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CANDIDATE ENGLISH TEACHERS' PREFERENCES ABOUT ERROR
FEEDBACK IN L2 WRITING CLASSES

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

by Abdullah COSKUN

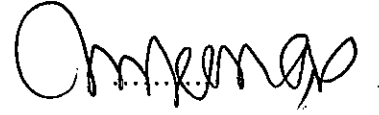
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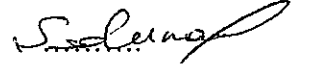
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ABSTRACT

CANDIDATE ENGLISH TEACHERS' PREFERENCES ABOUT ERROR FEEDBACK IN L2 WRITING CLASSES

by
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The main objective of this study is to interpret the results of a survey conducted on candidate EFL teachers to reveal their preferences about error correction in writing classes. To accomplish this, 32 last-year students from AIBU (Abant İzzet Baysal University) and 28 last-year students from HU (Hacettepe University) were surveyed using an instrument. The survey gathered information on forth-year foreign language education department students' feedback preferences by focusing on students' feelings about the importance of errors in general, and about different kinds of errors; how often they looked carefully at comments in different areas, including content and organization as well as language; how they wanted the teacher to deal with errors; and how they acted on feedback. Also, students' preferences for different error correction techniques were revealed.

In addition to items investigating student preferences for different feedback techniques (i.e. using symbols or codes, underlining the mistakes, directly correcting of the written text, conferencing and showing students the reference to help them find their errors themselves), this survey includes items about various feedback foci (i.e. grammar, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, content, and organization) on student compositions.

Also, the question whether there is a relationship between gender and error correction preferences was analyzed.

In analysis and presentation of the data derived from this study, SPSS 13 was used. In analysis of the data, the Chi-square test was used.

At the end of this study it was observed that there is not a significant difference between two universities in terms of feedback techniques and feedback focus. Both Hacettepe and Abant İzzet Baysal University's forth-year ELT students came up with similar responses to the survey. No significant difference related to students' preferences at two universities was seen on the following variables: grammar, spelling, vocabulary choice, punctuation, organizations, and content. It was revealed that AIBU and HU students' general beliefs about

how they wanted the teacher to deal with errors; and how they acted on feedback show no differences. Moreover, AIBU and HU students have similar preferences of different correction techniques, which are “using symbols or codes, underlining the mistakes, directly correcting the written text, conferencing, showing students the reference to help them find their errors themselves and no correction”. Finally, it was proven that there is not a significant relationship between gender and error correction preferences.

The findings of this study give a general insight to researchers and teachers of English Language in terms of preferred types of error correction and the focus given to certain errors by the students. Researchers and educators might benefit from the results of this study while giving feedback to their students in their English writing classes.

Key Words: error correction/students’ preferences/feedback

Öz

İngilizce Öğretmeni Adaylarının İngilizce Yazma Dersleri'nde Verilen Geri Bildirim Tercihleri

Bu çalışmanın asıl amacı son sınıf İngilizce öğretmeni adaylarının İngilizce yazma derslerindeki tercihlerini açığa çıkarmaktır. Bunu yapmak için Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesinden 32, Hacettepe Üniversitesinden 28 son sınıf öğrencisine anket uygulanmıştır. Bu çalışma son sınıf yabancı dil bölümü öğrencilerinin İngilizce yazma derslerinde yapılan hataların önemiyle ilgilidir. Bu çalışmada kullanılan anket, içerik ve dil yapısını da içine alacak şekilde farklı hata çeşitlerine, değişik hatalar hakkında yapılan öğretmen yorumlarının ne kadar sıklıkla öğrenci tarafından dikkatle incelendiğinde, öğrencilerin öğretmenlerinden hatalarını nasıl değerlendirmelerini istediklerine ve farklı değerlendirmelere karşı nasıl tepkide bulunduklarına ilişkin bilgi toplayan bir ankettir. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin farklı hata düzeltme teknikleriyle ilgili tercihleri açığa çıkarılmıştır.

Uygulanan anket, öğrencilerin farklı geribildirim teknikleriyle ilgili tercihlerini (semboller kullanma, hatanın altını çizme, yazılı metni doğrudan düzeltme, konferans ve öğrenciye hatalarını bulmasına yardımcı olmak için gerekli kaynağı göstermek) içine aldığı gibi, öğrencilerin kompozisyonundaki farklı hata çeşitleriyle de (dil bilgisi, imla, noktalama, kelime bilgisi, içerik ve düzeltilme) ilgili maddeler de içerir.

Aynı zamanda, bu çalışmayla cinsiyetle hata düzeltme tercihleri arasında bir ilişki olup olmadığı da analiz edilmiştir.

Bu çalışmadan elde edilen verilerin analizi ve sunumunda Kay-kare testi kullanıldı. (SPSS 13)

Bu çalışmanın sonunda, iki üniversite arasında geribildirim teknikleri ve hangi hataların geri bildirimi ile ilgili tercihler açısından anlamlı bir fark olmadığı gözlenmiştir. Hem Hacettepe hem de Abant İzzet Baysal İngilizce Öğretmenliği son sınıf öğrencileri ankete benzer cevaplar verdiler. Dil bilgisi, yazma, kelime seçimi, noktalama, organizasyon ve içerik açısından öğrencilerin tercihleri açısından da fark görülmedi. Hacettepe ve Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi öğrencilerinin öğretmenlerinden hatalarını nasıl ele almalarını istediklerine ve öğrencilerin geribildirim verildiğinde nasıl tepkide bulundukları arasında da fark olmadığı saptanmıştır. Buna ek olarak, AİBÜ ve HÜ öğrencilerinin farklı geribildirim tekniklerine (semboller kullanma, hatanın altını çizmek, yazılı metni doğrudan düzeltmek, konferans ve öğrenciye hatalarını bulmasına yardımcı olmak için gerekli kaynağı göstermek)

ilişkin tercihleri de benzerlik göstermektedir. Son olarak da, cinsiyetle hata düzeltme tercihleri arasında anlamlı bir ilişkinin olmadığı kanıtlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın bulguları araştırmacılara ve İngilizce öğretmenlerine, tercih edilen hata bildirim çeşitleriyle ve hangi hata türlerinin düzeltilmesinin öğrenci tarafından tercih edildiğiyle ilgili genel bir anlayış kazandırır. Araştırmacılar ve eğitimciler İngilizce yazma derslerinde öğrencilere geribildirim de bulunurken bu çalışmanın sonuçlarından yararlanabilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: hata düzeltme/öğrenci tercihleri/geribildirim

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study:

The importance given to English language teaching in Turkey has expanded rapidly in the last years due to the instrumental power of English and teaching of 4 basic skills of English, which are writing, listening, speaking and listening. This is not the case only for Turkey, though. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), with 60,000 individual and institutional members worldwide and which is dedicated to improve the teaching and learning of English and the language arts at all levels of education published a report indicating:

“Writing is an essential key to achievement in school, in the workplace, and in the larger world. Research shows that writing develops higher-order thinking skills and helps students learn content across subject areas. And the more students write and receive supportive feedback, the more their writing performance improves.”

As writing is so important in terms of language learning, giving feedback to our students in writing classes and the ways of doing that is subject to constant debate. Despite the fact that there is research that suggests error correction is ineffective as a means of improving student writing (Truscott, 1996), writing teachers share the idea that students are frustrated by the lack of feedback on their written errors. There is, on the other hand, research evidence to show that L2 students want error feedback and believe that they benefit from it (Leki, 1991; Radecki & Swales, 1988).

In the past fifty years, there has been a sudden change in the way ‘error correction’ has been treated. Throughout the 1950s and the mid-1960s, when the audio-lingual approach to teaching foreign languages was the most popular among English teachers, learner errors should be avoided. For instance, as Brooks (1960) stated, “Like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome, but its presence is expected”. The Teacher’s Manual for German, Level One, prepared by the Modern Language Materials Development Center (1961) suggests that teachers should correct

all errors immediately and that the students should not be required to discover and correct their own mistakes . However, beginning in the late 1960s and the early 1970s studies in transformational-generative grammar, first-language acquisition, and cognitive psychology have contributed to a positive change from audiolingualism (Shultz 1996). In this new period, rather than expecting students to produce error-free sentences, students were encouraged to communicate in the target language. Also, producing errors has recently come to be viewed as a natural and useful part of second-language acquisition (Corder 1967; Zydatiss 1974). Second-language errors began to be perceived as a natural process of acquisition; therefore, teachers were discouraged from explicitly treating learner errors.

1.2 Statement of Purpose:

The main purpose of this study is to reveal undergraduate Abant İzzet Baysal University and Hacettepe University Department of Foreign Languages Education forth-year students' general opinions about what kind of errors should be corrected and different types of correction methods on their written work. In addition to their general beliefs on what kind of errors (grammar, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, content, and organization) should be corrected, specific correction techniques (using symbols or codes, underlining the mistakes, directly correcting of the written text, conferencing and showing the reference for self-correction) will be investigated.

Also, the question whether there will be a relationship between error correction preferences and gender will be focused in the current study. The findings of the survey are thought to provide valuable insights about the preferences of forth-year undergraduate students' towards error correction in writing classes.

Findings are provided by a survey. How the participants, who are both students in their forth-year undergraduate programs and teachers doing their practicum classes in real life teaching situation in different schools, look at error correction will provide us with their experience and related ideas as both teachers and students in terms of error correction.

1.3 Research Questions:

This study was guided by the following five research questions:

Research Question 1: Is there a significant difference among last-year ELT students at AIBU and HU as for their feelings about the importance of errors in general, and about the relative importance of different kinds of errors; how often they looked carefully at comments in different areas, including content and organization as well as language?

Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference between students of AIBU and HU in terms of their general beliefs about how they wanted the teacher to deal with errors; and how they acted on feedback?

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference between students of AIBU and HU about their preferences for the following feedback type variables? (“using symbols or codes, underlining the mistakes, directly correcting the written text, conferencing, showing students the reference to help them find their errors themselves and no correction at all”)

Research Question 4: Is there a significant correlation between gender and error correction preferences?

Research Question 5: What are the written feedback preferences of the total number of students in this study?

1.4 Significance of the Study:

If writing is a process which requires planning, revising, rearranging, rereading, producing multiple draft before developing the final product, it is only fair that student writing should be responded to appropriately. Ayeche Zidat(2005)states that many teachers correct students’ written work improperly and most teachers use only one approach to provide feedback and error correction. He claims that the majorities of them mark every mistake and usually provide the students with the corrected form and adds that very few of them use editing symbols to indicate errors. Doff (1988) had also suggested long before that these practices above were

ineffective and inefficient, time-consuming and challenging the students to improve.

This fact has encouraged me to investigate and survey the issue of error correction to shed light on the ways today's undergraduate students look at error correction in writing and see whether the above-mentioned findings overlap.

Also, there is no consensus on whether written errors should be corrected to enhance learners' writing skills in the target language. In fact, benefits of error treatment have not yet been clearly proved. Hendrickson(1980) stated that in spite of its significance, the issue of error treatment is often neglected in teacher education.

Another significance of this study is that only few studies have been carried out among EFL learners, especially in Turkish EFL setting whereas there is a considerable number of studies that focus on the issue of error correction among ESL populations. As Turkish culture is different from the cultures most of the previous studies were held in, this area can be regarded as ripe for investigation and experiment. Moreover, although there have been some studies addressing teachers and students regarding the same issue (Enginarlar, 1993; Denstaedt,1998), a study on prospective teachers of English in Turkey have not been done so far.

1.5 Definitions of Terms:

In general terms, 'error' simply refers to 'mistake' (COBUILD, 1997). However, in linguistic terms, the concept of 'error' seems to be more complex. Krashen (1982) refers to 'error' as "any deviation from a selected norm of language performance, no matter what the characteristics or cause of the deviation might be". Ellis(1994), suggests that although an error can also be defined as a deviation from the norms of the target language, there is doubt as to whether this definition is precise due to the vague use of the word 'norms'.

On the other hand, mistakes are when students produce incorrect language although they know the correct form. Students can usually correct their mistakes, but by definition they can't correct their errors.

Hendrickson (ibid) defines 'error' from more of a teacher's perspective and he sees 'error' as "an utterance, form, or structure that a particular language teacher

thinks unacceptable because of its inappropriate use or its absence in real-life discourse”.

Feedback is defined by Keh(1990) as "input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision" and can comprise both content and form feedback. Lalande (1982) defines the word as "any procedure used to inform a learner where an instructional response is right or wrong”. The terms “error correction” and “error feedback” are used interchangeably in the current study. Content refers to comments on organization, ideas and amount of detail, while form involves comments on grammar and mechanics errors (Fathman & Whalley, *ibid*).

In this study, feedback focus will refer to aspects of the composition that the teacher attends to (grammar, content, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics). Feedback type will refer to the method the teacher employs to give feedback (use of symbols, error correction by the teacher, conferencing, written phrases, peer revision, and revision).

Here are some other significant terms for the current research. They are defined by Lee(2004):

Self-correction: The teacher indicates the student has made a mistake or error and gives the student an opportunity to self-correct.

Peer correction: The teacher asks other students to correct the mistake or error.

Underlying: The teacher underlines the error and draws attention to form by only underlying it. Here, the students are expected to think and decide what is wrong.

Explicit (direct, overt) correction: The teacher clearly indicates that the student's utterance was incorrect, he/she the correct form

Coded correction: The teacher uses symbols to get the student to work on the sentence by giving a clue on the type of the mistake made in this sentence.

These are the signs and abbreviations to identify the mistakes:

/	:This word is not necessary
^	:Add (a) word(s)
P	:Punctuation
Sp	:Spelling
Gr	:Grammar
T	:Tense

Uncoded correction: refers to instances when the teacher underlines an error, circles an error, or places an error tally in the margin, but, in each case, leaves the student to diagnose and correct the error.

Conferencing: The teacher meets learners individually, to assist learners who have difficulties with correcting particular errors.

In conclusion, in this chapter, the background of the study, the statement of purpose, research questions, significance of the study and definition of terms have been described. In the following chapter, the related literature will be reviewed. In the third chapter, thorough information about the research design, participants, instruments and the data collection procedure will be described. In the fourth chapter the results will be presented and, the fifth chapter will conclude the study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, firstly, error correction in writing in general and student preferences for different feedback foci are emphasized. Secondly, different techniques of error correction and students' preferences for these types are reviewed. Finally, literature regarding teachers' written comments is discussed and possible reasons behind students' preferences are analyzed.

2.1 Introduction

Before looking at the research about student preferences for various feedback foci, it is necessary to briefly explain the context of error correction in general. An examination of the change in instructional methodology in second language writing feedback will clarify the purpose of recent feedback preference research.

Hendrickson (ibid), in early years of error correction research, suggests that "teachers should correct all errors immediately, and students should not be required or permitted to discover and correct their own mistakes"

The main focus at that time was to prevent errors; therefore, it was the language teachers' major role to correct errors. These negative attitudes toward errors have drastically changed due to the Communicative Language Teaching (Jensen, 1997). Oladejo (1993) states that attitude toward error correction in second language writing has passed through a period of change over the last thirty years, from zero tolerance of errors with the teacher as the sole judge to a focus on how to get the learner to communicate ideas effectively in the target language.

1970s and 1980s were the years of the shift from a product-based to a process-based approach in second language writing. Zamel(1985) states that in this new process-based approach, writing is viewed as a "non-linear, exploratory, and generative" process during which writers discover and reshape their ideas. Silva(1990) suggests contrary to the product-based approach, this approach focused

on the writer's need for guidance and intervention throughout the writing process, instead of controlling lexical, syntactical, and organizational patterns. The process-based approach is based on the notion that content, ideas, and the need to communicate would determine form. The writer in this new approach is central in the writing process; he or she determines the task, socio-cultural setting, and discourse community. The reader's task is to focus on content, ideas, and the negotiation of meaning - not to be preoccupied with form. Because the teacher's role in this approach to ESL writing instruction is to interfere in the writing task at different stages (Reid, 1994), most research has focused on the type of teacher feedback. Preventing learners' errors was given great importance because there was a common belief that learners would learn every mistake they made. Now, it is thought that making mistakes is normal, it is a part of learning process and those mistakes will provide information on the target language (Nunan and Lamb, 1996). Lee(1997) focused on students' performance in error correction in written texts, and examined some common assumptions about teachers' error correction. Based on the study findings, she puts forward some pedagogical implications by providing us with three assumptions mentioned below:

1. Error feedback may be more desirable than overt correction;
2. Error feedback by means of a correction code must be handled with care; and
3. Some errors may deserve more attention than others

2.2 Feedback Focus

Although there have been a number of models suggested to classify teacher comments, many of these have often put focus on contrasting large-scale areas, such as “content” vs. “form” (Searle & Dillon, 1980), “high order vs. low order” concerns (Keh, *ibid*) and “local vs. global” issues (Zamel, *ibid*). Defined by Burt and Kiparsky(1972) in very early years of error correction research and cited by Hammerly(1991), global errors are the ones that seriously obstruct communication and cause native speakers to misunderstand a message. On the other hand, local errors are defined as errors that are isolated sentence elements, such as noun and verb

inflections that make a structure in a sentence awkward, yet, do not hinder the comprehension of the message.

Similarly, Ferris(2002) explains global errors as errors that interfere with the comprehensibility of a text. He adds that these are errors concerning overall content, ideas, and organization of the writer's argument. On the other hand, according to his definition, local errors refer to minor errors such as grammar, spelling, or punctuation that do not impede understanding of a text.

Hendrickson (ibid) and Brown(2000) distinguished errors as local and global errors. According to both of these researchers, local errors need not to be corrected as the message can be understood whereas global errors should be corrected.

Whatever the term used to classify teachers' comments, most of the research on teacher feedback focused mainly on which error correction techniques were more or less helpful. Recently, though, there has been an increase in the number of studies conducted into student preferences for the "focus" of teacher feedback, such as grammar, spelling, vocabulary choice and punctuation.

The question of how to mark a student's written work, especially what to mark and how to mark it, has provoked some debate. Fathman and Whalley (1990), quoted by Griffin (1982): "the major question confronting any theory of responding to student writing is where we should focus our attention."

Hammerly (ibid) recommends that if teachers are encountered with a number of errors, they should only correct the errors that significantly corrupt meaning and ignore those that do not. As for this point, Burt and Kiparsky's earlier study conducted in 1972 and cited by Hammerly(ibid) gives us a meaningful distinction between 'global' and 'local' errors based on the communicative importance of errors. As mentioned earlier, global errors are defined as errors that really result in a communication breakdown and cause native speakers to misunderstand a message. On the other hand, local errors are defined as errors that are isolated sentence elements, such as noun and verb inflections that make a structure in a sentence awkward, yet, do not hinder the comprehension of the message.

Grabe and Kaplan (1996) recommends that "comments should avoid exclusive attention to surface conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation), and should also avoid various commentary or notation.

Michaelides (1990) points out that teachers should learn not to correct every error especially if students are found to repeat the same mistakes in subsequent pieces of work. Instead of wasting his time, he could concentrate on marking only one particular linguistic item at a time. For example, he could mark only in relation to a particular teaching point or unit. This is a form of selective marking where not every error but only selected ones are marked.

In keeping with the belief that not every error should be corrected, Klassen (1991) deems that gravity of error should determine which correction is necessary. She suggests that teachers should focus on marking only global errors in the first draft of their student's written work and then local errors in the second draft. Also, instead of providing the correct answer every time a student makes an error, the teacher could provide clues and codes in the form of abbreviations, symbols, arrows, circles, lines and explicit marginal comments. The rationale here is that unless students recognize the type of error they are making, they will continue to make that error. Thus, a list of error codes as indicated in the "definition of terms" section can be employed by both teachers and more advanced students during peer marking sessions.

Leki (ibid), with her survey, which was adapted by Anderson, Benson and Lynch(2004) and used for the current study, found that students had a strong preference for having all errors indicated. The students, who are 100 university ESL learners, were asked how important error identification was to them and on which aspects of their writing they expected teachers' comments to focus. She found that the vast majority (89%) of respondents reported looking "carefully" at marks indicating errors in grammar, but that an equal number reported attending carefully to marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice. A slightly greater, though not statistically significant, number reported attending carefully to comments on content, while 82% stated they paid careful attention to comments on organization issues. Out of 100 subjects, 70 wanted all errors indicated. In her study, the most popular means of correction was underlining and giving a clue. As for response to feedback, 82%

said that they rewrote either the whole text or the sentences containing the errors. Finally, she suggested that we should either accept learners' errors or discuss openly with them the research about the effectiveness of correction. Also, she maintains that it is "high-handed and disrespectful of our students to simply insist that they trust our preferences.

Similar findings were found by Proud & Gatbonton (1996), in which students reported an almost equal preference for feedback to focus on grammar, content, and organization,

In a study, Anderson, Benson and Lynch(1996) adapted Leki's survey and came up with similar results. Out of ten AE course students, five thought it very important to minimize errors. Moreover, accurate grammar and vocabulary were rated most highly; only three thought punctuation very important. A greater number said they "looked carefully" at marks referring to content and organization than grammar. Five of them said they wanted all errors indicated; the rest said either most major errors or just those interfering with communication. Finally, locating the error and giving a clue was more popular than supplying the correct form as in Leki's study. However, in the part of the survey in which they are given sample actual feedback types to judge, the highest number preferred the correct form to be supplied.

Cohen (1987) found that the majority of teacher comments in his study focused on grammar and mechanics with much less attention given to content, organization and vocabulary. He also found that while students reported attending a lot to teacher comments on grammar and mechanics, they also reported paying considerable attention to content, organization, and vocabulary. Wenden and Robin(1987)carried out a study and the results showed that sometimes feedback might be too general or too specific or not emphasized where the learners want feedback. The survey result also shows that teachers are made focused on accuracy in form than in meaning when giving feedback.

Cohen(1987) states results of his study about students perceiving feedback on their compositions. Cohen's study suggested that students do not have many strategies that they use for processing teacher feedback. Learners were asked whether they pay attention to their teachers' feedback and whether they try to correct their

errors by using teachers' comments. It is seen that % 80 of the students from different first and second language classes read over their papers when they were returned and attended to the corrections. The self-rated better learners indicated paying more attention to mechanics, grammar and vocabulary whereas those viewing themselves as good writers indicated special attention to comments concerning grammar.

In Semke's (1984) 10-week study of German students, she divided the students into four groups. Each received a different type of feedback. Group 1 received only comments on content, with no concern for errors. Group 2 received only comments on errors. Group 3 received both types of comments, and Group 4 had their errors pointed out and were expected to make corrections themselves. Semke found no significant differences among the groups in the accuracy of their writing. In addition, Group 1 (comments on content only) was significantly better than all the others on fluency and on a cloze test. Thus, it would be fair to say that feedback on errors was not only unhelpful, but also harmful to learners. Those who received comments on content in addition to correction were significantly inferior to those who received only comments on content. Semke also found Group 4 (self-correction) inferior to all the other groups on fluency

Ur (1996) states that every error should not be corrected because "too much of correction can be discouraging and demoralizing"(p. 171). Teachers should think about which error to correct or ignore. If the teacher thinks that correction may hinder learning, the errors may be ignored. Correction may be necessary if the teachers' objective is to gain accuracy. However, correction may not be necessary when their objective is to gain fluency.

Ur(ibid) explains what teachers take into consideration when giving feedback on writing. According to Ur(ibid)the most important thing in a piece of writing is content, then the organization and presentation comes and the last thing is the accuracy of the grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation. Teachers have a tendency to give feedback on language forms instead of content and organization because language errors are more easily corrected than ones of content and organization. Students also want their errors to be corrected and these errors are difficult to ignore. In order to avoid giving feedback mainly on language forms,

teachers may correct errors and make suggestions as to content on organization and give evaluation.

Similarly, ESL students in academic contexts think that form-focused feedback is more valuable and see having error-free work as highly desirable (Leki, *ibid*; Hedgcock and Lefkowitz, 1994 ; Ferris, 1995;Enginarlar,*ibid*). For instance, Enginarlar based on a survey of 47 English as a Foreign Language students' attitudes towards the feedback procedure employed in their classes and concluded that these students perceive attention to linguistic errors as effective teacher feedback. Similarly, Saito (1994) and Ferris (1995) reached the same conclusion based on their respective surveys of students' attitudes towards feedback in an ESL context.

In addition, it has been argued that form-focused feedback can be effective, when accompanied by classroom instruction (Master, 1995). Ferris (1999) argues that students could improve their language accuracy through feedback on form if they were taught the rules related to their repeated errors, but considered that only errors which were ruled-governed such as agreement and article problems were 'treatable' in this way through feedback, while other more idiosyncratic errors such as word choice and word order might need a more directive feedback strategy such as complete correction. Later research (Ferris and Roberts, 2001) suggests that the situation may be more complex and that indirect feedback techniques, such as locating the type of error and asking students to correct it themselves, may be helpful for untreatable errors in some cases. The quality of revision after feedback on error has also been examined and it has been suggested that feedback on error can improve students' writing in the short term.

According to Ancker's (2000) research, there are some reasons that the teachers and learners consider when treating errors. Some teachers think that every error should not be corrected because of a number of reasons. Firstly, correction by the teacher may develop a barrier and students may feel frustrated to make mistakes the next time. Secondly, correction takes too much time and students may pay no or little attention to teachers' corrections. Also, teachers generally think that if learners are not corrected they could get confused later on and fossilization may occur. Leki(*ibid*)supported this claim with the following words:

“Students do want errors in their writing corrected and may be frustrated if this does not happen” (p.130)

Lee(ibid)looked at the reasons for comprehensive vs. selective error feedback from the teachers’ perspective. In the interviews, the reasons teachers preferred comprehensive error corrections were compiled. Most of the teachers said comprehensive error correction was required by the school or the English panel. Some teachers said they marked errors comprehensively because their students liked it, while some suggested that it was their responsibility to point out all errors for students to let them know what errors they had made.

Education Department in China states that “teachers need not correct all the mistakes in learners’ work”. It further extends its claim and suggests that “teachers should correct mistakes selectively” (Curriculum Development Council in Hong Kong, 1999). The reasons why teachers follow comprehensive marking are explored in the follow-up interviews. Of the 19 teachers who were interviewed in Hong Kong, 12 said that they were practicing comprehensive marking, but they added they would prefer selective marking. Ten out of 12 teachers claimed that they practiced comprehensive marking, either because it was required by the school/panel or because it was a common practice on the English panel. The reasons for comprehensive marking, briefly, are as follows:

- Teachers want to look at the overall performance of students
- The errors made by junior form students are basic and have to be indicated
- If teachers don’t mark all errors, students are not aware of what errors they have made
- When the compositions are not too long, comprehensive marking can be applied
- Students have to depend on teachers to tell them what errors they have made
- It is the teachers’ responsibility to mark all student errors
- Teachers are thought as lazy if they do not mark all student errors
- Parents want teachers to mark all errors

Education Department in Hong Kong recommends in the English Curriculum Development Council(1999) that teachers should select errors for marking based on student needs:

“Instead of correcting all the mistakes in a piece of writing, the teacher should first agree with learners what to focus on, e.g., the teacher may concentrate on areas such as tenses or articles, because these are where the learners particularly need help” (p.1-5)

Many error correction supporters have opposed to the idea of comprehensive error feedback because of the risk of “exhausting teachers and overwhelming students” (Ferris, 2002). Ferris (ibid) also suggests that error correction may be the most effective when it focuses on two or three major error types at a time, rather than dozens of disparate errors.

It has been suggested that the seriousness of learner errors and the kind of correction strategy used to deal with those errors depends on the objectives of a lesson (Nunan & Lamb, 1996). Hendrickson(ibid) argues that errors related to a specific pedagogic focus are deserving higher attention than other less important errors. Similarly, Walz (1982) supports the idea that the features of the target language that have been recently taught in a class should be one of the criteria to decide which errors to correct. The reason for this is because the learners might be confused if the teacher does not correct the errors that are relevant to what they have just studied in a class. Hammerly (ibid) strongly recommends that teachers should correct only errors which learners make with the rule that has been taught in class. According to what he considers, errors that learners make with what they have been taught are basically different from errors they make with what they have not yet been taught. As a result, each type of error requires different responses.

Teachers have to agree on which errors should be prioritized for correction (Walz, ibid). Burt(1975) points out that certain types of errors have higher priorities for correction than the others. Similarly, Bartram and Walton (1991) hold the view that certain types of errors are more important than others. Therefore, it would be necessary for teachers to know the order of correction. Although there are a number of different types of criteria available, the most important errors commonly ranked by the researchers and educators are (1) those that are relevant to the pedagogical focus, (2) those that occur frequently, and (3) those that hinder communication.

The literature in favor of error treatment has agreed with the effectiveness of selective correction for written errors. For example, Hammerly (ibid) states that if

error treatment is provided systematically and selectively, it would be more effective.

He also states:

“...the teacher who chooses the pedagogical focus as the criteria of error correction, has to modify the choice of the order in which to correct errors depending not only on the objectives of a particular lesson but also on what individual learners have learnt in the target language...” (p.75)

Celce-Murcia in 1985 asserts that selective correction is one of the most effective teacher strategies (cited in Stern, 1992). The following table illustrates Celce-Murcia's comparison between more effective and less effective teacher correction strategies.

More Effective and Less Effective Teacher Correction Strategies

More effective	Less effective
a. Teacher elicits information from class	a. Teacher lectures, gives rule or explains
b. Teacher elicits peer or self-correction	b. Teacher corrects directly
c. Teacher gives focused, specific cues as to what correction is needed and where	c. Teacher gives indirect feedback, diffuse cues on types and location of correction is needed
d. Teacher conducts meaningful practice of problematic form	d. Teacher conducts mechanical drill
e. Teacher corrects selectively	e. Teacher corrects everything

(Celce-Murcia, 1985, extracted from Stern, 1992, p.151)

Leki's (ibid) investigation of ESL students' preferences about error correction in writing reveals that the majority of the ESL students in the study would like their teachers to correct errors for them. Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1994) found in their research that FL college students have a tendency to rank teacher comments highly and to think that corrections on grammatical, lexical, and mechanical features are more valuable than those on content and style, while the opposite is true for ESL

college students. In their study, both ESL and EFL students express moderate preference for the use of correction symbols, and both dislike the teachers' use of the red pen. Students have expressed preferences for overt correction, in other words, teachers' indicating and correcting errors for students (Leki, *ibid*). However, research, has shown that overt correction has harmful effects on both the quality of students' compositions and on students' attitudes towards ESL writing (Hendrickson, *ibid*; Semke, *ibid*). In Hong Kong, the teacher's tendency to do all the corrections for students is described as "over marking" by the Curriculum Development Committee (1983), which is based on "the mistaken belief that the greater the number of corrections teachers do themselves, the quicker their students will learn to write better English". According to the committee, though well-intentioned, overt correction "encourages a passive and unquestioning acceptance of the teacher's comments" and finally students become over-dependent on teachers for error correction. Allwright (1975) and Long (1977) emphasize that it is important for teachers not to correct learners' errors and give the direct right answers.

Cohen (*ibid*) predicted that the reason why teachers attend more to surface-level errors might be that they are the easiest to detect and answer, but that comments on content, organization and vocabulary may "demand a higher degree of critical thinking and most likely take more time" and so are attended to less frequently or in less detail. Leki (*ibid*) further suggested that surface-level errors were probably easier for students to react to instead of requests for clarification of ideas.

Oladejo (*ibid*) set out to investigate the same issue, using as his subjects EFL students enrolled at the University of Singapore. He discovered that there was a preference for teacher comments to focus on both form- and meaning-related concerns; for example, when asked whether teachers should overlook grammatical errors and focus only on errors that hinder communication, most students (85%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. In addition, he found that students hold the preference of giving attention to organization first, then to grammar, and finally to vocabulary. He suggested that the conclusion by many applied linguists and teachers is that "grammatical errors should be given less attention whereas communicative errors should be of more importance in order to make sure that learners gain some level of confidence in communicating in the target language". He states that this can

only be done successfully through a complete analysis of students' needs and expectations.

Hedgcock & Lefkowitz (ibid) found that a significantly greater number of ESL students expressed a preference for teacher feedback to focus on content and organization (combined) than did those preferring feedback to focus on grammar and mechanics (combined).

Kumari Dheram (1995), in a small-scale study of five ESL students at a British university, also investigated whether the students preferred feedback to focus on form or content, and how learners respond to feedback on both form and content. All the students in her study expressed a preference for teachers' comments to focus on both form and content on the first draft. He, however, concluded that it is important to give feedback on content before focusing on language use to help students appreciate the communicative function of writing and avoid premature editing and making revisions to the text at a surface instead of a global level .

Although the majority of studies indicate that students prefer feedback to focus on both form and meaning-related concerns, there are a few studies reporting different findings. For example, Radecki and Swales (ibid) surveyed 59 ESL students at the University of Michigan using a questionnaire to gain an idea about their attitudes about teacher comment, correction, and instruction. Their findings suggested that students want substantive comments on the ideas and organization; nevertheless, they differ in that the vast majority (87%) of respondents "mostly desired to have all their linguistic errors marked, saying that this was the major responsibility of the teacher"(p. 355)

Taking all these research into consideration, it would be fair to say that the idea that teachers should respond to content and organization before attending to grammatical errors although the results of studies consistently indicate that students desire feedback on both form-and meaning-related concerns (Cohen & Cavalcanti 1990).

Leki (ibid) states that the students in her study expressed a desire to have all errors indicated even though "research evidence shows how little students profit from teachers' marking their linguistic errors".(p.208) For instance, Truscott (ibid) warns teachers to completely abandon error correction focused on grammatical

concerns. He states that grammar correction is ineffective for theoretical and practical reasons and may indeed have harmful effects on L2 writing development.

The idea that error correction in L2 writing can have significant negative effects on students' writing was also mentioned by Kern and Schultz (1992) who reported that students who received grammar-focused feedback produced revisions that contained less complex structures and were less rich in content than did those who received content-focused feedback.

Chiang(2004)carried out an extensive study investigating students' preferences for and responses to teacher feedback and its implications for writing teachers. In that study, he investigated more thoroughly what kinds of feedback the subjects paid more attention to. The subjects paid more attention to feedback involving grammar (23.3% Always; 46.7% Usually) and vocabulary (13.3% Always; 40% Usually) when compared to feedback related to organization (6.7% Always; 33.3% Usually) and content (13.3% Always; 36.7% Usually).

All the subjects ranked the option that feedback on grammar was more important than content and organization in their questionnaires. On the contrary, when they were asked the question "what kinds of feedback were more important to them in the interviews", all of them expressed the view that comments on content and organization were more important. They were also asked what kinds of teacher feedback they paid more attention to and all of them said they paid more attention to grammar. They said they would pay attention to comments involving content and organization, but their teacher's feedback in these areas was usually very general (comments like "your ideas are not very organized", "this point is not clear") and the teacher did not provide students with clear explanations. It has been suggested that teachers should avoid giving vague comments if they want students to benefit from their comments to improve their writing skill. It has been emphasized that text-specific comments should replace vague comments. On the whole, a great number of the students thought that feedback on grammar was the most important and they usually paid more attention to linguistic feedback. However, the students realized that feedback involving content and organization was more important when they thor more carefully in the interviews.

Whatever technique the teacher is using, there is one point he/she should be very clear at: whether to mark all student errors. Research on error correction emphasizes the disadvantages of comprehensive error feedback, i.e., marking all student errors. Zamel(ibid) pointed out that excessive attention to student errors turned writing teachers into grammar teachers, distracting them from other more important concerns in writing instruction. Hairston (1986) warns that writing teachers should not be “composition slaves”. Unfortunately, many ESL teachers bombard their students with a lot of error correction (Enginarlar, ibid, Ferris, 2002).

As a result of all these studies, it would be concluded that in some recent studies which are aimed at testing the effectiveness of different correction techniques in writing classes, the most prominently used methods feedback fall into two common categories: feedback on form and feedback on content.

2.2.1 Correcting Grammatical Errors

The research that is related to grammar correction in writing classes includes comparative studies measuring the effectiveness of different types of feedback on students’ writing and most of these studies discuss whether to give the priority to grammar or content.

In most of the research, there are different ideas on giving feedback about grammar and content. Zamel (ibid) suggests teachers should avoid mixing comments on content and grammatical corrections in the same drafts whereas it was argued by Ashwell(2000) that a combination of both content and grammar feedback will not overburden students but help them with their writing.

Fathman & Whalley(ibid)in their studies, suggests that feedback on both grammar and content, whether given separately or together, had a positive effect on students’ re-writing. Although it is true that grammar feedback had more effect on correcting grammatical errors than feedback on content did on improving content, the focus on content was shown to have some positive effect, with general comments of encouragement and praise helping to improve re-writes. Re-writing as an activity in itself, with or without feedback, was shown to produce consistently positive results.

In contrast to Fathman and Whalley's study on "form&content", Ashwell (ibid) found no significant difference in students' success in accuracy or content scores on a third draft following three different patterns of teacher feedback on the first two drafts: (a) the conventional response (giving feedback on content first and feedback on form in a later draft), (b) the reverse pattern, or (c) one in which form and content feedback were mixed. However, all of these patterns were superior to giving no feedback.

Just as with feedback on form, many faults have been found with standard practices of providing feedback on content (Fregeau, 1999; Fathman & Walley, ibid). Fathman and Walley, as well as Fregeau report that teacher feedback on content in the form of teacher comments is often vague, contradictory, unsystematic and inconsistent. This leads to various reactions by students including confusion, frustration and neglect of the comments. Leki reports that when presented with written feedback on content, students react in three main ways. First, the students may not read the annotations at all; they may read them but not understand them; or they may understand them but not know how to respond to them. Teacher comments on content are of little use if students do not know what they mean or how to use them productively to improve their skills as writers. Finally, Fathman and Walley(ibid) note, much like correction of grammar mistakes, comments on content tend to be negative and point out problems more than tell students what they are doing right.

Sheppard (1992) carried out his study with two different types of feedback in a writing class. One group received comprehensive responses to errors, using a correction code, and discussed their errors only in conferences with the instructor. For the other group, feedback and conferences were only about the content of the students' writing. Therefore, if error correction were helpful, the content group should have suffered on measures of grammatical ability. However, Sheppard(ibid) found no advantage for the error-correction group. It is true to say that his results favored the content group.

The discussion about "form&content" was replaced by the debate about the efficacy of teacher error/grammar correction in second language writing classes and

this has been the subject of much controversy among many researchers, especially between Truscott and Ferris.

John Truscott's (ibid) language learning article, the case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes, has been the main source of all these controversies about the best way to approach issues of accuracy and error correction in ESL composition. Truscott states that L2 writing teachers take grammar correction as a necessary activity without any critical investigation of whether this practice is effective.

Also, Truscott (ibid) argues that grammar correction has no place in writing courses and should be abandoned. According to him, the reasons are as follows:

- a) Research evidence shows that grammar correction is ineffective.
- b) This lack of effectiveness is exactly what should be expected, given the nature of the correction process and the nature of language learning.
- c) Grammar correction has significant harmful effects.
- d) The various arguments offered for continuing it all lack merit.

Truscott continues to suggest that and even if teachers are able to explain problems clearly, "students may fail to understand the explanation", "may forget the information even when they do understand it", or "may not be sufficiently motivated to apply the knowledge to their future writing." (p. 337). He claims that correction results in stress and demotivates students; also, it takes up too much teacher and student time which could be more productively and pleasantly spent on other aspects of writing.

Truscott furthers his claim by going on the offensive-arguing that not only is grammar correction ineffective; it is actually harmful to students and teachers. Because correction does not help students' accuracy, and may well damage it, simply abandoning correction will not have harmful effects on accuracy and might improve it. In other words, teachers can help students' accuracy at least as much by doing nothing as by correcting their grammar.

Ferris(2004)challenges Truscott's research with the following ideas:

“We would all doubtless agree that poorly done error correction will not help student writers and may even mislead them. However, there is mounting research evidence that effective error correction-that which is selective, prioritized, and clear-can and does help at least some student”(p.46)

According to Ferris' research study in 1999, there are reasons to continue the practice of correcting grammatical errors. Opinions about teacher feedback have consistently showed the importance L2 students give to receiving grammar correction from their teachers (Cohen, *ibid*; Ferris, 1995; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, *ibid*; Leki, *ibid*; Radecki & Swales, *ibid*).

Despite accepting that research on effectiveness of error correction and grammar instruction is incomplete and often inconclusive, Ferris(1999) believes that teachers should not abdicate this, “often very tedious duty”. L2 students need additional interference, as they are still in the process of learning syntax, morphology and lexicon of English. To make this learning process easier, Ferris goes beyond merely feedback and suggests “grammar mini-lessons”: “Well-constructed error feedback, especially when combined with judiciously delivered strategy training and grammar mini-lessons is beneficial and highly appreciated by ESL students” (p.5)

Loewen(1998), on the other hand, focused on how much grammar correction could improve students' accuracy in writing, and the study result showed no significant improvement. Loewen(*ibid*) avoids making a conclusion on whether grammar correction should be abandoned or not. Instead he makes another hypothesis for further research. That is, analytic learners might benefit from grammar correction because it would be consistent with their method of language learning. Holistic learners, on the other hand, might not benefit from such a method.

Fathman and Whalley(*ibid*) supported the effectiveness of grammatical feedback. Whatever the kind of received feedback (form, content or both), all students improved content, but grammatical accuracy improved only when grammar feedback was given.

In a famous study by Robb et al, (1986), four kinds of grammar corrections used on the surface errors of Japanese students were compared to see if they had an

influence on the students' writings over time. These types were: (a) explicit correction, where errors were pointed out and correct forms offered; (b) marking mistakes with a yellow pen, without explanation; (c) a tally was kept in the margin of the number of errors per lines, and students were told to examine the line and find and correct the mistakes; (d) the use of a correction code which showed both the location and kind of errors. In all these cases, the students were told to write their essays again, making the necessary corrections. Results revealed that at the end of the course, no significant differences existed between all the groups as far as accuracy is concerned. Consequently, the authors concluded that comprehensive treatment and overt corrections of surface errors are probably not worth the trouble for teachers to make.

Finally, this issue of grammar correction in writing classes can be summarized as follows: Many studies have shown that grammar correction to second language writing students is discouraging to many students, and even harmful to their writing ability (Semke *ibid*; Kepner 1991; Sheppard 1992; and Truscott (*ibid*). In general, those who do not receive grammar corrections have a more positive feeling about writing than those who did receive grammar corrections. Moreover, the time spent by students and teachers on correcting grammatical errors causes lack of time for the other crucial elements of writing, like organization and logical development of content. The research seems to suggest that writing teachers need to give priority to meaning and meaning related problems, to make comments about students' texts instead of just form.

Semke (*ibid*) has demonstrated that students who received comments from teachers only on content did much better and spent more time working on their essays than those who received remarks only on grammar. Specifically, this means that teachers should devote their time to areas like:

Organization

- Logical development of ideas and arguments
- Effectiveness of introduction and conclusion

Content

- Use of description
- Thesis statement

- Focus
- Use of facts and experience
- Cogency and consistency of how and why explanations

Semke (ibid) briefly advises teachers to train themselves to set aside their red pens and examine ideas and see what students are trying to say instead of simply looking for grammatical errors.

According to a National Centre for English Language Training and Research study conducted by Agosti(2006), findings about students' preferences regarding "the focus of error correction" can be summarized as follows:

- I. Students consider it more important for teachers to mark grammar and vocabulary errors than errors in spelling and punctuation.
- II. There is a high expectation among students that teachers should correct either all errors or most errors.

2.3 Different Techniques of Error Correction in Writing Classes

In order to analyze student preferences for different feedback techniques ,especially the ones focused in the current study(i.e. using symbols or codes, underlining the mistakes, directly correcting of the written text, conferencing and showing students the reference to help them find their errors themselves),first the classification of these error correction types should be illustrated. To illustrate this , Denstaedt P,(1998) classifies and explains error correction types in writing classes in five by using a single grammatically wrong sentence, which is " He told to me a story which was very funny" to explain these 5 types.

(tell me!)

Teacher A: He **told to** me a story which was very funny

The teacher directly gives the correct form above the mistake. In this case, the teacher somehow shows that he is the only one who can correct the mistakes and say which is good and which is bad. There is not anything that should be done by the students here.

Teacher B: He told to me a story which was very funny.

The teacher just underlines it and draws attention to form by underlying it. Here, the students are expected to think and decide what is wrong. In this example, the student is in the position of making a decision and actively involves in writing this sentence again.

(Pr)

Teacher C: He told to me a story which was very funny

Here, the teacher uses symbols (codes) to get the student to work on the sentence by giving a clue on the type of the mistake made in this sentence.

Teacher D: He told to me a story which was very funny (Teacher: “Why don’t you come and talk to me about it”)

Here, the teacher applies the conferencing technique; the teacher and a student discuss the errors in the written of the student. The student may think that this method is less stressful as they can express their ideas more freely and ask for clarification.

Teacher E: He told to me a story which was very funny

Here, the teacher leads the student either to self-correct him/herself or be corrected by his/her peer, the errors are not identified by the teacher, but are found by the student's classmates or the self who makes the mistake.

In addition to the above-mentioned 5 types indicated by Denstaedt (1998), one more type can be added to this classification as the survey used for the current study included it.

Teacher F: He told to me a story which was very funny (Teacher: “See section 11a in grammar book”).

Here, the teacher showed students the reference to help them find their errors themselves.(p.57)

Denstaedt concludes that no matter how it is done, written feedback is an essential aspect of any English language writing course. The goal of feedback is to teach skills that help students improve their writing proficiency to the point where they are aware of what is expected of them as writers and are able to produce it with minimal errors and maximum clarity.

Reviewing literature about different types of error correction methods which are focused in this study will provide a better background for the current research.

2.3.1 Explicit Correction vs. Implicit Correction

The research conducted about the issue of error correction methods is mainly concerned about whether to correct written pieces directly or indirectly. While some writing teachers prefer to give direct feedback, some others apply indirect feedback method on student errors. Definition of these terms will shed light on the current research.

Direct error feedback (overt correction&explicit correction) involves teachers' writing the correct forms or structures for students' faulty sentences (Hendrickson, *ibid*). Direct feedback is applied when the teacher provides the correct form for the student writer; if the student revises the text, s/he only has to transcribe the correction into the final version. On the other hand, in giving indirect error feedback, writing teachers have to decide whether to indicate error location directly (e.g., by circling or underlining errors) or indirectly (e.g., by indicating in the margin that there is an error on a certain line). Indirect feedback occurs when the teacher indicates in some way that an error exists but does not provide the correction; in other words, the teacher informs the writer that there is a problem but leaves it to the student to deal with it.

Ayoun(2001) defines explicit correction as detailed direct correction, which indicates that teachers provide learners with exact forms or structures of their wrong utterances. On the other hand, Ferris (1999) claims that implicit correction is indirect correction which means that teachers indicate the presence of errors or provide some sorts of clues with the intention of peer-correction or self-correction.

There is research evidence which indicates that indirect error feedback is more beneficial to students' long-term writing development than direct error feedback through increased student involvement and attention given to forms and problems. (Ferris, 2003)

Edge (1989), justifies the effectiveness of these two types of error correction methods and suggests that when teachers do not understand what learners are trying to communicate, they should provide correct ways of writing what they think the learners want to write. She states that if the teachers are right, their correction gives a clear model of correct utterance, and even if they are wrong, it encourages the learners to try again to write what they actually meant. Explicit correction is also effective when teachers deal with certain types of learner errors.

Kubota (2001) claims that finding out the appropriate words or structures might be very difficult for learners because they might not consult with any materials, such as grammar books or dictionaries or might not utilize these materials well enough to get benefit from them. For that reason, explicit correction for those errors could be thought as more favorable than the implicit one as explicit correction provides learners with opportunities to acquire the correct usage without any frustration.

Myer (1997) argues that teachers should correct wrong words or phrases explicitly by giving students the exact words or phrases in a spoken discourse. On the other hand, Zamel (ibid) suggests that teachers' comments like "What do you mean?", "Word Form" and "Wrong Word" do not help learners understand their problems. Moreover, the findings from Hayes and Daiker(1984) also showed that feedback like "unclear" or "be more specific" are little help to the students . Also, Keh's (ibid) study shows that one-word questions, such as "Why?" are problematic since they do not provide enough information for the learners to correct by themselves. He mentions that the learners also find that these kinds of comments are less helpful than others with more detailed information.

There seems to be strong evidence in the literature that there is a tendency for explicit correction while some of the other research has yielded results which are in favor of implicit correction.

Nassaji and Swain(2000),for example, conclude that "there was a tendency for more direct and explicit prompts to be more useful than less direct implicit prompts". Carroll, Swain and Roberge's 1992 study has results overlapping with Nassaji and Swain's research.

Semke(ibid)concludes that self-correction, which is a kind of implicit correction, is less effective than explicit types regarding the learners' achievement.

As pointed out before, there is some other research providing contrary results to the above ones. In other words, self-correction has been recommended by many other researchers. The following is one of many suggestions made by Brookes and Grundy (1990).

“...self-correction is preferable to peer correction, and peer correction to teacher correction. And because rewriting or self-correction is so important a writing skill, a good teacher will provide the maximum classroom opportunity for it, and indeed will include rewriting ability in any overall evaluation of learners' writing skills...”(p.54)

Lalande(ibid)argues that indirect feedback is preferable for most student writers because it engages them in “guided learning and problem solving”.(p.145) Error correction researchers who have examined the effects of these two contrasting types of feedback have reported that indirect feedback helps students to make progress in accuracy over time more than direct feedback does (Ferris et al., 2000)

If developing the abilities to edit one's written utterances is one of writing goals of language learners as Myles (2002) asserts and if “learning can only take place when students experience the cognitive modifications that will enable them to use each structure and element correctly”, writers(learners)should be enabled to discover the right forms or structures by themselves. Teachers' hints can be used by students to correct their errors. (Hammerly, ibid:106).

Robb et al.(ibid) claimed that correct forms does not improve the target language performance. Moreover, Tono and Kanatani (1996) state that explicit treatment is only effective for gifted learners. It means that for other learners, it is generally ineffective. Also, Lightbrown (1998) emphasizes that “explicit error correction is usually ineffective in changing language behavior”. Woods (1989) suggests that explicit correction of learner errors not only hinders the improvement of the communicative competence but also produces negative consequences in learners.

Lyster (1998) also maintains that corrective feedback which requires self correction provides the learners opportunities to acquire the process of target language learning.

There are many advantages of implicit correction as it makes learners more responsible for their learning (Allwright, *ibid*) and also helps teachers to save time and it is less time consuming than correcting errors explicitly (Raimes, 1991).

Also, Makino (1993), and Tono and Kanatani (*ibid*) state that even simple underlining that indicates the location of errors is beneficial for learners. Therefore, implicit correction gives learners the chance to improve their self-editing skills as well.

Lim (1991) proposes that students be allowed to work at these errors themselves with the help of their peers. Peer-marking/editing is especially useful in the first draft of the written work. Here, students are given the responsibility to edit each other's work individually or in a group before handing in the final draft to the teacher. Besides being fun for students to be allowed to correct and learn from errors other than their own, it also reduces the need for too many red markings from the teacher. Here, students must be briefed on how to edit the work of their peers.

In brief, there is a controversy among researchers in terms of effectiveness of both explicit and implicit correction. However, both types of treatment seem to have certain advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, it would be better for teachers to use various techniques depending on individual learners and the context of lessons.

Taking the reviewed literature into consideration, it can be assumed that implicit correction is more preferable than the explicit correction. At this point, Bates et al.(1993) ask a question as to how explicit indirect feedback should be in order to give students enough direction. There are various ways of giving implicit correction to students. It may be very explicit (marking an error at its exact location in the text and labeling it with a code or verbal cue, such as “VT,” “wrong verb tense,” or “use past tense”) or less explicit (placing a checkmark in the margin to let the writer know that there is an error somewhere in that line of text, but leaving it to the student to find, diagnose, and repair the problem)

In a study by Robb et al. (ibid), 134 Japanese EFL college students were assigned to one of four feedback groups: (1) direct feedback; (2) coded in-text feedback; (3) uncoded in-text feedback; and (4) marginal feedback about the total number of errors per line. Five student texts per student produced over a 9-month academic year were analyzed on a set of measures designed to assess “accuracy, fluency, and complexity,” and the authors report no significant differences across the four treatment groups on any of the measures. They conclude that “less time-consuming methods of directing student attention to surface errors may suffice” (1986).

Robb et al. (ibid) found that students’ performance in error correction is not affected by whether error location is made explicit for students. On the contrary, some different results are obtained in Lee’s (ibid) investigation and Lee’s research shows that direct prompting of error location is more helpful than indirect prompting because students can correct more errors when errors are directly located for them. Leki (ibid) long before points out that students prefer error correction methods that label mistakes and let them make corrections on their own.

According to Ferris & Roberts(ibid) the most popular type of feedback was underlining with description and then comes the direct correction, and underlining was the third. Twenty-one subjects who were all students filled in a survey in which there were items comparing the four different teacher response methods at the end of the semester. They were asked which of these ways facilitated for them to correct their mistakes, which way made it easiest to see what kind of mistakes they had made, which way they learned the most from, which way helped them most to write correctly in the future, and which way they liked the most. More than two-thirds of the students considered the Correction response to be the easiest to correct. However, half or nearly half thought Underlining with Description was the easiest way to see what kind of errors they had made, that they had learned the most from this response, and that it had been the most help in writing correctly in future. The results showed that “underlining” were significantly more effective at reducing error in subsequent writing than “underlining with description” was. Half said they liked “correction the most, with “underlining with description” second.

Ferris(2002) supports the idea that students learn more from either finding their own errors or making their own corrections, instead of receiving corrections from the teacher. Although there was no statistically significant difference between correction and underlining of errors, correction by the teacher was the best of the four methods used. He suggests that the superiority of the correction method may be because students are able to correct significantly more of their errors on their revisions after this method than after teacher responses either describing the type or noting the location of errors made, or both. Also, he continues to claim that correction by the teacher was also the most popular with the students, probably because it was the fastest and easiest way for them to revise.

Ferris et al. (2000) claimed that direct correction of error by the teacher led to more correct revisions (88%) than indirect feedback (77%). Over the course of the semester, however, it was noted that students who received indirect feedback reduced their error frequency ratios substantially more than those who received direct feedback.

There is research evidence to indicate that indirect feedback (i.e., indicating errors without correcting them) is more beneficial to students' long-term writing development than direct feedback (Ferris, 2003; Lalande, *ibid*). Ferris (2002) suggests that indirect feedback is generally more appropriate and effective than direct feedback. The danger of direct feedback is that teachers may misinterpret students' meaning; however, direct feedback is still appropriate (1) for beginner students,(2) when errors are 'untreatable', i.e., errors not amenable to self-correction such as sentence structure and word choice and (3) when teachers want to draw students' attention to other error patterns which require student correction.(p.146)

Lalande(*ibid*) investigates the effects of different types of teacher feedback on error in student writing. The experimental group of U.S. students of German as a second language improved in grammatical accuracy on subsequent writing after using an error code to rewrite, while the control group, which received direct correction from the teacher, actually made more errors on the essay at the end of the semester. However, the difference between the groups' improvement was not statistically significant.

On the other hand, in Frantzen's 1995 study of U.S. college students of intermediate Spanish, both the grammar-supplementation group receiving direct correction and the non-grammar group whose errors were marked but not corrected improved in overall grammar usage on the post essay. However, neither group showed significant improvement in written fluency over the semester.

The direct correction of surface errors has been found to be inconsistent, unclear and overemphasizes the negative by Fregeau(ibid). Moreover, when this type of feedback is given, students for the most part simply copy the corrections into their subsequent drafts or final copies. The vast majority of students does not record nor study the mistakes noted in the feedback. Having students merely copy teacher corrections into rewrites is a passive action that does not teach students how to recognize or correct errors on their own. Fregeau discovered that the method of teachers indicating the presence or types of errors without correction is also ineffective. Many times the students do not understand why the errors were indicated and simply guess the corrections as they rewrite. Fathman and Walley (ibid) discovered that when students receive grammar feedback that indicated the location of the error but not type of errors, the students significantly improved their grammar scores on subsequent rewrites of the papers. This idea is echoed by Frodesen (2001), who notes that indirect feedback is more useful than direct correction.

Robb et al, (ibid) have found that student performance in error correction was not affected by the salience of error feedback, including whether error location was made explicit for students. Lee's (ibid) study, however, has shown that direct prompting of error location was more helpful than indirect prompting, since students were able to correct more errors when errors were directly located for them. It must be noted that in Lee's study, the students read a text not written by themselves, and the results might have been different had they edited their own text.

As for the effectiveness of the teachers' responses in different proficiency levels, when giving feedback on form, or what we generally call error correction, indicating just the location of the error, or the location and the type of error, appears to be effective for students of high and average levels of proficiency, but not for weaker students. The findings suggest that students of low proficiency levels require

more detailed feedback, like having the model of the correct version or perhaps even a grammar rule to explain the error.

2.3.2 Use of Symbols or Codes

While teachers are giving indirect error feedback, they should decide whether they should identify error types for students. This identification requires the use of error codes (e.g., using “T” to indicate a verb tense error) and is referred to as coded error feedback (as opposed to uncoded error feedback, where errors are only underlined or circled).

Although some researchers are in favor of the idea of coded error correction, some others oppose it. For example, while Raimes (ibid) thinks that error identification is worthwhile and meaningful because it is a useful starting point for discussing errors with students, Ferris (2002) argues that identifying errors can be cumbersome for the teacher and confusing for the student. Lee(ibid) supports Ferris (ibid)with the following statement:

“Teachers may be over-estimating students’ ability to interpret marking codes and they may be using a wider range of metalinguistic terms than students could understand” (p.471).

Helt (2000) was also among many researchers who questioned the effectiveness of coded feedback. Helt found that student performance in error correction based on errors located by teachers was not significantly different when students were provided with codes or symbols.

Ferris et al. (2000) also discovered results similar to Helt’s. They found that there was no significant differences in self-editing performance between students who receive coded error feedback and those who receive uncoded error feedback.

Another researcher who could not find a statistically significant difference between teacher correction and coded feedback was Lalande(ibid) who carried out an experimental study investigating the effectiveness of two different types of feedback(i.e., teacher correction and correction with codes). The participants of this study were four German language instructors and their 60 students enrolled in four sections of intermediate German. The experiment group comprised two of the classes

and the control group the other two. The tests given at the beginning of the study showed no significant difference in the levels of writing ability between two groups. The results did not give any differences of importance.

Cumming (1985) argued that identifying student errors (by circling or underlining them with a cue for how to correct) may be regarded as the most extensively used technique for giving feedback to second language writers.

Enginarlar (ibid) found that students reacted positively to the indication of (linguistic) errors with codes. He concludes as follows: "Students regard such correction as a type of cooperative learning in which the amount of work and responsibility is shared by students and teachers" and he suggests that the "problem-solving manner of this feedback type would lead to more revision and achievement in writing classes." (p.193)

In a similar study, Saito(1994) tried to reveal students' reaction to the various feedback types their teachers applied. She compared seven types of feedback given by three teachers to three different groups of learners. Teacher correction (defined as the teacher crossing out all surface-level errors and providing the correct forms) and error identification (defined as the teacher indicating the location of a perceived error by underlining or circling it without providing the correct form) are two of main types in her study. (p.51) She found that, of these two variables, students preferred error identification over teacher correction. When asked the reason of their preference, although a few students said that they felt correction was the teacher's responsibility, the majority of students were willing to make corrections by themselves as long as they knew where errors were corrected .

Proud & Gatbonton (ibid) also worked on the same error correction method, which is "coded feedback" and discovered that students preferred teacher feedback with symbols/cues to overt error correction by the teacher.

Leki (ibid) also noted that students preferred error identification with cues for how to correct over teacher correction. Makino (ibid) supported Leki by observing that the more detailed the cues were, the higher the ratio of learner self-correction achieved.

Oledejo (ibid) acknowledges that a vast majority of students preferred the teacher to identify and correct their errors. For students "to become confident and to

be able to communicate" , teachers' involvement is necessary. Hedgcock & Lefkowitz (ibid) also discovered that on both first and final drafts, students preferred teachers to identify and correct errors in vocabulary, grammar and mechanics over using a set of proof-reading symbols .

Terri A. Greenslade(2006) and J. César Félix-Brasdefer have carried out a study examining the effects of uncoded vs. coded feedback on learners' ability to self-correct on a two-draft composition. 21 students of Spanish as an FL of intermediate/advanced proficiency taught by one of the researchers at a public university participated in that study. The results suggests that the type of feedback learners receive does indeed affect their ability to self-correct from the first to the final draft of a composition.

Ferris and Roberts (ibid) , investigated the effects of three different feedback treatments (errors marked with codes; errors underlined but not otherwise marked or labeled; no error feedback) and found that both error feedback groups significantly outperformed the no feedback control group.

Robb et al, (ibid) contrasted four methods of providing feedback on error in the written work of 134 Japanese college EFL freshmen. The correction group received direct correction of every error they made while the coded feedback group was given coded information about their performance. For the uncoded feedback group, only the locations of errors were marked but nothing else was provided. The marginal feedback group received information about the number of errors per line but nothing else. The results of their research did not support the effectiveness of direct correction and suggested that "less time-consuming methods of directing student attention to surface error may be enough."(p.83)

Lalande (ibid) worked on the effect of coded feedback and direct correction. He found that indirect coded feedback caused greater benefits in students' writing quality than direct correction by the instructor. Semke (ibid) also found in a similar study that excessive correction of student writing tended to influence the quality of compositions negatively and affect student attitudes toward writing badly.

Shizuka (1993) focused specially on direct correction; uncoded feedback; peer feedback; self-editing and did not entirely degrade the role of teacher correction and suggested the use of all four methods in combination.

Agosti(2006) carried out a study for the National Centre for English Language Training and Research and investigated students' preferences regarding different types of error correction methods. The results are as follows:

When asked how their teachers usually marked errors, 45 students said teachers used reformulation, 85 students said their teachers used the marking code and 19 students said their teachers underlined the errors. When asked which feedback method they preferred, a slightly higher percentage of students said they preferred the marking code (51.7 %) over reformulation (43.6 %). However, of the students who were exposed to reformulation, 70.5 % responded that they liked it whereas only 23.9 % out of those who were exposed to the marking code said they liked it.

2.3.3 Peer Correction

Over the past approximately 40 years, many changes have taken place in second language pedagogy (Larsen-Freeman, 1991). The role of peer feedback in writing (Caulk, 1994; Carson & Nelson, 1994; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Jacobs & Zhang, 1989; Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger, 1992; Nelson & Murphey, 1993, 1993) has also been the subject of a constant debate.

The process based approach in L2 writing instruction made group activities in the writing classroom more popular for the ELT community (Devenney, 1989). In peer review groups, students share their drafts with others as the drafts are developing to get guidance and feedback on their writing" (Leki, *ibid*). Nelson & Murphy (*ibid*) describe the merits of "peer-correction" with the following: "students providing other students with feedback on their preliminary drafts so that the student writers may acquire a wider sense of audience and work towards improving their compositions" (p.135)

Zhang(*ibid*)have also made claims for peer feedback, such as:

- . Learners can receive social support from peers.
- . Peer feedback can be more informative because peers are at the same level.
- . Students can learn by providing each other with feedback.
- . Learners may prioritize what peers say over teachers' feedback.
- . Peers provide a broader audience for students' writing. (p.209)

Despite its merits, some research does not seem to favor peer-correction for the following reasons:

- (i) peer feedback is very difficult to implement, especially in a mixed-culture classroom (Allaci & Connor, 1990)
- (ii) its use is time-consuming and impractical (Keh, *ibid*)
- (iii) it is ineffective and may even be counter-productive, given peers' "inadequate linguistic and cognitive maturity to evaluate" and their comments and corrections are likely to cause as many problems as they are expected to solve (Sengupta, 1998: 19)
- (iv) some forms of peers' social behavior may have a negative impact on the quality of the student-writer's revision (Nelson & Murphy, *ibid*)
- (v) peer feedback may be resented by student-writers who may fear ridicule from peers (Nelson&Carson, *ibid*).

Kasanga(1996),on the contrary, revealed the high level of willingness to engage in peer reviewing by the majority of students with a survey of more than 250 students. He concludes that peer correction helps students to be autonomous writers and suggests teachers the followings and incorporates in their assessments.

1. The students' ability to produce several drafts
2. The students' awareness of more than one revising strategy
3. The students' ability to identify their peers' weaknesses and strengths (for feedback and assessment);
4. The students' ability to identify their own weaknesses and to correct them or seek advice;
5. The students' ability to understand feedback;
6. The students' readiness or willingness to apply advice from several sources;
7. The students' ability to work independently with the help of references (p.26)

Oladejo (*ibid*) drew the lines between “teacher correction” and “peer correction” and discovered that students viewed the teacher as the person best capable of helping students improve their writing. He reports that "the majority of learners feel that errors of organization of ideas, vocabulary, and grammar would be best corrected by the teacher while problems with mechanics could be dealt with by the students themselves” (p.80)

Rothschild & Klingenberg (1990) mention that students have doubts about the value of peer feedback due to a perceived lack of expertise of student writers leading to faulty corrections.

Leki (*ibid*) also found that students preferred feedback from the teacher rather than from their peers. Students were asked to choose between teacher and peer feedback in Zhang's (*ibid*) reports and the vast majority of students chose the teacher as the person most capable of providing beneficial feedback. Zhang's hypothesis was as follows:

“If peer feedback is inherently more meaningful and relevant and gives more social support than teacher feedback, ESL learners who have experienced both will show a significantly stronger preference for peer feedback.”(p.213).

His findings contradicted with his hypothesis above. An overwhelming majority (93.8%) of participants chose the traditional teacher feedback over peer feedback .

Sengupta (*ibid*) conducted a study in which secondary school students in Hong Kong were trained how to respond to their peers' drafts. The subjects in this study were later interviewed to reveal their reaction to “peer feedback” and all of them mentioned that evaluation was the teacher's job.

Kumari Dheram (*ibid*) also mentioned that students "considered peer feedback useful for both developing and evaluating content" and came to the conclusion that peer feedback lowers students' dependence on the teacher as the only authority and helps them become aware of the importance of creating reader-based texts.

Connor and Asenavage (*ibid*) investigated the impact of peer and teacher feedback on eight ESL students from different countries in a university in the USA. They found that teacher feedback had a much more significant effect than peer feedback, with only 5% of peer feedback resulting in changes.

Paulus (1999) carried out a similar study on 11 ESL students on an intensive English language course at a public university in the USA and found slightly higher figures. Peer feedback accounted for 13.9% of all changes and teacher feedback for 34.3%.

Teacher feedback was more likely to have an impact than peer feedback with 87% of teacher comments resulting in some change compared to 51% of peer feedback.

Villamil and De Guerrero (1998) discovered that peer feedback had a beneficial effect on the quality of writing and also led to more learner autonomy though they made no comparison with teacher feedback. They (1998) explicitly state that “peer revision should be seen as an important complementary source of feedback in the ESL classroom.”(p.484). The usefulness of reading peers’ writing and giving peer feedback was acknowledged by 70% of the peer feedback class students as (a) learning from others’ strong points to offset their own weaknesses and (b) communicating with each other to enhance understanding and explore better solutions to writing problems.

Berg’s (1999) study of ESL classes in the USA also confirms the effectiveness of peer feedback as a means of aiding writing development. In this study, it was discovered that Berg (ibid) also found that peer feedback encouraged critical reasoning. Critical reasoning is a consequence of the considering the advice from a peer, questioning its validity, weighing it against his or her own knowledge and ideas, and then making a decision about what, if any, changes to make .

Tsui and Ng (2000) analyzed the influence of peer and teacher feedback on the writing of secondary school EFL students in Hong Kong. All students addressed a higher percentage of teacher feedback than peer feedback, but there was considerable individual variation. One of their case study students addressed 100% and 20% of teacher and peer feedback comments respectively, but for another the figures were 83% and 78%. They also noted that some students reported that they benefited from reading other students’ work as they prepared to give feedback and suggested that using peer feedback may contribute to the development of learner autonomy.

Jacobs and Zhang(ibid) also revealed that teacher feedback was not more effective than peer feedback, but that it was more effective than self-correction. They said that it was not certain whether teacher correction was more beneficial than peer feedback in correcting grammatical mistakes. Also, another study they carried

out shows that many subjects appreciated teacher correction more than only peer feedback and that they thought teacher correction was more reliable.

Rollinson's (2005) study of college level students of EFL in Spain found peer feedback was effective with 80% of peer feedback comments considered valid and 65% acted on.

Saito and Fujita (2004) investigated feedback provided to EFL students in a Japanese university from teachers' and peers' perspective and discovered that teachers and peers rated students' writing in broadly similar ways. The research broadly indicates the following:

“...teacher feedback has a much greater impact than peer feedback, though with considerable variation, but that peer feedback can contribute to writing development. This has to be balanced against the fact that introducing peer feedback in most contexts means students will receive more feedback than they would if only the teacher were providing feedback and that there may be other benefits, such as developing critical thinking, from encouraging peer feedback. However, even if peer feedback has advantages, it can only be introduced if students find it acceptable”.(p.31)

Allaei and Connor (ibid) revealed an interesting relationship between students' culture and the effectiveness of peer feedback groups. They exemplify their point by claiming that peer review works less well with Chinese speaking students. Also, Nelson & Murphy (ibid) found that Chinese speaking students were less likely to accept the right of other non-native speakers of English to judge their writing. Similarly, Carson and Nelson (ibid) found that Chinese speaking students studying ESL will generally work toward maintaining group harmony and mutual face-saving to maintain a state of cohesion. This meant that the peer review groups were less successful because of an unwillingness to criticize others.

Nelson & Carson(ibid) add that ESL students from countries with a large power distance are perhaps less likely to value their peers' views than are students from countries with a lower power distance (e.g., students from the United States).

In addition to culture, the size of the peer feedback group and the form of training can be identified as a prerequisite for successful use of this strategy (Berg, ibid). Zhu (2001), for example, worked with groups of three or four with both native

and nonnative speakers of English and noted that group dynamics had a strong impact on how the feedback group functions. As for the training aspect of Berg's discussion, a previous classroom-based study on peer review training (Min, 2005) revealed that a group of EFL students, after receiving extensive of coaching to be effective peer reviewers, was able to generate more specific and relevant written feedback on global features of their peers' compositions. Possibly, peer feedback generated by students who have received such extensive peer review training should be more refined, relevant, and to the point than that produced by the same group of students prior to training.

To sum up, Jacobs and Zhang(ibid) claimed that the relatively small amount of miscorrection was found in peer feedback. Therefore, they concluded that such a result may facilitate some L2 teachers' and students' concern that peer feedback is a case of the blind leading the blind.

2.3.4 Teacher-Student Conferences

Teacher-student conferences have become increasingly popular as an effective feedback technique in L2 writing. The research seems to take this technique as one-to-one dialogue between teacher and student about the individual written feedback given by the teacher. This technique is generally referred to "feedback tutorial" and sometimes "conferencing" in the reviewed literature.

Lo(1994) describes it as "arduous". Vandergrift(1986) claims that it is "too teacher-centered and time-consuming" and Leki(ibid) thinks that it is not always "feasible". Although conferencing is certainly a popular form of feedback, it is not actually a "real" solution. As Charles (1990) said, "Unfortunately, the problem for most students in most institutions is that the time is simply not available for this kind of individual editorial discussion" (p.286)

Hatori, et al. (1990) also investigated the effect of different types of feedback and claimed that conferencing and teachers' error correction in detail are very time-consuming for large classes. Hatori et al. was dubious about its cost efficiency and tried to show that mere stamping or underlining would be enough to provide the learners with the best production opportunities.

Despite the above criticisms of “conferencing”, most of the research seems to favour this type of error correction.

Zamel (ibid), for instance, suggests that conferences enable both reader and writer to make important discoveries about the developing text. She recommends this approach of “conferencing” after discovering that ESL students often found teachers' written comments difficult to understand. The main advantage of conferencing, she states, is that "dynamic interchange and negotiation is most likely to take place when writers and readers work together face-to-face". Also, Brender (1993) points out that students want to take part in conferencing and find it more effective than written comments.

Conrad & Goldstein (1990), long before mentioned that "responding in conferences is more effective than in writing because the teacher can interact dynamically with the students to understand intent"

Swain and Lapkin(2001) conducted a study in which pairs of learners wrote a story together; the text was then given to a native speaker to read and reformulate. The researchers look at the learners' discussion, both while writing and later, while comparing their own stories with the reformulation. One subject said that she remembered the points that had been discussed better than those which had not been discussed. Though Lo (1994) regards conferencing as being somewhat arduous at first, she then found it to be an effective tool on the second thought because "the teacher discovers the underlying intention and logic of students' texts and helps them reshape and modify the writing until the true meaning articulates itself intelligibly". (p.15)

Studies pertaining to student preferences for various feedback types have generally found that students appreciate the benefits of this technique. Saito (ibid), for example, reports that it was rated positively by just over 80% of respondents and was reported to be of much greater benefit than peer revision or self-correction. Student comments such as 'It helped me a lot to understand the unclear points about my writing' and "It's good for shy students" reveal this preference. Proud & Gatbonton (ibid) also conclude that verbal feedback in a teacher student conference was mentioned positively by a significant number of respondents. Students who preferred this type of feedback valued the personal relationship it established

between the teacher and student and the chance to have a dialogue with the teacher to defend ideas/choices.

Contrary to the above-mentioned two studies, only 10% of subjects in Hedgcock & Lefkowitz's (ibid) study rated verbal-only feedback as the most preferred type of feedback. This rating increased to 60% of respondents when verbal feedback was combined with written feedback. This result indicates that students felt that written comments were the best way to deal with the surface/linguistic errors they themselves were most concerned with.

Similar to teacher written commentary, conference feedback, was not an inherently effective means for giving usable and helpful feedback either. Students did not necessarily revise better and arrive at stronger texts as a result of such feedback. (Goldstein & Conrad, ibid). Many factors affected how well the teacher and student communicated and how effectively the student was able to use the teacher's feedback in revising.

Therefore, Goldstein&Conrad (ibid) made two important warnings to make "conferencing" more effective. First one is that conferencing should lead students to participate actively: setting the agenda, defending ideas, asking questions, and negotiating meaning. Secondly, so as to maintain a more productive student participation in teacher-student conferences, they assert that teachers cannot expect ESL students to come to writing conferences fully aware of the respective roles of the participants and so they must "teach students the purposes conferences can serve".

Conrad & Golstein (ibid) make further suggestions that contextual factors in addition to the nature of comments and types of problems students and teachers address must be taken into account when examining the relationship between teacher comments and student revisions.

Similarly, Woolfolk's recommendations(2001) regarding conferences are as follows:

- (1) "Build an environment of acceptance and appreciation of all students;"
- (2) "Broaden the range of social interaction, particularly for at-risk students;" and
- (3) "Enhance social skills development"(p.402)

As pointed out earlier, many students find understanding written feedback problematic. Conferencing gives both students and teachers the opportunity to go deep into the reasons of the problems resulting from student writing and feedback, and to develop strategies for improvement. During these sessions, teachers can ask direct questions to students in order to gain a deeper understanding of student writings. Also, students are able to express their ideas more clearly in writing and to get clarification on any comments that teachers have made. Finally, teachers can use conferencing to help students with any specific problems related to their writing. As a result of the reviewed literature above, it is fair to say that by establishing communication and negotiation with students about their papers, their revisions, and their use of our commentary, we can establish an atmosphere where students feel more secure and willing to take responsibilities.

2.4 Teacher Comments

Research on written feedback has generally focused on how teachers respond to linguistic or surface-level concerns. The literature seems to suggest that both students and teachers think that “comments” are beneficial. Most of the students (98%) in Enginarlar's (ibid) study, for example, reported to be very positively disposed to written teacher comments. In order for students to feel they benefit from teacher comments, he claims that these comments must be substantive and text-specific. His quantitative findings with questionnaire data focused on students' attitudes to the feedback procedures given by their English composition instructors. The procedures involved indication of linguistic error with code, and various types of brief feedback to help students' improve their drafts. Students perceived the following teachers' feedback effective: attention to linguistic errors, guidance on compositional skills, and overall evaluative feedback about content and quality of writing.

Although some studies show that students find teachers' written commentary helpful (Anglada, 1995), there is quite a lot of evidence that there is difference among students in terms of how helpful they find their teacher's written feedback and how well they understand their teachers' feedback.

Leki (1990) states: "Writing teachers and students hold the idea that written responses can have a great effect on student writing and attitude towards writing. Teachers continue to write comments on students' papers because they sense that their comments help their students improve; because written comments seem more feasible and more thorough than conferences on every paper; and because, for most writing teachers, our jobs require us not only to evaluate our students' writing but to be able to justify our evaluations "(p.58)

Cohen (ibid) worked on what kind of comments students prefer and found that the students desired written comments on their writing in the form of single words, short phrases, and complete sentences, although the first two forms of written feedback were mentioned most often by students as exactly the type that cause confusion.

The subjects in Radecki & Swales' study (ibid) suggested that responses indicating specific comments were the most beneficial: "They are very useful because if he only tells us to correct our mistakes, it will not be useful or efficient enough for the students "

Hedgecock & Lefkowitz (ibid) report that a majority of students felt written teacher comments were most effective when used in parallel with teacher-student conferences. In addition, they report that written teacher comments on vocabulary, content, and organization were more highly valued than the use of symbols with cues for self-correction.

Sheppard (ibid) supports the earlier literature and concludes that what is clear from research about written teacher comments in L2 writing is that students feel that this type of feedback can be of great benefit. However, it is important that these comments need to be specifically pointed to the text and provide a clear indication to students how to correct the error.

Proud & Gatbonton (ibid) put forward the condition to make these comments more useful. According to them, written comments represent something tangible students can review at a later time; but that this type was valued "only if" detailed enough to provide students with a clear indication how to proceed.

In light of the findings in the field of "teachers' written comments", Kepner (ibid) points out that learners may respond to teachers' written comments in different

ways and issues a call for further research on types of written feedback "to determine whether written feedback is always best for all L2 students" because earlier literature shows that teachers correct students' written work so imprecisely and inconsistently. (Allwright, *ibid*)

The studies of Greenbaum and Taylor(1982) also report a case study among composition teachers. In their studies, teachers were presented with sentences including specific types of errors and were asked to classify them and provide the corrected form. While most of the teachers were able to succeed in the latter one; almost 35% of the errors were categorized incorrectly for.

Cohen and Robbins (1976) revealed that teacher feedback was so indiscriminate that it might even negate any positive effects of error correction. Other studies also report a similar situation. Hendrickson briefly explained the situation as follows:

"a major reason that the correction of students' compositions has no significant effect on reducing errors, is that teachers correct compositions inconsistently." (Hendrickson *ibid*: 393)

Fathman and Walley(*ibid*), as well as Fregeau claim that teacher feedback on content in the form of teacher comments is often vague, contradictory, unsystematic and inconsistent. This results in different reactions by students, such as confusion, frustration and neglect of the comments. In link with teachers' vague, contradictory, unsystematic and inconsistent comments on students' written work, students' abilities to effectively use teachers' commentary should be taken into account. Researchers like Hyland(2000) investigate what individual students actually do with teacher commentary and have discovered that students vary in how they utilize the commentary they receive from their teachers . Leki(1991) reports that when presented with written feedback on content, students react in three main ways. The students may not read the annotations at all, may read them but not understand them, or may understand them but not know how to respond to them. Teacher comments on content are of little use if students do not know what they mean or how to use them productively to improve their skills as writers. Finally, Fathman and Walley(*ibid*) note, much like correction of grammar mistakes, comments on content

result from not knowing how to revise in reaction to comments (Saito, *ibid*). As a piece of advice, Conrad & Goldstein(*ibid*) suggests that students' own writing should be examined to see what they have done in response to the teacher's commentary throughout the semester, and the teacher should intervene in places where students seem to be having difficulty either understanding a comment or knowing how to revise in response to a comment. to revise Leki (*ibid*) also draws attention to the solution of lack of understanding or misunderstanding of the teachers' comments and suggests that teachers should familiarize students with the types of comments that will be used and train students in how to benefit from these comments. Kroll(2001)also suggests that without training in how to use the comments to better their writing, it is very likely that students will either ignore the comments, misunderstand them, or fail to use them constructively. Another researcher who reported findings to help students revise their written work is Ferris(2000) who investigated the influence of different treatment conditions on both text revisions and new pieces of writing. Discussing the findings of the study, Ferris (2002) reported that direct error correction to more correct revisions (88%) than indirect error feedback (77%). Over the course of the semester, however, it was noted that students who received indirect feedback reduced their error frequency ratios substantially more than those who received direct feedback. Also, many writing teachers consider one-on-one teacher-student conferences to be potentially more effective than written corrective feedback because they provide an opportunity for clarification, instruction, and negotiation (Ferris, 2002; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998) and as a result, facilitate the revising process.

2.5 Possible Factors Affecting Feedback Preferences

One of the factors that may have an impact on students' feedback preferences is students' previous learning experiences. Several studies (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, *ibid*, 1996; Leki, *ibid*; Oladejo, *ibid*; Saito, *ibid*) investigating both student preference for various feedback practices and how students process this feedback have found that students' previous learning experiences may be influencing both their preference and their revision strategies. The common findings in these

studies suggest that previous learning experience shapes feedback preference in terms of which feedback foci and types they have been exposed to in their L2 writing classes, and how ESL students perceive the roles of teacher and student in the classroom.

Leki (ibid) conducted a study to examine whether such a relationship exists between students' previous learning experience and feedback preferences. She claimed that student come to (North) American institutions with different notions. The majority of Leki's (ibid) subjects were in their first term in a US. university, leading her to conclude that their attitudes towards error correction were most likely based on language learning experiences in their native countries. This study was supported by Hedgcock & Lefkowitz (ibid) who found that FL students mostly preferred "form-focused". These preferences, they concluded, were a function of the teachers' focus on form-related issues in the FL setting "as opposed to fluency, idea generation, and organization in the ESL instructional setting. This, also explains why students in a number of studies (Leki, ibid; Oladejo, ibid; Proud & Gatbonton, ibid; Saito, ibid) prefer the use of symbols or codes to help them correct surface-level features in their writing.

Another effect of previous learning experience is the traditional view of the roles of teachers and students in the classroom. Sengupta (ibid) states that there is a "deep-rooted idea that the only possible interpretation of knowledge appears to be that it is transmitted from the teacher to the student, and not constructed by the classroom community"(p.25) in the FL context may explain the lack of importance given to peer feedback in ESL writing classes. Leki (ibid) states that "many new arrivals had not the opportunity to use peer responding and, therefore, did not believe it would work"(p.209). Jacobs (1987) also notes that "many students reported having had little prior experience working in groups in class and so had little idea how to go about it effectively"(p.329).

Also, Proud(1999) suggested that institutional attitudes towards writing, writing teachers, and different multilingual populations can greatly affect how teachers provide written commentary and how students react to such commentary and use it in their revisions. For example, some teachers and students work in

settings where the writing of multilingual students and what they have to say is highly valued.

Benesch(2001) emphasized the need to consider sociopolitical forces as well. For example, in some institutions, where negative attitudes towards minorities exist, multilingual writers are marginalized. Heavy teaching loads and large classes can also be regarded as causes of students' feedback preferences. Full time faculty with classes of 25–30 students each may find it hard to give as much effective commentary as they would like. If class sizes were smaller, more attention could be paid to the needs of faculty and their students, and teachers would be able to engage in the writing process of his/her students.

It is not only the student but also the teacher having an influence on students' written feedback preferences. While student factors include student personality, age, goals and expectations, motivations, proficiency level, past learning experiences, preferred learning styles and strategies, content knowledge and interest, time constraints, attitudes towards the teacher, the class, the content, the writing assignment, and the commentary itself; teacher factors include teacher personality, the teacher's pedagogical beliefs about how to comment, knowledge of the content about which students are writing, expectations of students, attitudes towards the following: specific student characteristics, each student, the content about which students are writing. (Proud,ibid)

Cohen and Cavalcanti (ibid) emphasize that learners' expectations and preferences might result from previous instructional experiences. If during students' language learning experience, their English teachers have marked their errors comprehensively and done the corrections for them, students may feel that these are the right things to do and that it is the teacher's job to correct errors. Without changing teachers' beliefs and their actual practices, it is not possible that students will change their expectations because learner expectations are dependent on teacher practice. Therefore, Cohen and Cavalcanti (ibid) suggest that it is important to raise teachers' awareness of the possible harm done to students and themselves by treating errors comprehensively and by correcting all errors for them, e.g., student frustration and teacher burnout.

In brief, there is very little empirical evidence to explain why L2 students have the preferences they have about feedback focus and feedback type although Raimes (ibid) wants that practitioners of ESL writing instruction are beginning to realize that there is great diversity in their students, which probably means that not all approaches to ESL writing may work with all learners.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study is to find out the preferences of students' for error correction. A comparison between Hacettepe and Abant Izzet Baysal University students in terms of their attitude towards error correction was made. Another comparison was made between male and female students.

This chapter will provide information about the subjects, research design and instrumentation and data collection.

3.2. Subjects

This study was conducted at Abant Izzet Baysal University and Hacettepe University. The participants of this study were fourth-year students of Department of Foreign Languages Education at AIBU and HU. A total of 28 students from HU and 32 from AIBU participated in the study. 19 of the subjects were males and 41 were females. Their ages ranged between 20 and 25.

3.3 Research design and instrumentation

The current study is a quantitative one. A questionnaire adapted from Leki by Anderson, Benson and Lynch (ibid) was conducted in order to investigate students' preferences for feedback (see Appendix B): their feelings about the importance of errors in general, and about the relative importance of different kinds of errors; how often they looked carefully at comments in different areas, including content and organization as well as language; how they wanted the teacher to deal with errors; and how they acted on feedback.

With the permission of Lynch(see Appendix A),their survey, which included 4 parts and 28 items was used. The first part is comprised of 6 items including numbers ranging from 1(very important) to 5(not important at all).This first part is related to their feelings about the importance of errors in general, and about the relative importance of different kinds of errors. The second part includes 6 items the choices of which are between 1(always) and 5(never).This section of the questionnaire seeks answer to the question “how often they looked carefully at comments in different areas, including content and organization as well as language.” On the other hand, the third part consists of 10 items which have different options below and require participants to put an “x” next to the answer which for them is the best or the most accurate. This part is relevant to how they wanted the teacher to deal with errors; and how they acted on feedback. In the last part, there is a grammatically wrong sentence and six different ways of correcting the sentence.(“Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I am very lonely”).Students were expected to rate these correction methods by marking numbers between 1(very good) and 5(very bad).Among different teacher responses to the same error are as follows: using symbols or codes, underlining the mistakes, directly correcting the written text, conferencing and showing students the reference to help them find their errors themselves. The last part has been designed in order to reveal students’ preferences for different types of correction methods.

3.4 Data Collection

The data were collected through the questionnaire mentioned above and the collected data were entered into SPSS 13, a statistical package program. Considering the nature of data, chi-square was performed in order to give answers to the research questions. The reason why chi-square test was applied in the current study is that the questionnaire was designed and administered to obtain individual item responses, not a cumulative score(Hopkins,1984). Therefore, a chi-square item analysis was conducted with follow-up chi-square comparisons made for each item. There was no need to check the reliability and the validity of the survey as they have been calculated by the researchers referred to above.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Findings about the Research Question 1:(Questions 1-12)

“Is there a significant difference among last-year ELT students at AIBU and HU as for their feelings about the importance of errors in general, and about the relative importance of different kinds of errors; how often they looked carefully at comments in different areas, including content and organization as well as language?” The answer to this question was given by the Chi-square Test. As can be seen in the Table 1 below ($p > 0,05$ for all the questions), no significant difference between AIBU and HU students for the this part of the survey was found, except for items 1 and 3.

TABLE 1: Findings about the difference in the importance of different kinds of errors

Pearson Chi-Square	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Question 1	9,721(a)	4	,045
Question 2	5,414(a)	4	,247
Question 3	14,989(a)	4	,005
Question 4	5,895(a)	4	,207
Question 5	4,483(a)	4	,345
Question 6	3,910(a)	4	,418
Question 7	,813(a)	3	,846
Question 8	,561(a)	3	,905
Question 9	,215(a)	2	,898
Question 10	1,607(a)	3	,658
Question 11	,340(a)	2	,844
Question 12	5,781(a)	3	,123

As far as the findings about the difference in the importance of different kinds of errors, it would be true to say that there is not a significant difference ($p>0,05$). Students of HU and AIBU have similar tendencies, which might result from the teachers' pedagogical beliefs about how to correct written errors. Writing teachers at two universities might follow a similar way of treating students' errors. Despite the similarities in this part in general, there are two items leading to a significant difference between AIBU and HU.

In item 1, a significant difference between AIBU and HU was found. Among AIBU students, 25,0% perceived "having as few errors as possible in their written work" as very important; 57,1% of the HU students circled the same option. A Chi-Square analysis revealed that there was a significant difference in the proportion of AIBU and HU students responding to this question. ($X^2=9,721$; $p<0,05$) Students' personality might cause such a difference between two universities. Some students might be able to deal with their errors after teachers' feedback while some others cannot tolerate their own errors and always try to commit as few errors as possible in their written work. This difference could also be the result of teachers' expectations. If the group has a teacher always expecting error-free written work from their students, it is usual that students give utmost importance to making as few errors as possible.

As for item 3, a chi-square test of independence for AIBU and HU students is significant. A significant association was found between two different universities' students in terms of the importance to marks indicating grammatical errors. Those who circled the option "very important" at HU make up more than the whole population there (53,6%) ; however, only 9,4 of the AIBU students thought that marks pointing out grammatical errors is "very important" ($X^2=14,989$; $p<0,05$). As for the difference regarding this item, it would be fair to say that students coming from a language learning background through which they were exposed to intensive grammar teaching and correction might have the preference for the correction of their grammatical errors in their written work.

4.2 Findings about the Research Question 2(Questions 12-22)

“Is there a significant difference between students of AIBU and HU in terms of their general beliefs about how they wanted the teacher to deal with errors; and how they acted on feedback is not significantly different at these two different universities?”

As illustrated in Table 2 below, the data revealed by the Chi-square Test shows that there is not a significant difference ($p > 0,05$ for all the questions) between AIBU and HU students regarding the research question above. Only the difference in question 13 is significant.

TABLE 2: Findings about the difference in how students want their teachers to deal with errors and how they acted on feedback.

Pearson Chi-Square	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Question 13	20,537(a)	5	,001
Question 14	,429(a)	2	,807
Question 15	2,595(a)	2	,273
Question 16	2,377(a)	2	,305
Question 17	2,156(a)	2	,340
Question 18	2,099(a)	3	,552
Question 19	4,271(a)	3	,234
Question 20	3,781(a)	3	,286
Question 21	5,210(a)	3	,157
Question 22	7,634(a)	4	,106

The similarity in results obtained from two universities is also very likely to be the result of the teachers' pedagogical attitude towards error correction. As far as the item 13 is concerned, of the sample 60 participants, the highest percentages for the option “mark all errors, major and minor” and “mark all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones” are both 46,4% at HU while the majority of AIBU students(25%) wanted their teachers to “mark most of the major errors” and “mark all repeated errors that might interfere with communicating your ideas” .A test of the relationship between AIBU and HU students for all the other options as well yielded

a significant result. ($X^2=20,537$; $p<0,05$) This difference might be a matter of students' expectations. Students with high expectations most probably want their teachers to correct all their errors, major and minor.

4.3 Findings about the Research Question 3: (Questions 23a-23f)

“Is there a significant difference between students of AIBU and HU about their preferences for the following feedback type variables?” (“using symbols or codes, underlining the mistakes, directly correcting the written text, conferencing, showing students the reference to help them find their errors themselves and no correction at all”)

As can be seen in table 3 below for each question regarding this question (Items 23a-23f), the results shows that there is not a significant difference in any of the results. ($p>0,05$ for all the questions).

TABLE 3: Findings about the difference in students' preferences for different feedback types

Pearson Chi-Square	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Question 23/a	7,088(a)	4	,131
Question 23/b	2,218(a)	4	,696
Question 23/c	4,455(a)	4	,348
Question 23/d	2,076(a)	4	,722
Question 23/e	8,397(a)	4	,078
Question 23/f	,244(a)	3	,970

Students' preferences for different feedback types might yield no significant difference as writing teachers at HU and AIBU could be following similar feedback type variables while correcting students' written work.

The findings so far have revealed no significant difference between AIBU and HU apart from few of the items in the survey. Why preferences of students at two different universities might or might not differ is two-sided. On one side, there is a teacher factor while on the other side we can talk about a student factor. Proud(ibid) lists student factors as follows: Students' personality, goals, expectations, motivations, proficiency level, past learning experiences, preferred learning styles and strategies, content knowledge and interest, time constraints, attitudes towards the teacher, the class, the content, the writing assignment, and the commentary itself. On the other hand, Proud suggests that the teacher factor might include the teacher personality, the teacher's pedagogical beliefs about how to comment, knowledge of the content about which students are writing and expectations of students.

4.4 Findings about the Research Question 4: (Questions 1-23f)

“Is there a significant correlation between gender and error correction preferences?”

Items 1-23e showed no significant difference ($p > 0,05$) between male and female students in the responses given to the survey about students' preference for error correction preferences as can be seen in Table 4. Only in the item 23f, a significant difference can be observed.

TABLE 4: Findings about the difference between male and female students' feedback preferences

Pearson Chi-Square	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Question 1	6,642(a)	4	,156
Question 2	7,581(a)	4	,108
Question 3	5,043(a)	4	,283
Question 4	6,282(a)	4	,179
Question 5	8,495(a)	4	,075
Question 6	3,952(a)	4	,413
Question 7	4,423(a)	3	,219
Question 8	2,043(a)	3	,564
Question 9	3,300(a)	2	,192
Question 10	1,984(a)	3	,576
Question 11	3,109(a)	2	,211
Question 12	2,326(a)	3	,508
Question 13	6,021(a)	5	,304
Question 14	1,949(a)	2	,377
Question 15	3,022(a)	2	,221
Question 16	1,115(a)	2	,573
Question 17	,282(a)	2	,869
Question 18	3,696(a)	3	,296
Question 19	2,042(a)	3	,564
Question 20	2,361(a)	3	,501
Question 21	2,628(a)	3	,453
Question 22	,806(a)	4	,938
Question 23/a	5,924(a)	4	,205
Question 23/b	3,611(a)	4	,461
Question 23/c	3,291(a)	4	,510
Question 23/d	2,025(a)	4	,731
Question 23/e	6,501(a)	4	,165
Question 23/f	10,162(a)	3	,017

According to the percentages of different options regarding this question, it can be said that while 25% of the total male participants responded to “no correction” as “very bad”, 60% of all the female participants gave the same answer. The result revealed a significant difference between the preferences of male and female respondents. This result was significant at the 0,17 level. ($p < 0,05$).

4.5 Findings about the Research Question 5:

“What are the written feedback preferences of the total number of students in this study?”

Frequency and percentage tables for each item in four different parts of the survey are given below:

Part I: This part of the survey is about students’ feelings about the importance of errors in general, and about the relative importance of different kinds of errors, such as grammar, spelling, vocabulary choice and punctuation.

Q1. How important is it to you to have as few errors as possible in your written work in English?

TABLE 5 : Findings about the importance of having as few errors as possible in written work

		Very important	Important	Sometimes important	Rarely important	Not important at all	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	16	7	4	-	1	28	1,6786
	%	57,1	25,0	14,3	-	3,6	100,0	
AIBU	F	8	17	5	2	-	32	2,0313
	%	25,0	53,1	15,6	6,3	-	100,0	
Total	F	24	24	9	2	1	60	1,8667
	%	40	40	15	3,3,	1,7	100	

While 57,1 of the HU students preferred “very important”, 53,1% of the AIBU students preferred “important”. Taking the total into consideration, it is seen that options “very important” and “important” are equally important from the respondents’ point of view with a percentage of 40%. This result suggests that

“having as few errors as possible in a written work” is regarded as something important by candidate teachers of English.

Despite the similarity in some of the options, there is difference regarding the order of importance and this might result from the students’ personality type. Some “perfectionists”, for example, cannot tolerate their own errors and always try to avoid them.

Q2. How important do you think is to your English teachers for you to have as few errors as possible in your written work?

TABLE 6: Findings about the importance of having as few errors as possible for English teachers

		Very important	Important	Sometimes important	Rarely important	Not important at all	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	17	8	1	1	-	28	1,50
	%	60,7	32,1	3,6	3,6	-	100,0	
AIBU	F	12	17	2	-	1	32	1,78
	%	37,5	53,1	6,3	-	3,1	100,0	
Total	F	29	26	3	1	1	60	1,65
	%	48,3	48,3	5,0	1,7	1,7	100,0	

60,7% of the HU students thought that “having as few errors as possible to their English teachers” is “very important”; on the other hand, 53,1 % of the AIBU students circled “important” for this item. Despite this difference, looking at the total statistics, it can be observed that “very important” and “important” are equally preferred by all the students with a percentage of 48,3%. In other words, nearly half of all the respondents held the idea that “having as few errors as possible in their written” is important to their English teachers.

This item emphasizes “the teacher” unlike the first question; hence, it would be true to analyze this question taking the teacher factor into consideration. For example, for students who have a teacher with high expectations in a writing class, having as few errors as possible might turn out to be the goal of all the students.

Q3. How important is it to you for your English teacher to point out your errors in grammatical forms (verb tenses, subject/verb agreements, article use, etc.) in your written work?

TABLE 7: Findings about the importance of pointing out errors in grammatical forms

		Very important	Important	Sometimes important	Rarely important	Not important at all	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	15	10	2	-	1	28	1,6429
	%	53,6	35,7	7,1	-	3,6	100,0	
AIBU	F	3	21	5	2	1	32	2,2813
	%	9,4	65,6	15,6	6,3	3,1	100,0	
Total	F	18	31	7	2	2	60	1,9833
	%	30	51,7	11,7	3,3	3,3	100,0	

This item about correcting “grammar” errors was ranked “very important” by 53,6% of the HU students whereas this preference shifted to option “important” with a percentage of 65,6 at AIBU. Despite the variation in the order of importance HU and AIBU students give to this item, “very important” and “important” were the most popular options as can be seen in the total section above. On the whole, it would be fair to say that “grammatical errors are perceived as important and should be pointed out by the teacher.”

The reason of this change in responses between AIBU and HU could be the teacher. If it is the habit of a writing teacher to point out all the grammatical errors in a written work, his/her students might feel under the influence of this habit and have the preference to see all their grammatical errors indicated. In other words, teachers’ past learning experiences are likely to form their attitudes towards errors and students may try to get used to their teachers.

That most of the students hold the idea that the indication of grammatical errors is the most important reveals that students are highly concerned about the form. Table 11 yields similar results.

Q4. How important is it to *you* for your English teacher to point out your errors in spelling in your written work?

TABLE 8: Findings about the importance of pointing out errors in spelling

		Very important	Important	Sometimes important	Rarely important	Not important at all	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	10	9	5	3	1	28	2,1429
	%	35,7	32,1	17,9	10,7	3,6	100,0	
AIBU	F	4	11	6	8	3	32	2,8438
	%	12,5	34,4	18,8	25,0	9,4	100,0	
Total	F	14	20	11	11	4	60	2,5167
	%	23,3	33,3	18,3	18,3	6,7	100,0	

The importance given to correcting spelling errors by the teacher changes from AIBU students to HU students as 35, 7% of the former circled “very important” while 34, 4% of the latter preferred “important”. The total preferences for this item are mostly “very important” and “important” with percentages 23, 3% for “very important” and 33, 3% for important and this means that spelling is thought quite important by the respondents.

The slight difference between AIBU and HU for this question may arise from students’ special interests in spelling. On the other hand, there might be some other students who do not feel good at English spelling. Participants might have chosen the option for this item considering their own strengths and weaknesses. Their self perceptions are likely to affect their preferences. This is also true for Table 12.

Q5. How important is it to *you* for your English teacher to point out your errors in vocabulary choice in your written work?

TABLE 9: Findings about the importance of pointing out errors in vocabulary choice

		Very important	Important	Sometimes important	Rarely important	Not important at all	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	9	10	8	-	1	28	2,0714
	%	32,1	35,7	28,6	-	3,6	100,0	
AIBU	F	10	13	6	3	-	32	2,0625
	%	31,3	40,6	18,8	9,4	-	100,0	
Total	F	19	23	14	3	1	60	2,0667
	%	31,7	38,3	23,3	5,0	1,7	100,0	

For this question, AIBU and HU students show similarity in their preferences as far as the importance they give to vocabulary choice errors with 35, 7% for HU and 40, 6% for AIBU. Although a total percentage of 1,7 responded to this question as “not important at all”, 31,7% of all the respondents gave the answer “very important”.

One reason why students’ preferences at two different universities change may be the content of the writing syllabus. If vocabulary is highly emphasized and if students are encouraged to use the right vocabulary in their written work, students could have an expected preference for vocabulary choice correction. Also, the grading policy in that lesson may affect students’ preferences in that students who know that their written work should contain the right vocabulary are more likely to expect from their teachers to point out their wrong use vocabulary. Table 13 can be interpreted similarly.

Q6. How important is it to *you* for your English teacher to point out your errors in punctuation in your written work?

TABLE 10: Findings about the importance of pointing out errors in punctuation

		Very important	Important	Sometimes important	Rarely important	Not important at all	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	7	7	10	4	-	28	2,3929
	%	25,0	25,0	35,7	14,3	-	100,0	
AIBU	F	4	11	9	6	2	32	2,7188
	%	12,5	34,4	28,1	18,8	6,3	100,0	
Total	F	11	18	19	10	2	60	2,5667
	%	18,3	30,0	31,7	16,7	3,3	100,0	

Punctuation is considered by 35,7% of the HU students as “sometimes important” which is somewhere in between “very important” and “not important at all”. However, 34,4% of the AIBU students preferred “important” which is much closer to “very important”. This difference shows itself in the total as well. “Sometimes important” ranks the top as the total number of students’ preference.

As the writing teachers are the best models for the students to learn writing in English, teachers' emphasizing certain language areas is more likely to create an interest in those areas. For instance, if students have a writing teacher who is very careful about punctuation while writing something, they will possibly have an expected preference for punctuation. The same interpretation may also be true for Table 14.

Summary of Section I: In this section, students' feelings about the importance of errors in general and the importance of different kinds of errors from the perspective of the subjects were analyzed. In the light of this analysis, it could be suggested that students feel in general that errors are important. While grammatical forms, spelling and vocabulary choice are taken as either "important" or "very important" by the participants, the only "sometimes important" preference can be seen in the item about "punctuation".

Part II: The second part seeks answer to the question "how often they looked carefully at comments in different areas, including content, organization and the language"

Q7. When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the marks indicating errors in grammar?

TABLE 11: Findings about the attention students give to marks indicating errors in grammar

		always	usually	sometimes	not very often	never	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	15	11	1	1	-	28	1,5714
	%	53,6	39,3	3,6	3,6	-	100,0	
AIB U	F	16	12	3	1	-	32	1,6563
	%	50,0	37,5	9,4	3,1	-	100,0	
Total	F	31	23	4	2	-	60	1,6167
	%	51,7	38,3	6,7	3,3	-	100,0	

53,6% of the HU students ranked this item as very important. Quite similarly, very important was preferred by half of the respondents at AIBU. As can

be seen in the total, more than half of all the participants look at marks indicating errors in grammar carefully. None of the respondents gave the answer “never” to this question. This is an indication of the fact that marks indicating grammar errors are not only given importance as indicated in question 3, but also always looked carefully by the students.

Q8. When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the marks indicating errors in spelling?

TABLE 12: Findings about the attention students give to marks indicating errors in spelling

		always	Usually	sometimes	not very often	never	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	11	12	4	1	-	28	1,8214
	%	39,3	42,9	14,3	3,6	-	100,0	
AIBU	F	10	15	5	2	-	32	1,9688
	%	31,3	46,9	15,6	6,3	-	100,0	
Total	F	21	27	9	3	-	60	1,9000
	%	35,0	45,0	15,0	5,0	-	100,0	

The attention HU and AIBU students pay to spelling markings on their written work is quite similar as both respondents mostly preferred “usually” with percentages of 42, 9% for HU and 46,9% for AIBU. This option is followed by the second mostly chosen option, which is “always”. A general tendency in the option “usually” can be observed in this item. This result supports the fourth item in the first part, which is about “the importance students give to marks pointing out spelling errors”.

Q9. When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice?

TABLE 13: Findings about the attention students give to marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice

		always	usually	sometimes	not very often	never	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	13	11	4	-	-	28	1,6786
	%	46,4	39,3	14,3	-	-	100,0	
AIBU	F	14	12	6	-	-	32	1,7500
	%	43,8	37,5	18,8	-	-	100,0	
Total	F	27	23	10	-	-	60	1,7167
	%	45,0	38,3	16,7	-	-	100,0	

46,4% of the HU students “always” look at marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice carefully, on the other hand, a similar percentage of AIBU students(43,8%) “always” look at these errors. The closest percentage to “always” is “usually” at both universities with percentages 39,3%(HU) and 37,5%(AIBU). None of the respondents have given the answer “not very often” and “never”, which means that errors indicating vocabulary choices are always, usually or sometimes looked at carefully. According to the total percentage,45% of all the students at both universities “always” look at the marks indicating vocabulary errors. A similar result was obtained with question 5, which is also about “marks indicating vocabulary errors”

Q10. When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the marks indicating errors in punctuation?

TABLE 14: Findings about the attention students give to marks indicating errors in punctuation

		always	usually	sometimes	not very often	never	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	8	10	5	5	-	28	2,2500
	%	28,6	35,7	17,9	17,9	-	100,0	
AIBU	F	5	13	6	8	-	32	2,5313
	%	15,6	40,6	18,8	25,0	-	100,0	
Total	F	13	23	11	13	-	60	2,4000
	%	21,7	38,3	18,3	21,7	-	100,0	

While 35,7% of the HU students chose “usually” for this item which is about students’ attention to punctuation markings on their written work, 40,6% of the AIBU preferred this option. These percentages are followed by “always” at HU with a percentage of 28,6% and by “sometimes” at AIBU with a percentage of 18,8%. According to the total statistics, marks on punctuation errors were “usually”(38,3%) looked at even though the majority of students gave the answer “sometimes important” to question 6 in the previous part

Q11. When your teacher returns a marked essay to you, do you look carefully at the comments on the organization of your essay?

TABLE 15: Findings about the attention students give to comments on the organization of the essay

		always	usually	sometimes	not very often	never	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	18	7	3	-	-	28	1,4643
	%	64,3	25,0	10,7	-	-	100,0	
AIBU	F	20	7	5	-	-	32	1,5313
	%	62,5	21,9	15,6	-	-	100,0	
Total	F	38	14	8	-	-	60	1,500
	%	63,3	23,3	13,3	-	-	100,0	

The response to this item, which is about comments on the organization of students’ essay, was given as “always” by 64, 3% of the HU students while this percentage goes down to 62,5% at AIBU. The second mostly selected option is “usually” with percentages 25% and 21,9% for HU and AIBU respectively. As the majority of the subjects (63, 3%) chose “always” and no one circled “not very often” and “never”, it can be said that errors indicating comments on organization are not ignored by the students.

The grading policy might lead students to think differently as students will probably put their focus on the form in an institution where essays are evaluated by the criterion of grammatical correctness. On the other hand, students in an institution where the use of linkers and the organization of the essay are the most important criteria, are likely to give utmost attention to comments on the organization of their essays.

Q12 When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the comments on the ideas you expressed?

TABLE 16: Findings about the attention students give to comments on the ideas expressed

		always	usually	sometimes	not very often	never	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	18	7	3	-	-	28	1,4643
	%	64,3	25,0	10,7	-	-	100,0	
AIBU	F	14	16	1	1	-	32	1,6563
	%	43,8	50,0	3,1	3,1	-	100,0	
Total	F	32	23	4	1	-	60	1,5667
	%	53,3	38,3	6,7	1,7	-	100,0	

64,3% of the HU students circled “always”. On the other hand, 43,8% of the AIBU students preferred the same choice. Half of the AIBU students “usually” look at carefully at the comments on the ideas they expressed. The number of respondents choosing “usually” at HU is half of the ones giving the same answer at AIBU. Taking the total into account, it is seen that more than half of the participants “always” look carefully at the comments on the ideas.

That the majority of students pay attention to the comments about the ideas they express in their writing shows that students are interested not only in the form (Table 7 and Table 11) but also in the content.

Summary of Section II: It was revealed that it is the mark on students’ essay organization which attracts the biggest population of students (63, 3%). While the percentages for the option “always” in response to “when your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the marks or comments on ...?” are as follows: 51,7% for grammar, 35% for spelling, 45% for vocabulary choice, 21,7% for punctuation and 53,3% for ideas; the percentage for comments on the organization of the essay is 63,3%. This shows that students are more concerned with the content of their written work than just the form.

Part III: Questions between 13 and 23 have numerous options. The options are indicated in the boxes below. In this part, how students wanted their teachers to deal with errors; and how they acted on feedback will be investigated.

Q13. If there were *many* errors in a composition, what would you want your English teachers to do?

TABLE 17: Findings about how students want their teachers to deal with errors

		Mark all errors	Mark all errors the teacher considers major, not the minor ones.	Mark most of the major errors	Mark only a few of the major errors	Mark all repeated errors	Mark errors interfering with communicating ideas	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	13	13	-	1	-	1	28	1,7500
	%	46,4	46,4	-	3,6	-	3,6	100,0	
AIBU	F	6	7	8	1	8	2	32	3,1250
	%	18,8	21,9	25,0	3,1	25,0	6,3	100,0	
Total	F	19	20	8	2	8	3	60	2,4833
	%	31,7	33,3	13,3	3,3	13,3	5	100,0	

“Mark all errors” and “mark all the errors the teacher considers major, not the minor ones” are equally preferred by HU with the same percentage (46,4%); on the other hand, the same option is chosen by only 18,8% of the AIBU students. The option “mark all the errors the teacher considers major, not the minor ones” was chosen by 21,9% of the AIBU students. The option “mark most of the major errors” was circled by none of HU students while 25% of the AIBU students preferred it. No one at HU chose the option “mark all repeated errors” whereas 25% of the AIBU students preferred it.

In the light of the total statistics about this item, it can be said that the majority of the respondents want their teachers to “mark all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones” (33,3%). This is followed by “marking all errors, both major and minor” with a similar percentage (31,7).

Q14. How do you want your teacher to indicate an error in your written work?

TABLE 18: Findings about how students want their teachers to indicate an error

		The teacher crosses out what is incorrect and writes in the correct word or structure	The teacher shows where the error is and gives a clue about how to correct it.	The teacher shows only where the error is	The teacher ignores the errors in English and pays attention to the ideas expressed.	Other	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	16	11	1	-	-	28	1,4643
	%	57,1	39,3	3,6	-	-	100,0	
AIBU	F	16	14	2	-	-	32	1,6225
	%	50,0	43,8	6,3	-	-	100,0	
Total	F	32	25	3	-	-	60	1,5167
	%	53,3	41,7	5,0	-	-	100,0	

While 57,1% of the HU students chose “The teacher crosses out what is incorrect and writes in the correct word or structure”, 50% of the AIBU students preferred this option. Looking at the total, we can see that this option is preferred the most (53,3%) and followed by “The teacher shows where the error is and gives a clue about how to correct it” with a percentage of 41,7%. The option “The teacher only shows where the error is” was the least chosen by the total number of participants. Options “The teacher ignores the errors in English and only pays attention to the ideas expressed” and “other” were not preferred by any of the subjects.

Q15. How carefully do you look at the marks your teacher makes on your written work?

TABLE 19: Findings about students' attention to the marks their teacher makes

		Read every one carefully	Look at some marks more carefully than at others.	Pay attention to teacher's comments on the ideas you expressed.	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	16	9	3	28	1,5357
	%	57,1	32,1	10,7	100,0	
AIBU	F	24	7	1	32	1,2813
	%	75,0	21,9	3,1	100,0	
Total	F	40	16	4	60	1,400
	%	66,7	26,7	6,7	100,0	

When asked how carefully students look at the marks their teachers make on their written work, it was seen that the option “Read every one carefully” was the most favorite option with a percentage of 57,1% by HU students although this percentage increases up to 75% at AIBU. The option “Look at some marks more carefully than at others” was selected as the most favorite option by 32, 1% of the HU while the percentage for this item is 21,9% at AIBU. The order of preference does not change when you look at the total. The first option (“Read every one carefully”) was chosen by 66, 7% of all the participants. This is followed by 26,7% for the option “Look at some marks more carefully than at others” and the least selected choice was “Pay attention to teacher's comments on the ideas you expressed.”(6,7%)

That the majority of students prefer to read every mark by the teacher shows the attention they pay to what their teacher writes on their written work.

Q16. If you only look carefully at *some* of the marks your English teacher makes on your written work, which ones do you consider most important to look at carefully?

TABLE 20: Findings about the importance of marks indicating different errors

		Marks indicating errors in grammar	Marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice	Marks indicating errors in punctuation	Marks indicating errors in spelling	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	15	11	2	-	28	1,5357
	%	53,6	39,3	7,1	-	100,0	
AIBU	F	18	14	-	-	32	1,4375
	%	56,3	43,8	-	-	100,0	
Total	F	33	25	2	-	60	1,4833
	%	55,0	41,7	3,3	-	100,0	

53,6% of the HU students considered “Marks indicating errors in grammar” as the most important to pay attention to. Similarly, 56,3% of the AIBU students preferred this option. While the second option “Marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice” was circled as the second most important to look at with percentages 39,3% and 43,8% for HU and AIBU respectively, the option “marks indicating errors in punctuation” was considered as important by only a few students at HU(7,1%). The option “Marks indicating errors in spelling” was chosen by none of the participants at two universities.

The order of importance for the total does not change as the first one is the most preferred; the second option is thought as the second most important and the third as the least important by the participants. This item covers questions 7, 8,9,10 in that they all have something to do with different points of language, such as grammar, vocabulary choice, punctuation, and spelling and try to reveal the importance students attribute to these points.

Students' preferences about this item might have been influenced by the importance their teacher gives to certain area of the language, the requirements of the writing syllabus or the past learning experiences of both the teacher and the student.

Q17. Of the marks that your English teacher makes on your compositions which ones do you remember best?

TABLE 21: Findings about the marks students remember best

		Comments on your ideas.	Comments on the organization of the paper	Marks indicating errors in English	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	15	2	11	28	1,8571
	%	53,6	7,1	39,3	100,0	
AIBU	F	22	3	7	32	1,5313
	%	68,8	9,4	21,9	100,0	
Total	F	37	5	18	60	1,6833
	%	61,7	8,3	30,0	100,0	

Of the marks that your English teacher makes on students' compositions, the one students remember best is the option "Comments on your ideas" with percentages of 53,6% and 68,8% for HU and AIBU respectively. The second mostly remembered one is "marks indicating errors in English" by 39, 3% of the HU students and 21, 9% of the AIBU students. While the least remembered ones among the total number of students are "Comments on the organization of the paper" with a total percentage of 8,3% of all the participants, 61,7 of all the respondents chose "comments on ideas" as the best remembered.

Q18 If you make an error in English, what helps you the most to understand what you did wrong?

TABLE 22: Findings about the most helpful thing or person helping students to understand what they did wrong

		Having another foreign student explain the problem	Having your teacher explain the problem	Looking in a grammar book	Having a native speaker (not your teacher) explain the problem	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	3	21	2	2	28	2,1071
	%	10,7	75,0	7,1	7,1	100,0	
AIBU	F	3	22	6	1	32	2,1563
	%	9,4	68,8	18,8	3,1	100,0	
Total	F	6	43	8	3	60	2,1313
	%	10,0	71,7	13,3	5,0	100,0	

If students make an errors, “having the teacher explain the problem” helps them the most to understand what they did wrong (71,7%). The percentage for this item is 75% at HU and quite similarly 68,8% at AIBU. The second most preferred option is “Having another foreign student explain the problem” with a percentage of 10,7% at HU and 9,4% at AIBU. On the other hand, 7,1% of the HU students chose “Looking in a grammar book” and “Having a native speaker (not the teacher) to explain the problem” while “Looking in a grammar book” was preferred by 18,8% of the AIBU student. “Having a native speaker (not the teacher) explain the problem” was regarded as the most important source to correct errors by only 3,1% of the AIBU students. Looking at the total statistics, one can see the over-dependence of students on their teachers in case they make an error and want to understand what they did wrong.

Q19 If you make an error in English, what helps you the least to understand what you did wrong?

TABLE 23: Findings about the least helpful thing or person helping students to understand what they did wrong

		Having another foreign student explain the problem.	Having your teacher explain the problem	Looking in a grammar book	Having a native speaker (not your teacher) explain the problem	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	6	8	11	3	28	2,3929
	%	21,4	28,6	39,3	10,7	100,0	
AIBU	F	8	3	14	7	32	2,6250
	%	25,0	9,4	43,8	21,9	100,0	
Total	F	14	11	25	10	60	2,5167
	%	23,3	18,3	41,7	16,7	100,0	

Contrary to the previous item, this question is about the least important source of error correction. 39,3% of the HU students answered this question with the following option: "Looking in a grammar book". Similarly, the same option is the most preferred one by 43,8% of the AIBU students. Although the least important source of correcting errors is similar, a difference in terms of the second least important can be seen above. While "Having your teacher explain the problem" is the second most selected by HU with a percentage of 28,6 %, "Having another foreign student explain the problem" is chosen secondly by 25% of the AIBU students. The total statistics regarding this question is as follows: "Looking in a grammar book" has been chosen as the one helping students the least to understand what they did wrong (41,7). This option is followed by "Having another foreign student explain the problem" with a percentage of 23,3.

Q20 If you make an error you don't know how to correct, where do you usually go for help?

TABLE 24: Findings about where students go for help in case of an error they cannot correct

		To your teacher	To another foreign student friend	To a native speaker friend	To a grammar book	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	18	4	1	5	28	1,7500
	%	64,3	14,3	3,6	17,9	100,0	
AIBU	F	25	1	-	6	32	1,5938
	%	78,1	3,1	-	18,8	100,0	
Total	F	42	5	1	11	60	1,6667
	%	71,7	8,3	1,7	18,3	100,0	

64,3% of the HU students and 78,1% of the AIBU students preferred to “go to their teachers” if they make an error they do not know how to correct. The second mostly chosen option is not different between two universities, either. In other words, 17,9% of the HU and 18,8% of the AIBU students refer “to a grammar book”. The least favorite reference to correct an error is “a native speaker friend” as only 3,6% of the HU and none of the AIBU students circled this option.

The majority of the total number of students (71,7) gave the answer “To my teacher” when asked where they usually go for help if they make an error they do not know how to correct. Secondly, “to a grammar book” was chosen by the respondents from two universities. Thirdly, “To another foreign student friend” was selected by only 8,3 of the respondents. Finally it can be seen that “to a native speaker friend” option was the least favorite option.

This question is in parallel with question 19 which is “what helps you the most to understand what you did wrong?”. To question 19, the majority of the subjects responded as “having the teacher explain the problem”, which is similar to the result of the current item in that most of the respondents wrote they would go to their teachers for advice in case of an error they cannot correct.

Q21 If you turn to one of the sources in #20 for help in correcting your errors, whose advice do you usually remember best?

TABLE 25: Findings about whose advice students remember best

		The teacher's advice	The foreign student friend's advice	The native speaker friend's advice	The book's advice	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	20	2	2	4	28	1,6429
	%	71,4	7,1	7,1	14,3	100,0	
AIBU	F	29	2	-	1	32	1,1563
	%	90,6	6,3	-	3,1	100,0	
Total	F	49	4	2	5	60	1,6667
	%	81,7	6,7	3,3	8,3	100,0	

A vast majority of the HU students think that they usually remember “The teacher's advice” best. This is followed by “The book's advice” with a percentage of 14,3% at HU. The case of AIBU is similar in terms of “The teacher's advice” as this option was the most preferred one with nearly all the students at AIBU with only a few exceptions (90,6%)

This item is closely related to the previous one in that they both try to reveal the source to refer to when they need help to correct an error. When asked whose advice students usually remember best, the most common answer given by the students with a percentage of 81,7% was “the teacher's advice” as in the previous item the result of which showed that the majority of the respondents usually went to their “teachers” for help if they commit an error they do not know how to correct. The second most selected option “the book's advice” with a total percentage of 8,3% also shows similarities with item 20 as the book was the second mostly referred source to correct an error. The least remembered advice comes from the “The native speaker friend's advice” as in item 20 which revealed the result that students hardly preferred to go to “to a native speaker friend” when they need help to correct an error.

Although there are slight differences between AIBU and HU students, the majority of all the participants have the idea that advice from the teacher is best

remembered, which shows that participants depend mostly on their teachers rather than a native speaker, a foreign friend or a book.

According to the results seen in Tables 22-25, the writing teacher is the most reliable source for students to correct their errors. This reveals the dependence on the teacher in case of an error.

Q.22 What helps you most to learn from the errors marked on your essay and helps you avoid making that error again?

TABLE 26: Findings about the way students prefer to avoid making that error again

		Rewriting the whole essay.	Rewriting on another piece of paper just the sentence in which an error appeared.	Rewriting near the error only part of the sentence that was wrong.	Reading through the essay carefully without rewriting anything.	Nothing	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	3	7	8	9	1	28	2,9286
	%	10,7	25,0	28,6	32,1	3,6	100,0	
AIBU	F	9	8	12	3	-	32	2,2813
	%	28,1	25,0	37,5	9,4	-	100,0	
Total	F	12	15	20	12	1	60	2,5833
	%	20,0	25,0	33,3	20,0	1,7	100,0	

While 32,1% of the HU students preferred “Just reading through the essay carefully without rewriting anything”, what helps students most to learn from the errors marked on their errors was responded as “Rewriting near the error only part of the sentence that was wrong” by 37,5% of the AIBU students. The percentages at HU for the options “Rewriting on another piece of paper just the sentence in which an error appeared”(25%) and “Rewriting near the error only part of the sentence that was wrong”(28,6%) are quite similar. Options showing similarities in terms of percentages are “Rewriting the whole essay”(28,1%) and “Rewriting on another piece of paper just the sentence in which an error appeared”(25%) at AIBU. No one at AIBU preferred the options “Nothing because you know you'll probably just forget and make the same errors again no matter what you do” while only 3,6% of the HU

students selected this option. The total statistics reveal that “Rewriting near the error only part of the sentence that was wrong” ranked the first in terms of percentages (33,3%) and 25% selected “Rewriting on another piece of paper just the sentence in which an error appeared” as their second most favorite way to avoid making errors. “Rewriting the whole essay” and “Just reading through the essay carefully without rewriting anything” were other ways to learn from the errors with the same percentages (20%).

Summary of Section III: Here, students’ wishes from their teachers about the way they should correct written errors were investigated. Moreover, the issue of how students acted on the feedback was analyzed. At the end of this section, it was observed that the majority of subjects taking part in the current research have similar preferences for the way how teachers should deal with students written errors. For instance, they would like their teachers to mark all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones. Secondly, as a method of correction, students want their teachers to cross out what is incorrect and write in the correct word or structure. This also indicates that students are highly dependent on their teachers and expects “implicit correction” from the teacher.

In terms of students’ reactions when they get feedback from their teachers, students mostly read every mark their teachers make on their written work. Also, in this part of the survey, it was realized that students consider marks indicating grammatical errors as the most important.

As far as students’ compositions are concerned, the majority of students thought that they remember comments on their ideas best among comments on the organizations of the paper and marks indicating errors in English.

Regarding the source of correcting errors, “the teacher” was preferred the most by the participants. They prefer to go to their teacher when they need help to understand what they did wrong and they think that they remember the advice of a teacher best rather than of a native speaker or a peer. “The grammar book” was the least selected option as a reference to correct errors.

Finally, what students do to help them avoid making the same error again was dealt with. The result of the relevant question was “rewriting near the error only part of the sentence that was wrong”

Part IV: There is a grammatically wrong sentence and six different ways of correcting the sentence.(“Since I arrived in Edinburgh,I am very lonely”). Different methods of corrections for the same error are as follows: using symbols or codes, underlining the mistakes, directly correcting of the written text, conferencing and showing students the reference to help them find their errors themselves and no correction at all. Students’ preferences for different types of correction methods were worked on in this section.

Q23a. Since I arrived in Edinburgh,I am very lonely. (showing students the reference to help them find their errors themselves)

Teacher’s response: **“See section 11a in grammar book”**

TABLE 27: Findings about showing students the reference to help them find their errors themselves

		Very good	Good	Sometimes good	Bad	Very bad	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	1	9	9	2	7	28	3,1786
	%	3,6	32,1	32,1	7,1	25,0	100,0	
AIBU	F	4	4	9	8	7	32	3,3125
	%	12,5	12,5	28,1	25,0	21,9	100,0	
Total	F	5	13	18	10	14	60	3,2500
	%	20,0	25,0	33,3	20,0	1,7	100,0	

The highest percentage for this item is 32, 1%, which is true for both options “good” and “sometimes good” at HU. These options are followed by “very bad” (25,0%) at HU. 28,1% of the AIBU students thought that “showing students the reference to help them find their errors themselves” is sometimes good. As for those who circled “bad or very bad” for this type of error correction, a total of 46,9% of the AIBU students thought that this way of correction is either “bad” or “very bad” whereas 32,1% of the HU students held the same view.

There is quite an equal distribution at the total statistics. To illustrate, the percentages are as follows: 20% for “very good”, 25% “very bad”, 33,3% “sometimes good”, 20% “bad”, 1,7% “very bad”. In other words, the method of showing students the reference to help them find their errors themselves are mostly regarded as “sometimes good” when compared to the other percentages. Only 1,7% of the respondents thought that this method is “very bad”

The number of HU students who think that this method of correction is “very good, sometimes good or good” is higher than the number of students. Therefore, it would be true to say that HU students like to figure out their own errors themselves by resorting to the reference suggested by the teacher.

Q23b. Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I am very lonely. (Underlining the errors)

TABLE 28: Findings about underlining the errors

		Very good	Good	Sometimes good	Bad	Very bad	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	1	3	10	8	6	28	3,5357
	%	3,6	10,7	35,7	28,6	21,4	100,0	
AIBU	F	1	8	9	9	5	32	3,2813
	%	3,1	25,0	28,1	28,1	15,6	100,0	
Total	F	2	11	19	17	11	60	3,400
	%	3,3	18,3	31,7	28,3	18,3	100,0	

This method of underlining the mistake was considered as “sometimes good” by 35,7% of the HU while the most commonly selected options are distributed equally to the options “sometimes good” and “bad” at AIBU. At HU, the percentages for “very good”, “good”, “bad” and “very bad” are respectively as follows: 3,6%-10,7%-28,6%-21,4% while these percentages for “very good”, “good”, “bad” and “very bad” are as respectively indicated: 3,1%-25%-28,1%-15,6%

According to the total statistics, 21,6% of the whole number of respondents chose either “very good” or “good”; on the other hand 46,6% selected either “very bad” or “bad”. This is an indication that “underlining the mistake” is not a preferable method of correction as students might have difficulty finding the correct form themselves.

Q23c. Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I am very lonely (Directly correcting of the written text): Teacher's response: **"have been"**

TABLE 29: Findings about direct correction

		Very good	Good	Sometimes good	Bad	Very bad	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	12	9	4	2	1	28	1,9643
	%	42,9	32,1	14,3	7,1	3,6	100,0	
AIBU	F	7	10	8	6	1	32	2,500
	%	21,9	31,3	25,0	18,8	3,1	100,0	
Total	F	19	19	12	8	2	60	2,2500
	%	31,7	31,7	20,0	13,3	3,3	100,0	

42,9% of the HU students circled the option "very good" while this percentage is less when it comes to "good"(32,1). The percentages decrease from the very good to the very bad. The order of goodness as for this method of correction follows the same system at AIBU except for the fact that "very good"(21,9) and "good"(31,3) change its places in terms of percentages.

As can be seen from the total percentages above, the number of those who thought that this method is "very good"(31,7) or "good"(31,7) is higher than the number of respondents choosing the options "bad" (13,3) or "very bad"(3,3), which means that the method of "directly correcting the written text" is highly preferred in contrast to "underlining"

Participants at both universities think that direct correction is "good" and the reason behind this might be that they have to spend no effort to figure out what the error is. Another reason could be their past learning experiences. Students who have been directly corrected by their teachers are likely to prefer to continue this type of error correction.

Q23d. Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I am very lonely (Conferencing)

Teacher's response: **"I am very sorry to hear that. Why don't you come and talk to me about it?"**

TABLE 30: Findings about conferencing

		Very good	Good	Sometimes good	Bad	Very bad	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	1	3	7	6	11	28	3,8214
	%	3,6	10,7	25,0	21,4	39,3	100,0	
AIBU	F	3	3	5	10	11	32	3,7118
	%	9,4	9,4	15,6	31,3	34,4	100,0	
Total	F	4	6	12	16	22	60	3,7667
	%	6,7	10,0	20,0	26,7	36,7	100,0	

Conferencing was commonly thought as "very bad" with a percentage of 39,3 at HU students. The second mostly preferred option is "sometimes good" (25%) while the option "bad" follows it with 21,4%. The percentages decline to 10,7% for "good" and 3,6 for "very good". A similar order of preference can also be seen at AIBU with percentages 9,4%-9,4%-15,6%-31,3%-34,4% for the options respectively. Considering the total, it is easy to see that conferencing is regarded as "very bad" by the 36,7 of all the respondents while only 6,7% of them thought this method as "very good". This is not a preferred method, either.

As conferencing is a face-to-face way of correcting the error which requires students to participate actively, defend ideas, ask questions, and negotiate meaning, some extraverted students might abstain from this method of correction. In other words, personality types may play an important role while student are expressing their preferences for written feedback.

Q23e Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I am very lonely (Using symbols or codes)

Teacher's response:

"Tense"

TABLE 31: Findings about using symbols

		Very good	Good	Sometimes good	Bad	Very bad	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	4	5	12	5	2	28	2,8571
	%	14,3	17,9	42,9	17,9	7,1	100,0	
AIBU	F	8	11	11	-	2	32	2,2813
	%	25,0	34,4	34,4	-	6,3	100,0	
Total	F	12	16	23	5	4	60	2,5500
	%	20,0	26,7	38,3	8,3	6,7	100,0	

"Sometimes good" is the mostly preferred option by 42,9% of the HU students while 17,9% chose "good". The percentage of people selecting "bad" is the same as "good" (17,9).

On the other hand, 34,4% of the respondents at AIBU students chose "good" and the same percent of students responded as "sometimes good". Only 6,3% of the AIBU students chose "very bad" as an answer to this question.

Looking carefully at the distribution of the total results, one can see that although "using symbols or codes" is mostly considered as "good", the majority of respondents are still uncertain. They held the idea that this method may sometimes be good.(38,3%).The reason for that may be that students are not familiar with this type of error correction.

Q23f. Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I am very lonely (No correction at all)

TABLE 31: Findings about "no correction"

		Very good	Good	Sometimes good	Bad	Very bad	Total	$\bar{X}$
HU	F	1	-	1	2	24	28	4,7143
	%	3,6	-	3,6	7,1	85,7	100,0	
AIBU	F	1	-	2	2	27	32	4,6875
	%	3,1	-	6,3	6,3	84,4	100,0	
Total	F	2	-	3	4	51	60	4,700
	%	3,3	-	5,0	6,7	85,0	100,0	

Except for 7,2% of all the subjects, all the students at HU selected either "bad"(7,1) or "very bad" (85,7).The case for AIBU is quite similar. 6,3% students

thought that leaving the error without any correction is “sometimes good” and 3,1% of them responded as “very good”. On the contrary, a total of 6,3% of the AIBU circled “bad” or “very bad” with a percentage of 84,4%.

A vast majority of all the respondents (85%) selected this “no correction” method as “very bad”. While none of the participants selected the option “good”, only 3,3 of them circled “very good” as a response to this item. 5% went for “sometimes good” and 6,7% “bad”. This clearly suggests that students do not prefer this type of attitude towards their written errors.

The reason why both HU and AIBU students think that this method is bad could be the idea that errors should be avoided and corrective feedback is a must. Another indication of the findings would be that students are dependent on their teachers and they want their teachers to active involve in their writing process.

Summary of Section IV: It was discovered that among different error correction methods, the best one from students’ viewpoint is direct correction of the written text. Then comes the correction done by using symbols or codes and underlining. Conferencing follows these two types of error correction. Finally and the worst one is “no correction” from the students’ point of view. These results make it clear that direct correction (writing the correct form) is preferred to indirect correction (conferencing, correction done with codes or symbols and underlining)

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5. 1 Summary of the study

The focus of this study was on error correction preferences of the forth-year ELT students at HU and AIBU. A survey including 23 items was conducted at these universities and the collected data were analyzed using the statistical technique, Chi-Square test. The survey questions can be categorized in 3 parts as :1.students' feelings about the importance of errors in general, and about the relative importance of different kinds of errors; how often they looked carefully at comments in different areas, including content and organization as well as language,2.how they wanted the teacher to deal with errors and how they acted on feedback and 3.what they think about different types of feedback given by the teacher. The question whether there is a significant difference between AIBU and HU in terms of their students' preferences regarding error correction is worked on using the survey mentioned above. Also, the question if there is a relationship between gender and error correction preferences is searched. Finally, error correction preferences of all the respondents were revealed regardless of their gender and university.

The findings of this study revealed that there is no significant difference between AIBU and HU apart from few of the items in the survey. The possible reasons why preferences of students at two different universities might differ are because of the student factor: Students' personality, goals, expectations, motivations, proficiency level, past learning experiences, preferred learning styles and strategies, content knowledge and interest, time constraints, attitudes towards the teacher, the class, the content, the writing assignment, and the commentary itself. On the other hand, the teacher factor (teacher personality, the teacher's pedagogical beliefs about how to comment, knowledge of the content about which students are writing and expectations of students) may also play an important role in such a difference.(Proud,ibid)

Also, a meaningful relationship between gender types and error correction

preferences could not be found

Despite the similarity of responses given by HU and AIBU students and by male and female participants, some valuable data regarding the general preferences of forth-year ELT students were found.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings

Through the current research, it was discovered that students think making as few errors as possible is important to them and to their English teachers. Although error-free writing is desirable by most of the students, in the process-based writing approach, students should be encouraged to communicate in the target language. Moreover, making errors has recently come to be viewed as a natural and useful part of second-language acquisition (Corder, *ibid*; Zydatiss, *ibid*).

When asked the question which aspects of their writing they expected teachers' comments to focus; grammatical forms, spelling and vocabulary choice are considered as important by the participants whereas the respondents are not sure when it comes to punctuation. This finding is in line with the study of Anderson, Benson and Lynch(*ibid*) from whom the survey for this study was taken. In their study, accurate grammar was rated most highly; only a few of the subjects thought punctuation very important.

Similar to Enginarlar's (*ibid*) conclusion that students perceive attention to linguistic errors as effective teacher feedback, "marks indicating grammar" were considered as the most important by both AIBU and HU students. In contrast, Truscott(*ibid*) states that grammar correction is ineffective for theoretical and practical reasons and may indeed have harmful effects on L2 writing development. Also, he warns teachers to completely abandon error correction focused on grammatical concerns.

Similarly, students were asked which errors are given attention to when the teacher returns an essay and it was found that comments on students' essay organization are always paid attention to(63, 3%). Comment on students' essay organization is followed by 53,3% for ideas, 51,7% for grammar, 45% for vocabulary choice,35% for spelling, 21,7% for punctuation. These percentages show that students

are more concerned with the content of their written work than just the form. Anderson, Benson and Lynch(ibid) support the findings of the current study as most of their participants said they “looked carefully” at marks referring to content and organization than grammar. Leki’s(ibid) study yielded some contrary findings, though. In her study, she concluded that the vast majority (89%) of respondents reported looking “carefully” at marks indicating errors in grammar, but that an equal number reported attending carefully to marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice. On the other hand, Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (ibid) claim that these preferences might change from the EFL setting to the ESL. They found in their research that EFL college students have a tendency to think that corrections on grammatical, lexical, and mechanical features are more valuable than those on content and style, while the opposite is true for ESL college students.

Students’ expectations from their teachers about the way they should correct written errors were also examined. At the end of this study, it was revealed that most of the students said they would like their teachers to mark all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones. Such a finding might be based on “the mistaken belief that the greater the numbers of corrections teachers do themselves, the quicker their students will learn to write better English” (Curriculum Development Committee, 1983). As advice, Michaelides (ibid) suggests that teachers should learn not to correct every error. Rather than correcting all errors he/she thinks major, marking only one particular linguistic item at a time should be preferred by the teachers. This is a form of selective marking where not every error but only selected ones are marked.

Although the participants of this study depend on their teachers to decide what is a major error and what is not, Leki(ibid) maintains that it is “high-handed and disrespectful of our students to simply insist that they trust our preferences.” (p.210)

Moreover, as a method of correction, many of the students want their teachers to cross out what is incorrect and write in the correct word or structure. This clearly indicates that students mostly depend on their teachers and expects “implicit correction” from the teacher. Related and contrary to this finding, Anderson, Benson and Lynch(ibid) found that locating the error and giving a clue was more popular than supplying the correct form as in Leki’s and the current study.

Although in a recent study, Ayeche Zidat(ibid)states that many teachers correct students' written work improperly and most teachers use only one approach to provide feedback and error correction, most of the students in this study preferred that "the teacher" is the source they prefer to go when they cannot deal with an error themselves and the teachers' advise is remembered the best. Also, Radecki and Swales (ibid) concluded that the vast majority (87%) of respondents "mostly desired to have all their linguistic errors marked, saying that this was the major responsibility of the teacher". Sengupta (ibid) states that there is a "deep-rooted idea that the only possible interpretation of knowledge appears to be that it is transmitted from the teacher to the student, and not constructed by the classroom community". This justifies the lack of importance given to peer feedback in writing classes, the advantages of which were explained by Zhang(ibid):

- . Learners can get social support from peers.
- . Peer feedback can be more informative because peers are at the same level.
- . Students can learn by providing each other with feedback.
- . Learners may prioritize what peers say over teachers' feedback.
- . Peers provide a broader audience for students' writing.(p.213)

Concerning students' compositions, the majority of students thought that they remember comments on their ideas best among comments on the organizations of the paper and marks indicating errors in English. This result was also supported by Radecki and Swales (ibid) who suggested that students want substantive comments on the ideas and organization.

Also, students' strategies to help them avoid making the same error again were investigated. The mostly preferred result of the relevant question was "rewriting near the error only part of the sentence that was wrong". In line with this finding, 82% said that students rewrote either the whole text or the sentences containing the errors in the feedback provided by the teacher (Leki, ibid)

Finally, it was found that direct correction of the written text was chosen as the best error correction method by most of the students. However, there is research evidence which indicates that indirect error feedback is more beneficial to students' long-term writing development than direct error feedback through "increased student engagement and attention to forms and problems" (Ferris, 2003) .Similarly,

Lalande(ibid) argues that indirect feedback is preferable for most student writers because it engages them in “guided learning and problem solving”. Error correction researchers who have examined the effects of these two contrasting types of feedback have reported that indirect feedback helps students to make progress in accuracy over time more than direct feedback does (Ferris et al., ibid). This finding is in parallel with the study of Hendrickson (ibid) who suggested “in early years of error correction research” that teachers should correct all errors immediately, and students should not be required or permitted to discover and correct their own mistakes. Lee(ibid) also tried to find an answer to the question “who is responsible to locate and correct errors.” While 45% of her subjects thought that it is the teacher’s job to correct errors, 55% said it is mainly the students’ job. The second most favorite type of error correction was the correction done by using symbols or codes and underlining. Regarding coded-feedback, Lee(ibid) found a higher percentage of students preferring “coded-feedback”. (76%) Klassen (ibid) suggests that rather than providing the correct answer every time a student makes an error, the teacher could provide clues and codes in the form of abbreviations, symbols, arrows, circles, lines and explicit marginal comments.

Even though not many people preferred “conferencing” as a way to deal with an error, Zamel (ibid) suggests that conferences enable both reader and writer to make important discoveries about the developing text. She recommends this approach of “conferencing” after discovering that ESL students often found teachers’ written comments difficult to understand. Similarly, Brender (ibid) points out that students want to take part in conferencing and find it more effective than written comments.

Finally, “no correction” is the way of treating errors considered as “very bad” by the students. This finding proves Leki’s(ibid) claim that students do want errors in their writing corrected and may be frustrated if this does not happen. These results make it clear that direct correction (writing the correct form) is preferred to indirect correction (conferencing, correction done with codes or symbols and underlining)

5. 3 Suggestions for Researchers

Following suggestions have been made for researchers:

1. A comparative study between a Turkish and a European university might give us an idea about the effect of culture on the preference of certain error correction methods
2. Researchers might work on the relationship between age and error correction preferences.
3. The relationship between learning styles and error correction preferences with an inventory is also worth investigating.
4. Further research can also explore in greater depth how the teacher and student factors influence error correction and how these two factors have an impact on teachers' error correction and students' ability to learn from it. Teacher variables such as prior grammatical knowledge, training and experience, knowledge and philosophies regarding error correction strategies, as well as learner characteristics such as proficiency, motivation, attitudes, and beliefs provide useful avenues for future research.
5. The study might also be conducted with students at different level students, such as beginner, elementary and intermediate and the relationship between level of proficiency and error correction preferences.
6. Further research needs to be conducted into reasons for learner variance in feedback preference.
7. As the scope of the survey used for the current study is too broad, discrete points might be worked on separately. For example, students' attitude towards "underlining" itself as an error correction technique should be taken as a research area and be thoroughly investigated.
8. Students' feedback preferences for the other language skills such as, speaking or for different courses, such as mathematics should also be worked on.

5.4 Suggestions for Administrations and Teachers

1. Some activities, such as conferences, seminars and workshops should be organized in order to provide English teachers with opportunities to learn the latest about error correction.
2. Experts on the issue of error correction in writing classes should help teachers through pre-service and in-service training.
3. A needs analysis survey about the preferences of both students and teachers should be conducted before the training starts. When determining the objectives of the training program, the goals of the lesson, students' age, previous learning experiences personality type, cultural background, learning style preference experience (both ESL and EFL) should be considered.

5.5 Limitations

This study is limited to:

- Forth-year ELT department students at two different universities, which are AIBU and HU.
- A survey consisting of different sections including items which are about students' error correction preferences.
- The time allocated to review literature, collect data and to present it.

Although the current study has some limitations, the findings of the study are assumed to be helpful for the further studies in the field of writing in English.

5.6 Assumptions

In the current research, it was assumed that;

- The research design in relation with the research questions is appropriate.
- The survey used in this study is suitable to collect relevant data.

- The sampling chosen for this study is the right way to reach valid and reliable results
- The participants who took part in the current research willingly responded to the survey.

5.7 Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to find out students' feelings about the importance of errors in general, and about the relative importance of different kinds of errors; how often they looked carefully at comments in different areas, including content and organization as well as language; how they wanted the teacher to deal with errors; and how they acted on feedback. The other goal of the current research was to reveal students' preferences for different error correction techniques. A comparative study between HU and AIBU was done to investigate the difference in responses to the survey. Also, genders' influence on error correction preferences was tested. Finally, the preferences of all the respondents for error correction in writing classes were focused regardless of their gender and university.

The findings of the study have demonstrated a similarity of preferences for error correction between HU&AIBU students and between male&female students. In other words, no significant relationship between gender and error correction preferences was seen.

The study has highlighted some results in respect to the preferences of all the participants. For instance, it was discovered that the majority students are concerned about making as few errors as possible. Among these errors, teachers' indication of the "grammatical errors" was considered as the most important. As far as students' essays are concerned, on the other hand, most of the students said they always look carefully at the comments on the organization of their essays. A general tendency among students was seen for the preference of "teacher" as the main source of error correction. Only a small percentage of the participants preferred their peers. However, Villamil and De Guerrero (ibid) found that peer feedback had a beneficial effect on the quality of writing and also resulted in more learner autonomy. They (1998) suggest that "peer revision should be seen as an important complementary

source of feedback in the ESL classroom.” The usefulness of reading peers’ writing and giving peer feedback was acknowledged by 70% of the peer feedback class students as (a) learning from others’ strong points to offset their own weaknesses and (b) communicating with each other to enhance understanding and explore better solutions to writing problems.

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APPENDICES**APPENDIX A**

Permission to use the survey:

Dear Dr. Tony Lynch,

I am an MA student and currently working at Abant Izzet Baysal University, Bolu, Turkey. My M.A thesis is about "Students' preferences for error correction "

I know that you have been working on that issue and have written an article with Kenneth Anderson and Cath Benson. The article was published in 2001 and can be downloaded thanks to ERIC.

I have been searching on an appropriate survey about my topic and I would like to use the survey you prepared for this study.

With your kind permission, could I possibly use this survey as it is?

Best Regards
Abdullah Coskun
AIBU
Instructor

Dear Abdullah Coskun,

My two colleagues - Kenneth Anderson and Cathy Benson - must be quicker on the uptake than me, as they tell me they had no difficulty understanding that what you (clearly) wanted was permission to use our questionnaire with your students.

The answer is, by all means, yes.

It would be good if you made clear in your paper that our questionnaire was based on one developed by Leki, as we say in our article.

Good luck with your research!

Tony Lynch

Sent: Friday, March 23, 2007 10:44 AM

APPENDIX B

SURVEY OF STUDENTS' PREFERENCES FOR ERROR CORRECTION

The purpose of this survey is to attempt to find out what types of markings on written work are most useful to students in helping them improve the correctness of their written English. Please be as honest as possible. Please respond to all questions. Thank you for participating.

PART I

Instructions: Respond to the questions-below by circling the number that comes closest to representing your opinion. If you feel the item is very important, circle 1 and if you think that it is not important at all, circle 5. If the importance of the item is somewhere in between, indicate that by circling the number between 1 and 5 which best represents your opinion.

1.How important is it to you to have as few errors as possible in your written work in English?

very important not important at all.

1 2 3 4 5

2. How important do you think it is to your English teachers for you to have as few errors as possible in your written work?

very important not important at all.

1 2 3 4 5

3. How important is it to *you* for your English teacher to point out your errors in grammatical forms (verb tenses, subject/verb agreements, article use, etc.) in your written work?

very important not important at all.

1 2 3 4 5

4. How important is it to *you* for your English teacher to point out your errors in spelling in your written work?

very important not important at all.

1 2 3 4 5

5. How important is it to *you* for your English teacher to point out your errors in vocabulary choice in your written work?

very important not important at all.

1 2 3 4 5

6. How important is it to *you* for your English teacher to point out your errors in punctuation in your written work?

very important not important at all.

1 2 3 4 5

PART II

Instructions: Respond to the questions below by circling the number that comes closest to being accurate. Circulate #1 if you do something all the time. Circle #2 if you do it most of the time. Circle #3 if you do it some of the time. Circle #4 if you do it not very often. Circle #5 if you never do it "Marks" can mean either words or symbols used by the teacher on your essay. Do not answer according to what you think you *should* do, but according to what you actually do.

7. When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the marks indicating errors in grammar?

always usually sometimes not very often never

1 2 3 4 5

8. When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the marks indicating errors in spelling?

always usually sometimes not very often never

1 2 3 4 5

9. When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice:

always usually sometimes not very often never

1 2 3 4 5

10. When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the marks indicating errors in punctuation

always usually sometimes not very often never

1 2 3 4 5

11. When your teacher returns a marked essay to you, do you look carefully at the comments on the organisation of your essay?

always usually sometimes not very often never

1 2 3 4 5

12. When your teacher returns an essay to you, do you look carefully at the comments on the ideas you expressed?

always usually sometimes not very often never

1 2 3 4 5

Part III

Instructions: Answer the questions by putting an X next to the answer which for you is the best and the most accurate

13. If there were *many* errors in a composition, what would you want your English teachers to do?

1. ____ Mark all errors, major and minor.
2. ____ Mark all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones.
3. ____ Mark most of the major errors.
4. ____ Mark only a few of the major errors.
5. ____ Mark all repeated errors that might interfere with communicating your ideas.
6. ____ Mark only errors that might interfere with communicating your ideas.
7. ____ Mark no errors and respond only to the ideas you express.
8. ____ Other (please specify)

14. How do you want your teacher to indicate an error in your written work?

1. ____ The teacher crosses out what is incorrect and writes in the correct word or structure.
2. ____ The teacher shows where the error is and gives a clue about how to correct it.
3. ____ The teacher only shows where the error is.
4. ____ The teacher ignores the errors in English and only pays attention to the ideas

expressed.

15. How carefully do you look at the marks your teacher makes on your written work?

1. ____ Read every one carefully.
2. ____ Look at some marks more carefully than at others.
3. ____ Mainly pay attention to teacher's comments on the ideas you expressed.

16. If you only look carefully at *some* of the marks your English teacher makes on your written work, which ones do you consider most important to look at carefully?

1. ____ Marks indicating errors in grammar.
2. ____ Marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice.
3. ____ Marks indicating errors in punctuation.
4. ____ Marks indicating errors in spelling.

17. Of the marks that your English teacher makes on your compositions which ones do you remember best?

1. ____ Comments on your ideas.
2. ____ Comments on the organization of the paper.
3. ____ Marks indicating errors in English.

18. If you make an error in English, what helps you the most to understand what you did wrong?

1. ____ Having another foreign student explain the problem.
2. ____ Having your teacher explain the problem.
3. ____ Looking in a grammar book.

19. If you make an error in English, what helps you the least to understand what you did wrong?

1. ____ Having another foreign student explain the problem.
2. ____ Having your teacher explain the problem.
3. ____ Looking in a grammar book.
4. ____ Having a native speaker (not your teacher) explain the problem.

20. If you make an error you don't know how to correct, where do you usually go for help?

1. ____ To your teacher.
2. ____ To another foreign student friend.
3. ____ To a native speaker friend.
4. ____ To a grammar book.

21. If you turn to one of the sources in #20 for help in correcting your errors, whose advice do you usually remember best?

1. ____ The teacher's advice.
2. ____ The foreign student friend's advice.
3. ____ The native speaker friend's advice,
4. ____ The book's advice.

22. What helps you most to learn from the errors marked on your essay and helps you avoid making that error again?

1. ____ Rewriting the whole essay.
2. ____ Rewriting on another piece of paper just the sentence in which an error appeared.
3. ____ Rewriting near the error only part of the sentence that was wrong.
4. ____ Just reading through the essay carefully without rewriting anything.

Part IV

Instruction: The following sentences all have the same error in English grammar and each sentence has a different possible response to the error which might have been written by a teacher. Look over the different possible responses and rate each response. If you think the mark is a very good way to indicate an error on an essay, circle #1. If you think the mark is a very bad way to indicate an error on an essay, circle #5. If you think the mark is somewhere in between a very good way to mark an essay and a very bad way to mark an essay, circle the number between #1 and #5 that best represents your opinion.

		Very good			Very bad	
		1	2	3	4	5
a.	Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I <u>am</u> very lonely. <i>see section 11a in grammar book.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I <u>am</u> very lonely.	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I <u>am</u> very lonely. <i>have been</i>	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I <u>am</u> very lonely. <i>I'm very sorry to hear that. Why don't you come and talk to me about it?</i>	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I <u>am</u> very lonely. <i>tease</i>	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Since I arrived in Edinburgh, I <u>am</u> very lonely.	1	2	3	4	5

Adapted from Leki (1991)