrong Word Choice	Wrong Combination/ Phrase Errors	Missing Word from a Combination	Derivational Error	Wrong Singular/ Plural Form			
A1	189	4	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	10	3	1	0	0	1	0	5	15
A2	244	6	4	1	0	2	3	0	9	0	0	25	2	0	0	2	0	0	4	29
A3	163	6	4	1	1	1	2	0	4	0	0	19	6	1	1	2	0	0	10	29
A4	191	11	3	1	1	1	2	0	2	0	0	21	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	22
A5	135	13	2	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	20	7	1	0	0	1	0	9	29
A6	550	10	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
A7	133	0	1	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	7	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	9
A8	152	6	3	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	14	4	2	3	1	0	0	10	24
A9	402	20	3	2	3	0	2	0	3	0	0	33	11	1	1	3	0	0	16	49
A10	174	13	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	21	0	2	1	1	0	0	4	25
A11	180	15	3	1	5	0	0	0	5	0	0	29	6	0	0	2	0	0	8	37

A12	119	10	2	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	**18**	2	2	0	0	0	0	**4**	**22**
A13	140	5	2	1	0	0	2	1	3	2	0	**16**	7	3	1	1	2	0	**14**	**30**
A14	307	6	2	1	3	4	3	1	4	0	0	**24**	4	1	0	2	0	0	**7**	**31**
A15	126	15	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	**21**	2	0	0	1	0	0	**3**	**24**
A16	165	5	2	1	2	4	1	0	3	0	0	**18**	4	0	0	0	0	0	**4**	**22**
A17	213	14	4	1	2	1	0	0	2	2	0	**26**	5	2	0	0	0	0	**7**	**33**
B1	137	8	2	2	4	1	0	0	0	2	0	**19**	9	2	3	0	0	0	**14**	**33**
B2	140	11	2	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	**17**	6	2	0	0	0	0	**8**	**25**
B3	312	12	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**16**	1	2	0	0	0	0	**3**	**19**
B4	117	3	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	**8**	6	0	0	1	0	0	**7**	**15**
B5	188	7	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	**16**	3	0	0	0	0	0	**3**	**19**
B6	135	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**7**	2	1	1	0	0	0	**4**	**11**
B7	214	10	3	3	2	0	2	1	4	2	0	**27**	5	0	1	0	0	0	**6**	**33**
B8	153	2	2	2	2	0	1	1	3	0	0	**13**	4	1	0	1	0	0	**6**	**19**
B9	142	3	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	**7**	3	0	0	1	0	0	**4**	**11**
B10	155	13	5	2	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	**24**	3	3	3	2	0	0	**11**	**35**
B11	170	11	0	2	0	1	1	0	5	1	0	**21**	8	3	0	0	0	0	**11**	**32**
B12	166	9	1	1	3	1	0	0	5	0	0	**20**	3	1	1	0	0	0	**5**	**25**
B13	161	7	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**9**	2	0	0	0	0	0	**2**	**11**
B14	259	6	3	1	3	0	0	1	2	2	0	**18**	0	7	0	0	0	0	**7**	**25**
B15	185	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	**15**	3	0	0	0	0	0	**3**	**18**
B16	132	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**	2	2	0	0	0	0	**4**	**6**

APPENDIX E

Observation Plan (Data and Checklist Form)

- **Class Data**

Date	18th April, 2010	Time	8:00 - 8:50am
Observation Session No.	5	Course	Engl 250
Section	—	Teacher	Maha Tureik
Building	S17	Room	S17 - 120
No. of Students	12	No. of Students Attending	12
Lesson Topic	Report Writing	Lesson Focus	Feedback + Film Review

- **Observation Tools**

  - ○ Voice recording
  - ⊘ Note-taking
  - ○ Other……………………………………………..

- **Notes on Lesson Topic, Focus and Objectives:**

The teacher started class by explaining errors students made in general and discussed them on the board:

- Vocabulary (limit air condition)
- Tenses (They wants a quite place to relax) (They goes in the afternoon)
- Plural vs singular
- Use of numbers and percentage (52% of Rifla residents)
- Spelling mistakes (eving ≠ evening)
- Shifting between tenses

Appendix E

- Notes on Teaching Methodology and Material

- The teacher spent the first 15 minutes discussing students' errors and giving them oral feedback.
- The teacher explained some grammatical rules explicitly.
- The teacher introduced the topic of writing a film review.
- She brought a leaflet of movies from cinema and showed the students that it was simple and short. What students had to write, however, was a comprehensive review.
- Students contributed by saying the main things that had to be included in the review such as (type of movie / cast / nature of movie plot / recommendation).
- The teacher wrote these words on the board.
- The teacher asked the students to suggest a movie.
- Students chose "Titanic".
- The teacher asked students to talk about the most important events of Titanic.
- The teacher asked students to open the book on page 104, which was a short introduction on a "review".
- The teacher asked a student to read the explanation.
- The teacher commented on the description of the book, saying that a review is written formally and informally.
- The teacher explained to students the use of the present tense is when writing a review.
- The teacher used the book to help students understand how a review is written.
- Students worked in pairs to do an exercise.
- The teacher walked around to monitor students.
- The teacher then answered the exercise on the board by writing adjectives that describe the plot and script.
- She drew a spidergram.

- Notes on Teacher's Feedback Practice and Type

excellent

poorly-written thrilling   shocking

well-written   gripping   confusing

moving

- The teacher answered the next exercise which was to say adjectives (positive and negative) to describe characters. The teacher did it ... students did not contribute (weren't asked to contribute)

- The teacher asked the students to write a film review. She divided students in 2 groups of 4 students to discuss which movies they would like to review.
- Students suggested watching a movie at the University and the teacher said "that was boring". Instead, the teacher asked one student to check what movies are showing in cinema and come back with information before starting the writing task.

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Appendix E

Feedback practice nl type

- Notes on Students' Interaction and Post-Feedback Behaviour

- Oral feedback ab the beginning
- Essays done previously were not ready to hand back to students

Notes on students' interaction nl post-feedback behaviour

- General Comments

- Students asked questions on how to go about the reports based on teacher's feedback

- Students found some vocabulary confusing e.g. thrilling, script/plot

- **Obtaining Samples**

  - Samples Obtained (*Number of Samples Obtained*): ....page 104 of the book.
  - Samples Not Obtained

Appendix E

General Comments

■ Notes on After-Class Researcher-Teacher Discussion

• Generally, students don't write the composition in the same class • They are given ideas, informations, some exercises.

• Students do most of the writing at home • In class, they are given grammar / vocabulary / feedback on what they wrote.

• Some students didn't bring their books (2), others didn't have pencils or pens • Some students didn't do the previous writing task even.

■ Notes on After-Class Researcher-Students Discussion

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APPENDIX F-1

Pre-test Sheet

Name: ID:

In no less than 120 words, write a composition on **the happiest moments you have ever experienced in your life**. Use the space below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX F-2

Post-test Sheet

Name: ID:

In no less than 120 words, write a composition on **your present and future plans in life**. Use the space below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX F-3

Delayed Post-test Sheet

Name: ID:

In no less than 120 words, write a composition on **the main difficulties facing you in life**. Use the space below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX G

The Course English 111 Syllabus

Unit Number	Exercise Number	Page Number	Purpose	Primary Skill Content	Language Content	Week	Session
			Introduction to Course			1	1
1	4	5	Comprehension	Reading		1	2
1	3 (3.1 & 3.2)	5	Interpreting meaning from context	Reading	Vocabulary	1	2
1	1-4 & 1.1	6 & 136	Grammar revision and consolidation		Questions (1)	1	3
1	1-3	6-7	Comprehension	Listening		1	3
1	1-3	7-8	Vocabulary building		Vocabulary	2	4
1	1-5	9	Giving short answers	Writing	Punctuation, Spelling. Grammar	2	4
1	1-2 & 1.2	9-10 & 136-137	Asking indirect questions		Grammar	2	5
1	1-4	10-11	Comprehension	Reading		2	5
1	1-3	11	Making writing interesting	Writing		2	6
1	5	11	Writing a final version	Writing		3	7
1	UNIT 1 TEST					3	8
2	1-3	12	Comprehension	Listening		3	9
2	1-4	13	Grammar revision and consolidation		Present Simple	3	9
2	1-4	15	Comprehension	Speaking and Listening		4	10

2	1-3	16-17	Comprehension	Reading		4	10
2	1-3 & 5	18-19	Grammar practice		Continuous or simple?	4	11
2	1-2	19	Writing an informal letter	Writing		4	11
2	3-4	19	Writing an informal	Writing		4	12
2	UNIT 2 TEST					5	13
PET STRATEGIES & PRACTICE TEST (1)						5	14
PET STRATEGIES & PRACTICE TEST (2)						5	15
3	1-4	20-21	Comprehension	Reading		6	16
3	1-3	22-23	Word formation		Vocabulary	6	16
3	1-5	21-22	Grammar revision and consolidation		Gerunds	6	17
3	1-3	25-26	Grammar revision and consolidation		Gerunds and Infinitives	6	17
3	1-3	24	Comprehension	Listening		6	18
3	1-2	24-25	Comprehension	Reading		6	18
3	1-6	27	Writing an informal letter	Writing		7	19
3	UNIT 3 TEST					7	20
4	1-4	30-31	Comprehension	Reading		7	21
4	1-5	31-32	Grammar revision and consolidation		Past simple/ continuous	7	21
4	1-3	32	Comprehension	Listening		8	22
4	1-3	33	Vocabulary building		Vocabulary	8	22
4	2-3	35	Use of English	Cloze		8	23

4	1-4	35-36	Grammar revision and consolidation		Past perfect	8	23
4	1-2	36	Vocabulary building		Adverbs of manner	8	23
4	1-6	37	Making writing interesting	Writing		8	24
1-4	REVISION & AT LEAST ONE HOUR A DAY OF READING FOR PLEASUR						Mid-Semester Break
4	UNIT 4 TEST					9	25
5	1-3	38	Comprehension	Listening		9	26
5	1-3	39-40	Grammar revision and consolidation		Reported statements	9	26
5	1-2	40	Vocabulary building		Phrasal verbs	9	26
5	1-5	41-42	Planning to write a story	Writing	Sentence structure	9	27
5	1-4	42-43	Comprehension	Listening		10	28
5	1-4	43-44	Grammar revision and consolidation		Reported questions	10	28
5	1-4	44-45	Vocabulary building		Vocabulary	10	29
5	1-3	45	Giving options, agreeing and disagreeing	Speaking and Listening		10	29
5	UNIT 5 TEST					10	30
6	1-4	46	Comprehension	Listening		11	31
6	1-4	47	Vocabulary building		Vocabulary	11	31
6	1-4	47-48	Comprehension	Reading		11	32
6	1-4	49-50	Grammar revision and consolidation		*Will* and *going to*	11	33

6	1-4	50	Talking about the future	Speaking and Listening		11	33
6	1-3	51	Vocabulary building		Collocations	12	34
6	1-3	51-52	Comprehension	Listening		12	34
6	1-3	52-53	Grammar revision and consolidation	Reading, Speaking and Listening	Present for future	12	34
6	1-4	53	Writing messages and notes	Writing	Formal and informal language	12	35
6	UNIT 6 TEST					12	36
7	1-3	56	Vocabulary building		Vocabulary	13	37
7	1-3	57	Comprehension	Speaking and Listening		13	37
7	2-5	58-59	Comprehension	Reading		13	38
7	1-3	59-60	Grammar revision and consolidation	Writing	*Must, have to*	13	38
7	1-5	60-61	Comprehension	Listening	Vocabulary	13	39
7	1-31	61	Grammar revision and consolidation	Speaking and Listening	Requests	13	39
7	1	62	Comprehension	Reading		14	40
7	1-2	63	Vocabulary building		Phrasal verbs	14	40
7	1-5	148	Writing and informal letter	Writing		14	41
7	1-4	63	Writing an informal letter	Writing		14	42
7	UNIT 7 TEST					15	43
1-7	REVISION & REVIEW					15	44
1-7	REVISION & REVIEW					15	45

APPENDIX H

Sample Pictures of Classrooms at the University of Bahrain

These two pictures below show the environment of the classes observed. All classes in the Department of English language and Literature have the same design. The pictures were taken during examinations period. In normal studying days, the chairs are arranged differently by being put close to each other.

APPENDIX I-1

Original Newspaper Report 1

جلسة النواب
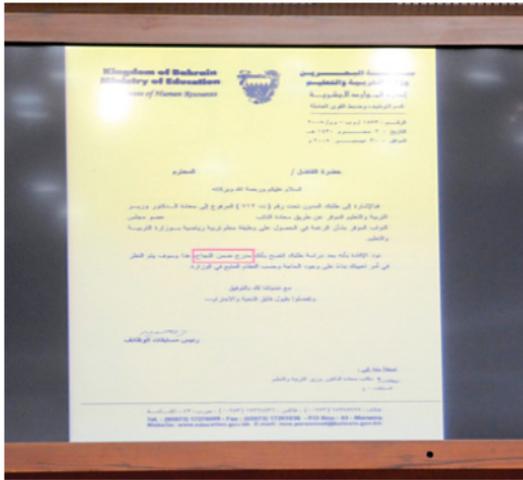
الوزارة تعاقدت مع 1200 معلم أجنبي خلال عام

العطيش: 50 % حالات الرسوب باختبارات توظيف التربية

انتقد النائب علي العطيش مشكلة غياب الشفافية والمعلومات المقدمة من الوزراء وهو ما يؤدي إلى تراجع البحرين للـوراء في المؤشر العالمي للشفافية.

وقال العطيش تعقيبـا علـى رد الوزير علـى سؤاله البرلمـاني إن سياسة إخفـاء المعلومات والتكتـم عليها لا تتماشـى مع المشروع الإصلاحـي ولا تتوافق مـع الأساليب الرشيدة في الإدارة وتعزز مزاعم عدم تكافؤ الفرص ووجود الفساد الإداري في الجهات الحكومية.

وذكـر العطيـش أن الوزارة استعانت في عام 2011 بعدد 1200 معلم أجنبي بين تعاقد جديد وتجديد عقود، في حين وظفت في ذات الفتـرة مـن المواطنين أقل من هـذا العدد بحجج مردودة عليها.

وأضاف، تتجاوز حـالات الرسوب باختبـارات التوظيف بالوزارة نسبة 50 % من المتقدمين في عام 2011، وبالأرقام فعدد الحالات 1705 حالات من أصل 3040 متقدما.

وواصل، لقد تخرج هؤلاء من جامعات معروفة وأن كثيرا منهـم ترفضهم الوزارة بحجة عدم اجتياز الاختبارات ونراهم يعملـون في أفضل المدارس الخاصة ويتقلـدون وظائف مرموقة.

وقال: إن ارتفـاع نسبة الرسوب تثير الشك والريبة في مصداقيـة الاختبارات وسلامة سياسة الـوزارة في التوظيف وعدم الشفافية.

ودعـا العطيش الوزير إلـى إعـادة النظر فـي سياسة الاختبارات التي تجريها الوزارة.

وزير التربية: توظيف 1172 معلما خلال عام

استند وزيـر التربية والتعليـم ماجد النعيمي على فتـوى من هيئـة التشريـع والإفتاء القانوني بعدم قانونية مسـاءلته أو مطالبته بمعلومات عن فترة ما قبل أدائه القسم الدستوري، حتى ولو كان على رأس الوزارة قبل تاريخ قسمه الأخير.

وكان الوزير يرد على ذلك على طلب للنائب علي العطيش الذي طالبه بمعلومات منذ عام 2006، فيما أدلى الوزير بقسمه الأخير في عام 2010.

وقـال الوزير ردا على سـؤال النائب بشـأن اختبـارات التوظيف بالـوزارة إن "عدد الذين تقدموا لتسـجيل أسـمائهم للتوظيف (بجميع فئاتهم)؛ بلغ 3040 متقدماً، ونسبة الذين تقدموا فعلياً للا ختبارات للوظيفة (بمختلف مراحلها)؛ بلغ 2507 متقدمـين، واجتـاز اختبـارات التوظيف بنجـاح عدد 1353 متقدماً، وبذلك تكون نسبة النجاح 53.25 % من إجمالي المشـتركين في هـذه الاختبارات بمختلف مراحلهـا، وتم توظيف عدد 1172 متقدما من بين الناجحين في الاختبارات، وذلك بحسب احتياجات الوزارة في كافة التخصصات وبذلك تبلغ نسبة الذي تم توظيفهم من بين الناجحين 87.79 % من إجمالي الناجحين (...)، أمـا بخصوص الناجحين في الاختبـارات من لم يتم توظيفهم فإنهم زيادة عـن الاحتياج بحسب التخصص الذي به فائض، من المتقدمين على الاحتياج المطلوب".

الفورمولا فضح أعداء البحرين

المعاودة: قنوات تعادي البحرين تبث من الخليج

طالب النائب الثاني لرئيس مجلس النواب عادل المعاودة

APPENDIX I-2

Original Newspaper Report 2

محمد حسن: قلقون من اختبارات ـــــــ
«التربية» التعجيزية ولا بد من تفسيرات

استغرب النائب الوفاقي نائب رئيس لجنة الخدمات بمجلس النواب عبدعلي محمد حسن من طريقة اختبارات وزارة التربية والتعليم الأخيرة، مبدياً تعجبه من إعادة الاختبارات على خريجين جامعيين خضعوا لاختبارات سابقة واجتازوها بنجاح.

كما استغرب محمد حسن أن يخضع حملة شهادات تكنولوجيات التعليم المتخرجين من جامعة البحرين إلى اختبارات باللغة الانجليزية، وهم الطلبة الذين درسوا باللغة العربية والوظائف التي قد يعملون بها باللغة العربية كذلك. وأبدى محمد حسن استغرابه من عدم إخضاع أصحاب تخصصات العلوم الاجتماعية لاختبارات وزارة التربية والتعليم مؤخراً، متسائلاً "هل من المعقول أن لا تكون هناك شواغر في هذه التخصصات لدى الوزارة؟".

وعن حملة شهادات تكنولوجيا التعليم، قال محمد حسن إن هؤلاء الطلبة تخرجوا من جامعة البحرين، ويحملون شهادة يفترض أن تؤهلهم للعمل كأخصائيي تكنولوجيا تعليم في مدارس المستقبل، وهذه المدارس تعتمد اللغة العربية، فلماذا لا تكون اختبارات هؤلاء الخريجين باللغة التي درسوا بها وسيمارسونها في وظيفتهم؟".

وتابع "صحيح انه اختبار وظيفة، ولكن لا يجب أن يكون اختبارا تعجيزيا، وإنما يقيس قدرات الطلاب وإمكانياتهم لشغل الوظائف، فهم مؤهلون بدرجة كبيرة من خلال تخرجهم من الجامعة إلا أن تكون وزارة التربية غير مقتنعة بمخرجات جامعة البحرين".

وأبدى محمد حسن قلقه من طريقة هذه الاختبارات، مضيفاً "نحتاج لتفسير وإيضاح من قبل المسؤولين، لماذا تبتعد الاختبارات عن

مجالات التخصص إلى مجالات أخرى؟".

وتابع: كل ما كانت هناك شفافية في هذا الموضوع كلما عزز الثقة بين الوزارة والخريجين، ونحن نريد أن نبني هذه الثقة، ولكن أن يكون هناك اختبار تعجيزي فهو اختبار غير موضوعي.

وأشار إلى أن بعض الذين قدموا هذه الاختبارات نجحوا في اختبارات مماثلة سابقة ولكن الوزارة تعيد إخضاعهم لاختبارات جديدة.

وقال: هذا لا ينطبق على هذا التخصص وإنما ينطبق على كل التخصصات التي تجري فيها مسابقات التوظيف، ونتمنى أن تكون هناك شفافية في التعرف على نتائج الاختبارات وفي موضوعية الاختبارات نفسها.

وعن خريجي العلوم الاجتماعية، استغرب محمد حسن عدم إخضاعهم لاختبارات واستثنائهم للتوظيف، متسائلاً ألا يوجد وظائف استجدت في هذه المجالات؟".

APPENDIX J-1

Sample Composition 1 from Group A

Dear Manal.

Hi manoola, How are you doing ?
I hope that you are fine. I am writing
to invite you to our ~~country~~
Country.

Bahrain is a very butifull country here
and I am sure you will be happy if you come hear. If
you need Shoping (Shopping) you can get more
than one place (Place) for that like Seof mall,
City mall and a lot (alote) of popular markets.
Also (all so) here we have alot of funny
and interesting places like wahoo in
City mall, the lost paradise, Athary and
water park. and sure if you came
we will go to visit the cinema.

finally,
~~firstly~~ firlly I hope to see you
here in Bahrain soon. Be sure that
we will have a very (every) interesting time.
Write to (for) me back (bace) Please sweety.

please

APPENDIX J-2

Sample Composition 2 from Group A

Dear Manar,

Thanks for your Letter. It was good to hear from you.

I'm writing to tell you about a really good film I've seen recently, called. The main star of the film is Jim carry. He plays the role of as a dad who always lies and don't care about his son. The son makes a wish which changes their life. I won't tell you any more because you should go and see it yourself. It's a funy film and you will enjoy seeing it.

I'm planning to go to the cinema again tonight.

APPENDIX J-3

Sample Composition 1 from Group B

Dear Keem,

Thanks for your last letter, it was good to hear from you.

I am writing to tell you about areally good film I've seen recently, called (.....) The story is about an disabilty girl who live with her family; every one love her bea because she is very kind, but the parents in the neighbourhood don't wont her to live with him in the nighbourhood, they wont send her to the mentol hospital; but one day aman come and change everything, I won't tell you any more because you should go and see it.

It is an unusual plot and brilliant film. The acting is perfect, because the actors are profeeisonal. I am planning to go to the cinema tommorow.

APPENDIX J-4

Sample Composition 2 from Group B

One day in a very Far town. There was a young boy called TAIAI.

TAIAI is a very handsum boy and smart, he used to play with his friends near the beach, TAIAI is not good swimmer, put he can play Football verywell.

Last week he played with his friends near the beach, suddnly the ball jumped in the sea, he went to returned the ball. So he went inside the sea but he started drawning and drawning. After that his friends ran to him, and have him in the last moment.

Now adays, there is no body help the other, but there is who's secrifais from his Freinds.

APPENDIX J-5

Sample Composition 1 from Group C

I wake up at 2.00 o'clock after midnight to have a glass of water. Surprisingyle, My father and mother were not in house.

I was so scared I even could not breathe at all, My room looked dark and scary It ~~could not be~~ looked nothing like my room at all. It was like a hunted place and I can ~~see~~ hear ghosts everywhere no matter where I look left or right.
I was praying for this sounds and ghosts to disappear but no matter how hard I beged nothing changes and my parents wont come to ~~rescue~~ rescue me. I wanted to scream but something wierd kept holding my voice inside of me, And like this not enough suddenly the lights started to turn on and off over and over again I couldn't help it I run under my bed and hide like a little kid and I couldn't even look because I was afraid that soothing bad would happen to ~~the~~ me.
In this scary situation, Suddenly the phone rang I was really confused " Should I pick?! or... no no", But I holded my self together and diceded to answer the phone, I picked and how relieving was that" hey Eman, It's me don't worry we went to bring someone to fix the lights because theres something wrong with it and we are in our way now ~~they~~ bye" said my dad, "oh my god now I can sleep in peace, It ~~just~~ felt like a horror movie".

Good story.
Check spelling
and punctuation

~~xxxxxxxx~~
~~xxxxxxx~~.

APPENDIX J-6

Sample Composition 2 from Group C

Dear ☺ Nada

Check tense and vocabulary.
Improve punctuation

Hi, how are you?. What are you doing at this moment, ?.
I hope you are doing well. In this Letter I will tell you about
my day routine. So I hope that you enjoy it When you read it.

Every sun rise, I open my eyes, breathe air. and I understand
that I am alive. So, I thank god and pray. I say to my self "good
morning" with smil because I wrot its on my wall in my room. Sometime
I eat breakfast. I go to bathroom swim and be rady to the collage.
I go out at 7am and back at 4pm, just on UTH days. When I
come back to the house, I feel tird and four devils in it. I always
say "they come form fellose sand", but they mak me happy. I play
ceith thim and go to eat somthing. Then I clean the hause because
they always make it dirty. I go to my room and lock it. I
study what I have and do my homework. When I finsh I
use the computer and chat with my friends. At 9pm I eat
the d.   . Sometime I watch TV befor I sleep. But the day
routine chang on MW because I have more rest.

Now, I have to stop writing becaues it is Friday
and I will go out to have fun. I really look forward
for your day routine. Good luck.

APPENDIX K

Sample Marked Test Script

A6

Name: Mariam Abdulla A.Rahman   ID: 20093381

In no less than 120 words, write a composition on the happiest moments you have experienced in your life. Use the back of the page if you need extra space.

In life, not everything is sweet, not everything is bitter, not everything is black, not everything is white, life tends to be a mixture of both; happy & sad, black and white, sweet and bitter. In my life, I had some ups and downs, but I like to remain in touch with all the great memories and moments in order to relive them once again. In this essay I will reveal some of the happiest moments of my life.

First of all, My Best friend; since I've met her I felt as though my life changed in a good way, I had someone who shares my interests, believes in me, trusts my opinion but most of all loves me for who i really am and not for what I have or dont have. Coming to school has been so amazing ever since, lunch breaks with her and all my other friends were the happiest moments of the day.

Secondly, My graduation ceremony was absolutely a happy moment for me, that day was unforgetiable !! I

APPENDIX L-1

Sample Page 1 from Writing Textbook used with Bahraini Students

UNIT 3 The senses

Writing: informal letter (2)

1

1 Look at the task below. What film or play could you write about? How many words should you write?

Task

You've seen a very good film or play recently. Now you are writing a letter to an English-speaking friend to tell him or her all about it. Say what film (or play) you saw, what it was about and why you enjoyed it so much.

Write 100–120 words.

2 Read Danka's letter to her friend Marianne and answer the questions.

1 What film has she seen?
2 Does she tell her the ending of the film? Why?/Why not?

Dear Marianne
1 Thanks for your last letter. It was good to hear from you.
2 I'm writeing to tell you about a really good film I've seen recently, called Chocolat. The main star of the film is Juliette Binoche. She plays a woman who goes to live in a small French town and opens a chocolate shop. Strange things start happening, and the people in the town get angryer and angryer. I won't tell you any more because you should go and see it yourself!
3 It is an unusual plot and a beautiful film. The acting is very good, too. I'm planing to go to the cinema again tonight!
Love
Danka

2 Read the letter again and match the descriptions below (a–c) to the paragraph numbers.

a) describing the film ....2........
b) general opinion about the film ....3........
c) referring to friend's last letter ....1........

3

1 Read the letter again and find words that mean the same as each definition below.

1 *n* the most important actor in a film or play: ....main star....
2 *v* to take part in a play or film as one of the characters: ....plays....
3 *n* the main events in a film, play or book: ....plot....
4 *n* the way of performing in a film or play: ....acting....

2 There are three spelling mistakes in Danka's letter. Find the words and write the correct spelling for each type of mistake below.

1 Words ending in -e, (or -ee or -ie). ....writing....
2 Words ending in -y. ....tv....
3 One-syllable words ending in one vowel and one consonant.

► Writing reference (Spelling) p. 151

4 You are going to do the task in Exercise 1.

1 Choose one of the films in the photos or choose a good film (or play) you've seen recently. Tell your partner about it. What was it about? Why did you like it?

2 What vocabulary will you need to write about the film (or play)? Write down three words or phrases that you think will be useful. You can also use the words in Exercise 3 if necessary.
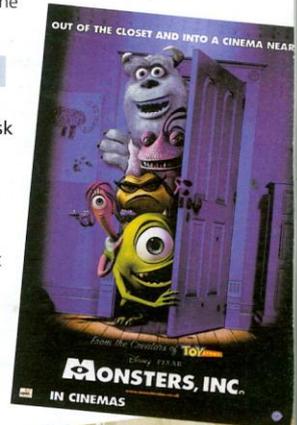
5 Decide how many paragraphs your letter will have. What will the subject of each one be? (Refer to Exercise 2.) Make notes for each paragraph.

► Writing reference (Paragraphs) p. 149

6 Write your letter (100–120 words). Check that the layout and the start and finish are appropriate for an informal letter.

► Writing reference (Informal letters) p. 154

► Progress test 1: Teacher's Book

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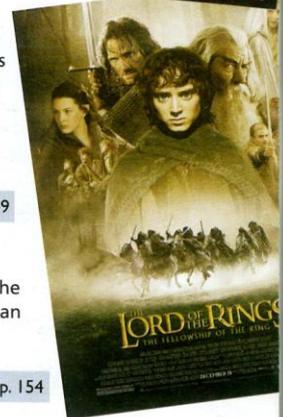
APPENDIX L-2

Sample Page 2 from Writing Textbook used with Bahraini Students

(handwritten: look for topic sentences whenever they are reading any text)

(handwritten: identifying topic sentence)

UNIT 2   Time out

4   Tell another student one thing that you are (probably) doing tonight, next weekend and next holiday.

Example: *Tonight, I'm going bowling with some friends.*

5   Read the text below. There are five mistakes with the present simple or present continuous. Find them and correct them.

All Change!

Everything's changing this week because it's National Break-Your-Routine Week. The idea is that everybody changes at least one thing about their daily routine. It can be small or big, sensible or silly! Stewart Marshall has been out talking to people about how they are changing their routines.

Sally   My dad usually drives me to the station and then I'm taking the train to school. But this week I'm walking to the station. I need the exercise!

Keith   I eat a bar of chocolate nearly every day, but this week I'm not having any. Maybe I'll stop completely ... I hope so!

Ruth   I usually wear black most of the time. So this week I'm trying lots of different colours. Today I wear green and blue. My boyfriend says I look good in it.

Jenny   It takes me 45 minutes to get to work on the bus and I don't do usually anything, just daydream. But this week I'm taking a book with me to read. It makes the time go very quickly.

Tom   I'm doing everything backwards this week. For example, I am always having cereal for breakfast, so I am having it for dinner this week. And I usually sleep from about 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. ... well, this week I am sleeping in the day from about 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. It's really fun. My friends are thinking I'm crazy!

6   Imagine it is National Break-Your-Routine Week. Look at the categories below and tell a partner your new routine for each one.

food   exercise or sports   clothes   sleep
transportation   reading material   music

Example: Food: *I usually have cereal for breakfast, but this week I'm having chocolate for breakfast.*

Writing: informal letter (1)

1   Look at the informal letter in the Writing reference on page 154 and answer these questions.
1 How does the letter begin and end?
2 Where does each paragraph begin?
3 What is the purpose of each paragraph?

(handwritten: Dear David — love Sheng; underline the end, after opening line; I have to do them with the rest of the class)

(handwritten: P1 is about a party, Par 2 travel arrangements; P3 looks after mad dies? David)

2   Now look at the task and student answer below. The letter has not been divided into separate paragraphs. Decide how many paragraphs there should be in the letter and where each one should begin and end.

Task

You have the name and address of an English language student in another country. Write them a short letter in which you
● introduce yourself *(handwritten: my name is Marcia – getting to know you)*
● describe your everyday routine *(handwritten: let me tell you — starts)*
● say what you like doing in your free time.
Write about 100 words. *(handwritten: I like doing lots of different things — takes up a lot of time)*

STUDENT ANSWER

Dear Eva, My name is Marcia. I'm 14 years old. I live in São Paolo, in Brazil, with my parents and two sisters and I'm really looking forward to getting to know you! Let me tell you a little about my everyday life. During term time, I get up at 7 a.m. After breakfast I get the bus to school. After school, I get home about 3 p.m. when I have something to eat before starting my homework! I like doing lots of different things in my free time. I play volleyball and basketball for my school so that takes up a lot of time! Write soon and tell me about you! Best wishes, Marcia

(handwritten: topic sentence)   *(handwritten: topic sentence)*

3   Paragraphs often begin with topic sentences which tell you the subject of the paragraph. See Writing reference (Paragraphs) page 149. What are the topic sentences in paragraphs 2 and 3 in Marcia's letter?

4   Now, write your own answer to the task in Exercise 2. Divide your letter into separate paragraphs. Use topic sentences where possible.

► Unit test 2: Teacher's Book

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