

Written Corrective Feedback: Teachers' Beliefs, Practices and Challenges in an Omani Context

Arab Journal of Applied Linguistics
e-ISSN 2490-4198
Vol. 1, No. 1, January 2016, 44-73
© The Author
<http://www.arjals.com>

Sawsan Al-Bakri¹
University of Exeter, UK

Abstract

There is empirical evidence that teachers' beliefs affect their instructional decisions. Research investigating teachers' beliefs is vast as is research on the effectiveness of written corrective feedback (WCF). However, how teachers' beliefs influence their WCF practices has received little attention. The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' beliefs on WCF and the reasons for their practices as well as the challenges they might face while providing WCF in a public college in Oman. An exploratory case study was employed. Qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews with six writing teachers and the analysis of WCF provided on 18 students' written assignments revealed that teachers' beliefs and contextual factors affected their WCF practices. In addition, the study identified several discrepancies between some teachers' stated and actual WCF practices. In general, teachers provided mostly comprehensive, direct WCF which is in contrast to what has been recommended in the literature on WCF. The study also revealed that there is lack of communication between teachers and students regarding WCF. Moreover, students' attitudes towards WCF can have a negative emotional impact on teachers. The study ends with recommendations to improve the current WCF practices and to sketch avenues for future research.

Keywords: *Beliefs, English language teachers' beliefs, teachers' practices, written corrective feedback (WCF)*

Theoretical Background

The main purpose of this study is to explore teachers' beliefs and practices concerning WCF and to what extent they match in a public college in Oman. It also aims at identifying the challenges teachers might encounter while providing feedback. Although research on teachers' beliefs and WCF is vast, there is paucity in research about teachers' beliefs on WCF and the extent their beliefs influence their WCF practices

¹ **Corresponding author:**
Sawsan Al-Bakri, University of Exeter
Email: Sawsanbakri@hotmail.com

(Lee, 2003, 2009). Published literature on teachers' beliefs and practices on WCF in the Arab world is rather scarce. However, some studies investigated teachers' and students' beliefs on WCF such as Abou Eissa (2010), Al-Shahrani (2013), Diab (2005, 2006), and Hamouda (2011). Lee (2009) argues that teachers' beliefs and practices play a pivotal role in the classroom because they directly affect the teaching and learning process. Therefore, "uncovering the beliefs that underlie teachers' practices can help identify the factors that contribute to effective feedback" (Lee, 2009. p.14). In addition, teachers who are willing to reflect on their beliefs and how they influence their practice can capitalize on their beliefs by identifying the beliefs that do not serve their students which in turn can support their own professional growth (Xu, 2012). This study aims to fill a gap in the literature in this regard.

Teachers' Beliefs

Research in general education and language teaching education has devoted a great deal of attention into teachers' beliefs as one aspect of teacher cognition (Borg, 2003, 2006, 2012; Pajares, 1992). The interest in teachers' beliefs is based on the commonly held view that beliefs play a major role in determining teachers' perceptions, judgments and behaviour. A growing body of research into teachers' beliefs has suggested that beliefs play a major role in teachers' pedagogical practices (Borg, 2003, 2006; Johnson, 1994; Farrell & Kun, 2008; Pajares, 1992).

According to Pajares (1992), the term belief is a "messy construct" and he explains that "The difficulty in studying teachers' beliefs has been caused by definitional problems, poor conceptualizations, and differing understandings of beliefs and belief structures" (p.307). Since researchers' agendas and studies differ, various definitions of the term belief can be found in the literature. A detailed description of the term belief has been provided by Borg (2001), in which she states that a belief is "a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, [it] is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behaviour" (p. 186). This definition will be adopted to inform this study.

Pajares (1992) notes that when researchers discuss teachers' educational beliefs, they seldom refer to teachers' general belief system of which educational beliefs are but a part. The most common research areas on teachers' beliefs are about teaching, learning and learners; subject matter; self as a teacher, or the role of a teacher (Calderhead, 1996). Borg (2001) defines the term teachers' beliefs, as "a term usually used to refer to teacher's pedagogical beliefs, or those beliefs of relevance to an individual teaching" (p. 187). I support Pajares (1992) in his view that these two terms should not be considered in isolation.

Reviewing the literature on teachers' beliefs it can be noticed that researchers have used different terms to refer to beliefs such as views, perceptions, conceptions, personal theories and attitudes to name but a few, due to fine differences in their meaning (Pajares, 1992). For example, Thompson (1992) prefers the use of the term conceptions when investigating literature about teachers' beliefs in mathematics as the term conceptions refers to "a more general mental structure, encompassing beliefs, meanings, concepts, propositions, rules, mental images, preferences, and the like" (p. 130). In this study, I will disregard the fine distinctions between different terms and I will use the term belief to refer to teachers' mental processes that share a common meaning with beliefs such as views or perceptions.

Another crucial issue is the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices. This relationship is rather complex in nature and there is still much debate whether beliefs precede and therefore influence practice or practice has an influence on beliefs. This is evident in the different views related to the teacher-change process. The first view suggests that change in teachers' practices proceeds change in teachers' beliefs. For example, Guskey (1986) argues that teachers change their beliefs after they change their practice and see positive changes in student outcomes. In contrast, the second view suggests that changes in teachers' practices are a result of changes in their beliefs (Golombek, 1989). The third view proposes that there is interaction between beliefs and practices. Phipps and Borg (2009) clarify that "beliefs influence practices and practices can also lead to changes in beliefs" (p. 381).

Although there is general agreement that teachers' beliefs have an impact on their pedagogical practices, it has been acknowledged that teachers' practices do not always reflect their beliefs (Borg, 2003, 2012). In fact, there is evidence in the literature that there can be inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices (Lee, 2009; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Phipps & Borg, 2009). This could be related to contextual factors that might hinder teachers from implementing their beliefs in practice.

Due to the complex nature of beliefs, investigating teachers' beliefs is rather challenging. Pajares (1992) points out that "beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured but must be inferred from what people say, intend, and do" (p. 314). Borg (2012) provides an intensive methodological analysis of 25 studies on teachers' beliefs which have been conducted in 2011. He concludes that most studies have adopted an interpretive approach using either mixed methods or qualitative data collection methods such as interviews, questionnaires, observations and document analysis. He also notes that "Sixteen of the studies involved 10 or fewer teachers and there is a trend for smaller- scale studies" (p. 14). In addition, most studies involving language teachers relied on non-probability (convenience) sampling.

Research has identified factors that could play a role in shaping teachers' beliefs (Borg, 2003). One of the most influential factors is teachers' prior experience as learners. This is followed by teacher education programs, reading books and articles, attending

conferences, workshops or seminars, teaching experience and classroom practices. Teachers' beliefs are not fixed and stable but could change under certain conditions.

Written Corrective Feedback

Providing WCF on student writing is one of the pedagogical practices of second language teachers who hope that this practice will assist the students in improving their writing skills and grammatical accuracy (Bitchener, 2012; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Kepner (1991) defines feedback as "any procedure used to inform a learner whether an instructional response is right or wrong" (p. 141). Teachers can give feedback on content (organization, ideas, amount of details) and form (grammar, mechanics and vocabulary). Feedback on form has received most of researchers' attention (Van Beuningen, 2010). Below, I will discuss studies on WCF in relation to its effectiveness, focus, types, students' and teachers' preferences and teachers' beliefs.

Research on the effectiveness of WCF is vast but research findings are inconclusive to date. Some studies have pointed to the usefulness of WCF (Ashwell, 2000; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1995), while others are doubtful about its effectiveness (Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986; Truscott, 1996, 1999). Truscott (1996) rather strongly warns that WCF on form can be harmful and should therefore be abandoned. Nevertheless, teachers continue to give WCF on students' writing because they believe that it can play a role in improving students' writing (Brown, 2007; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Also, students expect WCF from their teachers to know if their writing is accurate or not (Ferris, 2004; Lee, 1997; Leki, 1991). Research on the effectiveness of WCF has been criticized by several researchers such as Ferris (2004) and Gu enette (2007) who attribute the inconclusive results to research design flaws and problems of comparability. I believe that the effectiveness of WCF does not only depend on the type of feedback provided but is also related to students' language proficiency, goals and attitudes. I also agree with Hyland and Hyland (2006) who note that students are "historically and sociologically situated active agents who respond to what they see as valuable and useful" (p. 220).

WCF can be comprehensive (unfocused) or selective (focused). Comprehensive WCF refers to feedback that is given to all students' errors in a text. This is a common practice used by teachers (Ferris, 2006; Lee, 2004, 2008) which is time-consuming and creates a burden on the teacher (Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima, 2008). It can also lead to de-motivation of students when they see all their paper marked in red (Ferris, 2002; Reid, 1998) and it can produce cognitive overload which prohibits feedback processing. In contrast, selective WCF refers to feedback that targets a number of linguistic features such as past tense or articles. It has been argued that selective WCF has a positive effect on the accuracy of students' writing (Bitchener, 2008; Ellis et al.,

2008) and is more manageable for students and teachers (Evans et al., 2010a). Some researchers (Ferris, 2010; Storch, 2010) have questioned the superiority of the selective approach because from a practical approach the aim of teachers' WCF on students' written texts is improving accuracy in general and not just the use of a particular grammatical feature. It might also be confusing for students to observe that some errors have been corrected whereas others not.

There are mainly two types of feedback. Direct WCF refers to the provision of the correct form or structure by the teacher (Ferris, 2003). Indirect WCF refers to the indication to an error by the teacher through circling or underlining an error, indicating the number of errors at the margin, or placing a code such as SP for spelling or WW for wrong word (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Some studies have found direct WCF to be more effective than indirect feedback (Chandler, 2003; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005). It has been argued that less proficient students who might not know the correct linguistic structure will benefit more from direct than indirect WCF. In contrast, some studies have found indirect WCF to be more effective as it can promote long-term acquisition (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). In general, it has been suggested that indirect WCF is more beneficial for treatable errors (i.e. that are rule governed) as students might be able to self-correct them, whereas direct feedback is useful for untreatable errors such as sentence structure and word choice (Ferris, 2003).

Few studies compared students' and teachers' perspectives on WCF (Al-Shahrani, 2013; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Diab, 2005, 2006; Hamouda, 2011; Lee, 2004). These studies revealed some discrepancies in a number of areas between students' and teachers' beliefs. It has been suggested that for feedback to be effective, there should be an agreement between teachers and students on the most effective way of WCF. I support Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) in their view that students' preferences for feedback practices should be implemented with caution by teachers as they might contradict the overall aim of the WCF process which is to increase students' autonomy in order to equip them with strategies to improve the accuracy of their writing. Therefore, it is necessary that teachers discuss the purpose of WCF with their students and to highlight their responsibility in error correction.

Research on teachers' beliefs on WCF and the impact their beliefs have on their WCF practices has received little attention (Lee 2003, 2009). This is rather surprising considering that providing feedback on students' texts is considered to be an essential part of writing teachers' responsibilities. Evans, Hartshorn and Tuioti (2010b) point out that "understanding teacher perspectives on corrective feedback is integral to our understanding the place of WCF in L2 writing pedagogy" (p. 47). Examples of studies that investigated teachers' beliefs on WCF are Evans et al. (2010b), Ferris et al. (2011a), Ferris et al. (2011b), Lee (2003, 2009), Montgomery and Baker (2007), and Al-Shahrani (2013). So far, I am not aware of any study that investigated teachers' beliefs on WCF in Oman.

Evans et al. (2010b) conducted a large-scale study on teachers' perspectives on WCF. The participants consisted of 1053 English language teachers from 69 countries. The focus of the study was mainly to investigate whether teachers provide WCF on student writing and why they choose/not choose to provide WCF. The data were collected through an international online survey. The key findings are that 92% of teachers reported the use of WCF in their teaching practices because they believed that it is useful for students. The factors that affected their WCF practices were their personal teaching experiences, academic training and research and conferences. However, most participants who use WCF believed that WCF is somehow effective in helping students to improve their linguistic accuracy since students need to be motivated to benefit from the feedback. The limitation of the study is that the collected data is based on self-reporting of the participants. Self-reporting is not sufficient for the results to be reliable since teachers are not always aware of their teaching practices.

Lee (2009) investigated EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in Hong Kong. The data were collected from two sources: WCF analysis of 174 texts collected from 26 teachers and follow-up interviews with 7 of them and a questionnaire administered to 206 teachers and follow-up interviews with 19 of them. The main aim of the study was to report to what extent teachers' WCF practices align with their beliefs. The study reveals ten mismatches between teachers' beliefs and their practices. For example, most teachers provided comprehensive feedback although they prefer selective marking. The teachers explained that contextual factors such as exam pressure and school policy have an impact on their practices. However, Lee concludes that it might be that teachers only provided excuses to justify their practices. It could also be that they are not aware of the gaps between their beliefs and practices.

Ferris et al. (2011b) explored how 129 college writing teachers in Northern Carolina perceive response to student writing. The data were collected from three sources: A 25- item online survey, follow-up interviews with 23 participants and discussion of written commentary on 3-5 texts collected from these participants. The most important finding is that although teachers value feedback and believe it is important, they often feel frustrated and dissatisfied with their feedback practices due to the "apparent lack of impact on student progress" (p. 39). The challenges which they face are mainly related to time, lack of student motivation and challenges with providing WCF. The paper concludes with some suggestions for teachers to reduce frustration and increase their satisfaction with their teaching practices. Most importantly, it was suggested that teachers need to receive proper training, to be selective in providing feedback and to make an effort to address students' individual needs.

These studies are relevant for three main reasons: They highlight the importance of investigating teachers' beliefs through the employment of multiple research instruments; they show that teachers' practices do not always reflect their beliefs; and

investigating teachers' beliefs and practices on WCF could help teachers to reflect on their own practices in order to employ more efficient WCF that serve their students' needs.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is informed by an interpretive approach which stems from the premise that the social world and the natural world are distinct. Therefore, the social world has to be studied from within a certain social context and cannot be observed objectively from the outside (Grix, 2010). The researcher is inevitably part of the social reality being researched. Therefore, objective or value free analysis is not possible but relies on the subjective interpretation of the researcher. An exploratory methodology was seen as the most suitable approach to gain comprehensive insight of teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF in a particular context through the use of semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Borg (2012) emphasizes that "studying teacher cognition qualitatively ... allows for in-depth, contextualized understandings of cognition, which have strong local relevance" (p. 18). This study does not try to support any prior hypothesis and hardly claims to be generalizable. Instead, its value lies in uncovering a phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants in a particular context.

Methodology

Study Context

This study was conducted in the post-foundation programme of the English Language Center in a public college in Oman. The courses at the post-foundation level are designed to enhance academic skills which students need such as academic writing, presentation skills, and public speaking/communication skills. These courses are credited and there are four hours per week for each course over a period of 14 weeks average. Teachers are assigned four/five classes with 25-30 students each, so their teaching load is 16-20 hours each. The teachers come from different backgrounds such as India, Pakistan, Philippines, Arab countries and Oman. Students are mostly Omani nationals.

Technical Writing 1 (TW1) and Technical Writing 2 (TW2) are 2 courses offered at the post-foundation level. One of the requirements is that students write descriptive business/scientific essays (TW1) and scientific reports (TW2). Students are expected to write at least 2 assignments for each type of writing and teachers are supposed to give students WCF on their writing assignments but no clear guidance is provided by the department on how feedback should be given. Since all teachers are MA or PhD

graduates of different English majors and have several years teaching experience at tertiary level in their own country and Oman, I assume that the department does not see it necessary to provide them with such guidelines.

The Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in providing students with WCF and to investigate if their beliefs and stated practices match with their actual practices. It also aims to explore the challenges they might encounter. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the beliefs of a sample of EFL writing teachers at a public college in Oman concerning WCF?
2. What kinds of WCF do these EFL teachers employ?
3. What challenges do these EFL teachers encounter in providing WCF?

The Participants Teachers

The participants of this study were 6 writing teachers (5 female, 1 male) who were teaching TW1 or TW2 courses. I chose the participants because TW1 and TW2 teachers have to provide their students with WCF on their essays/reports. This would allow for the analysis of WCF which is appropriate for my study. The participants also come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and my aim was to represent the diversity of the teachers in this college as much as possible. Initially, I invited 8 writing teachers - those who fulfilled the above mentioned criteria and expressed their willingness to participate in the study - via an email that briefly explained the aim of the study. Finally, I chose 6 participants out of convenience because their free time matched my own free time which would allow me to conduct an interview with them. The sample was therefore chosen according to purposiveness and convenience. I provided all participants with an information sheet about the study and I explained that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage. I also assured confidentiality and anonymity by assuring that any information they provide will be used for research purposes only and that I will use pseudonyms to protect their identity. I received written consent from all participants to be interviewed and to provide me with 3 samples of their WCF practices on their students' written texts. Since students are supposed to write around 300 words for each assignment, I found that the analysis of WCF of 3 samples for each teacher would be sufficient to get insight into their WCF practices. (The writing samples will be discussed below). The teachers' teaching experience varied between 4 – 23 years. All expatriate teachers but Rihanna had teaching experience in their own country before coming to Oman. Most teachers

reported that they have not received any training on how to give WCF. For a more detailed description of their background see table 1 below.

Table 1
Summary of teachers' background information

Teacher Pseudonym	Country of origin	Years of teaching experience	Teaching experience in current context	Qualification	Previous training in giving WCF
Maria TW2	Philippines	20	7 years	MA Arts in English	None
Tatum TW2	Philippines	23	15 months	PhD Educational management	None
Feliz TW1	Philippines	23	8 months	MA Arts in English PhD student Curriculum and Design	Some training at previous workplace
Maisa TW1	Oman	4	8 months	MA Applied Linguistics/TESOL	None
Rihanna TW1	India	7	3 years	MA TESOL EdD student TESOL	None
Ali TW1	Pakistan	20	12 years	MA English Literature	Some training through workshops

Students

Eighteen students (13 female, 5 male) participated in the study: 6 students were enrolled in TW2 course and 12 were enrolled in TW1 course. The student participants consist of a monolingual group of students who are Omani nationals between 18-20 years old. These students share a similar background in terms of first language (Arabic), culture and religion (Islam). They also share a similar educational background as all participants studied at public schools where the medium of instruction is Arabic and English is learned as a foreign language for around 8 years. They also had to join the foundation programme before they were able to join the post-foundation programme. Nevertheless, their English proficiency level can best be described as intermediate level. All students were provided with an information sheet about the study in Arabic and those who volunteered to participate in the study were asked to sign a consent form. It is worth mentioning that only students with rather good English language skills (mostly females) volunteered to participate in the study.

Data Collection Methods

Interviews

In order to explore teachers' beliefs on WCF and their practices I decided to use semi-structured interviews which "combine a certain degree of control with a certain amount of freedom to develop the interview" (Wallace, 1998, p. 147). I developed the interview questions in relevance to the literature on teachers' beliefs and WCF and to the research questions of this study (Appendix 1). The interview questions were designed to elicit information about teachers' beliefs and their current practices regarding WCF and the challenges they might encounter while providing feedback in order to be able to address the research questions of the study. The interview questions consisted of 4 parts. Part one was designed to obtain background information about the participants. Part two aimed to elicit information about teachers' beliefs concerning WCF. The participants were asked to elaborate on their responses and to explain the reason for their beliefs whenever possible. Part three was about teachers' actual WCF practices. The questions were designed to get insight about their practices and the reasons for their current practices. Part 4 was about the challenges or difficulties they might encounter while providing feedback. I piloted the interview questions before its actual use with one writing teacher who did not participate in the study. Due to time constraint, the interviews were conducted in English prior to collection of WCF samples from the teachers. All interviews, which took between 30-38 minutes each, were recorded to allow for transcription and analysis of the data. I also shared the transcripts with the participants for respondent validation in order to present their views as accurately as possible and to increase the validity of the results.

Students' writing samples

The aim of collecting students' texts with their teachers' WCF was to investigate teachers' actual WCF practices and to investigate if they match with their stated WCF practices and their beliefs on WCF. In order to collect samples of WCF on student texts, I asked the teachers to approach their students in their classrooms and to explain the aim of the study and what their participation involves. Following my instructions, the teachers randomly chose 3 students' written texts (those who volunteered to participate) on which they have provided feedback. A total number of 18 texts were collected (6 TW1 and 12 TW2 texts). TW1 students wrote a descriptive essay whereas TW2 students wrote a scientific report. All essays/reports were written in class and were between 200-380 words long. I was provided with the original texts with WCF in red as well as the signed consent forms (see Appendix 2 for samples of teachers' WCF).

Data Analysis

In order to analyse the interview data, I employed a thematic approach which is appropriate for an exploratory case study (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010). Brown and Clark (2006) define thematic analysis as a “method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79). One of the benefits of this method is its flexibility which allows for rich, detailed and complex descriptions of the data (Boyatzis, 1998). First, I chose one interview transcript and read through it several times to get a sense of the data. Then I highlighted the comments/passages that are relevant to my study and labeled them with an informative label (Dörnyei, 2007). For example, I highlighted the comments “we are not given enough time to do this” and “you hardly see any commitment from the students” and labeled them “lack of time” and “student commitment.” Similarly I labeled other parts of the transcripts under different labels. I coded all transcripts in a similar way. Then I classified all labels into themes which were based on the research questions and the main aim of the study (Cohen et al., 2007).

Then I read all students’ written texts and identified the categories on which teachers provided WCF. I classified them into 6 categories: Content/Organization, Grammar, Mechanics (spelling, punctuation and capitalization) Words/Expressions, Sentence structure, and Comments (see Appendix 3 for examples of each category). I considered any intervention made by the teacher on students’ texts through a comment, a symbol, underlining, or correction as one feedback point (Hyland, 2003). I also classified the feedback points according to the type of feedback given such as direct or indirect WCF. Direct WCF was provided through writing the correction above the error, crossing the error, or adding the correct word or phrase. Indirect WCF was provided through the use of codes, underlining, circling or writing a question mark above the error. In order to identify the number of words for each text, I typed them on my computer. Finally, I compared both sets of data to identify mismatches between teachers’ beliefs (from interview data) and practices (from students’ writing samples).

Findings

Teachers’ beliefs about WCF

The interview analysis revealed that all participants shared the belief that it is their responsibility to provide their students with WCF in order to support them to improve their writing. Maria stated “It is teachers’ responsibility. It is part of the job – a call for duty.” Although providing WCF has been described as “time-consuming” and “a demanding job”, Tatum and Feliz explained that it goes back to what you believe in life which is “to do your best.” However, teachers’ beliefs differed in how to provide WCF. Tatum and Feliz believed that teachers should provide students with the correction to their errors because they should transmit their knowledge which is “the essence of

teaching.” Both teachers believed that if students see the correction, they will be able to remember the correction and avoid repeating the same error in their next writing. The belief that providing students with correction is sufficient for students to avoid repeating the same error is inconsistent with research on L2 learning. Research on second language acquisition has shown that L2 learning is a rather complex process. Input alone is not sufficient for L2 learning but has to be combined with output and interaction. It has also been argued that L2 learning is rather dependent on students’ developmental stage. In addition, research has shown that variables such as students’ aptitude, motivation and attitude can affect L2 learning (see Mitchell & Myles, 2004). In contrast, Ali and Maisa believed that teachers should not correct students’ mistakes but should help students to become independent learners by asking them to correct their own mistakes. They believed that students will only learn if they realize what their mistakes are and if they attempt to correct them by themselves. This reflects the belief that students are able to correct their errors regardless of the proficiency level of the student and the type of error which is not in line with research on the effectiveness of WCF. Maria and Rihanna believed that teachers should not correct all mistakes but should leave some mistakes for students to correct by themselves in order to help them to be responsible for their learning. In addition, most teachers believed that comprehensive WCF is necessary for improvement in writing. In contrast, Ali and Rihanna believed that teachers should overlook some mistakes. Ali explained that highlighting all mistakes can be discouraging for students, whereas Rihanna found that at this stage students need feedback about major errors whereas minor mistakes such as “verb to be” could be ignored.

Teachers’ beliefs about their students also seem to have had an impact on their beliefs and practices concerning WCF. All teachers shared the belief that the majority of students are not committed to their study; they lack autonomy and do not take WCF seriously. Ali and Tatum mentioned that male students are less committed in their studies than female students. Ali explains that he sometimes feels helpless with male students. Tatum and Maria believed that students in this context have problems in spelling. Maria did not correct spelling in her previous teaching context because students were able to correct their own spelling mistakes. However, in this context she provides the correct spelling because students “do not look for the correct spelling. Whatever spelling they know they write.” This shows that teachers’ beliefs are not fixed but can change with the context and can result in different practices. Although all teachers believed that WCF is important to help students improve their linguistic accuracy, they acknowledged that students’ attitudes and motivation play a major role in the effectiveness of WCF. Feliz stated “Those who are not serious will not even bother to read the feedback but those who are serious will definitely get benefit. So it depends on the students.” This brings forward Guénette’s (2007) conclusion “If the students are not committed to improving their writing skills, they will not improve, no

matter what kind of feedback is provided” (p. 52). Nevertheless, teachers continue providing WCF because of their strong belief that at least some students will benefit from the WCF. Overall, the interview analysis shows that teachers’ beliefs about themselves as teachers, L2 teaching, L2 learning and their students affected their beliefs and practices concerning WCF.

Teachers’ beliefs were shaped by many factors but they were mostly affected by their personal language learning and teaching experience. For example, Maria thought it is important to provide students with comprehensive feedback on all their mistakes because she felt very disappointed as a student if the teacher did not point out all her mistakes. In contrast, Ali believed that teachers should not mark all students’ mistakes because he felt very frustrated when teachers pointed out all his mistakes. Maisa noticed through experience that if students are provided with direct correction they will become dependent and will not care about their mistakes. The differences between teachers’ beliefs could also be related to their differences in their backgrounds as highlighted in Table 1 above. For example, Tatum and Feliz from the Philippines and whose teaching experience is mainly related to their own country shared a strong belief that it is the teachers’ responsibility to provide students with WCF on all their mistakes. They explained that this practice is highly appreciated and expected from teachers in their own country. In contrast, Ali and Maria, who had several years teaching experience in Oman and their own country, reported that it is necessary to change WCF practices when moving from one place to another. For example, Maria believes that Omani students need to be provided with the correct spelling because they have major problems with spelling unlike students in her own context. Unlike the teachers in Evans et al.’s (2010b) study, the participants in this study did not mention that academic training, research and conferences had any influence on shaping their beliefs.

Teachers’ WCF practices

The findings reveal that teachers followed a similar approach in assigning a task. The students start writing the assignment in class, but are allowed to complete it at home. Then they hand it to the teacher to provide feedback. All teachers stated that they do not ask their students for their feedback preferences. Most teachers reported that they spend between 10-15 minutes providing WCF on each assignment (essay/report) whereas Maisa and Feliz reported that providing WCF on each assignment can take around 30 minutes. Students have to write one draft only but are encouraged to write a final draft. The teachers explained that there is no policy that requires students to re-write assignments. In general, out of 30 students, 5 or 6 students rewrite the assignment and ask questions, but the teachers do not re-check the assignment. The teachers justified this practice by pointing out that there is no time for re-checking. Therefore, I can conclude that in this context a product-oriented approach rather than a process-

oriented approach is applied. The drawback of a product-oriented approach is that writing is tested rather than taught (Lee, 2004).

Most participants stated that they give comprehensive WCF which is an approach commonly used by writing teachers (Ferris, 2006; Lee, 2004, 2008). Maria referred to the negative effect such practice can have on teachers. She recalled that “there were actually moments in my life when I felt that I really wanted to quit.” In contrast, Ali and Rihanna reported that they give selective WCF. For example, Ali stated that he provides feedback on “important things such as content” but only hints at “minor mistakes such as grammar and spelling.” It has been suggested in the literature that it is best to select mistakes according to students’ needs (Lee, 2003). It seems that these two participants provided selective feedback according to what they believe deserves feedback which may not necessarily serve students’ needs.

Table 2
Amount and focus of WCF

Teacher	Content/ Organisat.	Gramm ar	Mecha- nics	Words/ Expressions	Sentence structure	Comm ents	Total	Avera ge
Maria	2	11	7	22	25	4	71	23.6
TW2	2.8%	15.4%	9.8%	30.9%	35.2%	5.6%		
Tatum	4	16	14	21	12	25	92	30.6
TW2	4.3%	17.3%	15.2%	22.8%	13%	27.1%		
Feliz	2	40	77	11	1		131	43.6
TW1	1.5%	30.5%	58.7%	8.3%	0.7%			
Maisa	7	47	55	16	8	8	141	47
TW1	4.9%	33.3%	39%	11.3%	5.6%	5.6%		
Rihanna	1	33	35	12			81	27
TW1	1.23%	40.7%	43.2%	14.8%				
Ali		28	40	8	1	3	80	25.6
TW1		35%	50%	10%	1.25%	3.75%		
All	16	175	228	90	47	40	596	33.1
	2.6%	29.3%	38.2%	15.1%	7.8%	6.7%		

Tatum, Maria and Feliz reported that they use mainly direct WCF especially for spelling because they believe that students should learn from their knowledge. In contrast, Ali

and Maisa use mainly indirect WCF because they believe that students can only learn if they correct their own mistakes. Ali does not always use codes because it is not practical for him. He finds it too time consuming considering the large number of students he has, whereas Maisa uses mostly codes since students are familiar with this practice from the foundation programme. Rihanna was the only teacher who reported using both types of feedback in a systematic way. She stated "I do not correct spelling. I just use symbols. But grammar, I will write the correct answer." The teachers reported that they do not consider the students' proficiency level, the length of the paper, or the type of error when providing WCF. Maria explained "Good or poor students - I always do the same things." It seems that teachers do not apply both types of feedback according to what has been recommended in the literature but according to their own ways that they have developed to provide WCF.

The teachers acknowledged that contextual factors such as lack of time, workload, students' motivation and being tired can have an impact on their feedback practices. Teachers who prefer comprehensive, direct WCF stated that they are sometimes selective and just underline some mistakes if there is no time. Moreover, Maisa mentioned that students' attitude can affect her WCF "When you mark his paper, you don't feel like providing feedback as if it is a serious student. You might make it shorter – not detailed."

The aim of the WCF analysis of 18 reports/essays was mainly to identify the actual WCF practices (3 texts per teacher). Table 2 shows the amount and focus of WCF points that the teachers provided on the 18 reports/essays in relation to content/organization, grammar, mechanics, words/expressions, sentence structure and comments. The analysis shows that the teachers provided a large amount of WCF points on their students' writing. The majority of them focused their WCF on errors related to form whereas content/organization received some proportion of WCF points but to a much lower extent. The most common mistakes that were identified in relation to mechanics were spelling; in grammar, verb tense, singular/plural, verb to be, subject-verb agreement, prepositions and articles. TW2 teachers focused more on words/ expressions than TW1 teachers. It could be that students who had to write scientific reports (TW2) had greater difficulties in using appropriate words/expressions than students who had to write essays (TW1). Maria, Tatum and Maisa also indicated errors in sentence structure. Maria indicated 25 errors in language structure which might have caused the reduction in the WCF points she has provided. Some teachers wrote comments of which some were positive, some indicated lack of clarity and others indicated the area that needs to be improved. However, only three teachers wrote positive comments, which is necessary for students to feel encouraged and to know about their strength in writing. Tatum provided 25 comments but many of them were illegible. I had to consult her to understand what she had written. It has been noted in the literature that teachers' comments can be vague and unintelligible to the students (Zamel, 1985). Feliz and

Maisa provided the highest WCF points whereas Maria, Rihanna and Ali provided the lowest WCF points. Overall, the results suggest that teachers gave mostly comprehensive WCF similar to findings in Lee (2003) and Al-Shahrani's (2013) study. This can explain why teachers spend a lot of time providing feedback and therefore feel exhausted.

Table 3

Direct and indirect WCF

Teacher	Grammar		Mechanics		Words/ expressions		Sentence structure		Total WCF	Total WCF
	Ind	Dir	Ind	Dir	Ind	Dir	Ind	Dir	Ind	Dir
Maria	1	10		7	3	19	21	4	25	40
	1.5%	15.3%		10.7%	4.6%	29.2%	32.3%	6.1%	38.5%	61.5%
Tatum	2	14	5	9	3	18	9	3	19	44
	3.1%	22.2%	7.9%	14.2%	4.7%	28.5%	14.2%	4.7%	30.2%	69.8%
Feliz		40		77		11		1		129
		31%		59.6%		8.5%		0.7%		100%
Maisa	24	23	43	12	7	9	7	1	81	45
	19.4%	18.2%	34.1%	9.5%	5.5%	7.1%	5.5%	0.7%	64.3%	35.7%
Rihanna	7	26	20	15	1	11			28	52
	8.8%	32.5%	25%	18.7%	1.3%	13.7%			35%	65%
Ali	12	16	23	17	2	6	1		38	39
	15.5%	20.7%	29.8%	22%	2.5%	7.7%	1.2%		49.4%	50.6%
All	46	129	91	137	16	74	38	9	191	349
	8.5%	23.8%	16.8%	25.3%	2.9%	13.7%	7%	1.6%	35.4%	64.6%

Dir=Direct, Ind=Indirect

Table 3 shows the amount of direct and indirect WCF which the teachers' gave on students' writing in regard to grammar, mechanics, words/expressions and sentence structure. It also indicates that most teachers used direct and indirect WCF with the exception of Feliz who only used direct WCF. In general, direct WCF was more used than indirect WCF. Maisa, however, used more indirect feedback than direct feedback for all categories and Ali used both types almost equally.

Indirect feedback was provided mostly through underlining the error. As for the use of codes, Maisa was the only teacher who used a wide range of codes such as WW (wrong word) WV (wrong verb) and SP (spelling). Most teachers provided direct correction to grammar errors that are rule-governed such as subject-verb agreement or singular/ plural whereas they gave indirect feedback for sentence structure. Research on WCF has suggested that teachers should consider the type of error before deciding on the type of feedback they provide (Guénette, 2012). For example, rule-governed errors

can be more effectively treated with indirect feedback as this will enable students to think about the language, whereas for features that are clearly outside the knowledge of the students, direct correction could be more productive or errors can be ignored (Ferris, 2002).

Comparing both sets of data it became evident that teachers in general provided WCF according to their beliefs. However, for some teachers, several discrepancies were identified between their stated and actual WCF practices. For example, Rihanna stated that she provides more feedback on content and organization than on grammar and mechanics. In fact, she only provided one WCF on content on one text, whereas 84% of her WCF was on grammar and mechanics. It could be that she found content/organization to be satisfactory and therefore did not provide feedback in this issue. Maisa stated that she rarely provides direct correction but her actual WCF practices revealed that she provided direct correction to around 36% of the errors. Considering the large amount of WCF points which she has provided, it is possible that she did not want to overwhelm the students with correction. Similarly, Ali gave around 51% direct feedback on students' writing although he stated that he does not correct students' mistakes. It could be that he is not aware of the gap between his beliefs and his practices as Lee (2009) suggested. Finally, Ali and Rihanna who stated that they practice selective marking actually marked a large number of students' errors of different categories. On average, Rihanna gave 27 feedback points on each essay whereas Ali provided 26.5 feedback points. This is a rather high rate for selective marking on one text. Similar to the findings by Montgomery and Baker (2007) and Al-Shahrani (2013), teachers in this study do not always seem to be aware of their own WCF practices.

Challenges concerning WCF

All participants reported that they are satisfied with their practices. Still they also encounter many challenges in providing WCF which brings to mind the participants in Ferry et al.'s (2011b) study. Time constraint was considered to be the greatest challenge since teachers have to give WCF to a large number of papers during limited time. In addition, due to the large number of students and sections, teachers are not able to have individual conferences with students which they find important for feedback to be effective. Students' ability to correct, their attitude, motivation and commitment were also considered to be a major challenge, which, in turn, had an impact on teachers' emotional state. All teachers reported that the majority of students are not committed to learning. Teachers' repeated expressions like "they don't bother," "they don't ask questions," "they don't make any effort," and "they're not committed." The teachers felt disappointed and discouraged; they also felt that their effort was not appreciated by students. Tatum stated "Sometimes you lose the patience because I think I'm working

so hard and my students don't seem to appreciate." Feliz suffered from a sense of guilt because she felt that she failed in doing her job as her quote shows:

Sometimes I really feel affected. First, students must have the motivation, the eagerness, the enthusiasm, even if you are enthusiastic. I know, it is the part of the teacher to motivate but how can you motivate a student who is not motivated? It's very hard. You can bring the horse to the river but you cannot make him drink. What can I do? I can give my best, but it doesn't bare much fruit. It's really disappointing. I think I did my best but it is not enough, it is my fault.

This brings to mind Lee's (2003) conclusion that "error feedback is, in a real sense, a most tricky and taxing area of English teachers' work" (p. 229).

Discussion

Investigating teachers' beliefs is a complex issue because teachers seem to act out of habit. Nevertheless, their actions are prompted by certain beliefs which are not always made explicit but have to be inferred from what teachers do and say. The study found that teachers' general beliefs about life as well as teachers' educational beliefs had an impact on their WCF practices thereby supporting Pajares' argument that teachers' educational beliefs are inseparable from teachers' general beliefs (1992). In particular, teachers' beliefs about their role as teachers, teaching and learning and their students affected their WCF practices. All teachers believed that it is their responsibility to provide feedback to students and that it is important for students to improve their writing skills confirming Bitchener (2012) in his observation that most language teachers believe that providing students with WCF is one of their responsibilities. However, their beliefs about their role as teachers, L2 teaching and L2 learning differed which had an impact on their WCF practices. The teaching context also had an influence on their beliefs. For example, some teachers found that students in this particular context have problems with spelling. Therefore, they believed that they should provide them with the correct spelling of words. Their beliefs were mostly shaped by their personal learning and teaching experiences rather than their education. Lack of proper teacher preparation for teaching writing has been addressed in Ferris et al. (2011b). Although teachers were not restricted by any college policy on how to provide WCF unlike participants in Lee (2008) and Al-Shahrani (2013), some inconsistencies were found between some teachers' beliefs and their practices. In addition, some teachers changed their practices as a result of their teaching experience, which, in turn, resulted in change in beliefs. For example, Maisa believed that providing students with direct WCF is useful. However, through teaching experience she noticed that students do not

care about making mistakes if the teacher corrects all their mistakes. Therefore, she changed her practice and started providing her students with indirect feedback. Since this practice helped them to become more conscious about their mistakes, she believes that providing indirect WCF is more useful for learners. This confirms the findings in the literature that there is interaction between teachers' beliefs and practices (Phipps & Borg, 2009). Moreover, the study suggests that beliefs are not fixed but can change under certain conditions. In this study, teachers' beliefs were influenced by their teaching experience, teaching context and the learners.

Teachers were not always able to give WCF that matches their beliefs due to contextual factors such as workload and emotional factors such as fatigue. For example, teachers who believed that comprehensive/direct WCF should be given to students may give selective/indirect WCF if time is not available. The study supports the argument that greater understandings of the contextual factors are central to deeper insights into the relation between beliefs and practices (Borg, 2003, Phipps & Borg, 2009; Li, 2013). Therefore, I support the view that it is necessary to include the context in any research on teachers' beliefs and practices as suggested by Li (2013).

The findings demonstrate that teachers' WCF practices are sometimes in contrast to what has been suggested in the literature, a point that has been observed in research into teachers' WCF practices. Most teachers tend to give comprehensive feedback although many correction advocates have advised against the use of comprehensive error feedback for the risk of "exhausting teachers and overwhelming students" (Ferris, 2002, p. 50). The study also suggests that teachers may lack proper knowledge to apply the selective WCF approach systematically because those who claimed to select errors did not select them systematically but rather on an ad hoc basis. Teachers also gave more direct feedback to treatable errors (grammar and spelling) and indirect feedback to untreatable errors (sentences structure) which might be difficult for students to correct. Lee (2004) suggests that indirect feedback should be used with more proficient students whereas direct feedback should be reserved for mistakes that are not amendable to self-correction and should be used with less proficient students. However, teachers did not consider students' proficiency level. Moreover, mechanics have received most of teachers' feedback points, especially spelling, although it has been suggested in the literature that WCF should be given to content and form.

All teachers are satisfied with their feedback practices, but are not satisfied with students' attitudes towards WCF. Although they are aware that only a small number of students rewrite the assignment according to the feedback given, they do not question the effectiveness of their WCF practices. This is in contrast to Lee (2004) where some participants doubted the effectiveness of their error feedback because students did not treat error feedback seriously. Also, teachers did not explore the reasons why only some students take WCF seriously. In general, teachers believed that students were not committed to their study. However, there might be other reasons why students do not

rewrite the assignments according to the feedback such as lack of understanding of the feedback, intelligibility of comments or lack of ability to correct because students have to be trained to self-edit. It could also be that teachers' and students' preferences for WCF do not match which might discourage students from considering WCF.

Conclusion

I believe that this study provided useful insight into the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices concerning WCF in a particular context and highlighted the challenges these teachers encounter while providing feedback thereby acknowledging the significance of including teacher variable in WCF research. Nevertheless, it is necessary to acknowledge the limitations of this study. First, the interviews were conducted prior to the collection of the written texts with WCF which might have affected teachers' behaviour in providing WCF. Second, the reasons for inconsistencies between teachers' stated and their actual WCF practices were not further explored through follow-up interviews. Third, the number of texts collected from each teacher is rather limited and most texts (especially from TW1 course) were written by students who are rather proficient in English since low proficient students did not volunteer to participate in the study. Moreover, students' written texts were collected from 2 different courses, the topics were different and the length of the texts was not identical. All this might have influenced teachers' WCF practices and therefore biased the overall findings.

Nevertheless, this study reveals that all teachers sincerely want to help students improve their writing and therefore make a great effort giving WCF on students' writing despite their belief that only serious students benefit from the WCF. In order to turn the challenging WCF practices to a more positive experience for teachers and learners, I believe it is necessary to consider the following recommendations: First, teachers should learn more about theory and practice regarding WCF, unlike the belief of some teachers such as Maria, who remarked that "you don't even need to review books on how to check." Depending on prior learning and teaching experiences is not sufficient for WCF to be efficient. Continuous professional development in terms of workshops and seminars is therefore vital. Second, there should be opportunities for the teachers to meet with their colleagues, coordinators and preferably critical friends (e.g. university academics) to share, reflect on - and examine their WCF beliefs and practices with each other. This would enable teachers to review and reflect on their own WCF practices in reference to recommended WCF practices in the literature. Together they could come up with suggestions that could contribute to more effective WCF practices. Third, it is crucial that teachers help learners to become independent and responsible learners. This can be done if teachers abandon the "I did my job" attitude and adopt the process approach in writing where students become accountable for revising and

rewriting their texts. The administration could support this by implementing a process-oriented policy. Guénette (2012) asserts that “If learners are not asked to revise or rewrite, the teacher cannot be sure that they noticed the correction; if they have not ... it is equivalent to not having been corrected at all; and it also means that teachers may have wasted their time” (p. 123). However, self-editing is a skill that must be taught (Ferris, 1995). Therefore, students could be trained to self-edit by providing direct correction on some categories of errors and underline all the other instances of these categories. Students could edit their errors using the model provided by the teacher. Fourth, teachers should explain to their students the purpose of WCF and students’ role in it so as to make them understand the rationale for the use of certain WCF provided by their teachers. Finally, teachers should abandon the one-size-fit-all approach and should adapt their feedback practices according to individual students’ needs.

This study concludes with implications for future research. Since this study is a small-scale study, results are not generalisable to other contexts in Oman. Therefore, it would be interesting to further investigate teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding WCF in different institutions in Oman. However, it is recommended that the limitations of this study be considered and that teachers’ beliefs be explored more in depth especially in regard to teachers’ beliefs about themselves, L2 teaching and learning and L2 learners which should inevitably include the context in which WCF is provided.

References

- Abou Eissa, A. F. (2010). *Responding to students’ writing in UAE government secondary schools: Teachers attitudes and practices, and students’ perceptions*. Unpublished MA thesis, American University of Sharjah, UAE.
- Al-Shahrani, A. (2013). *Investigation of written corrective feedback in an EFL context: Beliefs of teachers, their real practices and students’ preferences*. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Melbourne, Australia.
- Amrhein, H. R., & Nassaji, H. (2010). Written corrective feedback: What do students and teachers prefer and why? *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13 (2), 95-127.
- Ashwell, T. (2000). Patterns of teacher response to student writing in a multiple-draft composition classroom: Is content feedback followed by form feedback the best method? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 9 (3), 227 – 257. doi:10.1016/S1060-3743(00)00027-8
- Bitchener, J. (2008). Evidence in support of written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 17 (2), 102-118. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2007.11.004
- Bitchener, J. (2012). Written corrective feedback for L2 development: Current knowledge and future research. *TESOL Quarterly*, 46 (4), 855-60. doi:10.1002/tesq.63

- Bitchener, J., Young, S., & Cameron, D. (2005). The effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14 (3), 191-205. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2005.08.001
- Borg, M. (2001). Key concepts in ELT. Teachers' beliefs. *ELT Journal*, 55(2), 186-188. doi:10.1093/elt/55.2.186
- Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. *Language Teaching*, 36 (2), 81-109. doi:10.1017/S0261444803001903
- Borg, S. (2006). *Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice*. London: Continuum.
- Borg, S. (2012). Current approaches to language teacher cognition research: A methodological analysis. In R. Barnard & A. Burns (Eds.), *Researching language teacher cognition and practice: International case studies* (pp. 11-29). Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information. Thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brown, D. (2007). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*: Pearson Education.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2), 77-101. doi: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- Burns, A. (1992). Teacher beliefs and their influence on classroom practice. *Prospect*, 7 (3), 56-66.
- Calderhead, J. (1996). Teachers: beliefs and knowledge. In D. C. Berliner & R. C. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (pp. 709-725). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Chandler, J. (2003). The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12 (3), 267– 296. doi:10.1016/S1060-3743(03)00038-9
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education 6th edition*. London: Routledge.
- Diab, R. L. (2005). Teachers' and students' beliefs about responding to ESL Writing: A case study. *TESL Canada Journal*, 23 (1), 28-44.
- Diab, R. L. (2006). Error correction and feedback in the EFL writing classroom. *English Teaching Forum*, 3, 2-14.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed method methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R., Sheen, Y., Murakami, M., & Takashima, H. (2008). The effects of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback in an English as a foreign language context. *System*, 36 (3), 353-371. doi:10.1016/j.system.2008.02.001

- Evans, N. W., Hartshorn, K. J., McCollum, R. M., & Wolfersberger, M. (2010a). Contextualizing corrective feedback in second language writing pedagogy. *Language Teaching Research*, 14 (4), 445-463. doi: 10.1177/1362168810375367
- Evans, N. W., Hartshorn, K. J., & Tuioti, E. A. (2010b). Written corrective feedback: Practitioners' perspectives. *International Journal of English Studies*, 10 (2), 47-77.
- Farrell, T. S. C., & Kun, S. T. K. (2008). Language policy, language teachers' beliefs, and classroom practices. *Applied Linguistics*, 29 (3), 251-75.
- Fathman, A., & Whalley, E. (1990). Teacher response to student writing: Focus on form versus content. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp. 178-190). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ferris, D. (1995). Can advanced ESL students be taught to correct their most serious and frequent errors? *CATESOL Journal*, 8 (1), 41-62.
- Ferris, D. (2002). *Treatment of error in second language student writing*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Ferris, D. (2003). *Response to student writing: Implications for second language students*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Ferris, D. (2004). The 'grammar correction' debate in L2 writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here, and what do we do in the meantime? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13 (1), 49-62. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2004.04.005
- Ferris, D. (2006). Does error feedback help student writers? New evidence on the short- and long-term effects of written error correction. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Eds.), *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues* (pp. 81-104). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ferris, D. (2010). Second language writing research and written corrective feedback in SLA. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 32 (2), 181-201. doi:10.1017/S0272263109990490
- Ferris, D., & Roberts, B. (2001). Error feedback in L2 writing classes: How explicit does it need to be? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10 (3), 161-184. doi:10.1016/S1060-3743(01)00039-X
- Ferris, D., Brown, J., Liu, H. S., & Stine, M. E. A. (2011a). Responding to students in college writing classes: Teacher perspectives. *TESOL Quarterly*, 45 (2), 207-234. doi:10.5054/tq.2011.247706
- Ferris, D. Liu, H., & Rabie, B. (2011b). The job of teaching writing: Teacher views of responding to student writing. *Writing & Pedagogy*, 3 (1), 39-77. doi:10.1558/wap.v3il.39
- Golombek, P. R. (1998). A study of language teachers' personal practical knowledge. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32(3), 447-464. doi: 10.2307/3588117
- Grix, J. (2010). *The foundations of research 2nd edition*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Gu nette, D. (2007). Is feedback pedagogically correct? Research design issues in studies of feedback on writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16 (1), 40-53. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2007.01.001
- Gu nette, D. (2012). The pedagogy of error correction: Surviving the written corrective feedback challenge. *TESL Canada Journal*, 30 (1), 117-126.
- Guskey, T. R. (1994). *Professional development in education: In search of the optimal mix*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. New Orleans: Louisiana.
- Hamouda, A. (2011). A study of students' and teachers' preferences and attitudes towards correction of classroom written errors in Saudi EFL context. *English Language Teaching*, 4 (3), 128-141. doi:10.5539/elt.v4n3p128
- Hyland, F. (2003). Focusing on form: Student engagement with teacher feedback. *System*, 31 (2), 217-230. doi:10.1016/S0346-251X(03)00021-6
- Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2006). *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, K. E. (1994). The emerging beliefs and instructional practices of preservice English as a second language teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 10 (4), 439-52. doi:10.1016/0742-051X(94)90024-8
- Kepner, C. G. (1991). An experiment in the relationship of types of written feedback to the development of second-language writing skills. *The Modern Language Journal*, 75 (3), 305-313. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.1991.tb05359.x
- Lee, I. (1997). ESL learners' performance in error correction in writing. *System*, 25 (4), 465-477. doi:10.1016/S0346-251X(97)00045-6
- Lee, I. (2003). L2 writing teachers' perceptions, practices, and problems regarding error feedback. *Assessing Writing*, 8, 216-237. doi:10.1016/j.asw.2003.08.002
- Lee, I. (2004) Error correction in L2 secondary writing classrooms: The case of Hong Kong. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13 (4), 285-312. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2004.08.001
- Lee, I. (2008). Understanding teachers' written feedback practices in Hong Kong secondary classrooms. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 17, (2), 69-85. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2007.10.001
- Lee, I. (2009). Ten mismatches between teachers' beliefs and written corrective feedback practice. *ELT Journal*, 63 (1), 13-22. doi:10.1093/elt/ccn010
- Li, L. (2013). The complexity of teachers' beliefs and practice: One EFL teacher's theories. *Language Learning Journal*, 41 (2), 175-191. doi:10.1080/09571736.2013.790132
- Mills, A. J., Durepos, G., & Wiebe, E. (2010). *Encyclopedia of case study research: Thematic analysis*. Sage Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781412957397
- Mitchell, R., & Miles, F. (2004). *Second language learning theories*. London: Hodder Arnold.

- Montgomery, J. L., & Baker, W. (2007). Teacher-written feedback: Student perceptions, teacher self-assessment, and actual teacher performance. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16 (2), 82-99. doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2007.04.002
- Pajares, M. E. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research*, 62 (3), 307-32. doi:10.3102/00346543062003307
- Phipps, S., & Borg, S. (2009). Exploring tension between teachers' grammar teaching beliefs and practices. *System*, 37 (3), 380-390. doi:10.1016/j.system.2009.03.002
- Reid, J. (1998). "Eye" learners and "ear" learners: Identifying the language needs of international students and U.S. resident writers. In P. Byrd & J. M. Reid (Eds.), *Grammar in the composition classroom: Essays on teaching ESL for college-bound students* (pp. 3-17). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Robb, T., Ross, S., & Shortreed, I. (1986). Salience of feedback on error and its effect on EFL writing quality. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20 (1), 83-96. doi:10.2307/3586390
- Storch, N. (2010). Critical feedback on written corrective feedback research. *International Journal of English Studies*, 10 (2), 29-46. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/119181>
- Thompson, A. G. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and conceptions: A synthesis of the research. In D. A. Grouws (Ed.), *Handbook of research on Mathematics teaching and learning* (pp. 127-146). New York: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.
- Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language learning*, 46 (2), 327-369. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-1770.1996.tb01238.x
- Truscott, J. (1999). The case for "the case for grammar correction in L2 writing classes": A response to Ferris. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8 (2), 111-122. doi:10.1016/S1060-3743(99)80124-6
- Van Beuningen, C. (2010). Corrective feedback in L2 writing: Theoretical perspectives, empirical insights, and future directions. *International Journal of English Studies*, 10 (2), 1-27. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/119171>
- Wallace, M. (1998). *Action research for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Xu, Li. (2012). The role of teachers' beliefs in the language teaching-learning process. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2 (7), 1397-1402). doi:10.4304/tpls.2.7.1397-1402
- Zamel, V. (1985). Responding to student writing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21, 697-715. doi: 10.2307/3586990

Appendix 1

Interview guide

I Background information

Nationality, qualification, years of teaching experience, teaching experience at current context, training on giving written corrective feedback (how did you learn how to provide WCF)

II Beliefs

- What are your general beliefs about WCF?
- Prompts: important/ useful/whose responsibility ...
- What helped shaping your beliefs?

III Practices

- Can you explain how writing an assignment is done in your class?
- When you provide WCF, which categories do you focus on? Why?
Prompts: content/ organization/ grammar/vocabulary/mechanics ...
- Which type(s) of WCF do you use? Why?
Direct (you provide the correct form)
Indirect (you signal that there is an error through coding/underlining ...)
Mixed (direct and indirect)
- What factors might affect your WCF process?
Prompts: students' proficiency level, students' expectations/preferences, drafts, time ...
- What happens after the student has received your feedback? Explain
- How much time do you spend on providing WCF on an essay/report?
- Do you ask your students about their WCF preferences? Why?
- Are you satisfied with your feedback practices? (Do you think they are effective?)

IV Challenges

- What challenges, if any, do you face while providing WCF?

Appendix 2
Samples of teachers' WCF
Maria

The company's manager has asked me to write this report about what can help ^{flowers} to get fresh in long time.

Terms of reference

The company ^{of} must put the flower for different [?] types. Therefore, water put in the vase at the same about 0.75L. I suggest using water of the same temperature of 20°C too. ^{this part is not clearly stated} ^{missing details}

Method

First, I brought 3 ^{vases} vases. Then, I put the water in vase about 0.75L also it has same temperature of 20°C [the hot of water]. Second, in vase 1 put the water only but in vase 2 put salt and sugar and in vase 3 put sugar. Also, I repeated [?] this every day ^(you didn't change the mixture) for 3 days. I put the flower for the 3 vases. I ^{observed} also looked the flowers ^{every day} to get fresh or dry. Finally, I recorded the results in the tables give below.

Tatum

The senior manager has asked me to ^{sp.} investigate about to keep the flowers fresh.

Terms of Reference

The company wants ^{of} the flowers stay fresh that ^{will} make the customers happy. Therefore, cool water should help in ~~making the flowers~~ keeping flowers fresh. The factor suggest using aspirins and sugar. ^{and?} ^{where is the focus?} ^{flowers?} ^{to the question}

Method

First, I brought 3 vases ^{of} flowers, cool water, aspirins and ^{sp.} sugar. Then, I put cool water with aspirins on vase 1. Also, I put cool water with tea spoons sugar. On vase I put only cool water. After that, I observed each of the 3 vases ^{sp.} on the 3 days. Finally, I recorded the results in the table given below.

^{sp.} Got - put water incomplete inconsistent on vase ↔ content -

Feliz

One of my favorite restaurants when I was a child is the ^{Gold Hands} gold hands on Al-Hamra town, because it's amazing for a casual children delicious meal. Goldhands is a successful group ^{of} business that ^{the owners} for men cooperate together and ^{to} built ^{where} this wonderful restaurant. When you visit this restaurant you know that you and your children will enjoy your time.

As soon as you step through the door at this wonderful restaurant, you will be glad you came. The restaurant is immaculate, It has a lot of turquoise table with azure chairs. The floors is very clean and sparkling. In this restaurant, the most thing that I like ~~it~~ is the children's hall. In this hall, you will find a lot of toys and dolls or teddy bear that you can have fine when you eat.

Maisa

^{Topic sentence??}
First, the most important service that I ^{made} ^{UT} share to present it in my restaurant is the chef, who ^{the chef} has international skills in cooking and he has multiple experience. All the staff here are very ^{SP} friendly, including the ^{SP} waiters who receive customers with ^{smiling} faces and they ^{are} ^{SP} speaking different ^{SP} language. That helps restaurant customers to feel comfortable when they ^{place} ^{SP} orders. Also, I have a ^{SP} helpful service in my ^{SP} restaurant. It is a home delivery. This ^{SP} services is quick, free and available for 24 hours.

use descriptive language!

Rihanna

First, I will describe my restaurant. I choose special furniture for my restaurant to attract^{SP} people. Also, ^{to make customers} to be comfortable inside. The restaurant^{SP} is brightly lit and has different colors like red and white. We have make^{space/setting} for the seats in a circular design. The tables are gleaming in the midst of chairs. Moreover the decoration and the smell of food will attract^{SP} you to order something and taste our meals.

Ali

In conclusion, Lions are very interesting and amazing animal. In addition, It is one of the strongest animals in the jungle that is why people called them King of the jungle. However, nowadays Lions are in real dangerous because of the hunting. The number of African Lions which live in Sahara desert are in decreasing. In 1950, the number of African Lions was 42,000 but, now the number has become less than that it is almost 21,000. Unfortunately hunting these incredible creatures is ^{does not} never stop and because of that Lions ^{are} near to be extinction.

- good attempt
- Be mindful about spelling
- + grammar mistakes.

Appendix 3

Examples of error correction on each category

Category	Examples	Error correction
Content/ Organization	Topic sentence? Too short! Missing details	
Grammar	This <u>restaurants</u> The restaurant that I <u>open</u> <u>It</u> located	This <u>restaurant</u> The restaurant that I <u>opened</u> It <u>is</u> located
Mechanics (Spelling, punctuation, capitalization)	The <u>flor</u> ... from the kitchen <u>u</u> you will <u>happiness</u> Bank	The <u>floor</u> ... from the kitchen <u>.</u> You will <u>H</u> appiness Bank
Words/expressions	I <u>looked</u> the flowers The light is not <u>shining</u> You will <u>get</u> the delicious food	I <u>observed</u> the flowers The light is not <u>bright</u> You will <u>surely taste</u> the ...
Sentence structure	... how best flower fresh ...in not bursting the balloons	how long flowers can stay fresh ... in preventing balloons from bursting
Comments	Good attempt! Be mindful about spelling and grammar! Which factor is this?	