ESP writing teachers' beliefs and practices on WCF: Do they really meet?

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the beliefs and real practices of four English writing teachers in relation to their written corrective feedback (WCF) and verify whether these beliefs and practices are compatible or not in an ESP context in the preparatory year in Saudi Arabia. The participants in his study were four teachers and forty-students at the preparatory year in the English Language Center at Umm Al-Qura University. Data were collected via three qualitative instruments, namely classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis of 40 student essays. Findings showed that teachers' practices match their beliefs in different areas related to the significance and purpose of their own comments as a primary source of WCF as well as providing comprehensive (unfocused) and varying feedback based on the kind of error and the students' ability levels. Conversely, teachers' practices do not accord with their beliefs with respect to providing direct/indirect, positive/negative feedback. Several contextual factors that influence teachers' behaviors and decisions and shape their WCF practices are identified. The four teachers interviewed have personal values, individual preferences, and behavioral convictions that do not align with the school's policies and regulations. Further, the study concludes that they do not have the essential educational background and work experience to make them professional ESP writing teachers, did not receive any specific on-the-job training related to ESP writing instruction, have a heavy teaching workload, and deal with too many students most of whom are weak and unmotivated. The study recommends that work conditions for teachers should be improved. More importantly, teachers selected to teach ESP writing should be provided with adequate periodic training to help them acquire the necessary pedagogical knowledge and qualify them to build positive beliefs to provide effective feedback.

*Keywords***:** beliefs and practices; ESP; written corrective feedback; writing teachers; type and error

1. Introduction

Since English has been the internationally recognized language of communication, learning English became necessary bringing with it numerous advantages for individuals. Learning English as a second/foreign language has grown in popularity worldwide and gained increasing importance especially for those who plan to travel abroad, meet people around the world, look for jobs beyond national borders, or increase their career skills to progress in life both personally and professionally. Studying English at college level has attracted thousands of students to meet the demand for competent English language users with high-quality education (Bergey et al., 2018).

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English is taught to college students in non-native English countries like Saudi Arabia either for academic purpose (EAP) or for specific purposes (ESP) as part of the EFL training. In both contexts students need to have good command on the essential skills: listening, speaking, reading and, writing in order to be successful English users. As indicated by research, writing is becoming the most essential skill to be acquired in many academic and professional fields. Students in higher education settings are encouraged to develop adequate writing abilities to promote self-expression, foster learning performance, and enhance academic achievement. Writing has also been considered the most difficult skill to master for both L1 and L2 learners as it involves a number of complex linguistic capabilities such as forming grammatical sentences, developing rhetorical competences in the conventions of every genre, and cognitive skills to implement cohesion and coherence (Graham, 2019).

Providing corrective feedback (CF) to students' writing is one of the techniques commonly employed to improve students' writing abilities. Corrective feedback has been defined as "any feedback provided to a learner, from any source that contains evidence of learner error of language form. It may be oral or written, implicit or explicit" (Russell & Spada, 2006, p. 134). Teachers provide written corrective feedback (WCF) for the purpose of treating a variety of inadequate structures and seek to "either correct the inaccurate usage or provide information about where the error has occurred and/or about the cause of the error and how it may be corrected" (Bitchener & Storch, 2016, p. 1).

The utility and effectiveness of WCF in L2 settings has been debated. Scholars such as Kepner (1991), Sheppard (1992), and Truscott (2007) warned that corrections on grammar can negatively affect the learner's L2 writing accuracy growth. According to this stance, even though L2 error correction could help students to produce revised drafts, it cannot motivate learning the target language, create opportunities for meaningful language use, or lead to internalized knowledge. Consequently, WCF does not really help students to improve their writing quality especially in the presence of teacher's limitation and narrow capacities in providing sufficient and constructive feedback as well as student's inattention and reluctance to use the feedback effectively.

In opposition, other scholars highlighted the usefulness and effectiveness of L2 teachers' written feedback through which both beginners and more proficient writers can evaluate their writing, enhance their linguistic development via text revisions especially their grammatical accuracy (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Ellis, 2009). Teachers' comments have the potential of making students realize the level of their performance, pay more attention to possible points of weaknesses, and guide them to develop their writing abilities in both short and long term (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Attentive and clear teacher's response, not over-stressing the correction of errors, has been found a motivating factor to help students revise their drafts and prevent the possible error fossilization that may occur if those errors are not corrected (Alqurashi, 2015).

WCF provided to students could be of three types: 'direct' by crossing out errors, inserting missing word(s), or providing the correct form to the students, 'indirect' by indicating in some way that an error exists without giving the correction which drives the student to find it, or 'metalinguistic' via coded comments that include keys to decipher their meaning. In addition, teacher feedback could focus on global issues such as content and organization or on local issues such as grammar and mechanics. Moreover, WCF could be comprehensive (unfocused) in extent where teachers comment on any type of errors and correct all the errors in students' written texts or, selective (focused) where the feedback emphasis is on highlighting a few linguistic targets and selecting specific errors to be corrected while other errors are ignored (Lee, 2013).

Further, research on feedback investigated how L2 teachers provide feedback, and the relationships between teachers' beliefs when they correct errors and classroom practices which represented a

paradigm shift from teachers' behavior to teachers' cognition. Within this framework teachers' beliefs were treated as cognitive filters that influence teachers' feedback decisions and shape teachers' actions in classrooms. Exploring teachers' beliefs was found useful to inform educational practices and analyze how teachers make meaning in the sense that "a more realistic understanding of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices can emerge when the analysis of what teachers do is the basis of eliciting and understanding the beliefs" (Phipps & Borg, 2009, p. 382).

Research in second/foreign language education indicated that teachers hold a complex set of beliefs in relation to pedagogical practices. In particular, teachers' beliefs reflect individual philosophies of teaching and determine their instructional decisions. However, many experiments reported a negative relation between teachers' beliefs and practices. Teachers in many cases cannot act upon their WCF beliefs because of different contextual barriers found in classrooms, schools, and communities. Such findings confirm that the process of providing corrective feedback does not take place in isolation but is influenced by various institutional and cultural factors which can result in discrepancies between teachers' belief and classroom practices or WCF approaches (Ellis, 2009; Hyland & Hyland, 2006)

There are numerous studies in the educational context in Saudi Arabia that investigated teachers' beliefs and practices in settings where English is taught as foreign language focusing on college English major students. However, there are less studies that focused on English for specific purposes (ESP) in the Saudi settings. This research study aims to investigate ESP writing teachers' stated beliefs and perceptions regarding the nature, extent, type, focus, and manner of written corrective feedback and how far those beliefs and perceptions match their actual WCF practices. It also examines the external barriers and network of different factors that could contribute to preventing teachers from enacting their stated beliefs into actual classroom and WCF practices.

2. Significance of the Study

The current study is significant as it investigates the relationship between teachers' WCF beliefs and practices in a target context that is still under-researched (college-level ESP in Saudi Arabia). The results, implications, and recommendations of this study could be used as references to future research in the field of EFL writing in Saudi Arabia and Arabic-speaking academic contexts. Since this study employed qualitative methods only, it has the potential to fill a gap in the larger body of research that has depended heavily on quantitative methods. It also contributes to L2 writing literature by presenting several recommendations on how to improve teachers' classroom behaviors and WCF practices which have the potential to help students in processing teacher feedback, producing better meaningful texts, internalizing knowledge, enhancing their language acquisition, and reinforcing their cognitive development and learning in general.

Furthermore, the significance of this study lies in its potential to interpret the related system of beliefs that the participant teachers embrace and how those beliefs shape their feedback approaches. Findings of this study provide important guiding instructional practices that could help teachers in their efforts to develop an optimum method of providing corrective feedback. The study also discusses various contextual factors that may discourage teachers from implementing their own beliefs during the process of responding to student writing. It is important for educational administrators and policy makers to take those contextual factors into account in any future development plans to facilitate teachers' work, augment their performance, and motivate them to do their best. Also, findings of the study could contribute beneficial insights to enhance the efforts to update and improve teachers' preparation programs with special focus on educational training targeting the promotion of better classroom practices.

3. Theoretical Context

Rather than following a certain theoretical account, this paper follows a multidisciplinary approach where several disciplines are implemented at the same time for the sake of gaining a more profound understanding of the overlapping variables and issues investigated in the paper in order to reach reasonable solutions to the complex situation at hand. More particularly, the present study is informed by the framework that posits that EFL college-level students can benefit from their teachers' corrective feedback to develop their writing skills in the target language (Ellis, 2009; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Furthermore, this study is drawing on the propositions of Griffiths and Oxford (2014) which maintain that pedagogical beliefs and practices are key factors to understand and enhance the learning context and promote the adequacy of instructing. Teachers and learners' viewpoints directly influence the educational process and facilitate the comprehension of the multidimensional nature of the language classroom.

This study is guided also by an interpretive approach which originates from the assumptions that there are distinctive ontological differences between the social world and the natural world. Consequently, it is necessary for the researchers to employ specific methodological tools to understand and investigate the social world from within a certain social context that cannot be examined objectively from the outside (Grix, 2010). The purpose of inquiry within the interpretive approach is to identify and account for a particular phenomenon, such as teachers' beliefs, perspectives, motives, and actual classroom practices with regard to written corrective feedback as well as students' preferences of the extent, scope, and type of such feedback in a natural context. In such a case, explaining the various personal reasons and attitudes that inspire similar social actions is a key step to understand the world as it is and to interpret the situation from subjective experiences of individual participants (Ellis, 2012).

4. Instructional Context

This study took place in a natural classroom setting in the foundation year in *English Language Center*, in Umm Al-Qura University. Saudi Arabia. Newly admitted students, who intend to join scientific majors such as medicine, engineering, or applied sciences, need to go through a full academic foundation year made up of two semesters, before they can join their academic degrees. The foundation year offers non-credit courses that provide students with the necessary knowledge in content areas and basic study skills needed for their future majors as well as intensive English language instruction. Students are taught English for specific purposes to help them prepare for their prospective academic fields. ESP courses are designed to meet students' various needs and are distributed at different levels of proficiency focusing on all language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

Upon admission, all new students are enrolled on a common course where they study the basics of English for specific purposes. The textbook used is Oxford University Press (OUP) Headway Plus system, which provides integrated materials to equip students with an intermediate level of English. In the second semester, students continue to take ESP courses where content and materials are customized specifically to the specific field of study that they select: medicine, technology, or commerce. In these ESP courses, students develop their abilities to read topics related to their chosen specialization, learn how to write technical reports suitable for their selected majors, and learn specific contextual vocabulary and terminology in English that are routinely used in different real-world situations.

5. Methodology

This study employed qualitative methods to gain an understanding of teachers' beliefs and practices on WCF within the natural social and learning context with all its complexities. Qualitative methods are flexible but systematic tools to obtain in-depth knowledge of the participants' behavior, opinions, or attitudes relating to a certain issue in a specific setting and help researchers understand and analyze their emotions, experiences, and perspectives (Austin & Sutton, 2014). In particular, this study addressed the following research questions:

1.   What is the nature of WCF that EFL teachers provide on L2 writing at the preparatory year in a public university in Saudi Arabia?
2.   What are the teachers' beliefs relating to the WCF they provide on their students' writing?
3.   To what extent do teachers' WCF practices align with their beliefs on WCF?

6. Participants

Four male teachers were selected to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. The researcher approached all the writing teachers in the preparatory year and explained to them the nature and objectives of the study and asked them if they were willing to contribute to this study. Table 1 presents the demographic details of the four teachers who satisfied the following inclusion criteria:

a)   They have five years or more of experience in teaching writing for specific purposes to students in the preparatory year.
b)   They have at least a master's degree in applied linguistics, TESOL, or a related field.
c)   They have different cultural and educational backgrounds.
d)   They are willing to participate in the study.

Table 1. Teachers' demographic information

Pseudonyms	Country of origin	Teaching experience	Highest qualification
Teacher 1	Sudan	11 years	MA in TESOL
Teacher 2	India	19 years	MA in English education
Teacher 3	Jordan	10 years	MA in TESOL
Teacher 4	Saudi Arabia	6 years	PhD in applied linguistics

7. Instruments

Three qualitative research instruments were utilized to collect data as follows:

1.   Unstructured classroom observations to identify the teachers' actual classroom practices related to how they correct student writings and to see if their practices match their beliefs.
2.   An analysis of teachers' written feedback on student writing to examine the teachers' actual practices in using WCF.
3.   Semi-structured interviews to obtain the teachers' beliefs about WCF.

8. Data Collection

Data were collected for this study via the following procedures:

8.1. Classroom observations

Because providing feedback to students' writing is not the sole activity that teachers carry out in class, it was necessary to take a comprehensive snapshot of real classroom practices to exemplify and reflect such practices in a natural environment. For the purpose of conducting smooth observation sessions all teacher participants were notified in advance about the nature and objectives of this research. Also, to collect reliable data teacher participants were assured that these observation sessions had nothing to do with their performance evaluation. Data were collected by means of non-participant observation where the researcher attended classes and recorded the whole class without disrupting the natural environment of the classroom. Observations were unstructured in the sense that the researcher reported all the details related to how teachers performed in classes and how they approached students with respect to their errors.

Overall, 8 observations were collected where each of the four teachers was observed twice. The first observation took place in week 4 while the second was carried out in week 8. The researcher observed each teacher for two full classes (i.e., two hours each) in order to ensure the validity of observation results and to avoid the possibility where teacher participants might change their teaching practices because they were under observation. Moreover, to ensure collecting more valid responses from teachers about their beliefs regarding WCF, their instructional and WCF practices were observed in classrooms before they were interviewed. This arrangement was necessary to substantiate the collected data and to prevent any possibility where teachers, in case they were interviewed first, might modify their actual WCF practices during classroom observations to meet the input they express in the interviews.

8.2. Text Analysis

Analyzing teachers' feedback on students' writings is a valuable tool to explore how the teachers involved in the study approached the tasks of responding to multiple types of errors in students' compositions. Text analysis has the advantage also to examine the strategies teachers used to provide help and guidance on how students can improve different aspects related to writing in English as a foreign language. Teachers' corrective feedback comments on 40 students' first draft of the essays, each teacher commented on 10 students', were collected randomly after getting the students' consent. The collected sample answers were an assignment in Chapter 6, 'Dermatology', of the textbook, *Oxford English for Careers: Nursing 2: Student's Book*. The writing prompt asked students to write an essay of 200-250 words to 'Describe the etiology, signs and symptoms, and management of athlete's foot.'

8.3. Teacher Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were employed to explore teachers' perspectives and beliefs with respect to providing corrective feedback to students' writing and to understand the factors that may influence their WCF practices. Teacher interviews have been found to be a good technique to obtain in-depth and considerable information about classroom practices where teachers have enough room to talk in greater details about their beliefs and motives regarding WCF (Richards & Morse, 2013). The interview questions were taken from previous studies by (e.g., Lee, 2008 & Al-Bakri, 2015). All interviews were conducted in week 12 and 13 at the English Language Center, lasted between 25-35 minutes each, and were audio-recorded on the researcher's cell phone.

Each teacher was interviewed separately at his time of convenience in a friendly atmosphere to allow him to feel relaxed about participating in the study and speak frankly about his viewpoints on

WCF. The researcher asked questions in English while teachers had the option to respond in English or Arabic. General open-ended questions were designed to get insights about and reasons for teachers' current feedback-providing practices and strategies. Teachers had the opportunity to talk about any possible difficulties or challenges they encountered while providing feedback, and also, responded to different queries motivated by certain elements reported during observation sessions or derived from their feedback given on students' writing.

9. Data Analysis

All data collected in this study were qualitative (i.e., classroom observations, text analysis, and teacher interviews). Even though there are several methods of analysis, "there is no one single or correct way to analyze and present qualitative data; how one does it should abide by fitness to the purpose" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 461). To interpret the data collected from the three sources, thematic analysis has been used to examine the different types of data to understand what they represent. Thematic analysis is a significant technique of analyzing a set of qualitative data to explore the participants' experiences, beliefs, values, or preferences.

Thematic analysis provides a lot of flexibility to identify common topics and ideas that emerge repeatedly in the data, report similarities and differences in findings, determine concepts precisely, compare the relationships between the relevant issues, and categorize diverse data into themes and patterns. Consequently, to achieve detailed and reliable description of the data obtained via teacher interviews, the researcher listened to the recorded files following the "note-expansion" technique where "the reporter (note taker) listens to the tape to clarify certain issues or to confirm that all the main points are included in the notes" (Bertrand, Brown & Ward, 1992, p. 202). Then, the notes were transcribed into text in a linear form and examined inductively to identify the common ideas expressed and sort the major issues discussed to be coded in certain themes and categories.

Then, data from classroom observations were checked against the transcripts and incorporated according to their patterns or relevance. Repeatedly mentioned thoughts and concepts were coded and all the codes categorized to create themes that cover all the data collected. Finally, each theme was clearly defined and provided with a name for purposes of clarity and distinction. The process of organizing and labeling qualitative data to identify different themes was achieved through two approaches: adopting some codes used in previous studies about the issues of WCF (deductive) and creating other codes to represent new directions emerging from the data collected (inductive). For purposes of consistency and validity while extrapolating information to answer the research questions, the same codes were used to represent the themes extracted from classroom observations and teacher interviews.

Checking the codes and themes produced by the researcher is important to assure correct data analysis. Codes and themes are more reliable when "two independent raters produce roughly the same results when putting the system into effect" (Smagorinsky, 2008, p. 401). To test the reliability of codes and themes, the coding process was verified with the help of a second rater, an associate professor in the English Language Center specializing in the field of applied linguistics with good research background on qualitative methods. He was familiarized with code definitions and provided with a randomly selected samples of each dataset. Then, he applied each list of codes on the related data to check the appropriateness of the coding system. Finally, the consistency between the researcher and the second rater in terms of producing codes and distributing themes was examined. There were a few differences between the researcher and the second rater. All instances of disagreement were reassessed and resolved and consequently, a few codes were either refined, added, or deleted.

Data collected through the third instrument, teachers' feedback on students' essays, were analyzed to investigate the teachers' actual WCF practices. Ten students' essays taken randomly from each of the four teachers (total of 40 essays with teachers' comments) were examined to determine the type (direct or indirect), focus (on global issues or on local issues), extent (comprehensive –unfocused– or, selective –focused–), and manner (positive or negative) of feedback provided to students. Written interventions made by the teachers to the students' essays, such as any correction, symbol, comment, or underlining on the written texts, are considered feedback points that are worth investigating (Hyland, 2016).

To maximize reliability in text analysis, all students' essays were checked by a second rater, a writing teacher with an MA in TESOL. A student's essay with WCF was selected randomly to train the second rater how to identify different WCF points. Then, the second rater individually coded four other students' essays with WCF, one from each of the four teachers that the researcher already coded. Comparing the second rater's codes with those of the researcher demonstrated prominent concurrence in identifying the types (88%), the focus (84%), the extent (94%), and the manner (69%) of the feedback points.

10. Findings

Data collected via the three instruments provided a lot of results. This section presents the detailed results of the data collected.

10.1. Observations

Classroom observations are an ethnographic method utilized to examine the teacher classroom practices. During observations the four teachers seemed serious in the way they introduced different educational materials, explained new concepts, and answered students' questions. Teacher classroom practices were consistent throughout the two observations even though they implemented variable classroom management methods, teaching styles, and motivation strategies. Teachers 2 and 4 were more dynamic in class. They used the blackboard and power point presentations to explain different points and gave room for students to raise points and ask questions. They seemed ready to repeat explaining any points as long as there were students asking for more clarification. They also had a more positive relationship with students compared to teachers 1 and 3 as they engaged in social conversations with students, seemed to enjoy their time in class, and were observed to display their affection through smiling and encouraging gestures. On the other hand, teachers 1 and 3 focused more on the book and had their students do all the exercises and then discussed the answers. They asked questions to examine the students' understanding of the explained rules but allowed only a few questions. They had less positive relationship with students especially teacher 3 who seemed isolated from students during classroom interactions.

In addition, there were variations with respect to the focus on different writing aspects. The four teachers had different areas of focus based on the various activities they employed in class. Teachers 1 and 3 focused more on language form where they emphasized the significance of submitting assignments with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation, both of them gave general guidelines regarding the content and organization without engaging students in deep content-related or organization-related activities. Teacher 4 placed more emphasis on content and organization and did not spend too much time on language form items. Teacher 2 paid equal attention to the three aspects. He explained the various items of language form and also clarified important dimensions on how to construct an essay with good content and organization. All the four teachers utilized peer response strategies to different extents for the sake of allowing students to comment on each other's writing

(teachers 1, 2 and 3) or giving the opportunity to students to do exercises jointly, work together in different stages of the writing process as well as providing feedback on each other's' compositions (teachers 4). However, a few instances of ineffective teaching were observed in the classrooms of the four teachers who did not offer many enriching activities that deeply challenged the students' cognitive functioning.

10.2. Text analysis

To analyze teachers' WCF on student essays, frequency counts on the feedback comments were identified and calculated following the criteria of Bitchener and Ferris (2012). The frequency of feedback comments demonstrated that the four teachers had different levels of focus on the three areas of corrective feedback: language form, organization, and content. Overall, most of the corrective feedback comments (57%) were on errors related to language form such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Corrective feedback comments addressing content and organization appeared with comparable frequencies. Errors related to content, including diverse ideas and subject unity where all sentences talk about one main topic, received 19% of the total WCF points while 24% of the points addressed organization patterns such as the structure of each essay part (introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion) and the presence/absence of a thesis statement, topic sentences and supporting details.

Regarding the type of WCF provided, teachers responded to the different writing aspects with relatively similar practices concerning the level of explicitness of comments on errors. In particular, all teachers employed both forms of feedback, the direct (56%) and the indirect (44%), with slight differences. Teacher 3 tended to use direct feedback more often, teachers 1 and 2 used both types of feedback almost equally, while teacher 4 tended to provide more indirect feedback. In the process of responding to students' writings, the teachers had a general tendency to provide direct corrections to language errors maybe because they appear more frequently than other kinds of errors or because language errors are minor and easy to spot and correct.

Furthermore, because teachers did not seem to have a clear focus on a specific type of error, they tended to correct all errors they found which reveals they provided more comprehensive feedback than selective comments. Conversely, there were some cases observed in teachers' feedback to students' essays of different kinds of errors that teachers did not respond to and other cases where teachers underlined or crossed out errors without giving any comments. It is hard to tell if those errors were left unmarked or uncorrected because teachers did not notice them or because they decided not to correct them. A majority of unmarked/uncorrected errors were related to content and organization which poses the question if they were ignored because teachers did not know how to deal with them or because they were not considered serious errors. Table 2 presents the type and focus of teachers' WCF.

Table 2. Type and focus of teachers' corrective feedback

Participant	WCF points	Type		Focus		
		Direct	**Indirect**	**Lang. form**	**Content**	**Organization**
Teacher 1	78	52 (67%)	26 (33%)	59 (76%)	8 (10%)	11 (14%)
Teacher 2	106	47 (44%)	59 (56%)	46 (43%)	29 (27%)	31 (29%)
Teacher 3	93	71 (77%)	22 (23%)	67 (72%)	11 (12%)	15 (16%)
Teacher 4	99	41 (42%)	58 (58%)	44 (45%)	21 (21%)	34 (34%)
Total	**376**	**211 (56%)**	**156 (44%)**	**216 (57%)**	**69 (19%)**	**91 (24%)**

Table 2 above shows that all teachers focused on the language form more than other categories. This finding seems normal since errors on mechanics and language form appear more frequently in students' writing which confirms teachers' input from interviews that they find errors of this type the most common errors among students. Moreover, even though all teachers looked at all essay components (i.e., introduction, body, and conclusion), teachers 1 and 3 focused on the presence of thesis statements and topic sentences without giving many comments on those items. Teachers 2 and 4 gave more comments on the presence of the introductions, topic sentences, conclusions, and relevance of supporting details.

In addition, errors related to content (unity, coherence, as well as clarity and development of ideas) received less attention than those related to language form and organization. In many cases teachers used comments like 'unclear' or 'irrelevant' in response to content errors without providing solutions which indicates an assumption that students can figure out how to correct those errors themselves. In a few cases teachers decided not to grade a few essays with many unclear or random ideas which implies that teachers expected students to turn in well-structured or at least acceptable essays.

In the process of providing corrective feedback on student essays, the four teachers were generally encouraging and gave positive comments. Praising comments addressed content and organization mainly with only few cases targeting language form. Teachers 2 and 4 were even more specific in giving comments like *good introduction, excellent idea, great details,* and *nice comparison*. There were also some responses that could be considered neutral made by all teachers especially on serious errors related to the organization (i.e., *no thesis statement*) or the content (i.e., *not enough ideas*). However, there were some cases of negative feedback when responding to students who made spelling mistakes or frequent errors on simple issues like subject-verb agreement or verb tenses. Most of this feedback came from teachers 2 and 3 and included comments like *very unclear*, *so vague*, *WOW!!* or *What??*

In addition, teachers' WCF provided to students varied in quality and quantity based on their writing levels. Corrective feedback given to low-achieving students was direct and comprehensive in most of the cases while high-achieving ones enjoyed more indirect comments. Besides, low- achievers received more responses, mostly negative, than high-achievers. There were cases of 3 or 4 errors in one sentence which made teachers underline all the errors and give the necessary comments. In a few cases, when the essay was full of errors teachers did not comment on every single one. Teacher 3, in such cases particularly, would underline all the errors and put question marks besides them. This might indicate that teachers became frustrated because of the quality and quantity of errors, or they just did not want to disappoint their students, especially the low- achievers, with too many corrections. Table 3 shows the statistical details of the four teachers' total WCF points on students' essays.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of teachers' WCF points

Teachers	Drafts	WCF points	Range	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
Teacher 1	10	78	0-9	7.8	.512	1.61
Teacher 2	10	106	0-14	10.6	.702	2.22
Teacher 3	10	93	0-11	9.3	.517	1.63
Teacher 4	10	99	0-12	9.9	.481	1.52
Total	04	376				
Average		3.76				

10.3. Teacher interviews

Data collected through teacher interviews were analyzed to elucidate teachers' perspectives about writing instruction and clarify their beliefs about giving WCF. All teachers accentuated that writing instruction is helpful to students and necessary for their progress because, according to teacher 1, "*Writing is the most important skill for students in the prep year.*" Teacher 4 viewed writing as a basic indicator of any successful professional career stating that "*When students graduate and become doctors and engineers, they will need to write reports with good English so they should prepare themselves very well.*" With regard to aspects of writing instruction that should be given priority in classrooms, the four teachers did not agree on what aspects to focus on. Teacher 2 believed in the importance of all the aspects saying, "*Students need to learn everything to be competent in their professions in the future*", while Teacher 4 stressed the importance of good content and organization saying, "*Good writing must have clear ideas and good organization to be able to communicate their thoughts.*" Teachers 1 and 3 were in favor of promoting aspects related to language form because, according to Teacher 3, "*Writing teachers should pay more attention to spelling and grammar to produce good looking essays.*"

Moreover, the four teachers expressed different attitudes towards teaching writing. Teachers 3 and 4 mentioned they do not like to teach writing anymore and wish to switch roles with other teachers in the sense that, according to Teacher 3, "*Teaching writing should be rotated among all teachers in the English Language Center.*" Teacher 1 did not seem to care much about this issue stating, "*I can teach anything and after all, teaching all skills is the same.*" Teacher 2 expressed similar views and confirmed he wants to continue teaching writing because he enjoys "*seeing the progress of students as writers.*"

Interestingly, all the teachers highlighted the importance of engaging students in various writing activities for the sake of enhancing their writing skills. Teacher 4 maintained that teaching writing according to the process approach is very helpful because "*Introducing writing to students in stages make them understand each stage and make them capable of doing the exercises related to that particular stage.*" Teacher 2 mentioned that his students got a lot of benefit from discussing the common errors that appear in their writing and stated "*Many students are not even aware of their errors and sometimes they don't read my comments. Therefore, discussing their mistakes in class is very important.*" Teacher 3 stressed the benefits of multiple-draft writing but at the same time complained that "*Students cannot make any progress if the second draft they turn in looks almost like the first draft without creating real changes.*" Teacher 1 explained how he used model essays written by professional writers to improve students' written performance saying, "*Students really need to read passages that other people wrote so they can see good models of writing and follow the same steps to figure out how they can express themselves in a better way.*"

Teachers also expressed different beliefs about various issues related to WCF. All of them emphasized the significance of providing corrective feedback to student writing and mentioned that the purpose of such practice is, according to Teacher 4, "*To help weak students become good and good students become better.*" Teacher 2 considered WCF necessary for effective teaching since "*Common mistakes in students' essays help me to focus on certain points even if I have to explain the same points again and again.*" This is a clear indication that teachers are aware of the different advantages of corrective feedback that could serve short-term goals (helping students improve their writing) and long-term goals (helping teachers improve their instruction).

Ultimately, even though teachers advocated peer response activities, they put more value on teachers' responses and considered them the major source for corrective feedback. In this regard, Teacher 3 ascertained "*Only good students can provide some help to other students. However, you*

cannot depend on their corrections because some of them are wrong." This shows clearly that teachers employed peer response as a classroom activity only, but they did not consider it a reliable source for authentic responses. They mentioned they implemented peer response "*To give the students a sense of responsibility*" according to Teacher 1 and also because "*Students should know how to help each other before their teachers help them*" as Teacher 2 stated. Classroom observations and teacher's WCF indicated that the four teachers utilized both peer response and teachers' feedback with different techniques and at different levels. However, none of the teachers seemed to be aware of their students' preferences related to corrective feedback to their writing. Three teachers thought this was not important while Teacher 4 mentioned he might consider the idea of asking his students about their WCF preferences.

As for the delivery of WCF, the four teachers mentioned they preferred direct feedback where they underline or cross out mistakes and provide corrections. However, teachers employed coded feedback in some cases because, according to Teacher 3, "*Good students can understand what the codes mean and fix the mistakes themselves.*" This tendency suggests that even though all teachers highlighted the effectiveness of direct feedback, they had variations in providing feedback depending on the type of error and on the student's level, as Teacher 4 described, "*You do not have to correct simple errors, otherwise the paper will be filled of comments. Let the students search for solutions.*" None of the teachers were in favor of the indirect uncoded feedback where mistakes are underlined or crossed out without providing codes or corrections.

Another issue that all teachers were in favor of was the amount of WCF that should be given to students. They believed in unfocused corrective feedback where all errors are marked comprehensively because, according to Teacher 2, "*This is the favorite way for students to help them improve their writing.*" Another reason was "*if you do not respond to all kinds of errors students think you are not doing your job or maybe they do not even realize they made mistakes which means they will keep making the same mistakes over and over*" as Teacher 3 stated. Yet, teacher WCF analysis revealed that there were several mistakes that teachers did not mark which indicates a tendency to provide selective feedback in some cases rather than a comprehensive one. When this issue was raised during the interviews, Teacher 4 justified this practice saying, "*Sometimes you do not want students to feel distracted or overwhelmed or demotivated when they have too many corrections.*"

However, despite all teachers were in favor of unfocused (comprehensive) feedback, they expressed a tendency to provide more comments on certain errors more than on others which indicates they had different beliefs about what areas of writing to focus on. In particular, Teachers 1 and 3 mentioned that errors in language form are the most frequent errors in student writing which means they had to deal with such errors more often. Other errors related to content or organization attracted less attention because, according to Teacher 1, "*They are not too many*" or because, as Teacher 3 stated, "*Students have a hard time understanding concepts like cohesion or coherence. They should learn such concepts in more advanced courses when their language proficiency improves.*" Teacher 2 believed in the importance of responding to all aspects of student writing because "*This is the only way they can make some progress.*" Teacher 4 was in favor of focusing on aspects of content and organization in the sense that "*This is what we are supposed to do. Students study grammar, spelling, and vocabulary in other courses but rhetorical aspects are introduced only here.*" Interestingly, teachers' beliefs about the focus of WCF were congruent with their instructional practices witnessed during classroom observations, and, partially consistent with their actual WCF practices where the four teachers focused on different issues related to students' writing.

Lastly, the four teachers agreed that they should treat students very well and provide them with positive feedback because "*A good atmosphere encourages the student to do better and work hard*" as Teacher 2 stated. Teacher 3 added, "*Students' efforts should be valued and making mistakes should not*

be considered a big issue" while Teacher 1 stressed that "*We are here to solve their problems and facilitate everything for them. Of course they do better with good motivation.*" However, teachers' beliefs regarding positive feedback did not align with the corrective comments or classroom practices of Teacher 3 who made negative comments on students' errors and poor performance, and did not maintain a friendly atmosphere with students during classes. Comments of Teacher 1 seemed neutral in most of the cases in which he did not encourage or discourage students. Conversely, the beliefs of Teachers 2 and 4 regarding positive feedback seemed consistent with their classroom practices and the corrective feedback they provided to student writing.

Teachers' responses about the type, extent, and focus they provide indicate that some teachers believed that their corrective feedback should vary depending on the students' level of writing proficiency. In this regard Teacher 4 explained, "*I prefer to give detailed comments but not to all students and not in all situations. Good students understand the point quickly.*" However, Teacher 3 raised the point that low-achieving students do not seem to get the benefit from corrective feedback because they make the same mistakes over and over. In this regard he stated, "*It is really frustrating that spend time to correct papers and you find the same mistakes the next time as if you did not explain anything or did not write anything on the board.*" Teacher 2 also reaffirmed this idea saying "*Less skilled students need specific comments on simple issues like grammar and spelling. If you give them many comments you confuse them. In some cases, you have to ignore certain mistakes so you do not bother them.*"

Teachers' beliefs regarding the variation of focus, amount, explicitness, and manner of WCF are congruent with their actual feedback given to students where their comments varied based on the type of error and the students' ability levels. In addition, it is clear there is no special attention given to weak students to enhance their learning abilities. The preparatory year administration did not allocate extra classes, supplementary lessons, or tutoring sessions as an attempt to bridge the gap and enhance academic performance of struggling students who would, most likely, remain weak till there are institutional efforts to meet their needs.

11. Discussion

This section presents a more detailed examination of the findings of the three sources of the study in order to provide a comprehensive view of the beliefs and actual WCF practices of four ESP writing teachers and how far they align or misalign. The misalliance between beliefs and practices could be a result of the state of mismatch between the teachers' belief systems or network of beliefs where the stronger or core beliefs outweigh the peripheral ones in influencing teachers' practices and shaping their choice of certain actions. Core beliefs are important as they act like an inner drive to formulate actual practices because they are "experientially ingrained, while peripheral beliefs, though theoretically embraced, will not be held with the same level of conviction" (Phipps & Borg, 2009, p. 388). Discussion will focus on the seven themes extracted from the collected data as follows:

11.1. Purpose of WCF

The findings revealed that all the teachers accentuated the usefulness of providing corrective feedback to their students for the purpose of enhancing their students' writing accuracy. Teachers' WCF confirmed this belief since all of them provided multiple kinds of corrective comments to students' writing which means their beliefs were consistent with their practices in this regard. This situation has been repeatedly reported in the literature. Lee (2003), who interviewed secondary English instructors in Hong Kong and surveyed their WCF, found that teachers' practices matched their beliefs about the effectiveness of providing corrective feedback to help students become aware of their errors.

In Bailey and Garner's (2010) study, where 48 teachers in one university were interviewed in relation to the purpose and value of WCF, findings revealed that teachers provided corrective feedback and believed in its developmental and formative role. Alshahrani and Storch (2014) found similar results where the participant teachers believed that corrective comments are important to improve students' writing and provided comprehensive feedback which means their practices were in line with their beliefs. Other studies reported that if teachers do not respond to students' texts they blame themselves for not doing what is expected from them and feel guilty and fear that others would think they are incapable, lazy, and lacking responsibility. Consequently, students become more anxious and less motivated which are signs of poor performance that could lead to underachievement (Alqurashi, 2019).

11.2. Source of WCF

The four teachers advocated providing corrective comments to their students and depended heavily on their WCF to respond to students' writing which represents another area of alignment between their beliefs and practices. Even though teachers considered peer response helpful and felt it should be implemented as a guided classroom practice, they did not treat it as a primary source of WCF nor did they believe it could replace or compensate for teachers' response. Many studies in L2 contexts reported similar findings where teachers believed in the importance of utilizing peer response for the sake of boosting students' recognition of the different errors they make and allowing them to provide help to their classmates. Yet, teachers maintained a tendency to depend on teacher's direct response and teacher-led discussion in the process of providing feedback on students' writing (Jodaie & Farrokhi, 2012).

Conversely, writing teachers in many L1 settings implemented, believed in the importance of peer review, and found it practical in association with multiple benefits where the students' learning is enhanced within a process of giving and receiving peer feedback reviews (Nicol et al., 2014). Other studies in L1 settings reported that the quality of students' draft assignments improved when they received feedback from multiple peers (Dressler et al., 2019). These differences between L1 and L2 contexts with respect to implementing WCF might be a result of the fact that writing teachers in L2 settings were not given any focused training in language pedagogy in relation to the significance and mechanism of implementing peer response along with teacher corrective feedback.

11.3. Type (Explicitness) of WCF

Even though teachers claimed in the interviews that they preferred and provided direct feedback for a variety of reasons, the findings from text analyses revealed that they frequently utilized both types of corrective feedback, direct (explicit) and indirect (inexplicit) with comparable ratios (56% and 44% respectively), which indicates a mismatch between beliefs and practices. Teachers' preference for the direct feedback might have come from their belief that explicit WCF is more beneficial since students in L2 settings do not have enough linguistic competence to write correctly. Such a situation makes teacher direct intervention necessary for students to understand the nature of errors which in turn enhances their writing proficiency.

Several empirical studies found a widespread tendency among EFL writing teachers to provide indirect WCF for advanced students or when given on treatable errors that average students can correct themselves such as errors in spelling or subject-verb agreement. On the other hand, direct corrective feedback was found more functional for weaker students who, in most of the cases, struggle to understand error codes and cannot self-correct their errors. Direct WCF was found effective also when given on untreatable errors which can be difficult and beyond students' abilities to be self-corrected, such as complex lexical or organizational errors (Ferris, 2012).

Such beliefs in the utility and helpfulness of the explicit type of WCF could be considered an important sign that teachers believed in the teacher-centered approach, where knowledge is thought to be transmitted directly by the teacher who does not trust the students' capacity to figure out and correct their own errors. The mismatch between such beliefs of promoting direct WCF and real practices where direct and indirect WCF were used together could have been a result of the heavy workload and time constraints which made providing detailed and explicit WCF all the time exhausting and time-consuming for the teachers, as Van Beuningen (2010) explained. Employing a mixture of direct and indirect corrective feedback has been reported in previous studies. Bitchener and Ferris (2012), for example, found similar results as well and justified this tendency by contending that providing a combination of direct and indirect WCF is the best way to help students recognize their errors, and also, the most effective approach to boost up their learning and understanding of teachers' comments.

Overall, researchers in the field of L2 writing did not agree on the superiority of one type of corrective feedback over the other. Providing direct corrective feedback was found more useful in different EFL writing settings as it reflects teachers' responsibility, seriousness, and commitment to students' needs (Al-Jarrah, 2016). More feedback explicitness was considered more helpful for the students' reflection and cognitive engagement (Ferris, 2012). Conversely, the indirect correction approach was found in other contexts more appropriate as it encourages students to be more thoughtful and analytical about their errors since providing explicit feedback to all errors could make students over reliant on the teacher which does not enhance their cognitive development (Storch, 2010).

11.4. Extent (amount) of WCF

The four teachers stressed in the interviews that they preferred to mark all errors they find in students' essays and give comprehensive (unfocused) corrective feedbacks that target a range of errors rather than single-type errors. Interestingly, their actual WCF practices showed they did not concentrate on certain kinds of errors while giving comprehensive comments which suggests that teachers' practices were congruent with their beliefs in relation to the extent of corrective feedback. These findings are in line with those of other studies in EFL settings where teachers favored the comprehensive approach as they believed that students would find a great amount of feedback motivating while little feedback might make students unhappy or confused (Alkhatib, 2015).

However, there are other empirical studies that yielded contrary results where both students and teachers found selective (focused) WCF more manageable than unfocused feedback (Evans et al., 2010). Focused WCF was also found more effective for promoting writing accuracy because it directs students' attention more successfully to a preselected target form (Kassim & Ng, 2014). Likely, Hamouda (2011), who explored Saudi EFL students' preferences and teachers' attitudes towards written corrective feedback found that teachers preferred to give more selective feedback which made the process of error correction more practical. Some L2 writing experts did not endorse the traditional comprehensive approach of WCF and doubted the effectiveness of marking and responding to all errors on the basis that it does not help students to understand their errors or master the necessary skills of self-editing (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

Lee (2013) claimed that the comprehensive approach was prevailing in most EFL writing contexts were responding to more errors reflects, according to teachers, a feeling of more responsibility as educators and a sense of capability of positive intervention. However, there is an increasing tendency among L2 writing instructors to employ focused approach to WCF to encourage students to take responsibility of their own learning (Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). Because of the conflicting findings of the different studies, some other L2 writing experts maintained that both comprehensive and selective WCF are effective for developing accuracy in student writing (Ellis et al., 2008). This opinion lends

support to the argument that different amounts of WCF are more effective in different contexts, because "it is far from clear which error correction techniques are the most efficacious …. It is unlikely that there is one feedback strategy that is better than others for all occasions" (Larsen-Freeman, 2019, pp. 104–105).

Teachers in the present study could have had similar feelings and thoughts that they needed to utilize comprehensive WCF to demonstrate that they are serious in grading assignments and that leaving errors uncorrected is a sign they are not doing their job honestly. Another possible factor to adhering to comprehensive feedback could be that teachers may not have received enough training to choose the proper extent of corrective feedback which made them feel they needed to respond to all errors. There are various criteria, reported in the literature, to determine what targets of corrective feedback to select such as frequency of the error, effect of the error on intelligibility, and relation to the course objectives (Aljasir, 2021).

11.5. Focus of WCF

The interviews revealed that the teachers in this study had different beliefs about what areas of writing to focus on when providing WCF which reflects their diverse views regarding what aspects of writing that should receive more attention. However, text analysis showed that the highest percentage of teachers' comments focused primarily on language form errors such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Teachers had less focus on errors related to organization while content received the least attention which indicates that teachers were divided in their beliefs and practices regarding the focus of WCF. Two of them stated that language form should be the primary focus of WCF while another teacher believed that organization is more important than other aspects, and the fourth one advocated responding to all aspects of students' writing. Recent studies in EFL writing settings reported similar results of misalignment between beliefs and actual practices of the distribution of local vs. global feedback. Mao and Crosthwaite (2019) found that teachers in a Chinese context focused more on grammar even though they thought that they offered more feedback on global issues. Also, most teachers in a general foundation program in a private university in Oman favored the focus on all aspects of writing but their actual practices showed that they were divided between providing holistic feedbacks and focusing only on language accuracy and mechanics (Trabelsi, 2021).

A possible reason justifying the focus on errors related to language form could be that errors of this type were the most frequently appearing errors in students' essays which means that teachers had to deal with this type of errors more than other types. In addition, the prevailing exam culture gives the impression that teachers should focus on the form more than the content which could have affected their practices and made them pay more attention to language-related aspects to help students pass the writing exam. This is an important indication that the teachers of this study considered preparing students to pass the exams a core belief and looked at focusing on the content as a peripheral belief. Studies that looked at the different conceptualizations of categories of beliefs concluded that teachers' core beliefs, experientially rooted convictions, are usually stable, dominant, and more influential in modeling teachers' WCF approaches and instructional decisions than peripheral beliefs which are flexible and changeable in most of the cases (Phipps & Borg, 2009).

11.6. Manner of WCF

Some of the teachers' responses demonstrated in text analysis showed that their practices did not accord with their beliefs about the significance of providing positive comments to students' writing. This issue witnessed another division among teachers in which two teachers gave negative feedback whereas a majority of the comments provided by the other two teachers were mainly positive. This

finding echoes classroom observations where two teachers were patient, encouraging, and maintained good relationship with students while the other two teachers were less encouraging and did not care to preserve a supportive atmosphere with students. More particularly, most praising comments were given to students with medium to high writing proficiency while less-skilled students received punitive responses.

The cause of this inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and practices might be adopting an error-focused approach to providing corrective feedback which is highly embraced in EFL writing settings. According to this approach, teachers are geared towards focusing on students' weaknesses in writing more than their strength (Lee, 2009). Previous studies in L2 writing research in Saudi Arabia reported similar findings where teachers accentuated the importance of providing positive feedback in developing the students' writing, but actually, they gave more negative feedback than positive because of the assumption that negative feedback is more beneficial and can contribute to improving students' writing more than positive comments (Hamouda, 2011).

This tendency could be very harmful in discouraging students. In educational psychology, it is important for teachers to be positive in dealing with students to increase their motivation and self-esteem. Moreover, to make the learning experience pleasant, very effective and long-lasting, teachers should avoid negative responses to students' weak performance so that they do not feel anxious and reluctant to participate (Arifin, 2017). Teacher's disruptive comments and harsh feedback can escalate tension, lower students' confidence, and make them feel combative which are signs of a confrontational ambiance. Conversely, providing positive feedback has the potential to enhance good interpersonal relationships with students which makes them feel empowered and protected from possible psychological problems such as shyness, anxiety, fear of making mistake, and lack of confidence that could hinder their achievement (Ferris, 2019).

11.7. Variation of WCF

Teachers' actual feedback comments given to students were found consistent with their beliefs that the amount, focus, and explicitness of WCF should vary based on the type of error and the students' ability levels. Low-achieving students got more direct and comprehensive feedback in most of the cases while more indirect and selective responses were given to the high-achieving ones which indicates a kind of teacher awareness of students' needs. Previous empirical studies in EFL contexts reported that many teachers provided varied corrective feedback in type, extent, and focus and believed in modifying their responses to meet certain needs based on the students' proficiency levels (Zheng & Yu, 2018).

This could mean also that teachers in the present study might have considered commenting on students' essays a form of two-way interaction and consequently felt encouraged to give detailed responses to more proficient students because they saw good results for their corrective feedback. The repetitive errors could have discouraged teachers and made them provide less feedback to less-skilled students or sometimes leave errors uncorrected or even unmarked. Even though this is a negative teaching practice, it could be part of a widespread culture-based trend with a biased relationship between teachers and students favoring more-proficient students and paying more attention to their progress while the less-proficient ones enjoy less attention (Hamouda, 2011).

12. Causes for Misalignment

All in all, the views that teachers expressed in the interviews contradicted some of their WCF and classroom teaching practices and were in line with some other practices. There are numerous studies that attempted to account for similar cases of misalignment and concluded that there is always an

interactive and complex relationship between beliefs and practices. Teachers' classroom and feedback practices are directly influenced by their beliefs, but at the same time not everything teachers do reflects their stated beliefs (Santos & Miguel 2019). Cases of incongruence between beliefs and practices take place because "teachers' feedback practices are not just dictated by the perceived difficulties or needs of the students in their writing classes but also by the existing external factors such as teachers' beliefs on feedback, cultural, and institutional contexts, among others" (Magno & Amarles, 2011: 21). Researchers who explored the different cases of incongruence treated these 'external factors' as contextual influences that could play significant roles on the process of forming teachers' pedagogical beliefs. Furthermore, such misalignment between beliefs and practices can impose multiple barriers that could shape teachers' behaviors and prevent them from integrating their espoused beliefs into real classroom practices.

No doubt there are many contextual constraints that affect teachers' classroom practices in any educational setting, so they need to recognize and consider all the relevant influences when providing appropriate corrective feedback to students' writing. The process of providing WCF is inevitably impacted by teachers' beliefs which are usually influenced by their educational background, work experience, behavioral convictions, and personal preferences. Discrepancy between teachers' beliefs and practices is closely related to an important distinction between personal and professional values. Any conflict between these sets of values would seriously affect teachers' positive disposition towards teaching where they find themselves in many workplaces forced to adopt certain practices dictated by school regulations that have nothing to do with their personal preferences (Santos & Miguel, 2019).

Such a situation could create a passive work environment where teachers lose the desire to change and the momentum for development which increases job stress and diminishes their feelings of self-efficacy (Demir, 2016). In addition, official restrictions enacted on teachers could also impact the degree of confidence in their abilities as professionals, the commitment to elevate their pedagogical knowledge and skills, and the motivation for excellent work performance. Influences of the socio-political context creates a situation of unequal power relations which obligates teachers to act the subservient role where they become unable to "self-actualize a new and more autonomous, responsible role for themselves" (Hamp-Lyons, 2007, p. 495).

Teachers involved in this study were not essentially writing teachers. They all had degrees in L2 teaching and through the years they taught other skills to L2 learners including reading, structure, and study skills. Because they were perceived as 'good teachers' they were assigned to teach writing without going through professional training specifically targeting writing instruction. This could have affected their teaching philosophy and behavior especially with respect to providing WCF. It goes without saying that for teachers to provide corrective feedback successfully they need specific training in the skills and content areas they are supposed to teach, ESP writing in this case.

It is necessary for teachers to acquire cutting-edge pedagogical knowledge about the nature and benefits of written feedback to elevate and foster their feedback literacy and maximize the efficacy of their written corrective feedback. Teachers also need further training on the dynamics of teacher–student interaction and interpersonal relationships related to different contextual variables to enhance their professional experience and meet various classroom challenges. Also, the surveyed writing teachers are non-native speakers of English which means they are, in fact, learners of English themselves and sensitive to language issues, and consequently, in need of adequate relevant training to be able to integrate both language and content the right way so they feel empowered to reflect on their own feedback practices (Llinares & Lyster, 2014).

Furthermore, the different, and sometimes opposing, beliefs and practices of the teachers in this study may have to do with differences in their majors and teaching experience. The stated beliefs and

actual practices of Teacher 2, for example, were more consistent than those of the other three teachers. This could be attributed to the long experience in the field of teaching English (19 years) that could have helped him reach a high level of awareness about the basics of the profession of teaching. In addition, teaching experience has been found positively related to student achievement gains since experienced teachers are more capable of meeting various demanding work conditions and responding to the students' needs which improves their learning outcomes (Madigan & Kim, 2021).

Teachers 1 and 3, in contrast, seemed less stable in their teaching, less organized in providing corrective feedback, and their expressed beliefs did not accord with many of their practices. These downsides could have come from their limited experience in teaching at the collegiate level since they spent most of their careers teaching English to high school students in their countries of origin, Sudan and Jordan respectively. Cases of discrepancy between teachers' stated beliefs about corrective feedback and their real feedback approaches in many other settings were found largely influenced by their own previous experiences in learning and teaching including teachers' L2 writing competence, instructional styles, and lack of professional training (Li, 2017).

Work conditions are among the contextual factors that could preclude teachers from giving WCF that matches their beliefs. In particular, three of the teachers in this study are expatriates who hold the position of 'language instructor' and required to teach 18 hours weekly. They have worked at this university for some years and their work contracts are renewed annually according to the needs of the school. Teacher 4 is the only Saudi national, and also, the only one with a PhD degree. He holds the position of Assistant Professor with a teaching load of 14 hours weekly. Such heavy teaching loads and the continuous pressure to satisfy the school requirements for renewing contracts can make teachers intensely exhausted, unable to manage their weekly schedule, and unable to enact their own beliefs. Teachers may believe that direct/comprehensive WCF is the best for students but because of the high number of students and the limited time, they find themselves forced to give indirect/selective comments. What makes the situation worse is when teachers find that all their efforts in reading multiple drafts and giving corrective feedback did not make any difference or contribute to improving students' quality of writing since the provided WCF goes, in many cases, entirely unread by students (Halonen & Dunn, 2018).

This situation could make teachers dissatisfied with students' attitudes towards WCF and lead them to believe that students are not serious about their study. The small number of students who successfully rewrite the assignments according to their teachers' feedback indicates that a majority of students are low-achievers and not committed to treat error feedback seriously (Lee, 2004). Such student with negative attitudes, which are contrary to teachers' expectations, could lead to more misalignment between teachers' perceptions and corrective feedback approaches. The school policy, regulations of the preparatory year in this case, do not highlight providing extra support to weak students to improve their proficiency level.

In particular, the preparatory year administration did not allocate extra classes, supplementary lessons, or tutoring sessions as an attempt to bridge the gap and enhance academic performance of struggling students who would, most likely, remain weak so long as there are no institutional efforts to meet their needs. As a result, weak students are accorded with a negative image where they are thought of as having no interest in working hard or no ability to make more efforts to be at bar with the high achievers. This negative image could have made teachers, maybe unconsciously, neglect or pay only little attention to weak students and think they do not want or do not have the ability to improve their writing abilities and that they usually do not care whether they pass the course or not.

13. Conclusion

The current study investigates the expressed beliefs and perceptions of four ESP writing teachers and their real classroom practices in relation to written corrective feedback provided to students in the preparatory year in English Language Center at Umm Al-Qura University, Saudi Arabia. The collected qualitative data indicated that teachers' practices matched their beliefs in different areas. Teachers deemed corrective feedback necessary to enhance students' written accuracy and provided corrective comments for this purpose. The four teachers in the study depended heavily on their WCF to meet the students' needs for corrections even though they considered peer response helpful for students in revising each other's drafts which indicates they treated their own corrective comments as a primary source of WCF. Marking all the errors in students' drafts and providing comprehensive (unfocused) corrective feedbacks is a third area of alignment between teachers' beliefs and practices. They targeted a range of errors rather than concentrating on certain kinds of mistakes. Furthermore, the four teachers stressed that feedback should vary in amount, focus, and explicitness based on the type of error and the students' ability levels. In the process of responding to students' writing they gave more indirect/selective responses to high-achieving students while more direct/comprehensive comments were given to the low-achieving ones.

Moreover, some cases of disparity between teachers' practices and beliefs were identified. Even though teachers expressed several reasons in the interviews for preferring direct feedback, they were found to employ both types of corrective feedback, direct (explicit) and indirect (inexplicit) with compatible ratios. Teachers had different beliefs about what aspects of writing should receive more attention when providing WCF. In practice, their comments addressed language form errors such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation more than errors related to organization and content. The four teachers talked in the interviews about the significance of providing positive and encouraging feedback to students. However, two teachers enacted their beliefs and gave constructive comments while most of the feedback provided by the other two teachers was negative, especially to less-skilled students. In general, it is very important to understand, examine, and assess teachers' beliefs as a key constituent in teachers' cognition along with their knowledge, theories, values, attitudes, and assumptions. Teachers' classroom performance and WCF practices are highly influenced by their cognition. However, the broader context and network of different factors as well as a variety of external barriers can contribute to preventing teachers from enacting their beliefs in their actual classroom practices and WCF approaches.

Several aspects inside or outside the classroom's borders influenced the teachers' behaviors and decisions and shaped the type, extent, focus, and manner of the provided corrective feedback. It is always important to reach greater understanding of the contextual factors to analyze the interactive relationship between beliefs and practices. The discrepancy between personal and professional values in workplace could lead to different levels of incongruence between beliefs and practices. Personal values are shaped by the educational background, work experience, behavioral convictions, and individual preferences while professional values represent the school's policies, regulation, and rules.

Also, teachers surveyed in this study are not professional ESP writing teachers since they did not receive specific training related to ESP writing instruction. They did not have the opportunity to acquire cutting-edge pedagogical knowledge about the mechanism of written feedback necessary to qualify them to build positive beliefs and provide effective feedback. Three of the teachers did not have enough teaching experience which is necessary to build the required awareness to teach college students. Work conditions could have added adverse pressures that affected the teachers' performance. They had to teach a heavy load and deal with too many students, most of whom are weak and

unmotivated which might be additional reasons why teachers did not give the kind of adequate feedback that may have been possible otherwise.

14. Limitations

There were some limitations in the current research that should be acknowledged. The number of participants in this study was relatively small. Only four teachers were interviewed, and forty student drafts were examined which makes the results not readily generalizable. A larger sample is required in future studies to verify these results and broaden the understanding of the investigated issues. Additionally, due to the research focus, this study did not look at the effect of other factors like characteristics of the learners, dynamics of the discussion, and classroom management. Taking these factors into account in future studies is important to understand their influence on teachers' interactional patterns and WCF practices. Also, this study primarily collected data from semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and teachers' feedback on their students' writing samples. Other instruments of data collection could be employed in future studies including stimulated recalls and think-aloud protocols to offer more insights into the mechanism of teachers' decision-making about what kind of feedback to provide and the factors contributing to the differences of teachers' feedback practices. Finally, the present study examined teachers' written feedback beliefs and practices at only one point in time instead of over time. Therefore, more longitudinal studies are needed to explore the development of teachers' instructional practices and the factors that initiate changes in teachers' WCF performance.

15. Implications

The current study yields useful pedagogical implications for learning and teaching practices related to L2 writing. Firstly, to maximize the ability of teachers to provide quality WCF they should receive adequate training in different forms like seminars, workshops, and short-term courses. Such training can help teachers acquire cutting-edge pedagogical knowledge about written feedback which is necessary to maximize the efficacy of their written feedback and encourage them to reflect on their own feedback practices. Secondly, as stated in the literature, studying writing teachers' beliefs and feedback approaches in isolation of the context produces flawed results and imperfect information about teachers and teaching. Therefore, there should be organized institutional efforts to thoroughly examine the complex network of various interrelated factors that affect teachers' WCF practices, and sometimes, prevent them from enacting their own beliefs. Thirdly, it is very important for teachers to understand their students' beliefs about the nature and benefits of WCF. Teachers should engage their students in discussion related to methods of writing instruction in general, and WCF in particular. Such discussion is very helpful for the sake of assessing students' needs and desires and correcting any wrong perceptions about what constitutes effective WCF. Finally, instructional methods should be reviewed and developed to make it possible to create a student-centered approach to WCF. Teachers should encourage students to be more active in the learning process, empower them to become more capable of editing their own errors, and provide constructive comments on their peers' writing which, in turn, helps students to become highly motivated, more self-regulated learners, and independent writers whether in the mid or long term.

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