

## **EFL Jordanian Students' Reaction to Written Comments on Their Written Work: A Case Study**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines how Jordanian EFL students at Jerash University react to their teachers' written feedback. In addition, the study, in its wide focus concentrates on the effect of teachers' written feedback on students writing processes. Qualitative method was used to collect data from twenty students who belong to B.A English Language at Jerash University in their third year of study during the academic year 2014/ 2015. On one hand, the study indicates that students vary in their attitude toward teachers' written feedback and the majority of EFL students reveal that they perceived teachers' written feedback to be useful for them in their writing processes on the other. In its conclusion, this study reveals that teachers' written feedback have twin effects; the first one presents improving and orientating students' revision skills, while the second one reveals the enhancement in the Jordanian EFL students' overall writing quality.

**Keywords:** EFL Jordanian students, Jerash University, student reactions, teacher feedback

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## Introduction

In a writing class, students write their composition relying on the instructions given by the teacher, and then the teacher evaluates their work and provides feedback in the form of comments, marks, or corrections. The overall objective of a teacher's role in providing feedback is to guide and help students to improve the quality of their written work by teaching them to do things differently or more effectively. But sometimes, teachers are not provided with guidelines or trained in the correct or appropriate way to give feedback on students' written assignments. An example is when a teacher provides feedback that is incomprehensible or not specific. In such a situation the students as well as the teacher do not benefit at all (Wiltse, 2002). In addition, most teachers are generally reluctant to share or exchange opinions regarding their evaluations of their students' writing with other teachers. Even the more complete and free-standing comments found at the end of papers are not generally preserved or shared, and teachers rarely have the time or opportunity to re-read comments they have made on student papers.

In the context of the process writing approach, feedback is measured as an input used to respond to any information related to the text produced. Keh (1996, p.295) describes it, "Feedback is a fundamental element of the process approach to writing. It can be defined as input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision". Feedback on EFL writing can be advice, criticism or information about the quality or errors in the text (Kamimura, 2006). The feedback will guide the students on how to correct their errors and improve their writing.

Notwithstanding, the number in the studies on teacher written feedback is increasing in L2 contexts, most of these studies were conducted in L1 and ESL contexts. In addition, there is a need to investigate the variable learners' preferences for feedback in EFL context and in an Arabic speaking context given that studies investigating EFL learners' preferences for feedback of university students in an Arabic speaking context to the best knowledge of the researcher, do not exist. So, the findings of this study will hopefully highlight areas in the methodology used in the EFL classroom that need to provide EFL teachers with more imminent into giving useful and effective feedback.

This study will add to the little available literature in studies related to teacher written feedback in EFL contexts and student reaction to written comments on their written work in Jordan specifically and the Arab educational world in general. The data is also useful for filling the lack of knowledge regarding the variables that affect the writing process of Jordanian EFL students, particularly in terms of feedback.

## Literature Review

Studies that have been conducted in area of teachers' feedback can be categorized according to three major theoretical approaches. Chandler, (2003) identified these three approaches as the self-directed feedback, peer-directed feedback, or teacher-directed feedback.

### *Self-directed feedback*

Self-directed feedback happens when students edit their own writings after they have completed a written task. The students may use a grammar reference book or a dictionary when they are not sure of certain aspects of the language. This will help the students to further improve their ability to examine critically their own writing and eventually produce better quality texts.

However, this method can only work if students have already achieved a suitable level of proficiency that allows improvement through self directed feedback .Thus, self-directed feedback works best for highly proficient students where it can motivate them to develop a self-monitoring technique that requires substantial linguistics knowledge to identify and correct their errors (Ferris, 2002). Given the low proficiency level of the majority of students in an EFL context, this type of feedback is hardly suitable.

However, there is no denying that this type of feedback has its advantages. According to Hyland and Hyland (2006), the writer himself/herself can provide information to improve his or her writing. Thus, it is not advisable to overlook the writers as critical readers and reviewers of their own texts.

Similarly, Edge (1989, p. 51) stresses the need to give students the opportunity to self-correcting by examining their evaluated work and deciding on how to further improve it. Equally supportive of self-directed feedback is Makino (1993, who argues that

In the process of language learning, learners sometimes notice some of their errors by themselves, through the strategy of monitoring, and they can also correct some of their errors when other people such as teachers or peers, give them cues or hints about them (p.338).

Thus, while this type of feedback may not work with low proficiency students, the point being underlined is that a variety of feedback types should be utilized in the EFL classroom.

### ***Peer-directed feedback***

In a traditional EFL classroom, teachers are the authoritative figures and students have few opportunities to share their opinions and reflect on their thoughts. The purpose of producing a text is usually to communicate some ideas or information. Thus, it is only natural that the writer will want his/her peers to read the text and provide some feedback. A number of terms are used interchangeably to refer to peer-directed feedback such as peer review and peer response. However, all of them share the same idea where students offer constructive criticism after reading and evaluating each other's work (Farrah, 2012).

Peer-directed feedback can be defined as the activity through which students give and receive comments from each other on their language performance. It is premised on the rationale "... that writing and learning are social processes" (Hyland, 2003, p.198). Peer-directed feedback, according to Paulus (1999,p.267), "encourages students to focus on their intended meaning by discussing alternative points of view that can lead to the development of those ideas".

While many L2 researchers and instructors have been quite positive about peer feedback, nevertheless, it is the case that an increasing number of research findings regarding peer-directed feedback indicate mixed and even conflicting responses. Indeed some L2 teachers have already had an ambivalent attitude toward peer-directed feedback (Ferris, 2003). Thus on the one hand, it is argued that peer-directed feedback is beneficial for a number of reasons. Firstly, it helps students develop the necessary critical thinking skills to examine and revise their own writing.

Secondly, it promotes interactive learner participation and a genuine sense of audience in the writing classroom (Mendonça & Johnson, 1994). Thirdly, it offers a nonjudgmental learning environment in an authentic communicative context (Hyland, 2003).

The beneficial impact and effectiveness of peer-directed feedback have been substantiated by a number of empirical studies (Min, 2006; Paulus, 1999; Tsui & Maria, 2000). It has been claimed that peer readers can provide useful feedback and that writers can and do revise effectively relying on feedback from peer readers. Peer-directed feedback can be seen as complementary to teacher feedback. In addition, by critically reading the work of others, students could become more critical readers and revisers of their own writings. For example, Mo (2005) conducts an experimental study to investigate the feasibility of organizing peer review activities in Chinese classrooms and the effects that peer review might have on student revision. It was concluded that peer review was as effective as relying solely on teacher feedback. The students were reported to be willing to receive feedback from peers, and they were already capable of effective peer revision.

On the other hand, a number of studies have indicated conflicting responses regarding the effectiveness of peer-directed feedback. Some studies revealed that peer-directed feedback failed to induce much revision and did not lead to significant improvements in writing. For example, Miao et al., (2006) compare two groups of students who received feedback from their teacher and their peers respectively. Peer feedback was found to have less impact than teacher feedback because students incorporated less peer feedback than teacher feedback in revisions. Thus less improvement occurred than would have been possible. However, despite its reduced impact, peer feedback did encourage learner autonomy and complemented teacher feedback even in Chinese classrooms, which were seen very much as teacher-centered environments.

In general, instructional feedback provides students with informational or critical comments that either confirms what they already know or change their existing knowledge and beliefs. Higgins et al., (2002) note that meaningful feedback of good quality given at the right time helps students become cognitively engaged in the content under study as well as the context of learning. Researchers such as O'Brein (2004) believe that peer feedback is helpful in improving EFL/ESL writing by highlighting findings by other researchers that signify that learners still value peer-directed feedback even though they prefer teacher feedback. This view is further corroborated by Ferris (2003, p.133), who state that "in general, researchers have found that peer response is well received by student writers and that they enjoy the process".

In another study conducted by Jacobs et al., (1998) on EFL students from the University of Hong Kong, their findings revealed that 93% of the students preferred to have feedback from other students. One of the most important reasons for preferring feedback was that students were provided with more ideas as well as helped to identify problems they missed. In addition, Jacobs et al., (1998) pointed out that by engaging in peer-directed feedback, EFL students get to learn about each others problems and experiences and in this way it makes learning more meaningful and enjoyable. While another study conducted by Tsui and Ng (2000), into the effects of teacher and peer comments on secondary L2 learners in Hong Kong revealed that "some learners incorporated high percentages of both teacher and peer comments, some incorporated higher percentages of teacher comments than peer comments, and others incorporated very low

percentages of peer comments.” Those who favored teacher comments found peer comments not useful. Those who favored peer comments reported that they “enhance a sense of audience, raise learners’ awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses, encourage collaborative learning, and foster the ownership of text.” According to them, learners were able to “develop a sense of autonomy over their own writings”, and, the writing classroom is no longer one that gives absolute control to the teacher. The role of the teacher changed into “negotiating meaning and collaborating with learners to clarify and voice their thinking, emotions, and argumentation as well as in helping them to develop strategies for generating ideas, revising, and editing” (Tsui & Ng, 2000, p.168).

In the case of Abu-Jarad (2008), a study conducted in Al-Azhar University in Palestine comprising forty-seven EFL students at intermediate (Writing I) and advanced level (Writing II), reveal that the students felt an improvement in their writing, especially in the mechanical aspects of writing. Additionally, the advanced level students were more positive about peer-directed feedback in the areas compared to the intermediate level students. The researcher concludes that positive response to peer-directed feedback increases in line with increasing level of proficiency. While a study conducted by Kurt and Atay (2007) on Turkish EFL students conclude that students benefited from the peer feedback process as their friends ‘picked out the mistakes’ they were not aware of, gave them ‘opinions to elaborate on’ in their essays, and ‘helped them look at their essays from a different perspective’. There were others who indicated that many things came to mind when they were discussing their own essays with their friends. They enjoyed participating in peer feedback sessions. Moreover, as they were discussing their paper with their friends, they felt ‘free’, ‘less anxious’ and ‘self-confident’, in discussing their point of view.

In a most recent study, Farrah (2012) investigates students’ attitudes towards peer feedback in process writing classes in addition to assessing the effectiveness of this teaching technique, the findings reveal that students viewed peer feedback as a worthwhile experience as it offered an opportunity for social interaction. It also improved students’ writing skills and hence the quality of their writing. Furthermore, the technique enhanced students’ critical thinking, confidence, creativity, and motivation.

### ***Teacher-directed feedback***

Teacher-directed feedback involves a teacher editing a student’s writing by correcting errors, giving comments and grading the work. This type of feedback is usually the most traditional method for responding to students’ writings that is often used in many L2 writing classes (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). According to Hong (2006), L2 students prefer this feedback most probably because of the teacher’s level of proficiency. As such they have great confidence in it. Ferris and Roberts (2001) have confirmed the notion where L2 student writers found teacher feedback significantly more preferable than either peer or self-directed feedback. Furthermore, in an EFL context where most students are of low proficiency, it is only natural that feedback from the more proficient teacher is considered suitable.

There are two types of teacher feedback, namely, conferencing feedback and written feedback. Conferencing feedback is face-to-face communication between teachers and students. There are some advantages and disadvantages to this method. Hyland (2003) states that face-to-face communication between teachers and students enables students to discuss their writing with

their teachers, it is also the case that it does not necessarily benefit the students as some of them may be intimidated by the personal attention given by the teacher in such a situation. Similarly, Charles (1990.p. 287) voices his reservation when he argues while for face-to-face conferencing may be the ideal method, in practice it may not be the real solution because "...the problem for most students in most institutions is that the time is simply not available for this kind of individual editorial discussion". As Ferris, (2007) notes, usually an EFL class has too many students to make such a method practicable as it would use up too much of the lesson time. In addition, while the conferencing is in progress, other students may feel bored or have no idea as to what they should actually be doing. Hence, this method is most probably unsuitable in a writing process class with a large number of students. In other words, conferencing is definitely not an effective form of feedback for students, especially in an EFL context, where there are a large number of low proficiency students and not enough lesson time to ensure that all of them are given equal opportunity to receive and participate in feedback conferencing.

In contrast with oral conferencing, the well known traditional written feedback has some obvious advantages in an EFL/ESL context. Written feedback may include comments, praises, and suggestions to inform students pertaining to how well they have written a piece of work. The teacher will also rectify, mark or identify surface level errors for the attention of students (Chandler, 2004). The significant advantage of this traditional method is that it is less forgettable since it is written down and students can access it time and again, making this method especially suitable for L2 learners with limited language proficiency that have difficulty remembering oral feedback (Arndt, 1993). In addition, written feedback is usually only for the attention of the individual student. Thus, when negative comments are given, the particular student will not feel so embarrassed as compared to conferencing feedback. Also the teacher can ask the student to read aloud positive comments not only to share with the class but also as a reward for good work. Another advantage of teacher written feedback is that as Muncie (2000) points out, students can make good use of teacher feedback, even if it is given in the final draft, to produce a summary of all the feedback given which would act as a personal reference manual for a student to help him/her to produce better quality writing. By creating personal reference manual based on teacher written feedback, students can selectively use teacher feedback with a greater degree of freedom.

All the advantages highlighted above explains why teacher written feedback can be the most appropriate method of feedback and as such the most widely used method to evaluate student writing and hence assist them to produce better writing in an EFL context. Another positive value of written feedback is that it can motivate students to continuously revise their draft which will surely help them to improve their writing.

However, there are problems with this method too. For example, some students ignore teacher feedback because they are only interested in the final grade. Thus, they will not spend time on reading and learning from the teacher's feedback. In other words, teacher written feedback is not considered as a source to improve their written work. Consequently, students who are not motivated to learn from error treatment are unable to learn from their mistakes.

### *Effects of teacher feedback*

A number of studies have been conducted from various perspectives regarding teacher feedback on student writing in ESL and EFL classrooms. Among these studies, is a particularly insightful one conducted by Connors and Lunsford, (1993). This study as cited in Stern and Solomon (2006) analyzed examples of the top twenty error patterns teachers commented on in college essays from a randomly selected (3,000) samples out of (21,000) essays. The study revealed that many of the teachers' comments were global and rhetorical comments rather than local comments. The teachers usually started with positive remarks with reference to some elements of a paper and ended with negative comments or vice versa. It was reported that most of the comments were usually judgments to explain or justify the grades given by the respective teachers. As such the comments were written in tandem with the grades scored where higher scores were given positive comments while lower scores received less favorable comments. Some of the worst grades even received negatively critical judgments which indicated the teacher's disappointment.

In another study investigating the nature of teacher response to student writing, Zamel (1985) discovered a similarity between L1 writing teachers and ESL writing teachers in the way they responded to the texts written by their students. In this study, the researcher assumed that teachers' attitudes toward writing exerted a major influence on their evaluation of the student writings. The researcher analyzed the responding behaviors of (15) ESL teachers in relation to (105) texts, and examined each teacher's response to three or more student compositions. The study found that contrary to the numerous findings related to the process approach, most teachers only concentrated on the surface level features of writing and error identification with little regard for the discourse features. By emphasizing the language-related local problems the teachers ignored the fact the compositions were drafts and not final products and as such did not assess the writing as an ongoing process (Zamel, 1985). This resulted in treating and evaluating them the compositions in a product oriented approach even though they had meant to employ the process oriented approach.

The impact of both peer and teacher feedback on student writing is the main focus of a study conducted by Paulus (1999). The researcher analyzed the first and final drafts of (11) ESL students and student verbal reports during revisions based on Faigley and Witte's taxonomy of revisions (1981, as cited in Paulus, 1999) to classify the type and the source of the revisions into whether they were surface changes or meaning changes. The study discovered that both peer and teacher feedback helped students in their revision processes. It was also found that when left on their own, the students made most of their own revisions at the surface-level. In contrast, at the peer and teacher feedback level, the changes mostly occurred at the meaning-level.

The relationship between different types of error feedback and their impact on the improvement of accuracy and fluency of student compositions was the focus of a study conducted by Chandler (2003). Thirty-one ESL students participated in this experimental study of which (16) made up the control group and (15) the experimental group. Although, both groups received the same treatment and error feedback from the same teacher, the study discovered that there was a difference between the revision processes of each group. The results of the study revealed that the experimental group increased the accuracy in their writings on first drafts over the semester as compared to the control group. The control group who were instructed against

doing corrections based on their teacher's feedback did not show any significant progress in their writing accuracy. The findings illustrate the importance and benefit of giving immediate feedback to students.

In this regard, it is instructive to note that most teachers in EFL/ESL classrooms tend to spend more time and interact in more positive and supportive ways with students who are high achievers students rather than with low achievers. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that these teachers would often ignore the comments of low achievers compared to those of high achievers. This in turn, may have a negative impact on students' confidence and self-worth and make them feel inferior to others. This feeling of superiority or inferiority can produce the immediate effects of anger and apprehension in most students. To prevent this happening, teachers must provide supportive and constructive feedback to all students, regardless of proficiency level in order that students feel good about what they are doing or have done. This will help create a good relationship between teachers and students and in turn reduce a student's apprehension or worries towards the process of writing itself. If teachers treat their all their students in equally supportive ways, then positive outcome is that students would be more receptive and willing to make use of teacher feedback in revising their drafts.

## **Research methodology**

### ***Research questions***

The following research questions are formulated to achieve the objectives of this study:

1. How do English language major students at Jerash University perceive their teachers' written feedback on their written texts?
2. How does the teachers' written feedback affect students writing processes?

### ***Participants of the study***

Twenty third year students taking the B.A English Language program at Jerash University in Jordan for the academic year 2014/ 2015 were randomly selected from a total of 55 students for this study. Of this number 13 were females and seven were males and they had just completed all their basic writing courses. It should be noted that the rationale for selecting them is premised on the fact that they have completed their English language compulsory writing courses. Thus, their experiences and suggestions would be a significant source to further improve the courses for future students of EFL.

### ***Data collection and analysis***

The research instrument used in this study was semi-structured interview. Unlike the quantitative method of using questionnaires, semi-structured interview instrument represent methods where data is collected through direct interaction between the respondents and the researcher (Creswell, 2009). The semi-structured interview involved 20 EFL students because it was used to obtain information pertaining to their perceptions and opinions on how they perceive their teachers' written feedback on their written texts.

There are three advantages to using semi-structured interviews as a research tool. Firstly, the interviewer has better control of the interview situation. Secondly, there is greater flexibility and thirdly, the response rate is higher. Nunan (1992, p. 149) expresses it as follows: "in a semi-structured interview the interviewer has a general idea what he or she wants to

interview with a list of predetermined questions, topics and issues rather than questions determined during the course of the interviews”.

According to Singleton and Straits (2002), it is possible to schedule and construct the items in a semi-structured interview so that they facilitate the collection of essential data and information. Thus, in this study, the items were carefully constructed so as to obtain relevant and reliable responses to find answers to the research questions and in turn solutions to the problems. In this regard, the interview questions for this study were constructed with the objective of discovering the 20 EFL students perceived their teachers' written feedback on their written texts. In addition, the overall design and organization of the interview items and questions were also given due attention.

### *Data analysis*

The analysis of the interviews that were conducted with the respondents in this study was qualitative in nature and hence subjective. Thus it was necessary for the researcher to structure the data in order to facilitate the analysis in a systematic way. Bearing this in mind the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data were conducted following a sequence of processes based on content analysis.

The actual process of effectively analyzing the qualitative data had to be done in a sequential manner. As Wiersma and Jurs (2005) affirm, in general, a qualitative research is a sequence of processes toward an accurate description or interpretation of the phenomenon accordingly. Following Gay & Airasian, (2003), the process of analyzing the interviews was done firstly, by transcribing, then segmenting the transcripts followed by coding of the segments and finally categorizing the codes. It should be noted that coding and categorizing the segments were done simultaneously to ensure that the transcripts were categorized into the appropriate units according to the established codes.

Thus firstly, following Maxwell (2005), data collected from semi-structured interviews was transcribed literally on paper before being downloaded on computer using Microsoft Office Word Software. In doing so, no changes were made to the respondents' actual sentences, phrases, and words. Although most of semi-structured interviews were in the English language, sometimes the respondents used Arabic in order to explain clearly what they meant. In such cases, the researcher translated their responses into English language.

Then, the researcher segmented the information into smaller units and in doing so, the researcher tried as best to make sure that readers could understand the information too. Besides, the process of segmenting the transcribed data from the semi-instructed interviews followed a bracketing procedure whereby data that contained areas of interest and significance and which were directly related to the interviews questions were highlighted. In the case of transcripts of interviews, they were segmented into smaller units and subsequently categorized generally.

Finally, the researcher coded the segmented units; Neuman (2003) view that the process of coding segmented qualitative data should be simultaneously carried out in terms of reducing the data as well as categorizing the data under broad themes so that the resulting data can be coded into fewer and larger categories that are easier to manage and analyze. Thus, by coding data in terms or larger categories, it is easier for a researcher to analyze the data from a broader

perspective of analysis. Thus in this study, the researcher coded all segments of the interview under broad categories in accordance with the research objectives.

## Findings

### *Students' attitude reactions to teachers' written feedback*

The aforementioned twenty English language major students showed different types of attitude reactions toward written feedback they received from their teachers varying from positive attitude reactions to negative ones. The results of this study indicate that the students responded effectively and they had a very high level of attention to teachers' written feedback. The majority of the participants perceived teachers' written feedback as tools to know their weakness in writing. For example, Ahmad respected the teacher comments, saying:

"I would like to thanks my doctor for his comment, all the time he give me a good comments on how to write the word and sentence and make connection between the paragraphs"

A second positive attitude reaction to teachers' written feedback showed that students were being happy and glad. The participants showed their happiness when perceived their teachers' comments praised their written drafts. For example, Ahlam and Ali appreciated the teacher comments, saying:

"sometimes doctor write on my essay very good, good, I'm very happy for this comments and this encourage me and help me to write in good way"

"sometime doctor comment on my essays as good, your idea is very good, organization of paragraphs very good... I'm happy to read this comments because it support me"

"you know.. when doctor evaluate and mark my essay he always wrote good title and sometimes he wrote great job..this comments I feel it is very important for students who write in English language"

To sum up, the majority of the student revealed that they felt satisfied with their teachers' written feedback and they expressed their liking of the teachers' written feedback. However, some students expressed their negative attitude reactions towards types of written feedback. For example, Mua'taz stated that:

"doctor wrote many comments on my essay.. I can't read what he wrote and understand what I should correct"

The first negative attitude reactions towards teachers' written feedback were "dislike". Some students could not understand written feedback provided to them by their teachers and resulted in their negative attitude reactions. Another example from Ahmad stated that:

" when doctor evaluate my essay he wrote many comments ...I cant read it or what he meant ..his writing way like doctor in the hospital when he write prescription"

Besides, other students revealed that they "deny" some written feedback because they think that teachers evaluate randomly and they have confused criteria for evaluation. When Amal and Ali were asked about their reaction to the written feedback, they replied:

"I feel that my essay is very good because I do my best in wrote it... I can't imagine that teacher wrote on it poor writing or no connection between the ideas"

"teacher sometimes evaluate my essay word by word and focus on spelling but with other students he focus on organization of the essays... we don't know what teacher interested in or what criteria he follow to evaluate our essay"

"Disappointed" is another negative reaction that the student showed in this study. Some students mentioned some situation in which they felt disappointed when they read teacher written feedback. For example, Mohammad and Sara declared that:

"when I read the teacher comments I imagine that I need to take another 5 to 6 course in English write to become good writer in English language"

"I read the comment ... all time he wrote in my essay and ask are you sure this is your language?"

On the whole, some students felt disappointed when they read teachers comments. In their opinion, the practice of highlighting their errors and giving them a lot comments and less encouraging comments caused feeling of disappointed.

### ***The effect of teachers' written feedback on students writing processes***

The qualitative data showed that the written feedback have a superior persuade on students' writing process development of Jordanian EFL students. Besides, the majority of students considered written feedback learning tool. In this regards, Hamza and Shahid said:

"Sometimes doctor wrote useful comments on my essay about how to organize and how to punctuate my essay.. it help me a lot because text essay I will take this comment into my consideration"

"when we practice writing in the class doctor randomly read some essay and write some feedback such as who to make connection between title and introduction and how to make and write the conclusion"

Moreover, the data revealed that the participants perceived teachers' written feedback to be useful for them in their writing processes. Do'a'a and Nader commented:

"yes, it is very helpful for me it allow me to improve my writing."

"doctor comments make my English writing more professional by the time because he give a good comments and I make and correct my second draft based on his corrections"

Students also reported that teacher written feedback helped them to clarify and simplify their idea and to avoid future mistakes. Barakat and Abdullah commented:

"sometimes doctor comment on my essay as how to make the sentence and paragraph more simple and don't write in ambiguity way"

"doctor comments help me a lot in writing he all time wrote a comments on how to use present tense and the differences between it and simple past and he always wrote comment to make connection between sentences in each paragraph"

Moreover, interview results showed that students also considered teachers' written feedback as helpful to improve their ideas, content, and organization. For example, Rawan and Zainab remarked:

"when we finish first draft doctor write to us some useful comments such as to organize our essay and to write and explain more and sometimes he asked to support our idea with example"

"doctor interested in the idea he ask us to write to read our mined and on how we think, so he encourage us to focus on idea and when we write he make useful comment to enhance our content with good vocabulary"

Surprising, the majority of the students revealed that it was important to them received feedback before they started writing. Amera and Somaiaa for example responded:

"doctor ask us to make group and each group corporate to write essays and doctor discuss the topic and he give us a good comment about how we start to write"

"usually we discuss the topic with the doctor before we start to write he give us some suggestion about how we can enhance our idea more and make it understandable"

The qualitative data also showed that the teachers written feedback can enhanced their grammar and vocabulary improvement. Hassan and Irshaid expressed their reasons in the interview:

"Doctor all the time comment on our grammar mistake and he wrote to us how to choose good words I think this is very important for us for learn more English language and improve our writing processes".

"As you know most the time when we write we think in our native language Arabic language but when we translate it to English language it become wrong word sometimes, so doctor comment and feedback help us a lot to choose suitable words".

## Discussion

The present study mainly aimed at identifying and investigating how do English language major students at Jerash University perceive their teachers' written feedback on their written texts. Another focus of the study was to find out how teachers' written feedback was regarded as helpful by students for their writing processes.

The first research question in this study focused on English language major at Jerash University students' attitude reactions to their teachers' written feedback. The results of the study revealed that English language major students at Jerash University varying in their attitude towards the written comments given by their teachers. Jordanian EFL students sometimes reject teachers' written feedback because it is unclear for them. In some cases the students revealed "deny" to some written feedback because they think that teachers evaluate randomly and they have confused criteria for evaluation. Moreover, students feel disappointed toward some teachers' written feedback because, in their opinion, their teachers give them a great deal of critical comments and less encouraging comments.

On the other hand, student positive attitude reactions, such as happy, glad and fulfilled of their teachers' written feedback. The majority of the participants perceived teachers' written feedback as tools to know their weakness in writing, besides, they had a very high level of interest in teachers' written feedback. Ellis (2009) suggested and highlighted that positive feedback supports the learner and fosters motivation to write more and better.

The second research question focused on investigating how teachers' written feedback was regarded and considered as helpful and as learning tool by students for their writing processes. The results showed that Jordanian EFL student perceived teachers' written feedback to be useful for them in their writing processes. Students also reported that teacher written feedback helped them to clarify and simplify their ideas and to avoid future mistakes. Similar to the findings of studies on ESL contexts (e.g., Srichanyachon, 2012; Ferris, 2003; Lee, 2005; Ellis, 2009) the results showed that students also considered teachers' written feedback helpful in improving their ideas, content, and organization and enhanced their grammar and vocabulary usage.

### Conclusion

This study has provided evidence that students attitude towards teachers' written feedback do have an effect on writing process and the quality of written work produced by Jordanian EFL students. Besides, this study concluded that teachers' written feedback have a twin effect: the first one was improving and orientating students' revision skills and correcting their writing mechanisms, and the second was enhancing the Jordanian EFL students' overall writing quality while doing a different draft of the same essay and composition. Consequently, Jordanian EFL teachers are encouraged to promote confidence and a positive attitude amongst students and in doing so, their comments should be worded in diplomatic, easy terms and encouraging. They should as far as possible avoid making negative comments. In such way, teachers would be able to motivate their students to write better and to reap good products.

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