



Graduate School of Education

**EFL Teachers and Learners' Perceptions, Beliefs and
Practices on Written Corrective Feedback in the Saudi
Higher Education Context.**

Submitted by

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To

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Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "H. Rajab". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a dotted line.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my mum and dad, my wife Rama and my precious three children, Abdulrahman, Seham and Sarah for all their patience, unwavering support and endless love. I love you all unconditionally. To all my family members, friends, colleagues and students in Saudi Arabia and beyond, I dedicate this research work to you.

Abstract

An area of research that has witnessed an enormous surge of research studies as well as extensive debates in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), is the Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) concept and practices in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts. Over the past three decades, there has been a plethora of research studies on WCF, however, most studies had few limitations which necessitated a wider prospect into the various issues concerned with WCF. This research study, following an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, which was conducted in the Saudi context, brought a new angle into this heavily debatable area of research where a link was sought to bridge the gap between the teachers and students' perceptions of WCF and their preferred WCF type in an EFL context taking advantage of a large number of participants to take part in a single study on WCF. Online teacher and learner questionnaires were utilised with the participation of 320, both male and female, EFL teachers, and 840 EFL male and female learners from Preparatory Year Program (PYP) at six government universities in Saudi Arabia. Then, semi-structured interviews with 10 EFL, male and female teachers and 10, male and female learners were conducted to explore their perceptions, attitudes and practices (in the case of the EFL teachers) towards this important issue in TESOL and where differences as well as agreements among the teachers and learners exist, so as to attempt to enlighten EFL/ESL professionals on various aspect of WCF as seen by both teachers and learners. Data analysis included quantitative analysis of the teacher and learner questionnaires as well as qualitative and thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews. The teachers, as

well as the learners expressed high level of interest towards WCF. Similarly, the learners also believed that their overall language learning can be elevated by having a well-structured WCF which they need to be familiar with. Results of the data analysis also indicated that there are still some differences in the way teachers and learners perceive the WCF in general where teachers prefer coded WCF, whereas, learners prefer unfocussed WCF. There were positive unified agreements, however, between the EFL teachers and learners which gave the indication that there should be more discussions and research studies in order to reach a mutual understanding and a beneficial solution that aims to elevate the scope of TESOL teaching and learning. Furthermore, establishing writing centres at universities in Saudi Arabia where WCF is fully detailed for learners, may also represent an area for continued focus. Recommendations and suggestions for future research include conducting a similar research study in a different EFL context and compare the results to the outcome in this study.

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Table of Contents

Dedication	2
Abstract	3
Acknowledgment	5
Table of Contents	6
List of Tables.....	11
List of Figures	12
List of Abbreviations & Acronyms	13
Chapter 1	14
Background	14
1.1 Introduction.....	14
1.2 Aims and Objectives	14
1.3 Statement of the Problem.....	17
1.4 Rationale for the Study	19
1.5 Significance for the Study.....	19
1.6 The Saudi EFL Context	20
1.6.1 General Overview of the Saudi Education System.....	20
1.6.2 EFL in KSA	21
1.6.3 Preparatory Year Program (PYP) at Saudi Universities	22
Chapter Two	25
Literature Review	25
2.1 Introduction.....	25
2.2 Writing.....	25
2.3 Linguistic Accuracy in Second Language Writing (SLW)	26
2.4 Error Correction (ER) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theories	27
2.4.1 Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theories and Hypotheses.....	30
2.4.1.1 Conceptual Framework	31
2.4.1.2 The Cognitive Theory of SLA and Schmidt’s Noticing Hypothesis.....	33
2.4.1.3 The Skill Acquisition Theory	34
2.4.1.4 The Sociocultural Theory (SCT)	34
2.4.1.5 Krashen’s Monitor Model of SLA	36
2.4.1.6 The Interaction Hypothesis	39
2.5 Error Types	40
2.6 Content vs. Form WCF.....	42
2.7 The Concept of Feedback and Corrective Feedback	44

2.8 Written Corrective Feedback	46
2.9 Research on WCF Types	48
2.9.1 Direct vs. Indirect WCF	48
2.9.2 Focussed vs. Unfocussed WCF	50
2.9.3 Coded vs. Uncoded WCF	52
2.10 Motivation and WCF	54
2.11 Rubrics and WCF	54
2.12 The Great WCF Debate.....	55
2.11 WCF Studies in the Saudi Context.....	59
Chapter Three	65
Methodology.....	65
3.1. Educational Research	66
3.2 Paradigm	67
3.2.1 Ontology.....	69
3.2.2 Epistemology.....	70
3.2.3 Methodology and Methods	71
3.3 Research Paradigms	71
3.3.1 Interpretism	72
3.3.2 Critical Paradigm	73
3.3 Qualitative vs. Quantitative Methods.....	75
3.4 The Mixed Methods Methodology.....	76
3.4.1 A Typology for Classifying Mixed Methods Research Designs	78
3.5 Sampling.....	80
3.5.1 Selecting the Samples	82
3.6 Questionnaires	82
3.6.1 Teachers' Questionnaire	85
3.6.1.1 Section 1.....	85
3.6.1.2 Section 2.....	85
3.6.1.3 Section 3.....	85
3.6.1.4 Section 4.....	85
3.6.1.5 Section 5.....	86
3.6.1.6 Section 6.....	86
3.6.2 Students' Questionnaire	87
3.6.2.1 Section 1.....	87
3.6.2.2 Section 2.....	87
3.6.2.3 Section 3.....	87
3.6.2.4 Section 4.....	87

3.7 Semi-structured Interviews.....	88
3.8 Procedure.....	90
3.8.1 Piloting the Questionnaire.....	90
3.8.2 Piloting the Semi-Structured Interviews.....	91
3.8.3 Administration of the Research Instruments.....	92
3.9 Data Analysis.....	92
3.10 Validity and Reliability.....	94
3.11 Triangulation.....	96
3.11.1 Data Triangulation.....	96
3.11.2 Method Triangulation.....	96
3.12 Ethical Considerations.....	97
3.13 Challenges and Limitations.....	98
Chapter 4: Data Analysis.....	99
4.1 Introduction.....	99
4.2 Phase I – Quantitative Data Analysis.....	99
4.2.1 Face and Content Validity.....	99
4.2.2 The Piloting Stage of the Questionnaires.....	100
4.2.3 Data Analysis of the Teachers’ Questionnaire.....	101
4.2.3.3.1 Demographics.....	104
4.2.3.3.2 Professional Experience and Qualifications.....	104
4.2.3.3.3 Classroom Particulars (Items 4 - 10).....	105
4.2.3.3.4 Written Corrective Feedback Practice Specifics (Construct 2 – Items 11 - 32)..	106
4.2.3.3.4.1 Answering Research Question 1 (Items 11-13 and 15): What is the preferred method of WCF among EFL teachers working in the Saudi context and why.....	106
4.2.3.3.4.2 Answering Research Question 3 (Items 14 and 16 - 32): Does the chosen method of WCF which the EFL teachers in the Saudi context is reflective of their own pedagogical beliefs and why.....	107
4.2.3.3.5 Challenges of Giving WCF (Construct 3).....	109
4.2.3.3.5.1 Answering Research Question 3 (Item 33).....	109
4.2.3.3.5.2 Answering Research Question 3 (Items 34 - 36).....	109
4.2.4 Data Analysis of the Students’ Survey.....	110
4.3 Answering Research Question Four – Shared Perceptions between Teachers and Students on WCF.....	117
4.4 Stage II - Qualitative Data.....	121
4.4.1 Findings.....	121
4.4.1.1 EFL Learners’ Preferred Method of WCF.....	123
4.4.1.1.1 Students’ Attitudes Towards Different WCF Types.....	124
4.4.1.1.2 Students’ Attitudes Towards Coded WCF.....	126

4.4.1.2 EFL Teachers Preferred Method of WCF	126
4.4.1.2.1 Unpopularity of Comprehensive WCF Amongst EFL Teachers	127
4.4.1.2.2 Awareness of the Significance of Writing Skills	130
4.4.1.2.3 Teaching Basic Rules of Writing	131
4.4.1.2.4 Pair Work Activities	131
4.4.1.2.5 Verbal Feedback	132
4.4.1.2.6 Learner Self Correction	133
4.4.1.3 Learners and Teachers' Attitude towards WCF in EFL Classrooms	134
4.4.1.4 Suggestions to Improve WCF System from the Teachers' Perspective	136
4.4.1.4.1 Awareness of the Role of Writing Skills	136
4.4.1.4.2 Issues in the Existing Writing System	137
4.4.1.4.3 Issues with Writing Assessment Rubrics	137
4.4.1.4.4 Lack of Time in Giving WCF	138
4.4.1.4.5 Training and Workshops to Improve WCF System.....	139
4.5 Summary of the Qualitative Data Analysis.....	139
Chapter 5: Discussions	141
5.1 The Research Questions and The Foci of The Study	141
5.2 Part 1 – Preferred WCF Type Amongst Teachers and Students.....	142
5.3 The Impact of WCF on the EFL Learners' L2 Writing Skills	143
5.4 WCF practices in Saudi EFL context.....	145
5.5 EFL Teachers' and Learners' Views on WCF	147
5.6 EFL Teachers' Challenges Related to WCF	151
5.7 Cognitive Beliefs of the EFL Teachers on the Chosen WCF Type	154
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations	157
6.1 Summary of the Findings of the Study.....	157
6.2 Recommendations for Future Research	159
6.3 Pedagogical Contribution	160
6.4 Anecdotal and Some Personal Reflections.....	161
References.....	164
APPENDIX A	181
APPENDIX B	188
APPENDIX C	189
APPENDIX D.....	195
APPENDIX E	201
APPENDIX F	202
APPENDIX G.....	203
APPENDIX H.....	204

APPENDIX I	205
APPENDIX J	205
APPENDIX K	207
APPENDIX L.....	209
APPENDIX M.....	213
A Sample Coded Interview Transcript (Teacher).....	213
APPENDIX N.....	217
A Sample Coded Interview Transcript (student)	217
APPENDIX O.....	222

List of Tables

Table 1.1. The main four core levels of the PYP program at the ELI, KAU	31
Table 1.2. The Assessment Overview	32
Table 2.1. Summary table of WCF studies in the Saudi context.....	57
Table 3.1. Target Group and their distribution for the surveys	77
Table 3.2. Target Group and their distribution for the interviews	77
Table 3.3 A summary of the structure of the teachers' survey.....	83
Table 3.4 A summary of the structure of the students' survey.....	85
Table 4.1. The five-point Likert scaled items	98
Table 4.2. Reliability Statistics for teachers' questionnaire.....	99
Table 4.3. Pearson Correlation Analysis of the constructs	99
Table 4.4. Years of teaching experience	102
Table 4.5. Highest qualification of the teachers.....	102
Table 4.6. Preferred WCF amongst teachers.....	104
Table 4.7. Teachers' preferred method of written corrective feedback.....	104
Table 4.8. PMMC of the students' questionnaire constructs.....	107
Table 4.9. Parents' Work (Yes/No).....	109
Table 4.10. Parent(s)' type of work.....	109
Table 4.11. Descriptive analysis of students' questionnaire items	112
Table 4.12. No. of students in classes – Teachers.....	116
Table 4.13. No. of students in classes – Students.....	117
Table 4.14. Emerging Themes and Sub Themes	118
Table 4.15. Pseudonyms of teachers and students' interviewees	118

List of Figures

Figure 2.1 List of WCF codes	55
Figure 3.1. The interrelationship between the building blocks of research	64
Figure 3.2. Crotty's 1998 depiction of the four elements of research	64
Figure 3.3. An example of deductive reasoning	69
Figure 4.1. Gender of the Teachers' Participants	101
Figure 4.2. Students' Gender	108
Figure 4.3. Students' age range	109
Figure 4.4. Comparing WCF type between the teachers and students	115
Figure 4.5. Most focussed-on errors when giving WCF by the teachers	115
Figure 4.6. Most challenging elements in giving WCF to students	116

List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

Abbreviation/ Acronym	Full Wording
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
DA	Dynamic Assessment
ER	Error Correction
ESL	English as a Second Language
IELTS	The International English Language Testing System
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LLM	Language Learning Motivation
LLS	Language Learning Strategies
NL	Native Language
PYP	Preparatory Year Program
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLW	Second Language Writing
SPSS	Statistical Package used for Statistical Analysis
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TL	Target Language

Chapter 1

Background

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the main aims and objectives of the research study. It will further discuss the statement of the problem and introduce the four main research questions this study was based upon.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The general concept of providing corrective feedback and the perception of its benefits to learners at all, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL), levels, regardless of the discipline undertaken, is hardly a controversial area among educationalist worldwide. It is a foundation upon which learning can be built and developed where it may also lead to language acquisition in most situations provided the optimal conditions are utilised (Nassaji & Kartchava, 2017). Bitchener and Knoch (2015b) state that “the practice of providing written CF on their students’ texts can help them improve the accuracy of their writing and, as a result, help them acquire L2 forms and structures that are being used incorrectly” (p. 406). Providing corrective feedback in second language (L2) mediums (oral or written discourse) is vital for the development of the students’ writing where they are able to conceptualise and reflect on their use of L2 in a manner that enables them to appropriately negotiate the problematic areas in their language production.

Some researchers believe the task of providing written corrective feedback (WCF) to L2 learners is one of the most important tasks for writing teachers (Ferris, 2006a; F. Hyland, 1998, 2003; K. Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Mack, 2009). Coffin et al. (2005) state that: “the provision of feedback on students’ writing is a central pedagogic practice” (p.63). This might be due in parts to the fact that L2 writers are faced with numerous challenges in developing sound and

competent L2 writing skills (Evans, Hartshorn, McCollum, & Wolfersberger, 2010). WCF provides the L2 learners with accurate linguistic features which they need to notice errors they made. Ferris (2011) indicates that L2 learners: “need distinct and additional intervention from their writing teachers to make up their deficits and develop strategies for finding, correcting, and avoiding errors” (p.4). Furthermore, Ferris (1995) acknowledges that: “writing teachers seem to believe that responding to student errors is a vital part of their job” (p.49). This necessitates that L2 writing teachers’ role in various contexts, foreign language (FL) or second language (SL), is to assist their learners in improving their overall writing proficiency in line with what their learners’ needs are and in line with the course aims and objectives. Many teachers believe that L2 learners value their teachers’ feedback and comments on their written work and likewise, L2 learners, in agreement with their teachers, believe that their written errors need to be given feedback on (Hirvela & Belcher, 2007; Ur, 1999).

Notwithstanding the aforementioned seemingly universal foundational belief of the benefits of providing WCF in L2 learning and acquisition, error correction in general and WCF in L2 in particular are two of the most controversial and debatable topics among theorists and researchers alike. Error correction is perhaps one of the most commonly used approach for responding to students’ writing, however, for the L2 writing teachers, it constitutes the largest allocation of time spent whereas for the students themselves, it represents the most important part contributing to their success as writers as they perceive it (Ferris, 2003). The concept of WCF has been a topic that has witnessed the majority of theorists, researchers and teachers being polarised either into a ‘for’ or ‘against’ WCF camp. Unfortunately, and despite all the attempts of both sides to present their evidences in support of their individual arguments, the issue continues to be a ‘no win’ situation with no clear comprehensive and convincing evidence in support of either side of this debate. Furthermore, even with the aforementioned consensus among researchers of the benefits of providing feedback to learners in principle, it has been an issue of great controversy. Research in WCF seems to be passing through a path and forced to make a U-turn at either side of this closed path. Each time a new evidence is presented (empirical or otherwise), that particular evidence is refuted with a counter-evidence and takes the whole debate to the opposite side of the path which

ironically, is creating a gap between research and real-world practice. The term WCF has apparently become a popular notion in English as a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) fields of research and recently, the vast majority of research studies have grappled with exploring various parameters of this appealing term. After more than two decades of research and investigations of WCF, researchers move back and forth in an attempt to answer the same five following questions: 1. Should students' errors be corrected? 2. Which particular errors should be corrected? 3. When should learners' errors be corrected? 4. How should those errors be corrected? and 5. Who should carry out the correcting? (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Moreover, in certain international educational contexts, the dilemma is further complicated where EFL teachers are faced with deep institutional and departmental bureaucracies as well as mandated tight schedules leading to the implementation of pedagogical strategies which are non-favourable to both teachers as well as students (Kendon, 2018; Müller, 2015). Thus, EFL teachers in those contexts resort to alternative disadvantageous learning strategies (other than the ones they perceive and believe to be beneficial to the students) in order to fulfil the requirements of the institutions and meet deadlines as well as protect their own employment status by blindly following the dictated teaching instructions imposed by the institution. Hall (2011) remarks on the latter issue by stating: "Teachers are not completely free to pick and choose how they teach; they are bound in by social convention, learners' expectations and school and ministry policies about how to teach and what methodology to follow" (p.101).

This research study will attempt to answer questions regarding exploring any gaps that may exist in the perceptions and the of the EFL teachers and the recipients of the WCF (i.e. the EFL learners) in the Saudi context. WCF is relatively an unexplored territory in the Saudi context. I am hoping to answer the question - based on data collection and analysis – why there is such a big pedagogical gap in the WCF practice which is evident between what is practiced by the EFL teachers in the Saudi context in relation to WCF and what is preached and hypothesized by the various limited research and literature. In terms of the existence of a research gap that generally exists in the EFL context worldwide and in the Saudi context in particular, as will be discussed in

the next chapter, studies have been limited to a mere exploration of the efficacy of a certain type of WCF, survey or interview very limited number of either teachers or students and above all, many studies seem to be conducted in a relatively very short duration of time. Furthermore, when a study exists that may include various elements and explores different aspects of WCF, there seems to be a general lack of either enough number of participants or, analysis procedure which may lack structured and sound approach. In this study, I am also hoping to address few general questions as well as more specific ones as per the responses generated from the large number of participants in this study.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The educational structure in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has three main strands prior to tertiary education. Students at government (public) schools in KSA spend six years at elementary level, three years at intermediate level and three years at secondary level. In principle, teaching English as a foreign language (at government schools) starts at year six (last year of elementary level) for two hours a week. At intermediate and secondary levels, English is taught for four hours a week. This structural form is designed in order to prepare the students in Saudi Arabia for tertiary level education where English has been implemented as the language of instruction in the majority of those tertiary institutions. Several of these institutions focus on the 'quantity' of their curriculum rather than 'quality' where, for instance, there is an emphasis on covering as many units or chapters of EFL books as possible. Therefore, EFL teachers experience great pressure in their attempts to meet their institutions' schedule deadlines, very often at the expense of the quality of teaching. One vital aspect of teaching that is usually compromised is the quality of teaching writing and the lack of an appropriate WCF. In the worst-case scenario, many dedicated EFL teachers end up as composition slaves, which is a term coined by Maxine Hairston (1986) in her article 'On not being a composition slave', which describes the toil and drudgery that many EFL teachers face in giving WCF (Hairston, 1986). When this is coupled with the weakness in the level of English proficiency reported in almost all grade levels in Saudi Arabia (Al-Shammari, 2005), many students underachieve in English and do not receive

the benefits that might be gained from WCF. In my several years of experience as an EFL teacher in Saudi Arabia, I have noticed how EFL teachers face a perpetual professional dilemma where teachers tend to compromise between time and the provision of sound WCF on students' written assignments. A study recently carried by Shah, Hussain, and Nasseef (2013) on the factors impacting teaching in the Saudi context, concluded in its findings that one of the major challenges of EFL teaching in the Saudi context is unfavourable institutional policies and procedures. They state that: "they [EFL teachers] constantly switch between pedagogically and socially oriented behaviours and try to meet the learning and social needs of the learners.

Thus, EFL teachers imparting various skills find it quite challenging to choose the right method that would suit the learners' needs and their learning style" (p.107-108). As such, many EFL teachers practice WCF differently to what they consciously believe is the best approach to WCF. In other words, they follow institutional guidelines (against what they may perceive as the best approach to WCF) which may not take their heavy schedule into consideration as well as the fact that there is a lack of individualisation in the WCF for different proficiency levels of the students which is obviously lacking in a comprehensive institutional curriculum mandating the following of one particular WCF type, such as coded WCF, which might not be beneficial to certain proficiency levels' students. Furthermore, and as will be highlighted in the next chapter (Chapter 2), limited studies have tackled this important issue where all these studies had limited number of participants or lacked the exploration of possible links and common understanding between the teachers and students with regards to WCF.

As such, the main and overarching question to be addressed in this study will be: What are the perceptions of EFL teachers and learners in the Saudi context towards WCF?

The latter can be addressed by answering the following four specific questions:

- 1.What is the preferred method of WCF among EFL teachers working in the Saudi context and why?
- 2.What is the preferred method of WCF among male and female Saudi EFL learners of various English proficiency levels, and why?

3. Is the chosen method of WCF which the EFL teachers practice in the Saudi context, reflective of their own pedagogical beliefs and why?
4. What are the shared perceptions between the EFL teachers and learners when it comes to WCF?

1.4 Rationale for the Study

The aspect of teaching second language writing is one that is perceived a controversial and heavily debated area of TESOL research. For the past fourteen years, I have been an EFL lecturer involved with writing instruction, evaluation and assessment. As such, I came to realise how troublesome this area of TESOL is and how arduous the process of giving WCF to students can be, especially in a context such as Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is among the large EFL context (e.g. China, Japan, Korea....etc) (Al-Asmari & Khan, 2014) and as such, it provides a wealth of vital information about EFL and how issues relating to its teaching, especially the teaching of Second Language Writing (SLW), can assist professionals around the world in general and in EFL contexts in particular, learn from such experiences and insights. Additionally, my interest in this particular area of TESOL research stems from the fact that there has been a lack of comprehensive or extensive research studies conducted on WCF as well as that sense of inclusiveness where both sides of this important issue where both, EFL teachers' voices as well as students' voices are heard and taken into account when exploring perceptions and practices with regards to WCF (Chen & Nassaji, 2018; Storch, 2018).

1.5 Significance for the Study

It is hoped that this research study, with its large number of participation from EFL teachers and students in the Saudi context will offer a new angle into the various elements of WCF by considering voices from within of EFL teachers and students. It is also hoped that by publishing the findings to the academic community, it will be possible to consider certain vital and shared elements of this research together with other studies (old and new). Specifically, it is hoped that this research study will shed light on what teachers and students believe sincerely and openly about the practices of WCF where suggestions for the

EFL departments in the Saudi context are presented and perhaps, practical steps in the form of procedural model can be adopted in the WCF practices.

1.6 The Saudi EFL Context

1.6.1 General Overview of the Saudi Education System

The education system in KSA is mainly characterised by the complete segregation of students, teachers, and staff by gender which is also a characteristic of the cultural elements of public domains in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, it can be said the general education system in KSA (public schools) is highly centralized and fully administrated by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2018b). However, in higher education, the situation is different where no central authority exists, and each university administers its own curricula and programs. The majority of universities adopt an academic year which has two semesters; each consists of 15-17 weeks. The last two weeks are designated for taking the final examinations. Students are expected to pass these mandatory examinations so as to move into the next level (year). Teachers at various levels of higher education and at different institutions and departments are expected to develop various examination questions reflected from the adopted textbooks.

As is the case in the majority of countries around the world, education is mandatory in KSA for all children between the ages of six and fifteen years.

The Saudi educational system consists of four main phases:

- (a) The primary school phase which spans for six years (year 1 to 6)
- (b) The intermediate school phase which spans for three years (year 7 to 9)
- (c) The secondary school phase which also spans three years (year 10 to 12)
and
- (d) The university level which starts at the age of 18 (Ministry of Education, 2018a).

As the number of students graduating from high schools every year in KSA exceeds the allocated number by the ministry of higher education in Saudi Arabia to be admitted into government universities, private universities and

colleges admit all those who did not secure a place at government universities. Private universities charge tuition while public universities do not.

1.6.2 EFL in KSA

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is recognised as a medium for advancing the country's various fields including medical, educational, military, commercial and so on (Cordesman, 2003). Teaching EFL has emerged as the major foreign language taught, both at schools, institutes, colleges and universities in the Middle Eastern region in general and KSA in particular (Liton, 2012). Teaching EFL in KSA dates back to 1925 when the ministry of Education introduced EFL in school curriculum (Abdan, 1991). As most subjects taught at schools and universities in KSA, English has undergone certain religious, economic and political influences that have a great impact on shaping the English language in Saudi Arabia nowadays (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). Article No. 50 of the Saudi Policy of Education elaborates on the EFL teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia where it mentions that the objective of EFL teaching in KSA is to enable students to acquire the knowledge and scientific expertise needed to better represent Muslims and serve humanity (Al Hajailan, 2003). At schools, the majority of EFL teachers in KSA use the old traditional teaching methods such as the grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods (Elyas & Picard, 2010). As such, it can be generally seen that these methods are not productive because they only focus on grammatical rules and very often use the Arabic language, which is the learners' first language, to translate the knowledge (Al-Nofaie, 2010). The techniques EFL teachers employ at schools in KSA to deliver their lessons include structural analysis, chorus work, answering questions, corrections, and translating texts (Al-Seghayer, 2015). Most Saudi EFL teachers believe that teaching grammar is the most central aspect of the English language teaching which the students need to master (Moskovsky & Picard, 2018), and it is mostly seen that EFL students in KSA schools are passively attentive to their teachers' lessons of grammar or vocabulary (Al-Seghayer, 2015).

Notwithstanding, the demands and the need to use English in the Saudi society have mushroomed in order to be able to meet the 21st century needs (Elyas & Picard, 2012; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014).

1.6.3 Preparatory Year Program (PYP) at Saudi Universities

All government and private Saudi universities (and colleges) established their PYP as a first-year program in the university. The main purpose of establishing a PYP is to provide the students with an intensive English course. The mission statement of the English Language Institute (ELI) at King Abdulaziz University (KAU) states:

The Mission of the English Language Institute (ELI) at King Abdulaziz University (KAU) is to provide intensive instruction of English as a foreign language, delivered by qualified instructors using an internationally-oriented curriculum, to Foundation Year students in order to enhance their English language skills and facilitate their academic progress (ELI, 2018).

As such, this (PYP) program aims to improve the students' proficiency level of English and to bridge the gap between their previous education in secondary school and the educational standards of the university. In the first year, students study an intensive English language course along with other general courses, such as statistics, computer science, mathematics and communication skills. At the ELI at KAU, the majority of the students who are registered on the PYP course and have taken the proficiency exam, must pass four modular semesters which span eight weeks each in order to start studying their undergraduate courses (majors). The ELI Student Handbook states:

The annual number of newly-admitted full-time students varies depending on KAU seat availability, but it is usually between 12,000 to 15,000 students. Unless exempted by a required IELTS (4.5 and above) or iBT TOEFL (47 and above) score, all students must successfully complete the English course requirement in order to be eligible to secure KAU college entry. The numbers of students per class vary depending on student levels and can exceed 30, but

ELI is aiming to reduce class sizes to approximately 25 as soon as this is operationally feasible (ELI, 2017, p. 15).

The four main core levels are illustrated in table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1. The four main core levels of the PYP course at the ELI, KAU.

ELI COURSE CODE	COURSE LEVEL	CEFR LEVEL	CREDITS
ELI 101	Beginner	A1	0
ELI 102	Elementary	A2	2
ELI 103	Pre-Intermediate	B1	2
ELI 104	Intermediate	B1+	2

Regarding the textbooks (materials) used, the ELI Students' Handbook states that:

The ELI is currently (as of August 2015) using the Cambridge University Press English Unlimited Special Edition (2014) as its core instructional materials. The English Unlimited Special Edition series has been specially designed to cater for Arabic speaking learners in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The series corresponds to four CEFR proficiency levels, (A1, A2, B1 & B1+). The aim of the English Unlimited Special Edition is to enable adult Arabic-speaking learners to use English for effective communication in real-life situations (ELI, 2017, p. 22).

The average amount of English instruction is 18 hours a week, and the students are permitted 20 absences (hours) each modular. Assessment is carried out as illustrated in the breakdown table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2 The Assessment Overview

Method	Format	Weight
Formative Continuous Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Writing Tasks 10 % •Grammar and Vocabulary Use 10 % 	20%
One Speaking Examination	Range from basic interviews with leading questions (lower levels) to extended turns and discussions (higher levels). Time allowed: 3-5 minutes.	10%
One Writing Examination	Range from constructing simple sentences and short paragraphs (beginner level) to more comprehensive, cohesive paragraphs	10%

	at Elementary and Pre-Intermediate level, to writing short, coherent essays (Intermediate level). Time allowed: 40 minutes.	
Computer-based Mid-Module Examination	Multiple choice questions with focus on reading and listening comprehension, and vocabulary and grammar use from units covered in the first three weeks of the module. Time allowed: 90 minutes.	20%
Computer-based End-of-Module Examination	Multiple choice questions with focus on reading and listening comprehension, and vocabulary and grammar use from units covered in the entire module. Time allowed: 105 minutes.	40%
Total		100%

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a detailed and thorough review of the literature that underscored the areas of WCF and SLA along with the various aspects related to it as well as the conceptual framework which informed this research study, are presented. The chapter will be divided purposefully into four main parts. The first part will discuss the writing as a learning process and the linguistic accuracy in second language writing (SLW). Additionally, the first part will also discuss the various hypotheses and theoretical perspectives of SLA, which relates to the main framework of error correction and WCF as investigated by this study. The second part will include definitions and highlights of the various currently employed types of WCF in SLA field and findings of research studies carried out on each type. The third part will discuss the current controversial and the highly debated topic of WCF among various scholars and researchers in the field. The fourth and final part of the chapter will present a discussion on the effectiveness and contributions of WCF in the field of SLA in general and in the Saudi context in particular. The recent and pertinent literature will be reviewed and discussed throughout this chapter so as to provide theoretical foundations for the current research at hand. Furthermore, gaps in previous research studies in WCF in the Saudi context are examined in order to detail and establish the rationale and support for this research.

2.2 Writing

A sign of an educated society in particular and a country as a whole can be usually measured – to a large extent – on the percentage of its citizens who are able to read and write. Learning to write has been known for thousands of years (Greeley, 1975; Mattessich, 2002). Without which, knowledge and civilization may have never existed. Writing, be it in its basic form of rough written notes and drafts or well-structured formal texts and essays, is perceived as a functionality of a communicative act that transmits information as well as links people together throughout the world (Browne, 1993). In other words, writing has an important main purpose and that is to convey certain messages between

people, the purpose of which could be to explain a particular issue, persuade or entertain the reader (J. Graham & Kelly, 2009). The teaching and learning of writing is one of the pillars of literacy in old, as well as in contemporary education. In fact, learning to write is achieved by practicing writing itself and learning to write is considered a central aspect of real learning, or education in its truest sense (Whiteman, 2013). Writing is considered an integral and vital part of the process of developing literacy from young age. It helps in developing the thinking of learners because when they engage in writing, their thinking and learning are encouraged due to the fact that learners are unable to write unless they are actually thinking. Additionally, the spoken and written parts of a language are not merely parallel, but they also influence one another (Swank & Catts, 1994). The effective learning of writing is also considered a fundamental component of education and the ability to do so is seen as a great asset to keep for students throughout their lives (Berdan et al., 2006). Furthermore, it is imperative to realise that: “writing is not an innate natural ability but is a cognitive ability” (Harris, 1993, p. 78) where it is acquired over the years via schooling and training in any way, shape or form. Writing in its essence is a visual medium where the visual objects are the printed as well as the hand written pages (Kress, 2005). Throughout the world, students’ grades at schools, colleges and universities are decided (to a large extent) on their performance on written exams or tests (S. Graham & Harris, 2006) where it provides a meaningful tool for enhancing and supporting the students’ content material learning (S. Graham & Perin, 2007).

2.3 Linguistic Accuracy in Second Language Writing (SLW)

An important component of language development (first language, L1 or second language, L2) is literacy acquisition due to the fact that language encompasses both, the written and spoken modalities of communication. One of the important foundations in the development of language (L1 or L2) literacy is improving the learner’s writing language accuracy. The linguistic accuracy in question includes mechanical, syntactical as well as lexical accuracies in contrast to other additional writing accuracies such as rhetoric and organization (Andujar, 2016). In order to improve the learner’s linguistic accuracy in writing

English as a second (ESL) or foreign language (EFL), the context within which learning is taking place should be taken into consideration. In most (if not all) contexts around the world, producing a legible and linguistically accurate writing is a fundamental aspect of learning English for ESL or EFL students. It is considered as a must-have skill for their future success at university and future professional career. However, researchers in the fields of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL), Teaching English a Foreign Language (TEFL), English Language Teaching (ELT) as well as the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) have yet to address a particular pedagogical approach as the ultimate strategy for students to produce accurate and sound L2 writing. In the 1980s, the L2 writing pedagogy has shifted away from perceiving writing merely as a mechanically finished product towards thinking about it as a cognitive process (Cambourne, 1986; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Yoshida, 1983). A key element in the process of learning is perceiving writing as a process and thus, adopt the process writing approach where writing leads to “writing to learn” (Britton, 1970; Emig, 1971, 1977). Recent research in the field of linguistic accuracy have suggested that the provision of certain WCF types (e.g. *focused WCF*) may lead to linguistic accuracy (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Sheen, Wright, & Moldawa, 2009).

2.4 Error Correction (ER) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Theories

The importance of error correction and the provision of feedback cannot be overstated since it is perceived by many researchers as one of the effective factors of learning and developing a foreign language (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011; Spada, 2011; Valeo & Spada, 2015). There has been a rapid increase in research studies worldwide on this specific timely topic of SLA in the past three decades as well as the research into the role and treatment of errors. The main focus of these studies has been on the cognitive perspectives of corrective feedback that relates to the ways of processing linguistic information in addition to the sociocultural perspectives (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). This particular sociocultural perspective is elaborated by Lee (2014) who state that: “The sociocultural influences of human actions and practices (e.g., the provision of MLE [Mediated Learning Environment] through feedback) as well as people’s role as agents in transforming themselves and social

structures” (p. 206). Ellis (2009) further elaborates by stating that: “Sociocultural theory (SCT) sees learning, including language learning, as dialogically based; that is, acquisition occurs in rather than as a result of interaction. From this perspective, then, L2 acquisition cannot be treated as a purely individual-based process (as it has been in cognitive and interactionist SLA) but rather as one shared between the individual and other persons” (p. 12). In addition, an overarching complex formation of a more straightforward enquiry for the researchers to provide solid evidence for, has been to answer the question: Does WCF lead to SLA? The impact of written corrective feedback on SLA is an area that is witnessing continuous and ongoing research where WCF plays a major role in giving feedback to L2 learners (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). This is due to the fact that L2 writing researchers and SLA researchers focus on similar parameters in general and in a similar manner (Ferris, 2010a). Ferris (2010a) further notes: “The two lines of research are not in competition; rather, they are complementary. There may be a methodological gap, but it is not a philosophical or theoretical chasm. L2 writing researchers and SLA researchers who investigate written CF—although they pose somewhat different questions—can and should learn from each other and build on one another’s work” (p.191). Linguistic errors are always prevalent in second language (L2) students’ writing due to the fact that it presupposes a level of mastery of several language areas including spelling, grammar, and vocabulary, in addition to other skills such as handwriting and punctuation (Ioannou-Georgiou & Pavlou, 2003). Within the L2 teaching realm and depending on their gravity, errors in certain cases might be limited or hardly noticeable and will not cause a major degree of irritation to the reader. However, other errors may imply lack of knowledge of the target language (TL) and in the worst-case scenario, might lead to a total communication breakdown, which might be in the form of an urge to cease reading that errors-filled piece of writing. Consequently, errors have always been perceived as a major concern to both students and teachers, and error correction has equally assumed a focal point in L2 teaching. Thus, students generally expect that their errors will be pointed out and dealt with by their teachers. In the domain of teaching and learning, researcher consider ‘errors’ to be different than ‘mistakes’. Corder (1967), generally referred to in the literature as Corder (1967) and who is recognised by many as the ‘father of error analysis’, was the first linguist to differentiate between an ‘error’ and a

'mistake' in his ground-breaking publication "The Significance of Learner's Errors" (Corder, 1967). In general terms, errors are believed to be as something that deflects the utterance of a second language (SL) learner from the model they are aiming to master (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). James (2013) suggests that: "the distinction between a mistake and an error can be found in relation to the correction ability" (p. 78). He perceives a mistake as a fault in the learner's utterance that he/she is able and willing to correct. On the other hand, an error is believed to be as something that a learner is neither able nor inclined to correct. Corder (1967) has differentiated between mistakes and errors. He finds that the term error as signifying something erroneous, related to the essential knowledge of the language. Thus, errors indicate the present level of a learner's language level. However, the term mistake is commonly given in situations in which the learner produces an incorrect form due to a slip of the tongue, memory lapse or a similar cause. The claim Corder (1967) makes is that the process of correcting mistakes is within the ability of the SL learners, on the other hand, correcting errors is not since their current stage of language development does not allow them to recognize the objective distinction between their own speech and the speech of a native speaker. Additionally, and following from this distinction, it is evident that both, FL learners of a particular language as well as native speakers of that particular language, though not to the same extent, are prone to making mistakes such as those resulting from: "memory lapses, physical states, such as tiredness and psychological conditions such as strong emotions" (Corder, 1967, p. 166). Thus, errors give an indication of failure of linguistic competence whereas mistakes indicate failure of performance and therefore are (mistakes) not considered to be significant in the FL learning process (Corder, 1983). Additionally, "learners' errors provide evidence of the system of the language that he [the learner] is using at a particular point in the course" (Corder, 1967, p. 167). James (2013) believes that an error is something that is "unintentionally deviant and not self-correctible by its author" and a mistake as something that is "intentionally or unintentionally deviant and self-correctible" (p. 78). Furthermore, Suzan Gass (2013) who perceives errors as: "red flags; they provide windows onto a system that is, evidence of the state of a learner's knowledge of the L2. They are not to be viewed solely as a product of imperfect learning; hence, they are not something for teachers to throw their hands up in the air about" (p. 91). In what

follows from the latter statement by (Susan Gass, 2013), is a strong indication of the benefits of errors committed by L2 learners in the process of SLA in that they can be seen as helpful indicators of L2 proficiency and not as flaws that needed to be eradicated. However, it is important to recognise that WCF is mostly effective when it is attributed to the negative evidence it entails. Susan Gass (2013) believes that L2 learners have access to two types of language input: the positive evidence as well as the negative evidence. The positive type is simply defined as an exposure to contextualised language input and it serves in informing the learner of what is linguistically sound and acceptable in the TL since it contains: “the set of well-formed sentences to which learners are exposed” (p. 36). On the other hand, negative evidence (direct or indirect) helps the learner recognise the incorrectness of a written L2 output form or a written utterance and this is realised through WCF, which is given to the learner in response to the non-target like L2 production. Following this distinction between positive and negative evidences, researchers have been debating the question of whether the two types are equal in their effectiveness to the L2 learner or, will one type only suffice in L2 acquisition. The next section discusses the major SLA theories and hypotheses as they relate to WCF.

2.4.1 Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theories and Hypotheses

Within the realm of research, a hypothesis is directly related and derived from a particular theory. Furthermore, “a theory summarizes what is known about some phenomenon and provides a tentative explanation; a hypothesis is a research prediction that can be deduced from a theory” (Goodwin, 2009, p. 37). As such, a hypothesis is an untested proposal or a predictive statement, which is subjected to field-testing in order to evaluate its reliability and validity (Saldana, 2014). On the other hand, a theory is a proposal that has been tested and evaluated. Van Evera (2015) explains that a particular theory consists of a series of hypotheses, which have been tested and validated. In order to conceptualise WCF as it relates to SLA theories and hypotheses, theoretical background of the various SLA theories and hypotheses need to be discussed. Language researchers and experts have always been intrigued by the process of learning a second language after learning the first. Psychologists and language researches believe that the natural sequential order of first language acquisition (L1) generally takes the form of the following stages: When children

are born, they are innately predisposed to acquire a spoken native language and are socially interactive. They first use their auditory capabilities to listen to a spoken language then they start to learn how to speak it. Next, a large number of those growing up children learn to read and eventually, a proportion of those who are able to read efficiently, carry on to the final and last, but difficult, phase of learning how to write. Learning a second language is generally a process that is phased similarly to that of the L1 (Krashen, 1981; Newmark, 1966). There are however, several additional challenges that L2 learners have to overcome in learning how to write in L2. Several cognitive and psycholinguistic SLA hypotheses and theories provide strong foundational support for corrective feedback. These include: The noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1995, 2001), the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1991), the output hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 1995), the transfer appropriate learning hypothesis (Segalowitz & Lightbown, 1999), Pienemann's teachability hypothesis (Pienemann, 1989) as well as the more recent counterbalance hypothesis (Lyster & Mori, 2006). Additionally, there are several theories including: the skill acquisition theory (DeKeyser, 1998, 2007b), social constructivist theory and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978) that also give support one way or another to corrective feedback. In the aforementioned hypotheses and theories, CF is regarded as an important factor in making substantial contribution to interlanguage development as well as promoting language learning due to the fact that it induces noticing and noticing the gap in written production of L2 learners. It allows the L2 learner to cognitively and visually recognize errors and thus, avoid them once successfully acquired the correct form of language structure.

2.4.1.1 Conceptual Framework

This research study is underpinned by the understanding of best practices of WCF by EFL teachers as they contribute to SLA in EFL students. This framework is guided by the cognitive theory and noticing hypothesis, the skills acquisition theory, the sociocultural theory, Krashen's monitor model of SLA and the interaction hypothesis. The study, in an attempt to interpret the beliefs and practices of WCF by the EFL teachers, focusses on how these WCF (best) practices by the teachers on the students' written assignments and manuscripts, are noticed and processed cognitively by the students. Also, the

study focusses on how error correction and the concept of feedback assist Saudi EFL learners gain explicit L2 knowledge and ensure that errors are not repeated after gaining this knowledge.

Furthermore, the study focusses on the way WCF beliefs and practices by the teachers and also received and learned by the students where these practices by the teachers are rooted in Vygotsky's social cultural theory and the concept of scaffolding which may ultimately lead to the support and scaffolding and students' L2 learning. This scaffolding is vital due to the fact that students need to learn within their language and cultural contexts, and the teachers need to provide the best practices that incorporate students' language and cultural backgrounds which both lies in the heart of the sociocultural theory.

The study is also guided by Krashen's monitor model where the function of L2 learning is to make corrections, to change the output of the acquisition system before an L2 learner writes (or speaks), or sometimes after the learner writes (or speaks) as in self-correction.

The study further perceives WCF as a form of an interaction between the teacher and the student where it is argued that WCF gives the students learning opportunities that attend to the communicative content and linguistic information of L2, as rooted in the interaction hypothesis.

As mentioned earlier and within the limitations of the main boundaries and the focus of this research, the following sections will address three SLA theories, two hypotheses of SLA and Krashen's monitor model of SLA (1982), that are pertinent to the role of WCF. The latter statement and the specified sections to be included in this study are perceived from the EFL teachers as well as the EFL students' point of view in the Saudi context. These theories and hypotheses are:

- 1.The Cognitive Theory and Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis
- 2.The Skill Acquisition Theory
- 3.Sociocultural Theory (SCT)
- 4.Krashen's Monitor Model of SLA
- 5.The Interaction Hypothesis

2.4.1.2 The Cognitive Theory of SLA and Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis

Due to the fact that the way WCF is practiced and perceived by EFL teachers as well as the attitudes of EFL students towards it, implies a way of thinking, it is therefore plausible to recognise that a large bulk of research carried out on WCF is grounded in the cognitive theories which also stems from Schmidt's noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990). Schmidt was among the first SLA researchers to systematically address the relationship between awareness and L2 learning (Loschky & Harrington, 2013). He believes that what is noticed by the L2 learner becomes an intake which in turn is necessary for L2 learning. Schmidt hypothesizes that the process of noticing is a necessary factor for L2 learning. It is considered by some researchers as the first stage in the processing stages of SLA (Garner, 1988; Skehan, 1998, 2003). Retrospectively, Sheen (2010) believes that: "Corrective feedback promotes learning because it induces noticing and noticing the gap" (p.170) which eventually may lead to interlanguage development. However, it is worth mentioning that despite the fact that noticing is generally considered to be a necessary component in L2 learning, some researchers dispute the fact as to whether noticing is indispensable for L2 learning or not and whether it may eventually lead to language acquisition on its own or not. Several researchers believe that conscious understanding of the target language (TL) system is necessary for the learners if they are to utilise correctly and appropriately, the linguistic forms of the TL. Therefore, learners must attend and notice any source of variation in every domain of the TL (Schmidt, 2001). Additionally, L2 learners must pay attention consciously and cognitively as well as notice input if input is to become intake for L2 learning. An important part of L2 development and learning is to cognitively draw the attention of L2 learners to errors they made as they strive to learn a second language. In this manner, CF plays a vital role in triggering the recognition of gaps that exist between the TL norms and the learners' own interlanguage where eventually the learners will be able to grammatically, for example, restructure sentences in the TL. Schmidt (1995) elaborates that whenever corrective feedback (or WCF) is provided to the L2 learner, it is important to take into consideration the three different types of attention, which are: *noticing*, *understanding* and *awareness*. Bitchener and Ferris (2012) add: "Noticing refers to the process of bringing some stimulus into focal attention

(i.e., registering its simple occurrence) while understanding and awareness refer to explicit knowledge (e.g., awareness of a rule)” (p. 17).

2.4.1.3 The Skill Acquisition Theory

The skill acquisition theory has been best illustrated in SLA by the work of (DeKeyser, 2007a, 2007b). It is rooted in the different branches and on the general theory of psychology, which ranges from behaviourism to cognitivism and connectionism (Dekeyser & Criado, 2012). It draws on the model known as the Anderson's Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT) model which itself is considered as a kind of cognitive stimulus-response theory (Ellis & Shintani, 2013). The application of this theory is extended to most complex skills of learning and not merely to language development and learning. The basic structure of this theory is that it constitutes three main stages. These stages are outlined by VanPatten and Benati (2010) who state that: "Within this theory, development involves the use of declarative knowledge followed by procedural knowledge, with the latter's automatization" (p. 33). Therefore, SLA is perceived by theorists to be a progression through three stages, declarative, procedural, and automatic (DeKeyser, 2007a). In this theory, the relevance of error correction and feedback to L2 learners is in the provision of explicit knowledge where L2 learners can focus on TL problem areas and thus, ensure that wrong information (errors) are not proceduralised. Additionally, based on this theory, being able to perform tasks at a much faster pace with greater accuracy (i.e. written production tasks) aided by WCF is indeed seen as a factor leading to knowledge (and language) acquisition.

2.4.1.4 The Sociocultural Theory (SCT)

Many researchers in the field of SLA who adopt the sociocultural framework in their work and interpretation of language acquisition and learning, base their arguments on the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky's work which he conducted back in the nineteen-twenties and thirties and was not translated and published until the sixties and the seventies (Ohta, 2017; Ozfidan, Machtmes, & Demir, 2014). Vygotsky believed that all learning, including language learning is essentially socially oriented and socially mediated process by: "cultural artefacts, activities and concepts, with language structure, organisation and use being the primary tool of such *mediation*" (Pawlak, 2013, p. 65). As such, the

SCT considers the way in which second language learning is achieved through a process of co-construction between the knowledgeable others or '*experts*' and the learners or '*novices*' (Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Thorne & Lantolf, 2007). From the sociological perspective of the SCT, the emphasis is placed on the vital role that social interaction plays in learning. The latter is remarked as: "the interaction between societal presentation and endogenous processes of abstraction" (Sinclair, 1994 as cited in Steffe & Wood, 2013). Language, on the other hand, perceived as a cultural artefact, mediates social activities with psychological ones. Mitchell, Myles, and Marsden (2013) state that: "From a sociocultural perspective, children's early language learning arises from processes of meaning-making in collaborative activity with other members of a given culture" (p.227). As such, language learning in essence is believed to be the appropriation of a tool in which a shift takes place from inter-mental to intra-mental processes. Furthermore, the theory posits that individual learner's knowledge exists at any particular time of the learner's life within a zone called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky and Cole (1978) define ZPD as: "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). In this zone, a learner (i.e. the novice) can be aided by the knowledgeable other (i.e. the expert) to move to higher mental level in a process called '*scaffolding*', where the learner is able at a later stage to regulate the learning activities unaided until they become internalised (Polio, 2012). The latter process in which the learner's knowledge is scaffolded by the expert is seen as a quintessentially social process where the main part is played by interaction which leads to language learning and development (Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Appel, 1994). An important inference that can be drawn from this theory is that the learner's cognitive development including that of learning L2 occurs over two phases. The first phase is the socially oriented phase where the learner collaborates with more knowledgeable others (e.g. teachers or more proficient peers) and the second phase is the cognitively oriented phase where higher order thinking (metacognitive thinking) develops in the process of internalisation (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Pawlak, 2013). This distinction of the two phases indicates that the social "environment is not a factor in [L2] development, it is the very source of [L2] development" (Lantolf,

Thorne, & Poehner, 2015, p. 365). Thus, the SCT does not share similar views with other SLA theories in terms of language cognition and is quite distinct from other SLA theories (Ortega, 2014) which he previously referred to it as “epistemological tensions” or “paradigm wars” (Ortega, 2005, p. 322). The uniqueness of the sociocultural theory is that it is strongly related to writing in that writing is viewed as learned as well as a social process (Pinker, 2003). Several researcher studies which have presented empirical evidence of SLA drawn on Vygotsky’s notions of scaffolding, ZPD and mediation in which WCF, in line with the assumptions of SCT, is perceived as a sociocultural interaction as well as a dialogic process between the teachers and the learners (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Lantolf, 2000; Nassaji & Swain, 2000). Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) state that: “Effective error correction and language learning depend crucially on mediation provided by other individuals, who in consort with the learner dialogically co-construct a zone of proximal development in which feedback as regulation becomes relevant and can therefore be appropriated by learners to modify their interlanguage systems” (p.480). The authors as such, did not place great importance on supplying the students with direct or indirect feedback with the aim of dictating the correct linguistic form or directly highlighting written errors to the students. Instead, the aim was to promote an advanced level of negotiation between the students and their teacher where this negotiation is based on the students’ specific ZPD (Devrim, 2014; Pawlak, 2013). The latter can be seen to have a strong impact in an EFL context where the EFL teacher can help the students develop their L2 linguistic accuracy based on the SCT principles in which the feedback as a mediation tool is negotiated between the teacher and students. As such, EFL teachers can pedagogically select the best approach to provide WCF as best reflecting the needs of the students.

2.4.1.5 Krashen’s Monitor Model of SLA

Amongst the most influential and first general theories of SLA has been the proposal by Stephen Krashen in 1978 of the monitor model of SLA (Krashen, 1978). The theoretical perspectives of his original model witnessed several modifications and extensions in 1981, 1982, 1984 and 1985. The theoretical emphasis of his model however, was mainly on the contrast between learning

and acquisition. Krashen (1981) states this distinct difference by saying that there is:

‘the acquired system’ and ‘the learned system’. The former is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language – natural communication – in which speakers concentrate not on the form of their utterances, but on the communicative act. On the other hand, the “learned system” or “learning” is the product of formal instruction and comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge about the language (p.37).

The model essentially consists of five basic hypotheses where each hypothesis somehow has implications for WCF. Krashen’s monitor model has been influential in the past three decades and has been among the most debated and most elaborated model of SLA. However, the model has received considerable debates and criticism in recent years. Mings (1993) declares that Krashen “has been strongly challenged as a theorist” (p.172). Furthermore, some researchers claim that Krashen’s model is only applicable to limited linguistic features (i.e. grammatical structures) and that it lacks research evidence as Cook and Cook (1993) comment: “it makes sense in its own terms but is not verifiable” (p.65). Some researchers have gone as far as attacking his monitor theory, calling it a “bad theory” (Gregg, 1984, p. 95). Notwithstanding these criticisms, the contribution of the model has been very enriching in the field of SLA and in addition, the model has strong implications for WCF. In this study, three of Krashen’s hypotheses will be discussed and their relationship to WCF will be highlighted. The first hypothesis in the model is the *Input Hypothesis*. This is the central element of the overall model where Krashen (1985) believes that if the L2 learners receive comprehensible input, they will move to a slightly higher proficiency level. He gave this proficiency level the notion of $i + 1$ where i is the current level the L2 learner is at and $+1$ refers to the level that immediately follows after i . Krashen believed that language acquisition indicates that no explicit teaching of grammatical structures or drills are necessary if the L2 learners are exposed to sufficient comprehensible input which ultimately will lead to language development. Thus, Krashen believed that error correction or WCF should not take place in L2 learning since he views language acquisition

as a natural process that occurs over time and error correction or WCF may hinder this natural process (Krashen, 1985). The second hypothesis is the *Acquisition – Learning Hypothesis*. The hypothesis makes a distinction between ‘language acquisition’ and ‘language learning’ (Krashen, 1985). He stated that acquisition is the “subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilise in acquiring their first language” and he referred to learning as the “conscious process that results in ‘knowing about’ language” (Krashen, 1985, p. 1). In other words, Krashen perceives language acquisition as a naturalistic process that takes place in which L2 learners are interacting in a natural and meaningful communication while language learning on the other hand pertains to a distinct behavioural perspective that includes studying the TL structures and rules as a result of classroom activities (Diaz-Rico, 2004). This distinction that Krashen makes between acquisition and learning indicates that error correction or WCF has little or no effect on the acquisition process since the latter occurs naturally and he perceives error correction or WCF as an unnatural and cannot be combined with acquisition into a unified entity. Therefore, Krashen believes that an L2 learner is capable of writing fluently in the TL through acquisition via exposure to authentic texts in a natural process of communication rather than being exposed artificially to grammatical and syntactical structures of the TL, as is the case in WCF (Krashen, 1984; Lemke, 1990). The third hypothesis is called the monitor hypothesis, which resembles the name of Krashen’s model, the monitor model. In this hypothesis, Krashen asserts that in language learning, an L2 learner, having been exposed to sufficient comprehensible input, is able to edit or ‘*monitor*’ the language output in the form of utterances (spoken or written) either before or after they occur because of the L2 acquired system (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Thus, Krashen believes that direct intervention in the form of error correction or language rules teaching, contribute very little to the learner’s language ability since L2 output is already monitored by the acquired system and therefore, sees no benefit in the provision of WCF on the L2 acquisition process if the learner is still acquiring the linguistic form or structure. As intuitively appealing as Krashen’s hypotheses are, they have been criticised by numerous researchers in the field as mentioned earlier. Some researchers believe that these hypotheses have not been empirically tested and even when some attempts were made to test these hypotheses empirically, they failed (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Bitchener and

Ferris (2012) further remark criticism of the monitor hypothesis by stating: "Another problem that critics have had with the monitor hypothesis is that it is impossible to tell when a learner is consciously applying a rule from the learned system and when the learner is applying, subconsciously, a rule from the acquired system" (p.10). Additionally, and taking into consideration Krashen's overall stance against error correction or WCF, the numerous research studies in support of error correction or WCF (as we will discuss shortly) have all but presented some criticism to Krashen's monitor model in one way or another (Ashwell, 2000; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Sheen, 2007).

2.4.1.6 The Interaction Hypothesis

The interaction hypothesis, as a member of the family of SLA hypotheses that perceives language and language learning as a social practice, was first put forth by E. Hatch (1978a, 1978b) and Long (1981, 1996). Both researchers rejected Krashen's model since they did not accept that input alone (as per Krashen's input hypothesis) was adequate for L2 learners to acquire a foreign or a second language. E. Hatch (1978a) maintains: "One learns how to do conversation; one learns how to interact verbally and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed" (p. 404). In other words, she disagrees with Krashen in that L2 learners first learn (or acquire) the language rules and structure then subsequently utilise them in discourse production. Simply put, the theory places heavy emphasis on the role of interaction between L2 learners and their interlocutors (e.g. language teachers). While the interlocutors and L2 learners are interacting, and through negotiation of meaning, either of them or even both may modify their utterances in order to be able to resolve any communication difficulties using as many accurate TL lexis and structures as possible so as to mutually understand the message communicated between them (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). In his early work, Long (1981) and in an empirical study, observed that there are far more benefits to the L2 learner, in an interaction with a native speaker (NS) of the L2 than in the input only process. Long (1996) states: "negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive

ways” (pp. 421-2). Recently, some researchers have outlined and elaborated on the major tenets of the interactional hypothesis by stating that the major emphasis of the hypothesis is on three elements, which occur during interaction in L2 (Jabu, Noni, Talib, & Syam, 2017; Polio, 2012; Song, 2016). These three elements are: *input*, *output* and *feedback*. As such, the interaction hypothesis supports the notion of feedback and the need to provide the L2 learners with WCF. This is evident in the emerged principle of ‘focus-on-form’ which highlights the need to draw the attention of the L2 learners to correct L2 linguistic structures and forms in response to errors learners make in spoken or written utterances (Long, 1991, 1996, 1998). Despite the fact that the interaction hypothesis was originally based on oral interaction since it was based on a model of conversational modifications, several researchers in the field have adopted its concepts on written discourse (Qi & Lapkin, 2001; Sachs & Polio, 2007; Swain, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 1995). Applying the three elements of the interaction hypothesis, input, output and feedback to the written discourse will be in the following manner: “Rereading a corrected or reformulated version of one’s writing is a form of input. Rewriting a corrected essay is a form of output. Written correction is a form of feedback that gives learners an indication of their errors” (Polio, 2012, p. 383).

The following (second) part of this chapter will include definitions and highlights of the various currently employed types of WCF in SLA field and findings of research studies carried out on each type.

2.5 Error Types

As part of the big debate on WCF, identifying the type of errors L2 learners make is an issue that has been extensively researched in the past three decades (Bates, 1993; Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Burt, 1975; Burt & Kiparsky, 1972; Corder, 1971; Ferris, 2002, 2003; Hendrickson, 1978, 1980). This is due to the fact that different WCF strategies and approaches depends largely on the type of errors committed by the L2 learner. In addition, implementing those recommended WCF strategies in the EFL context will make a positive difference to both teachers as well as learners. Teachers will save time and energy providing a particular WCF strategy corresponding to certain errors and

for the learners' written accuracy development, the change is certainly to the better. The thematic classification of different types of errors starts with what has been discussed earlier in the previous chapter, as the difference between a mistake and an error. Several researchers have distinguished the difference between an error and a mistake. *Mistakes* are perceived as an infrequent as well as non-systematic occurrences that may occur in the first language (L1) of a speaker such as slip of the tongue (or pen) and memory failures, whereas *errors* are systematic inaccuracies indicating gaps in the L2 of a learner's interlanguage system (Bayraktaroglu, 1985; Corder, 1967). Some researchers believe that errors should be tackled by the teacher rather than mistakes since the latter can be self-corrected by the learners themselves and the former can be more recurrent and not immediately recognized by the L2 learner (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Gass & Selinker, 2001). Errors as such can be further distinguished into two main kinds, *global errors* and *local errors*. Global errors are errors that hinder communication and cause interference with the main message of a written text whereas local errors are errors that cause minor linguistic violations which does not impede the intended meaning a written text is conveying (Bates, 1993; Burt, 1975; Burt & Kiparsky, 1972; Hendrickson, 1978, 1980; Van Beuningen, 2010). Ferris (2003) elaborates further on this distinction by stating: "the former [global errors] being errors that interfere with communication and the latter [local errors] being more minor errors that do not obscure the comprehensibility of the text" (p. 51). In essence, the main distinction between global and local errors is the level of interference or hindrance they cause to the overall message of the written text. Instances where Arab L1, EFL learners commit local errors is: *He go to the beach every Saturday*. (i.e. omission of the third person singular 's') and an example of a global errors is: *My teacher learned me English* (i.e. lexical error – using *learned me* instead of *taught me*). Having said that, it can be very challenging for the L2 teachers to make that clear-cut distinction between errors and the gravity of interference they cause in a written text due to the fact that: "the gravity of an error is to a very considerable extent matter of personal opinion" (Ellis, 2009, p. 6).

Another system for categorizing errors is proposed by Ferris (1999) and Ferris (2002) where she identifies two types of errors, *treatable* and *untreatable* errors.

The former type represents errors that are rule-governed or grammatical errors such as those errors related to subject-verb agreement, article usage, verb form and tense and plural noun endings whereas the latter represents errors that are more idiosyncratic in nature or non-grammatical errors such as lexical misuse, spelling and punctuation errors (Van Beuningen, 2010; Van Beuningen, De Jong, & Kuiken, 2012). Ferris and Roberts (2001) report that L2 learners are usually capable of successfully editing and treating *treatable errors* by themselves. On the other hand, Ferris (1999) suggests that a recommended approach to deal with untreatable errors is: “a combination of strategy training and direct correction” (p. 6). These systems of distinguishing errors into different types and categories has strong implications for the choice of recommended WCF strategies and approaches in treating different types of errors (Van Beuningen, 2010).

2.6 Content vs. Form WCF

For the past three decades, the field of L2 writing pedagogy has been witnessing a shift from the old concept of viewing writing as merely a finished product by the L2 learner towards perceiving it as cognitive process (Cambourne, 1986; Flower & Hayes, 1981). The main characteristic of the latter is that its ultimate purpose is to have this process writing leading to learning (Britton, 1970; Emig, 1977) as well as aiming to see improvements in the L2 learners' subsequent drafts and future writing following WCF (Ferris, 2010b; Han & Hyland, 2015). Those researchers perceive feedback to be useful as well as beneficial to the L2 learners in general where its effects are powerful and positive, leading those researchers to endorse the provision of feedback (Alfieri, Brooks, Aldrich, & Tenenbaum, 2011; Steedly, Dragoo, Arafah, & Luke, 2008). Indeed, Hattie and Timperley (2007) identify feedback as one of the “highest influences on achievement” in the classroom (p. 83). In what follows from this pedagogical trend (of endorsing the various practices of providing WCF to L2 learners) is that many researchers in the L2 writing field who are advocates of providing WCF, propose the implementation of a multi-phase drafting and applying different WCF strategies for each phase accordingly (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). For instance, several researchers (Sommers, 1982) propose that teachers should respond to a learner's written content first and at a later phase, they should respond to the learner's written form only, thus allowing

L2 learners/writers not to be distracted by linguistic difficulties and pursue the development of their ideas instead.

However, other researchers such as Fathman and Whalley (1990) argue that providing WCF on content as well as on form simultaneously was equally as effective as providing WCF on content or form separately. Not trying to trivialise the concept of WCF and narrow it to a limited single issue, nevertheless, on the face of currently employed WCF in an EFL context, the standard practice of providing WCF by L2 teachers has been form-focused WCF rather than content-focused WCF (Storch, 2010). This is due to the fact that : “Grammar correction is seen as one way of helping writers to improve the accuracy of a piece of writing and in turn, therefore, to improve its communicative effectiveness” (Ashwell, 2000, p. 329).

Additionally, a holistic content WCF can be extremely subjective (Schwartz, 1984) as well as time-consuming (Hartshorn et al., 2010; Truscott, 1999). In a study conducted by Furneaux, Paran, and Fairfax (2007) on 110 EFL teachers from five different countries, it found that those teachers surveyed focussed their WCF on grammatical (i.e. local) issues rather than on global issues (i.e. ideas, content, and organization). Thus, it is vital for the EFL teachers to consider parameters of their intended WCF to be provided before they apply certain WCF strategies or types on the L2 learners’ written drafts. This is in line with what Boud (2000) states that: “Unless students are able to use the feedback to produce improved work, through for example, re-doing the same assignment, neither they nor those giving the feedback will know that it has been effective” (p. 6).

Furthermore, studies in student motivation and self-regulation processes suggest that it is not enough to simply give feedback; it is imperative to consider that student responses to feedback vary, and, in some cases, feedback can negatively affect learning (Boekaerts & Corno, 2005; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Kohn, 2011). It appears that we cannot apply a “one size fits all” approach to feedback practices. Ultimately, the goal of feedback should be to foster students who are owners of their own learning (William, 2011). It is equally noteworthy to mention here that there is more to WCF than the sole purpose of giving “correction”. In her book, *Teaching Students to Write*, Neman (1995) states that teachers should show an interest in students in a way that view them as

thinkers and writers since this will build their self-confidence, which comes through positive comments. Raimes (1991) also mentions that noticing and praising the work that is done well by the students will improve their writing more than any kind or amount of correction of what they do badly. A good teacher will always tell his/her students that his/her answers are incorrect in such a way that keeps him/her interested in the activities carried out so as not to discourage future participation by the student (Perrott, 1982). The latter is due to the fact that when feedback is given or received, it is considered an emotional, as well as a rational, activity (Coffin, 2003).

2.7 The Concept of Feedback and Corrective Feedback

In the last two decades, there has been an increasing number of research studies that focus on the feedback process provided by the teacher as it relates to students' writing development (Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 2006b; K. Hyland & Anan, 2006). The focus and interest in this line of research has been mainly influenced by process approach to writing, first coined by Murray (1972) where students' errors are perceived as part of the learning process and not as a negative element. This indicates that the focus is actually on the process of writing and not on the writing product.

Numerous definitions of the term 'feedback' exists in the literature due to the fact that academics in the higher education field attempt to reflect upon and stress the importance and complexity involved in understanding this term. However, in a much simplistic and generalised form of definition of the term, Askew and Lodge (2000) defines it as "all dialogue to support learning in both formal and informal situations" (p.1). In a much older but more specific definition of feedback, Ramaprasad (1983) gives the definition in terms of understanding of the process of learning where he states that: "feedback is information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way" (p.4). Mayer (2014) makes a distinction between feedback and corrective feedback where he states that: "When the learner is incorrect, an explanation of the correct answer is provided, allowing the learner the opportunity to repair his or her knowledge at that moment.

In contrast, providing corrective feedback only is a minimally guided method of instruction that merely informs the learner that he or she is right or wrong, with no additional information” (p.451). On the other hand, various terms are used as it relates to second language acquisition (SLA) literature in identifying errors committed by learners and corrective feedback provided. The terms that are commonly used in literature are *negative evidence*, *negative feedback* and most importantly *corrective feedback*. The latter term (corrective feedback or CF) apparently incorporates different layers of meaning (Chaudron, 1988). He refers to the ‘treatment of error’ as: “any teacher behaviour following an error that minimally attempts to inform the learner of the fact of error” (p.150). A more detailed definition of corrective feedback is given by Lightbown and Spada (2013) who perceive it as: Any indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect’. This includes various responses that the learners receive. When a language learner says, ‘He go to school every day’, corrective feedback can be explicit, for example, ‘no, you should say goes, not go’ or implicit ‘yes he goes to school every day’, and may or may not include metalinguistic information, for example, ‘Don’t forget to make the verb agree with the subject’ (p. 197).

Universities throughout the world are keen on building better quality of learning and teaching of the programs they offer, which necessitates reforms in various aspects of their programs. As these reforms attempt to enhance the students’ learning, paying special attention to feedback is considered an important aspect of assessment that also contributes to the overall understanding of the relationship between the students’ progress and achievement (Bandura, 1991; Fedor, 1991; Weaver, 2006). In the UK, a National Student Survey (NSS) was first introduced in 2005 and since then, assessment and feedback have been the two main areas showing the lowest rates of student satisfaction (Beaumont, O’Doherty, & Shannon, 2008; James Williams, Kane, & Sagu, 2008). Ramsden (2003) expresses his opinion on the situation where an assessment is graded without feedback as “defrauding students” and as “unprofessional teaching behaviour” in addition to the fact that: “it is impossible to overstate the role of effective comments on students’ progress in any discussion of effective teaching and assessment” (p.187).

In addition, the recently introduced trend in the field of teaching and learning has been the shift from teacher-centred to student-centred learning (Rust, 2002) where the latter has been emphasized as an important part of an overall quality movement which seeks to focus on the accountability in all aspects of a high level of learning (Leckey & Neill, 2001). This has been reflected in the quality of feedback that is provided to learners in their written assessments and, which is assumed by the university lecturers. This quality of feedback has been emphasized as an important indicator of students' satisfaction as well as the overall learning level in tutorials (Retna, Chong, & Cavana, 2009). Several research studies have documented that carefully and well-planned feedback given to students at all levels in general and in tertiary education in particular can enhance the students' learning and motivation as well as having a significant impact on their academic achievements (Falchikov, 1995; Sadler, 1989; Stefani, 1998; Weaver, 2006). This is due to the fact that students benefit greatly from feedback provided to them where they are made aware of their accomplishment as well as how close they are to achieving learning goals and targets set for them (Cross, 1996; Cross & Steadman, 1996).

In an educational context, feedback used is generally considered as a crucial factor to improving knowledge and skill acquisition (Anderson, Conrad, & Corbett, 1989; Azevedo & Bernard, 1995; Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, Kulik, & Morgan, 1991; Epstein & Brosvic, 2002; Moreno, 2004; Pridemore & Klein, 1995). Beyond the influence that feedback has on achievement, it is also regarded as a significant factor in motivating learning (Lepper & Chabay, 1985; Narciss & Huth, 2004).

2.8 Written Corrective Feedback

In several reported research, the most commonly utilised methodology in teaching writing seems to focus on the writing process itself and pay little attention to written corrective feedback (WCF) as a viable approach to improving L2 writing grammatical accuracy (J. Hartshorn & N. Evans, 2012; Hinkel, 2013). Providing WCF is a fundamental aspect of teaching L2 writing to ESL or EFL learners and it is required as an approach to motivate and improve students' writing accuracy (K. Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Additionally, an

important consideration in focussing on linguistic accuracy in WCF should be the learning purpose.

It is generally agreed that the main purpose of writing in L2 is to consolidate the classroom instructions where priorities are given to focus on form (Ellis, 2002). However, as mentioned earlier, the provision of WCF has been a controversial aspect of ELT pedagogy where researchers have (for the past three decades) debated the issue of: To provide or not to provide WCF? This question has since become the heated issue of debate between researchers and scholars for the past three decades and is still an ongoing controversial issue amongst researchers in the field (Meihami & Meihami, 2013). It has led, naturally, to several other emerging viable questions such as: When to provide WCF, how to provide it (the type of WCF to be given) and on what particular section of the learner's produced writing should WCF be provided (Dukes & Albanesi, 2013).

Historically, a strong interest in feedback to L2 student writing may have started to surface because of pedagogical changes which initially took place in Canada and the USA L1 educational contexts in the mid-70s (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 2003; K. Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Zamel, 1985). Some scholarly articles initiated the debate of whether or not WCF should be given to student L2 writing (Kepner, 1991; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981; Krashen, 1982; Marzano & Arthur, 1977; Semke, 1984; Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1985). However, it was only after Truscott (1996) presented his seminal case against grammar correction in L2 and Ferris (1999) published her rebuttal of his case, we started to witness a series of heated debates and numerous research studies 'for' and 'against' the provision of WCF. Since then, many research studies continued to debate the effectiveness of error correction and its contribution to the development and improvement of writing accuracy, including (Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 1999, 2004, 2006b; Truscott, 1996, 1999; Truscott & Hsu, 2008).

On the other hand, other researchers have investigated whether WCF helps L2 student writers improve their written products and linguistic accuracy (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Ferris, 2010a; Lee, 2013; Sheen, 2010; Sheen & Ellis, 2011; Jessica Williams, 2012). These studies have, to a certain extent, polarised the opinions of L2 writing specialists where much attention has been directed towards the efficacy and effectiveness of WCF in SLA and L2 writing. Due to the evidently numerous controversies surrounding it, the debate into the efficacy

of WCF may continue for a long period in the future (Bitchener & Knoch, 2015a). However, the fact of the matter is, providing WCF remains a practiced and an indispensable tool in ELT since it continues to play (in principles) a vital part in guiding, motivating and encouraging L2 learners to improve their linguistic accuracy in L2 writing (Benson & DeKeyser, 2018; Kang & Han, 2015). Thus, it is essential to take into consideration the beliefs and perceptions of EFL/ESL/L2 teachers that shapes and influence their L2 writing instruction and on the other hand, it is equally important to consider the students' perceptions, attitudes and preferences regarding WCF. Very few research studies have been conducted in the ELT field, which considers both the teachers' perceptions, concerns and practices which influence their own pedagogical practice in WCF as it relates to the students' attitudes and preferences.

2.9 Research on WCF Types

2.9.1 Direct vs. Indirect WCF

Recent research studies have suggested a wide range of different WCF styles and overlapping terminologies. However, traditionally, there are two main types of WCF strategies, which L2 writing teachers provide to their learners: Direct and Indirect WCF (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima, 2008). Direct WCF is the act of indicating error types such as 'preposition' and 'tense' where the L2 writing teacher provides the correct form directly next (or near) the error committed. On the other hand, indirect WCF is merely is a process of providing feedback by indicating where the error or incorrect form occurred by underlying, highlighting or circling it without actually providing the student with the correct form (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Lee, 2008). Kang and Han (2015) further elaborate: "Whereas indirect feedback only signals the locus of an error, direct feedback explicitly corrects it by not only signalling its locus, but also providing its correct counterpart" (p. 2). Lee (2013) on the other hand, views direct and indirect WCF from a different perspective altogether by stating that: "While direct WCF involves providing correct answers for students, indirect WCF allows teachers to provide hints (e.g. underlines, circles and symbols) and let students come up with their own correct answers" (p.110). For over two decades, researchers have long been debating the efficacy of one strategy over the other. Some

researchers will argue for the direct WCF since it has positive outcome on the EFL learners' grammatical accuracy (Ellis et al., 2008), as well as the outperformance of those L2 learners who receive direct WCF over those who receive indirect WCF (Chandler, 2003). This is in addition to the fact that direct WCF is very suitable to lower proficiency EFL/ESL learners (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Furthermore, due to the fact that direct feedback strategy appears to be a straightforward type (pedagogically) and easier to follow than indirect WCF, it is quite popular amongst students (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010). Ferris (2002) looked at the effects of different WCF strategies on both text revisions (i.e. subsequent submissions) and newly submitted pieces of writing and reported that 88% of correct revisions were attributed to direct WCF compared with 77% of indirect WCF. Nonetheless, other researchers believe that indirect feedback is the more effective method (i.e. than the direct method) due to the fact that it fosters more engagement among students as well as providing long term language development (Lalande, 1982). Some see indirect WCF as their favourite strategy since they perceive it as a much politer and less intimidating form of feedback than direct WCF (Thonus, 2002). In two similar studies that are almost two decades apart, Lalande (1984) and Chandler (2003) examined the accuracy in two groups of ESL/L2 students' writing following direct WCF to the first group and indirect coded WCF to the second, concluded that the students' accuracy in the second group (indirect coded WCF) by the end of the semester was higher than the first group (direct WCF). Furthermore, indirect feedback "helps students to make progress in accuracy over time more than direct feedback does [...] or at least equally as well" (Ferris & Roberts, 2001, p. 169) and as a result, giving the students the opportunity to correct their own errors which – in the long run - may contribute to less dependency on the teacher (Ferris, 2006a) as well as improving proficiency through student centeredness and autonomy (Ferris, 2003). Ellis et al. (2008) remark that while it is plausible to see the distinction between direct and indirect WCF within a language pedagogy context, the issue of distinction between the two from an SLA perspective is somehow problematic because:

It is important to distinguish between two senses of acquisition (Ellis, 1994): (1) the internalisation of a new linguistic form and (2) the increase in control of a linguistic form that has already been partially internalised.

Indirect CF has the potential to assist (2) but it is not clear how it can address (1). Direct CF, because it supplies learners with the correct target form, can assist with (1). It follows that the effectiveness of direct and indirect CF is likely to depend on the current state of the learners' grammatical knowledge. From a practical standpoint, however, it is unlikely that teachers will be sufficiently familiar with individual learners' interlanguages to be able to make principled decisions regarding whether to correct directly or indirectly (Ellis, 2008, p. 355).

The idea of having this distinction is more of a guideline for L2 teachers to take into consideration when providing WCF.

2.9.2 Focussed vs. Unfocussed WCF

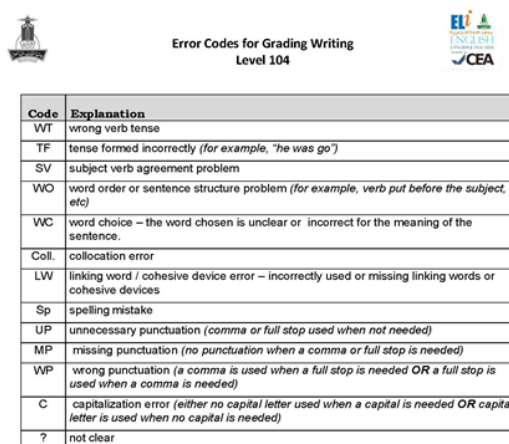
Some researchers make a further distinction as a subdivision of either direct or indirect WCF and that is the distinction between *focussed* and *unfocussed* WCF (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Ellis, 2009; Ellis et al., 2008). Some researchers perceive this distinction as a function of the scope of WCF and its efficacy (Kang & Han, 2015). Unlike focussed WCF, unfocussed WCF as an approach in providing a particular type of WCF is intended to target all or the vast majority of grammatical (or other type of) errors. In an unfocussed WCF, the L2 teacher gives comprehensive WCF to the L2 learner and thus, provide WCF on every single error appearing in the written text produced by the L2 learner (Lee, 2013). Focussed (or selective) WCF is however much more restricted and narrowed where the L2 teacher aims to target one or few specific grammatical errors (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Ellis, 2009; Sheen et al., 2009). Despite the fact that some researchers are pro-unfocussed or comprehensive WCF (Van Beuningen, 2010), the majority of researchers in the field are proponents of focussed WCF (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Ellis, 2009; Evans et al., 2010; Farrokhi & Sattarpour, 2012; Ferris, 2002; K. J. Hartshorn & N. W. Evans, 2012). While Van Beuningen (2010) points out that unfocussed or comprehensive WCF is the "most authentic feedback methodology" (p.20), there are three main disadvantages to adopting this type. The first disadvantage is that unfocused or comprehensive WCF is an arduous task, which can add unnecessary workload leading to teachers' burn-out. Lee (2013) maintains that: "Teachers still find themselves marking student errors in great detail, giving

meticulous attention to written errors in an unfocused manner (Lee, 2004, 2008, 2010)" (p.109). A phenomenon best described by Hairston (1986) as "*composition slaves*" (p.117) which despite numerous research studies that call for reconsiderations of the practice of unfocussed WCF, we still witness a widespread practice of unfocussed WCF in several EFL contexts such as Hong Kong (Lee, 2013) and Saudi Arabia (Alshahrani & Storch, 2014). As Lee (2013) elaborates on the reasons L2 teachers in some EFL contexts follow the unfocussed WCF by stating: "This is partly because of their lack of training, as well as the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1977) that makes them adhere to the tried and trusted method of detailed WCF. Also, teachers feel under pressure to demonstrate, through comprehensive WCF, that they are hardworking teachers, who have to satisfy the expectations of students and parents" (p. 109). The second disadvantage, as Bitchener and Ferris (2012) argue, is that if the proficiency level is not taken into consideration, unfocussed WCF can be futile as well as difficult for low proficiency L2 learners. From the latter, the third disadvantage is that, with low proficiency L2 learners, the efficacy of unfocussed WCF can be insufficient if the L2 learners: "Do not have adequate opportunities to process and practice utilising the feedback" (J. Hartshorn & N. Evans, 2012). On the other hand, advocates of focused WCF argue that it is more effective than unfocussed WCF since targeting fewer errors will allow more attention to those specific selected errors as well as allowing more attention capacity and cognitive processing and recognition of errors to be utilised by the L2 learner (Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007). Thus, focussed WCF in its selection of specific errors and ignoring others, can take two different paths. Highly focused WCF will target a single error type (e.g. errors in the use of the past simple tense). On the other hand, a less focused WCF will be applied to more than one error type but will still restrict correction to a limited number of pre-selected types (e.g. simple past tense; articles; prepositions). However, as it is the case with all issues and elements related to WCF, no one strategy has proven to have any greater success over the other. It is true that some researchers would highlight certain superiority of one strategy and its advantages in comparison to the other (e.g. focused vs. unfocussed), nevertheless, when considering various contexts and factors such as the L2 proficiency level of the students, choosing and favouring one strategy over the other, can be met with doubtfulness and will be unproductive if not inefficient

due to the fact that various WCF strategies are suited best to various situations. Some researchers have suggested different approaches depending on the context and setting dictating the WCF strategy to be utilised. For example, Ellis (2009) believes that direct focussed WCF is more relevant to lower proficiency level L2 learners whereas indirect unfocussed WCF is more suitable for advanced L2 learners. Similarly, Bitchener and Ferris (2012) suggest that utilising both strategies can be advantageous in that focussed WCF is given to the L2 learner in the first draft targeting essential and specific linguistic elements (grammar) and in the final draft, the L2 learner is given unfocused (comprehensive) WCF.

2.9.3 Coded vs. Uncoded WCF

Two further subcategories stem from indirect WCF: *coded* and *uncoded* WCF (Ferris, 2011; Sampson, 2012). This extended categorization seems to be the plausible and predictable outcome of having controversies, disagreements, comprehensiveness in WCF research and above all the urge to pinpoint WCF strategies and types that actually work. In other words, as research on WCF moves deeper into testing more parameters and variables, researchers, in an attempt to resolve previous research shortcomings, attempt to suggest a newer approach or a sub-strategy which they argue will resolve those shortcomings. In an indirect coded WCF, the L2 teacher locates the error a student makes (e.g. by underlining that error) and annotates it with a code of some sort (See Figure 2.1 below) in order to foster self-correction among the L2 learners (Ferris, 2011; Lee, Mak, & Burns, 2015; Sampson, 2012).



Error Codes for Grading Writing
Level 104

Code	Explanation
WT	wrong verb tense
TF	tense formed incorrectly (for example, "he was go")
SV	subject verb agreement problem
WO	word order or sentence structure problem (for example, verb put before the subject, etc)
WC	word choice – the word chosen is unclear or incorrect for the meaning of the sentence.
Coll.	collocation error
LW	linking word / cohesive device error – incorrectly used or missing linking words or cohesive devices
Sp	spelling mistake
UP	unnecessary punctuation (comma or full stop used when not needed)
MP	missing punctuation (no punctuation when a comma or full stop is needed)
WP	wrong punctuation (a comma is used when a full stop is needed OR a full stop is used when a comma is needed)
C	capitalization error (either no capital letter used when a capital is needed OR capital letter is used when no capital is needed)
?	not clear

Figure 2.1. Sample error codes sheet (English Language Institute (ELI) - King Abdulaziz University)

If the error is merely underlined (or circled) without any kind of annotations, comments or otherwise by the L2 teacher, then it is seen as uncoded indirect WCF. Some researchers may view coded WCF as similar to direct WCF where the former is said to occur when the L2 writing teachers indicate the error with a code (e.g. SP refers to spelling error and VT refers to verb tense) whereas indirect WCF is similar to uncoded WCF in that the errors in the latter are merely highlighted by the teacher (e.g. with a highlighter or underlining with a pen) without providing specific identification of what type of error (Rajab, Khan, & Elyas, 2016). Several researchers who are advocates of indirect coded WCF argue that it encourages cognitive engagement as well as providing a type of metalinguistic clue to the L2 learner in order to aid self-discovery and correction (Ellis et al., 2008; Ferris, 2011; Sampson, 2012). Some may even relate it to SLA in terms of allowing a supportive learning scaffolding which can occur between the L2 learner and the knowledgeable other (e.g. more advanced peer or the teacher) where microgenesis eventually takes place as grounded in the sociocultural theory (Myles, 2002; Sampson, 2012). In addition, other researchers argue that coded WCF allows the L2 learner to notice any discrepancies between initial interlanguage produced and the correct form of the target language where noticed input can be successfully transformed into intake (Schmidt, 1990; Schmidt & Frota, 1986). However, there is a vital point to consider when it comes to coded WCF and that is teaching the various, specific codes used by the teacher and making them familiar to the learners (Lee, 2008). In other words, many L2 learners find it more difficult to understand and familiarise themselves with different types of errors committed with the WCF corresponding codes, than direct uncoded WCF (Holtgraves, 1999) since they may have not (due to their low L2 proficiency levels) mastered all the of the WCF codes given to them (Ferris, 2002; Lee, 1997). The latter issue may even be exacerbated by the fact that in many EFL worldwide contexts, EFL learners may have to familiarise themselves with an extremely long list of codes, which may even differ from one institution to another within the same context, resulting in the lack of attention given by the EFL teachers to whether an error is treatable or untreatable (Ferris, 1999, 2002). As a result of all these issues mentioned where researchers differ in their support for coded or uncoded WCF, a plausible solution to this issue is to use a combination of WCF strategies and approaches (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Ferris, 2011; Lee et al., 2015).

2.10 Motivation and WCF

An important aspect of EFL teaching is how to best motivate the students so they can attain more knowledge and elevate their L2 level in a pleasant and easy manner. It is no doubt that motivation is very strongly related to achievement in language learning (Ur, 2013). Without motivation, students will be having great difficulties learning or attaining as they should be. Dörnyei (2001) states that: “Without sufficient motivation, however, even the brightest learners are unlikely to persist long enough to attain any really useful language” (p. 5). When we consider language learning motivation (LLM), research studies have concluded that motivation is significantly and positively correlated with learning outcome especially with L2 learners who are of higher proficiency tend to adopt more and deeper learning language strategies (LLS), and they have a wider LLS repertoire than their peers (Dörnyei, 2014; Ellis, 2008). Additionally, it should be taken into consideration that certain EFL contexts, such as the EFL contexts in the Arab world in general and the Saudi EFL context in particular, should be paid special attention when it comes to consider ways to keep motivating learners and keep positively encouraging them to learn in an advantageous learning environment (Elyas & Picard, 2010).

One particular element of motivating EFL learners through pedagogically sound writing assessment and through written corrective feedback (Ahmed, 2018). Several research studies have been conducted and concluded that L2 learners are able to improve their writing skills in L2 provided they are motivated through following a certain type of WCF (e.g. direct WCF) (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009) or through the provision of a variety of written exercises which the students find interesting (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010) or through praise for good written assignments where the students are commended by comments the WCF the teachers provide (Spivey, 2014; Tang & Liu, 2018). Some L2 learners may even be motivated intrinsically by WCF their teachers provide and believe WCF will help them improve their L2 writing (Han & Hyland, 2015).

2.11 Rubrics and WCF

It is a well-known fact among language teachers (be it in L1 or L1) that writing assessment can be highly subjective and consequently, can be occasionally

seen as unfair to students. This is due to the fact that unlike other disciplines and subjects such as mathematics or science, writing is an art, and while subject to some generally agreed-upon rules and conventions, there may exist a wide variety of opinions among teaching professionals as to what constitutes “good writing” (Del Vecchio, 2017). Crusan, Plakans, and Gebril (2016) states that:

Teachers need to know how to create fair assessments that provide information about their students’ writing ability. They need to know how to develop scoring rubrics and assessment criteria. Bad assessment practices can have a potent effect on students. The consequences of uninformed assessment can be losses for students in time, money, motivation, and confidence (p. 43).

As such, establishing a common framework to guide writing assessment, particularly within schools and universities with unified curriculums, can reduce to some degree this subjectivity and assessment variability. Ultimately, a breakdown of grading standard framework known as a *rubric* is designed by the EFL department where there are a set of criteria related to writing such as organization, use of details, sentence structure, etc are illustrated in this rubric (framework). A sample rubric is given in Appendix M. Several research studies have discussed the efficacy of rubrics in writing assessment in general (Dawson, 2017) while other researchers explored the efficacy of rubrics with WCF in improving students’ L2 writing skills (Ene & Kosobucki, 2016; Hartshorn et al., 2012).

Some researchers have recently explored the efficacy of e-rubrics in providing feedback and improving students’ writing skills (Raddawi & Bilikozen, 2018). However, some researchers have voiced their concerns and raised questions regarding the way rubrics are made and whether they genuinely reflect (fairly) on the students’ writing grades (Obeid, 2017; Panadero & Romero, 2014). Another concern regarding the use of rubrics is the findings of some research studies which states that students were unaware (or unfamiliar) with the whole concept of a rubric structure and its use (Aldukhayel, 2017).

2.12 The Great WCF Debate

One of the most prominent and long discussed research area of SLA and L2 writing has been *written corrective feedback*. This area of research can be traced back to some old assertions and remarks such as those implied in the SLA behaviourism theory back in the 1950s where errors were viewed as a taboo and a sign of deficiency on the L2 learner's part and should be avoided in all aspects of L2 learning (B. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). However, more ideas and concepts followed on such as the ones by Corder (1967) who viewed errors as valuable elements in L2 pedagogies as well as a facilitator in corrective feedback (Corder, 1967, 1971). However, the actual issue of WCF was not extensively discussed or debated, at least not on a worldwide scale of academia until Truscott (1996) published his epic research paper which ever since its publication in 1996, the fields of ESL/EFL/TESOL have witnessed a surge of rebuttals which were mainly exchanged between Truscott who argues that WCF has no real benefit if not harmful to the L2 learner as well as putting away time and energy that could otherwise be productively invested in other L2 areas; and Ferris who asserts that there are ample evidence for WCF and its positive impact in SLA if properly applied.

Despite the fact that L2 researchers and L2 writing experts acknowledge that Truscott (1996) was the instigator of this controversial and heated debate of whether or not to provide WCF on written production of L2 learners (Ferris, 2012), as far back as a decade prior to his publication in 1996, Hairston (1986) published her research paper where she voiced her strong criticism against WCF due to then, the lack of solid evidence and research as well as lack of both knowledge and experience on the part of the L2 teachers in providing WCF. In her own words, Hairston (1986) states:

to be a good composition teacher one must do two things: first, one must mark all student papers meticulously and comment on them copiously; second, one must hold one-to-one student conferences regularly...Unfortunately, there are also serious drawbacks to this approach to teaching writing. First, it is a totally impractical model for most writing teachers in most writing programs, and, if held up as an ideal, will almost certainly damage the writing program in important ways. Second, most of the time this error-focused method of teaching writing

does not work, and for good psychological and behavioral reasons (pp. 117-118).

As can be seen, Hairston (1986) expressed her strong criticism of the provision of WCF in general long before Truscott (1996) paper. Furthermore, several researchers have presented their arguments against WCF in general prior to Truscott (1996) paper including Sommers (1982), Semke (1984) and Zamel (1985). However, if we are to take the number of research studies and quantify them into 'for' WCF as compared to those 'against' it, the vast majority of research studies are "for" WCF (Ferris, 2012). Nonetheless, the issue is hardly resolved academically by the number of studies a particular side may have accumulated. The controversy of this issue is far deeper and it is probably one of the most controversial topic in TESOL and SLA (K. Hyland & Hyland, 2006). From the researchers' point of view, L2 writing teachers follow a disadvantaged old tradition in providing feedback to the L2 learners whereas L2 teachers argue that WCF research findings are too generalised that fail to address certain parameters of different contexts (Ostovar-Namaghi & Shakiba, 2015). There are many factors, which contributed to this controversy which all boils down, somehow predictably, to that one argument: 'for' WCF as opposed to a counterargument refuting it and presenting evidence 'against' WCF (Guénette, 2007; Van Beuningen, 2010). Those arguments, for and against, continue to surface and appear in scholarly articles in academic journals up to this day and as soon as a research study presents its evidence, for or against WCF, another research shortly follows refuting the argument and rejecting that evidence by presenting a counter argument. The major reasons behind this complicated research dilemma and controversy can be attributed to certain rationales. In relation to the WCF issue, there is no one size fits all solution or universal pedagogical approach (Ferris, 2011; F. Hyland, 2010). Additionally, there are so many research parameters and variables that have to be considered before the hypothesis is globally considered in the field of ELT/ESL/EFL/TESOL (K. Hyland & Hyland, 2006). For instance, the arguments put forth by researchers advocating WCF lies in the fact that they believe it does lead to SLA, improved L2 writing proficiency, elimination of error fossilisation, noticing correct L2 grammatical structures and more confidence leading the L2 learners to improve their overall L2 level.

On the other hand, those opposed to WCF stress that those research studies claiming evidences “for” WCF lack the inclusion of control groups, evidence supporting long term efficacy of WCF, small sample sizes, lack of multi-contextual global evidence and contradictory claims by different “for” WCF research studies (Storch, 2010; Truscott, 1996). More importantly, whenever an argument is made that is “for” or “against” WCF, the counter argument is incapable of comprehensively refuting the initial argument since both arguments may have valid and solid evidences for their assumptions. For instance, in one of his published research studies, Truscott (2001) presents one of the reasons why WCF is ineffective and harmful to students by stating: “For students, the sea of red ink on their assignments is likely to prove quite discouraging, and even the most highly-motivated students cannot be expected to adequately deal with every error in their work” (p.1). The latter can be seen refuted by Ferris (2011) where she criticises the intentional avoidance of WCF by L2 teachers by stating: “Worse, L2 writers themselves, painfully aware of their own linguistic deficits and the need for teacher intervention, were disappointed with instructional policies such as, “I will not correct your journal entries, your freewrites, or your early essay drafts. You should be focusing on expressing your ideas and building fluency and not worrying about grammar until ‘later’” (p. IX).

For some academics standing close to the side-lines of these two opposing arguments, it is easy to adopt one of them believing the argument of either one of the two is stronger than the other. However, standing further away from both of these two opposing arguments on a neutrality line, an academic will clearly accept both of these two opposing arguments since they both have their valid evidences for the research context they were tested for. Thus, it is evident that an argument “for” or “against” WCF cannot possibly be conclusively or comprehensively be adopted against the opposing one. The dilemma becomes even more complex once we discover that few of the research studies which Truscott (1996) has cited in support of his argument against WCF (Kepner, 1991; Sheppard, 1992) have actually been cited by Ferris (2004) as providing evidence in support of WCF (Pawlak, 2013). Perhaps this dilemma will continue for many years to come and within the realms of research studies, a deeper insight into different ESL/EFL contexts and listening to voices from within (i.e.

the teachers and learners) is a must in order to have a holistic view of what actually constitutes a good WCF practice and what is not.

2.11 WCF Studies in the Saudi Context

Even though a multitude of research studies on WCF have been conducted worldwide in the past three decades in ESL/EFL contexts, this area of research is still fairly unexplored in the Saudi context. Nevertheless, few studies have attempted to tackle one or more issues related to WCF one way or another. Table (1) summarises a history line of seven research studies that have been either published in academic journals or submitted as a master dissertation or a doctoral thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a master or a doctorate degree. These seven studies are available on the Google scholar and the Saudi Digital Library web sites.

Notwithstanding, these studies have not yet been able to explore the WCF issue extensively and this is apparent in the lack of in depth variables exploration or certain discrepancies which collectively has created a gap in the research of WCF in the Saudi context. The first study by Grami (2010), focussed merely on exploring peer feedback. Data collection was gathered by obtaining the opinions in six interviews only where the entire study lasted for three months only. Some researchers may argue that the number of participants may not be a fair representative for a country such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where the research duration may not have sufficed in terms of exploring several universities' teachers and students in such a short time. The second study by Mustafa (2012), has focussed on WCF by following a qualitative approach employing informal conversational and semi-structured individual interviews with five ESL Saudi students. The study, though valuable and important, was limited by the small number of participants and lacked participation of the teachers themselves. The third study by was a master dissertation involving 480 students and 50 teachers at several high schools in a small city north of Saudi Arabia. Even though the study focussed on addressing important issues relating to WCF, it was only restricted to male high school students and teachers which reflects on a very narrow academic section of the EFL context in Saudi Arabia where the majority of EFL teaching occurs at tertiary level education. It also involved Saudi EFL teachers at high schools in

one small city in Saudi Arabia and did not involve expatriate EFL teachers at tertiary level institutions at various cities of the Kingdom. The fourth study by (Alnasser, 2013) was a doctoral thesis employing a mixed methods design and involving 41 EFL Saudi students at university. The study, though it managed to present new ideas and certain perspectives from the learners' point of view, it did not include the teachers' own perception of WCF as compared to the students' ones. Additionally, the study was limited by the rather small number of students from only one university in Saudi Arabia. The fifth and sixth studies are basically a different version of one another. The fifth study by Alshahrani (2013) was a master dissertation conducted utilising mixed methods design with 45 students and three teachers from one university in Saudi Arabia. The sixth study by Alshahrani and Storch (2014) was a summarised version of the fifth study by Alshahrani (2013) which was published as a journal article. The study is by far the most encompassing study on WCF thus far in the Saudi context. However, the number of both students and teachers' participants (all males) was comparatively, very small. This is in addition to the fact that the study was conducted at only one university in Saudi Arabia and the period for the data collection was only six weeks. No interviews were conducted with any student and no questionnaires were given to the teachers to complete prior to the semi structured interviews. Both, the questionnaire and the interviews' questions were somehow small (6 questions in the questionnaire and 8 interview questions). The seventh study by Alnasser and Alyousef (2015) is basically a summarised version of the doctoral study by Alnasser (2013) where it was published as a journal article.

A more encompassing and comprehensive study is needed where both the learners and the teachers' views (both male and female students and teachers) are taken into consideration using various instruments (e.g. questionnaires and interviews). The sample participants selected should be reflective of the total population of students as well as teachers in the Saudi context and above all, it should include EFL teachers from different backgrounds and nationalities from various universities in Saudi Arabia. A timeline of previous studies of WCF in the Saudi Context is given below in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Summary table of WCF studies in the Saudi context.

No	Article title	Author	DATE	Research Design	Findings
1	The Effects of Integrating Peer Feedback into University-Level ESL Writing Curriculum: A Comparative Study in a Saudi Context	Grami Mohammad Ali Grami	2010	The study first investigated students' initial perceptions of peer feedback and compared them to their perceptions after the experiment using questionnaires and individual semi-structured interviews.	peer feedback helped students gain new skills and improved existing ones
2	Feedback on the Feedback: Sociocultural Interpretation of Saudi ESL Learners' Opinions about Writing Feedback	Rami F. Mustafa	2011	Qualitative study on Saudi students' opinions about the feedback they receive, and about their perceptions on what constitutes helpful feedback. ESL Context. 5 participants (3 male and 2 female students).	Saudi students do not think highly of the feedback, and that the feedback they desire is markedly different from what they receive

3	The Attitude of Male and Female Teachers and Students towards Teachers' Feedback on the Writings of Secondary School Students in Rafha City, Saudi Arabia	Sahal R. Al-Shammari	2011	The population of the study is 480 students (240 males and 240 females) and 50 teachers (25 males and 25 females). In this study, five instruments are used to accomplish the objectives of the study:1) Students' questionnaire; 2) Teachers' questionnaire; 3)Students' interviews; 4)Teachers' interviews; and 5)Class observations.	Students and teachers have positive attitudes towards teachers' feedback on students' writings and that teacher's feedback is a very important technique to improve students' writing
4	A New Form of Peer Feedback Technique: An Investigation into the Impact of Focusing Saudi ESL Learners on Macro Level Writing Features.	Suliman M. Alnasser	September 2013	A mixed method approach was employed using pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires, mid- and post-interviews, and also recording verbal protocol sessions while the participants provided peer feedback to one another. The participants were 41 male EFL learners at a university in Saudi Arabia. The study adopted a one-group design for the data collection.	Learners showed a strong preference for conventional PF, suggesting they have difficulty in accepting the prohibition from providing PF on micro features of writing.

5	Investigation of written corrective feedback in an EFL context: beliefs of teachers, their real practices and students' preferences	Abdul Aziz Al Shahrani	2013	Mixed methods design. 45 students answered a questionnaire and three teachers were interviewed. All the participants were selected from one university.	Teachers used the comprehensive WCF. This practice matched the students' preferences and the teachers' beliefs. The teachers also focused their WCF on mechanics. However, this practice neither aligned to the teachers' beliefs of focusing WCF on vocabulary and grammar, nor did it match the students' preferences of focusing WCF on grammar.
6	INVESTIGATING TEACHERS' WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK PRACTICES IN A SAUDI EFL CONTEXT: HOW DO THEY ALIGN WITH THEIR BELIEFS, INSTITUTIONAL GUIDELINES, AND STUDENTS' PREFERENCES?	Abdulaziz Alshahrani & Neomy Storch	2014	Journal article. A summarized version of the master dissertation in No. 5.	Same as 5.

7	Investigating Saudi Learners' Preferences for Giving and Receiving Macro and/or Micro Level Peer Feedback on Their Writing	Suliman Mohammed Alnasser & Hesham Suleiman Alyousef	2015	A journal article which is the summarized version of the doctoral thesis in no. 4.	Same as 4.
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The next chapter, a methodology will be proposed for describing the mixed methods research design that will be utilised to examine the perceptions and beliefs among male and female students and teachers on WCF.

Chapter Three

Methodology

In chapter 1, an outline of the research study was presented and the central research question as well as the four secondary research questions were introduced. Chapter 2 surveyed and analysed the literature to identify and understand the current status of issues relating to WCF in the Saudi context. Additionally, gaps in the literature specific to the Saudi context were also identified and thus, a solid foundation for the argument for this study was established. In this chapter, Chapter 3, the research methodology as it relates to the main research question of this study: What are the perceptions of EFL teachers and learners in the Saudi context towards WCF? - will be explained and discussed. Furthermore, the four secondary questions: What is the preferred method of WCF among EFL teachers working in the Saudi context and why? What is the preferred method of WCF among Saudi EFL learners and why? Do EFL teachers use a certain type of WCF based on their own preference or departmental recommendations? What is the shared perceptions between the EFL teachers and learners when it comes to WCF? - will also be discussed in terms of what methods and tools are best suited to gather the data that best reflects and touches upon the perceptions of EFL teachers and students with regards to WCF. The chapter begins with a discussion of the main elements of research designs in general and educational research in particular as it relates to contemporary issues in learning and EFL context since this research, WCF in the Saudi context, is firmly embedded in both of these entities. This is then followed by a discussion of paradigms and the ontological and epistemological positions that influenced the theoretical underpinnings of this research. Next, the chapter discusses the main methodological approach, the mixed methods approach, as well as the rationale leading to its selection and suitability for this particular research. After that, a discussion of the participants and their selection, instrumentation and tools used in collecting and analysing the data procedures, will be detailed. The chapter concludes with a

description of the steps taken to ensure that this research study is conducted in an ethical manner.

3.1. Educational Research

In the past two decades, a new line of research oriented practice has gained tremendous weight and momentum and that is *evidence-based practice (EBP)* where various professions such as medicine, education and business have endorsed it as a service delivery norm (Kumar, 2014). In the field of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL), the word research has also taken various (though closely related) interpretations. Among those experts in the TESOL field who have given their interpretations of the definition of the term *research* in TESOL is Brown (2014, p. 3) who states that:

The word research has many definitions in TESOL (see, for instance, Brown, 1992a). After much thought (Brown, 1988a, 1992a, 2001a, 2004, 2011a), I have finally settled on a single definition for research that includes all the myriad strategies and types of research that are used in TESOL studies: any systematic and principled inquiry. Research is systematic in the sense that it is not random, and principled in the sense that it “has a clear structure and definite procedural rules that must be followed” (Brown, 1998a, p.4). Research is inquiry in that it involves the investigation or examination of certain issues, questions, hypotheses, or propositions.

As such, this research is an attempt to answer the research questions set forth in such a manner as to gather evidence and reflect back on the practice of EFL teachers as well as the beliefs of EFL students with regard to WCF. Thus, by attempting to answer the research questions in this study, I am implying that my research has three distinct characteristics where: it is undertaken within a framework belonging to a set of philosophies, utilizes procedures, methods and techniques that will be tested and verified by validity and reliability and finally, bias-free as well as objective. However, due to the controversies surrounding such a heavily debatable topic (WCF) of whether to correct or not to correct (Guénette & Lyster, 2013). The first characteristic which is related to the philosophical foundation of this research is going to be discussed next, while issues relating to validity and reliability as well as bias will be discussed later in the chapter.

3.2 Paradigm

The perception and our way in which we see and view the world around us and as researchers, guides us in our investigations, is called a paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The term paradigm comes from the Greek *paradeigma*, meaning both model [pattern] and example (Piscopo, 2015, p. 3). In one of the simplest definitions of paradigms, (Rocco, Bliss, Gallagher, & Pérez-Prado, 2003) state that a paradigm is a “world view” (p.19). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) define a paradigm as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (p. 91). M. Crotty (2003) on the other hand, adds to the latter definition: “...an overarching conceptual construct, a particular way in which scientists make sense of the world” (p.35). Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison (2007) see a paradigm as: “A basis for comprehension, for interpreting social reality” (p.9). Creswell (2002) points out that the most quoted definition of research paradigm is that of Kuhn (1970) where the latter identifies a paradigm as “the underlying assumptions and intellectual structure upon which research and development in a field of inquiry is based” (p.7). Willis and Jost (2007) states that: “A paradigm is thus a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field” (p.8). In one of the recent definition of the term, Punch and Oancea (2014) perceive a paradigm from a much wider angle rather than that of the narrow lens which views it as merely an exemplar of research practice. They see it as: “a set of assumptions about the world, and about what constitute proper techniques and topics for inquiring into the world” (Punch & Oancea, 2014, pp. 16-17). Educational researchers carry out research based on their paradigmatic beliefs to their particular expertise subject which is shaped by their ontological and epistemological position. Those positions are usually, but not always, implicit rather than explicit where they are not necessarily stated in the research but are manifested in the methodology and approach (Aubrey, David, Godfrey, & Thompson, 2005; Brown, 2014). Additionally, those positions have a strong impact on the approach to theory and the methods which the researcher utilises. Some experts view a paradigm as consisting of four main components: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and, methods which are interrelated in the world of research. See figure 1 below:

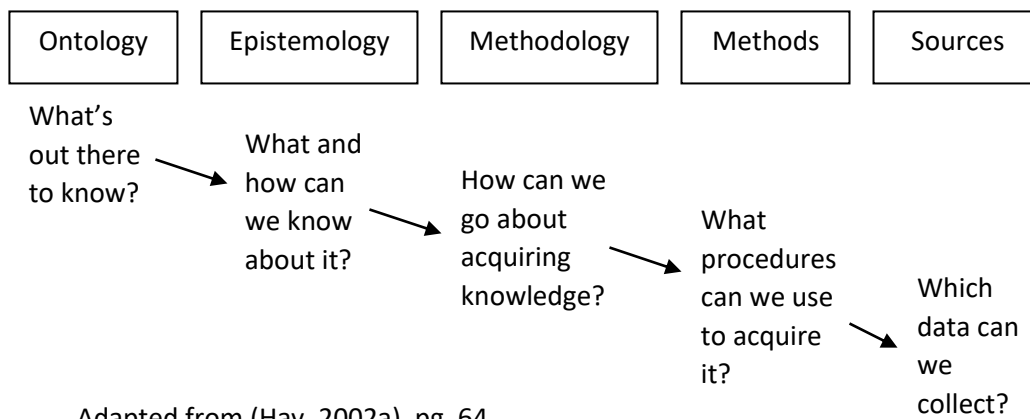


Figure 3.1. The interrelationship between the building blocks of research

The structure of diagram 1 has some variances with different theorists and researchers. For instance, Michael Crotty (2003) believes that when considering human knowledge and what values are attributed to it, any research project should have four basic elements to be taken into account in that research: “methods, methodology, theoretical perspective and epistemology” (p.3). He does not include ontology as an element of the research design since he believes that research does not aim or seek to define ultimate truths (ontology) which is the subject of a much wider philosophical debate, and that ontological issues can be dealt with adequately without pushing ontology into his four elements division of research. Furthermore, he claims that the terminology that exists in the literature is confusing to some extent with regards to epistemologies, theoretical perspectives, methodologies and methods “thrown together in grab-bag style as if they were all comparable terms” (Michael Crotty, 2003, p. 3). His depiction of these four elements is illustrated the following flow chart (Figure 2):

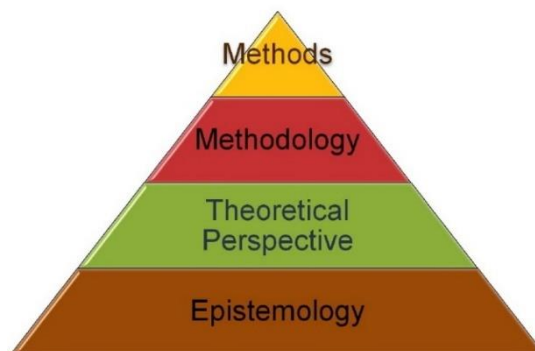


Figure 3.2. Crotty’s 1998 depiction of the four elements of research.

Furthermore, in recent years, Guba and Lincoln (2005) have added a fifth element (or sixth if we consider the element of ontology) to the aforementioned four-tier schema of research proposed by Crotty (1998) and that is axiology or the principles underpinning ethics, aesthetics and religion. Killam and Carter (2013) emphasises that the former statement is true for philosophy, however, in research "axiology refers to what the researcher believes is valuable and ethical" (p.6). It is worth mentioning here that, contrary to what may seem an idealistic approach to "go with the flow" and "trust me on my unannounced assumptions" research, it is far better for researchers to recognize, acknowledge and state their own ontological and epistemological stances and be able to answer and defend these stances against critiques once they have embarked on a research journey.

3.2.1 Ontology

The term "ontology" is originally Latin *ontologia* and onto- from ancient Greek meaning "being, that which is". Michael Crotty (2003) considers ontology to be the study of being. Delanty and Strydom (2003) consider ontology to be "a theory of the nature of reality" (p.6). Ontology is considered a major concept in philosophy that concerns the question of: how the world is built and if there is a 'real' world out there that is independent of our knowledge of it? (Marsh & Furlong, 2002). In other words, ontology is simply all that is about what exists, what it looks like, what components make it up and how the components interact with each other. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) assumptions of ontology relating to the social reality, focus on issues around being human within the world and whether a person sees this social reality, or aspects of the social world, as being "external, independent, given or objectively real or instead as, socially constructed subjectively and the result of human thought as expressed through language" (Wellington, 2005, p. 100). Additionally, it is considered as the "starting point of all research" (Grix, 2002, p. 177). Educational researchers work under a wide spectrum of theoretical perspectives that they believe in, and thus, ontology can to a large extent, be the widest of these perspectives since it includes a variety of perceptions about the nature of reality. When considering ontological assumptions in research, we indicate what constitutes reality, or "what is". Researchers needs to make their ontological positions clear regarding their perceptions of how they perceive reality (issues relating to their research)

and how things really work. This will facilitate the illustration of the research methodology and aid researchers to have a sound and coherent argument in support of their research studies. In considering all aspects of ontology, in essence, it is difficult to critique a researchers' ontology – since it reflects a personal philosophical assumption which is impossible to refute empirically – there are no wrong or right ontologies. Furthermore, many researchers (especially research students) confuse the two terms ontology and epistemology due to their close lexical similarity and furthermore, due to the objectivity of the researcher that plays a role in both, ontology and epistemology (Porpora, 2015). Perhaps this is why Crotty (1998) left ontology out of his framework (as mentioned earlier in paradigm) where one would expect it to be listed next to epistemology.

3.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology in its plain form is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with the nature of knowledge and truth (Perry, 2016). It originates from the Greek words *episteme* or knowledge and *logos* or theory. There are certain distinctive questions that epistemologists ask such as: What is knowledge and what does it indicate in research to know something? Is there a limit to our knowledge? (Olivier, 2009). How do we know what we know? How do we know that $1 + 1 = 2$? Is what we know was acquired through knowledge or reason or direct observation? Also, in a research setting: What is the relationship between the observer and the observed? The knower and the known? In a more related definition of the term to the field of education, Reagan (2004) considers our way of teaching and pedagogical practices an epistemological issue since: “the way in which we think about knowledge and what it means to know” (p.51). Gardner (2013) defines epistemology as “a theory of knowledge that asks questions, for example, about who can know and what can they know” (p.193). Crotty (1998) considers it as: “a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” (p.3). The epistemological position held by a researcher reflects the “view of what we can know about the world and how we can know it.” (Marsh & Stoker, 2010, pp. 18 - 19). For Willis and Jost (2007), epistemology is viewed as “what we can know about reality and how we can know it” (p. 10). Blaikie (2000) perceives epistemology as “the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality, whatever it is understood to be. In short, claims about how and what is

assumed to exist can be known” (p.8). Researchers – especially research students – need to separate the two terms “ontology” and “epistemology” because, although slightly related, they are different and should not be collapsed together as some may think that “ontology” is part of “epistemology”. From my personal experiences and knowledge gained in reading research studies in the Saudi context, I realised that the issue of WCF in the Saudi context needs to be addressed and discussed so that a sound pedagogical approach is applied to this issue and the best way to resolve it is to consider it from both the EFL teachers and EFL students’ points of views.

3.2.3 Methodology and Methods

The term methodology can be viewed as a collection of general principles which underline the way we aim to investigate the social world and how we validate the knowledge generated from a particular research (Bryman, 2016). It has a philosophical meaning and usually refers to the approach or paradigm that underpins the research. e.g. positivism, post-positivism, critical, postmodern and so forth (P. Johnson & Duberley, 2015). On the other hand, methods can be thought of as the practical elements of choosing an appropriate research design– perhaps an interview, an experiment or a survey– to answer a research question, and following that, designing the appropriate instruments or tools to generate data (Kumar, 2014; Podesva & Sharma, 2014). It can clearly be seen that methods are really part of methodology and in any research, researchers adopt a particular stance towards the nature of knowledge which will govern a particular theoretical perspective which will dictate the researcher’s choice of methodology and will eventually inform the choice of research methods employed .

3.3 Research Paradigms

In this section, research paradigms are explained. As mentioned earlier, a paradigm has four main elements: Ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. Research, however, can be divided into paradigms. Gephart (1999) classified research paradigms into three philosophically distinct categories as positivism, interpretivism and critical postmodernism. Others, such as Guba and Lincoln (1994) categorize research into four paradigms: positivism, critical

theory, constructivism and realism. However, as the social sciences research in the past century witnessed a big leap, different paradigms came to the fore. Dash (2005) and A. Hatch (2006) believe that the four main research paradigms are: positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism (also referred to as constructivism since it emphasizes the ability of the individual to construct meaning) and critical theory. Some researchers (Denzin, 1989; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) may add feminism and postmodernism as other research paradigms. In this chapter, interpretivism and critical research paradigms are discussed.

3.3.1 Interpretism

This paradigm is sometimes referred to and described as “relativism”, “anti-positivism” or the obvious “other” of positivism. It is also referred to in many research text books as “constructivism” since there is an emphasis on the individual’s ability to construct meaning which is the essence of this paradigm. It is however, much bigger than the positivism paradigm. Interpretivists do not accept the fact that it is possible to make objective statement about the real world, as positivists claim, since “real world does not exist independently but rather ‘reality’ is socially and discursively ‘constructed’ by human actors” (Grix, 2010, p. 64). In the past and in positivism’s early emergence, reliance was placed on hermeneutics, which means text interpretation, and phenomenology which indicated a shift from a primarily positivistic epistemological or methodological focus to current ontological trends (Richardson, Fowers, & Guignon, 1999). Richardson et al. (1999) state: “The result was a shift from seeing hermeneutics as primarily epistemological or methodological, where the aim is to develop an art or technique of interpretation, to today’s ontological hermeneutics, which aims to clarify the being of the entities that interpret and understand, namely, ourselves” (p. 200). Phenomology is concerned with the exploration and interpretation of historical texts. Ernest (1994) believes that the interpretive paradigm was founded on the base of meaning-making cyclical process. Interpretivists also believe that the people and their institutions are fundamentally different from the natural science and in addition, contrary to the positivism paradigm, there is a big emphasis on understanding the human behaviour as well as human action and focus on its meaning rather than explain it (as in positivism). From an ontological angle, the assumptions of interpretivism are subjective which indicates that social reality is seen by many

different people and those people do not interpret events in the same manner and thus leaving multiple perspectives of a particular incident. In other words, realities as we see and feel them are mediated by our senses and with the absence of consciousness, the world is meaningless. The latter statement leads to the notion that there are as many realities as there are people with their own individual perceptions of the world. From an epistemological point of view, interpretivism is a paradigm that is characterised by subjectivism which is based on the phenomena of the real world. The world does not exist independently of our knowledge of it (Grix, 2002, 2010). Researchers adopting the interpretive paradigm and based on 'the socially constructed reality' will predominantly use qualitative methods. Interpretive researchers employ qualitative research methodologies (e.g. case studies, ethnographic interviews and focus groups) to investigate, interpret and describe social realities (Bassey, 1999; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013). Unlike the positivist researcher who will employ deductive reasoning, the main approach adopted by the interpretivist researcher is the inductive reasoning which means that developing a theory will stem from the evidence base and the resultant conclusion is reached by observing examples and generalizing from the examples to the whole.

3.3.2 Critical Paradigm

This is sometimes referred to as the critical theory. However, the latter is better thought of as the umbrella that the critical paradigm falls under and the base of this theory is the belief that education researchers need to conduct their research with the goal of: "the emancipation of individuals and groups in an egalitarian society" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). It has its roots in Marxism (Zanetti, 1997) and it is a paradigm that is mainly concerned with the oppression that harms the oppressed and designates its research to empower oppressed groups (e.g. feminist). Thus, it can be seen that this paradigm is deliberately political. It does not merely seek to empower the disempowered, expose inequality or promote freedoms within a democratic society, but rather bring positive change to the society. A very interesting concept which critical theory advocates believe in is that "researchers can no longer claim neutrality and ideological or political innocence" (Cohen et al., 2013, p. 32). To present their case against other paradigms, critical theorists would make the argument that: "the positivist and interpretive paradigms are essentially technicist, seeking

to understand and render more efficient an existing situation, rather than to question or transform it" (Cohen et al., 2013, p. 32). From an ontological point of view, the paradigm is rooted in historical realism. The latter is basically a stance depicting reality to be affected by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values. A reality that was once, in the past ductile (plastic), however, over time, it was shaped by a group of people of power in social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender domains, and then crystallized (reified) into a series of structures that are now (inappropriately) taken as the status quo of what is perceived by the public as "real" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Epistemologically, however, the critical paradigm is anti-positivist/anti-scientism and it is one of subjectivism. Habermas (1978) in his arguments against scientism states that: "science's belief in itself: that is, the conviction that we can no longer understand science as one form of possible knowledge, but rather must identify knowledge with science" (p.4). Grix (2010) – in agreement with Habermas's stance – sees that critical research as being a collective combination of the scientific and interpretive paradigms. A researcher who distances himself/herself from the positivist paradigm often perceives that choosing the qualitative methods will protect them from the oppressive stigma that is sometimes associated with the positivist paradigm. From a methodological point of view, within the critical paradigm, there is a strong principle of belief in centrality of participant interaction as well as the need for the researcher to be immersed over a long period of time in the participants' world and adopt the interpretive (qualitative) design. From the latter, it is assumed that the design will lead to qualitative research methods such as in-depth, face-to-face interviewing and participant observation. In this research (WCF), which is – as has been discussed earlier – a heavily debated area of research in EFL/TESOL, the views of many experts in the field take a very critical view of the issue of WCF as has been expressed by many researchers (e.g. (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Bruton, 2009, 2010; Ferris, 1999, 2004, 2010b; Truscott, 1996, 1999). Thus, it is inevitable that, when the views of teachers (including that of the researcher himself) are taken on board with regards to this issue (WCF), we will have views that are deeply embedded in the critical paradigm.

3.3 Qualitative vs. Quantitative Methods

Both of these two dichotomous pillars of research methods form the foundation upon which all research tools and methods are based on. They reflect upon the divergent ontological and epistemological paradigms and research agenda of researchers and hence, the research methodology they adopt. Positivists use mainly (but not always) quantitative methods (Ary & Jacobs; Puzzolo, Stanistreet, Pope, Bruce, & Rehfuss, 2013) and these methods always yield numbers and figures which are later analysed (Eichelberger, 1989). The aim of the quantitative methods is for the researcher to distance himself/herself from participants and stay detached from any subjectivity so as to provide objective and direct exact causations which are accurate and irrefutable. The main advantages of the quantitative methods are that results are replicable, and researchers deal with hard facts. Tools used in quantitative methods are mainly questionnaires, inventories, scales and so on. The data analysis of the quantitative methods is deductive, statistical and occurs at the end of the data collection (Creswell, 2015; Hartas, 2015). However, critiques of the quantitative method say that the results are merely a numerical reflection of data and it is rarely clear as to what they actually mean; much in a manner similar to that in commercial or political polls for example. Therefore, on the other end of the spectrum, there are the qualitative methods which are usually employed by proponents and advocates of the interpretivist paradigm since their ontological and epistemological beliefs of the world are that it is socially constructed. Qualitative researchers do believe in a world that exists but the core concept of this belief is that when considering idealism, different people construe it (i.e. the world) in very different ways and organizations are invented social reality (Cohen et al., 2011). Due to the fact that qualitative methods are highly subjective in nature and aim to find out the true essence of social behaviour, tools used include interviews, focus groups, ethnographies, observations, case studies and so on. The advocates of qualitative research designs feel strongly with regards to people's experiences, perceptions and social interactions which are all too complex to give them a mere representation in numbers and categories. Therefore, the qualitative researcher believes that he/she must explore people's lives (the world) and give them voice so as to let their words and accounts lead the researcher to understandings that would otherwise

remain hidden without deep and open-minded exploration (Munhall, 2007). Critiques of the qualitative methods say that since the researcher (or inquirer) is the actual data collecting instrument (Guba, 1981), from an epistemological point of view, therefore, access to the truth is not possible to occur externally to a researcher's mind (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Critiques of both paradigms say that there are certain issues with each method and having a "hardliner" stance such as that of Marsh and Stoker (2010) who claim that the ontological and epistemological positions are a skin rather than a sweater, in favour of one method and not the other, will only compound the problems. But even then, Read and Marsh (2002) themselves acknowledge that although the differences between qualitative and quantitative methods do exist, they "can easily be overstated" (p.232). Thus, the need to find a method that will correct and compensate for any shortcomings in either the quantitative or qualitative individual designs, lies in the 'mixed-method' research.

3.4 The Mixed Methods Methodology

Although Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) see mixed methods methodology as an area that researchers now consider as an alternative option in conducting research, the idea was suggested over five decades ago. (L. Cohen, L. Manion, & K. Morrison, 2007) quoting Merton and Kendall (1946): "Social scientists have come to abandon the spurious choice between qualitative and quantitative data: they are concerned rather with that combination of both which makes use of the most valuable features of each. The problem becomes one of determining at which points they should adopt the one, and at which the other approach" (pp.47-48). "The 'mixed/multiple methods approach' to social research has been incorporated as a philosophyrather than an approach" (Kumar, 2014, p. 19). The mixed method approach is explained by Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, and Hanson (2003) as being a method that involves: "gathering both numeric information (e.g., on instruments) as well as text information (e.g., on interviews) so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information" (p.20). From a wide generalised, straightforward academic lens, we can perceive mixed methods as an approach in social science research that encourages the integration of two major methodological approaches: 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' (Symonds & Gorard). B. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) define it as "the class of research where the

researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (p.17).

However, it must be stated here that researchers have yet to agree on a universal definition of mixed methods methodology. The latter is confirmed by Creswell et al. (2003) who state: “although consensus has been slow to develop for a single definition recognized by all inquirers” (p.163). We can however, see some researchers reaching for that extended definition which attempts to appeal to the wider academic audience. This is evident in the words of Gibson who states:

“Traditionally, Mixed Methods (MM) Research design, also called Compatibility Thesis and Multimethodology, is defined as a procedure for collecting, analysing, and blending both quantitative and qualitative research methods into a single study in order to understand a research problem. The term Mixed Methods, however, is a relatively recent naming convention that is primarily associated with research in the social sciences. It has gained particular prominence since the 1980s. Mixed-Method Research is increasingly becoming more clearly defined, associated with empirical research practice, and often recognized as the third major research paradigm which provides better triangulation of data results because both qualitative and quantitative research methods are engaged” (Hai-Jew, 2015, p.xxvi).

Gorard and Taylor (2004) in their strong support of the mixed method research state that this approach is: "key element in the improvement of social science, including education research....requires a greater level of skill.....can lead to less waste of potentially useful information...creates researchers with an increased ability to make appropriate criticisms of all types of research" (p. 7). Thus, with all elements and parameters to be considered for this research on WCF and with the tools to be employed for data collection and data analysis, it is inevitable that mixed methods design is the most suitable design to be adopted in this study. I strongly believe that if we consider any method individually, it will ultimately turn out to be flawed. However, if we try to combine potential methods, “these limitations can be mitigated through mixed methods research, which combines methodologies to provide better answers to our research questions” Turner, Cardinal, and Burton (2017). On a broader sense of looking at this research methodology, the decision to employ a mixed methods

design was taken in part so as to increase the trustworthiness and confidence in the conclusions to be drawn from the gathered data (B. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Additionally, due to the fact that mixed methods design generates a more comprehensive and therefore stronger set of insights into the phenomenon under study that single-design (mono method) study could otherwise achieve, and thus, providing a richer and more meaningful answers to the central issue the thesis is interested to address. It is my belief that if I utilise a survey on its own, my research will be redundant and that element of reality being multiple through the eyes of the EFL teachers, will be missing and thus, my conclusions will not yield that truth about the issue at hand (WCF) and how to explore it holistically from a research point of view.

3.4.1 A Typology for Classifying Mixed Methods Research Designs

Deciding on the type of the research design in general and the specificity of a mixed design approach is paramount since it provides a structured plan and a “road map for to rigorously conduct studies to best meet certain objectives” (Clark & Creswell, 2008, p. 159). Amongst the common strategies of classifying mixed methods designs is the designation of four main criteria where further six core designs emerge from (Creswell et al., 2003). Due to the limitations in this thesis, the adopted design will only be discussed. Thinking about how to conduct my research constructively and in a rigorous manner, I strongly believe in taking in consideration this area of research (WCF) in the Saudi context as well as other important factors such as the number of teachers to be surveyed and interviewed and the strict gender segregation in Saudi Arabia (especially in the education system), which obviously will be a barrier in having female colleagues voice their own concerns on this issue. Thus, I have opted to undertake a specific type of mixed methods design which is the sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Kletzien, 2011). This design which many researchers consider the most straightforward design is characterised by initially collecting and analysing quantitative data and then, in the following stage, by collecting and analysing qualitative data (Baran & Jones, 2016; Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Clark, 2007; Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark, & Smith, 2011; Domínguez & Hollstein, 2014; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). This design, the sequential explanatory design, utilises qualitative data in the subsequent stage of the research so as to provide an insight into the causes of

the relationships identified in the quantitative study (Clark & Ivankova, 2015; Creswell, 2014; Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996). Surveys might be constructed by interviewing small (or large) numbers of people first and then testing the question(s) wording or sequence. Kletzien (2011) elaborates on this design by stating: “Explanatory designs consist of an initial QN phase, after which the data is analysed and used to inform a decision on how to proceed. In the second phase, QL methods are used, usually to obtain a more nuanced understanding of the problem examined in the first phase. While the focus of the second phase was slightly different from that of the first, the key aspects of an explanatory design (QN methods first, then analysis and use of data, followed by a subsequent QL phase) were in place in this evaluation” (p. 11). Additionally, it is useful to cross-check interviews via content analysis on possible incoherence in the findings. Also, it seems imaginable that an interpretivist researcher has a problem to which the answer can best be found employing quantitative methods and vice versa. However, while Marsh and Furlong (2002) see a clear dependence between epistemology and methodology and Hay (2002b) perceive it as a “directional dependence”, Read and Marsh (2002) stress that “the link between epistemology and methodology is important, but far from determinant” (p.235). To pick up Marsh and Furlong (2002) metaphor mentioned earlier, it might be more appropriate to see it not as a (woollen) sweater or a (human) skin, but rather a snakeskin. With the sequential explanatory mixed methods design adopted, this research study will be using a concurrent-triangulation strategy with more-or-less equal weight given to both in order to: “to cross-validate or corroborate findings from one strand (quantitative or qualitative) of the research with findings from another strand (quantitative or qualitative)” (Riazi, 2016, p. 47). As Creswell (2003) highlights, a concurrent triangulation strategy design is “selected as the model when a researcher uses two different methods in an attempt to confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within a single study” (p. 217). The “flatter” quantitative data is strengthened and enhanced by the multidimensional qualitative data. The more subjective qualitative data is strengthened by the relative objectivity of the quantitative data (Lea, Hayes, Armitage, Lomas, & Markless, 2003). At the same time, the study has characteristics of a concurrent-nested strategy, in which one method is predominant, and the other method is “nested” in it (Clark & Creswell, 2007).

3.5 Sampling

Due to the fact that it is virtually impossible to survey the entire population of EFL teachers and EFL learners in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (known as *census*), I used a representative *sample (n)* (from the entire population) for my study for both the surveys and interviews that is proportional to the entire population (N). The surveys conducted with the EFL teachers and students followed a cross-sectional design since they were conducted at a specific period of time (Jex & Britt, 2014; Mathers, Fox, & Hunn, 1998). The samples chosen for the surveys were random samples selected without any means of personal bias for this selection or preferences by the researcher. Conrad and Serlin (2005) state that “primary goal of sampling methods in quantitative research is the specification of a representative sample” (p.396). Thus, the samples (teachers and students) were selected using *simple random sampling criteria* which is defined as: “the process of selecting sample observations from a population so that each observation has an equal and independent probability of being selected” (Hahs-Vaughn & Lomax, 2013, p. 110). The idea of having a random sample stems from the fact that: “The random part of simple random sampling is essential to ensure that the sample drawn is not systematically biased in favour of or against particular characteristics of specific sample members” (Conrad & Serlin, 2005, p. 396). Ornstein (2013) stresses: “The fundamental idea of applied survey sampling, which is that a properly selected random sample can accurately represent any population” (p.1). On the other hand, the samples of the EFL teachers and students for the semi-structured interviews were purposefully chosen since I needed to have a diverse demographic background and an equal ratio of male to female teachers’ and students’ participants. Similarly, I invited EFL government, post-secondary, tertiary level learners aged 18-20 years old having various English proficiency levels and are registered in the Preparatory Year Program (PYP) at six different national universities in Saudi Arabia out of twenty five in total (Ministry of Education, 2018c) to participate so as to have a reliable students’ sample. I conducted interviews with 10 EFL teachers for 45 - 60 minutes each. The EFL teachers (in both, the survey and those volunteering to take part in the interviews) were from different backgrounds (nationalities) with a minimum of a Bachelor in English Literature (BA) and a Certificate in English Language

Teaching to Adults (CELTA) teaching EFL to PYP students at six different universities in Saudi Arabia while being equally selected with regards to the gender. In the teachers' survey, the number of EFL teachers that took part were 320. For the students, I interviewed 10 learners for 45 - 60 minutes each. The number of the learners who participated in the survey were 840. It is worth mentioning here that the EFL learners, unlike the EFL teachers who are mainly expats and the majority are non-Saudi, are mainly Saudi (male and female) nationals between 18-20 years old registered on different EFL courses of the preparatory year program (PYP) at six different tertiary level institutions across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Tables 2 and 3 below summarize the target groups for the surveys and the semi structured interviews respectively.

Table 3.1. Target Group and their distribution for the surveys.

Survey	Target Group	<i>N</i>
Learners	EFL PYP learners.	840 learners (400 male and 440 female)
Teachers	EFL government tertiary level teachers	320 teachers (168 male and 152 female)

Table 3.2. Target Group and their distribution for the semi structured interviews.

Interview	Target Group	<i>N</i>
Student	EFL government tertiary level learners from six different national universities in Saudi Arabia. Approximately, 1 - 2 participants from each university.	10 students (5 male and 5 female)
Teachers	EFL government tertiary level teachers from different backgrounds (nationalities) at six different universities in Saudi Arabia. Approximately, 1 - 2 teachers from each university.	10 teachers (5 male and 5 female)

3.5.1 Selecting the Samples

The samples selected were randomly selected from six government universities within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Random samples of EFL learners from all university assigned English proficiency levels of the PYP courses at their universities in Saudi Arabia (from the assigned beginner level to the intermediate level), were selected and similarly, equal number of EFL teachers assigned to teaching different levels at those six government universities, were randomly selected as previously mentioned in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, earlier.

3.6 Questionnaires

It is common nowadays to see some research textbooks use the terms *surveys* and *questionnaires* synonymously and in certain cases, interchangeably to the dismay of the novice researcher or students embarking on a research journey. As Greener (2011) also elaborates: “.....as in many disciplines the terms are used more or less synonymously, but technically a survey is a research design that takes a cross-sectional approach....[however], A questionnaire is a type of survey involving, unsurprisingly, asking subjects to respond to a range of questions, often in a self-completion form.” (p.38-39). This means that a survey is more encompassing than a questionnaire and the actual questions which the participants answer, form the actual physical questionnaire (paper based or online). The questionnaires followed a five-point Likert scale survey design (Clow & James, 2013) which some researchers consider it to be the most common type of rating scale used in human subject research (Boslaugh, 2012). Thus, I needed to take into consideration several factors including:

1. Language – I needed to provide the questionnaires for the students in both English and Arabic, so they could respond as carefully and appropriately as possible. As Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009) states: “We believed that the bilingual version would promote positive respondent attitudes and would also encourage participants by boosting their confidence in their English abilities” (p.126). Some students who were very proficient in English preferred to complete their surveys in English. Teachers’ questionnaires were only drafted in English since they were all at the native or near native level. The main aim of translating the students’ survey into Arabic

is to maximise potential participation from the students of all levels (EFL levels) and eliminate any disengagement of interest from the survey by those students whose proficiency level in English could have hindered them from participation. Furthermore, a form of bias may exist if the researcher fails to reach some of the participants due to communication barriers, such as language barriers (Bowling & Ebrahim, 2005). Despite the fact that I used Harkness, Van de Vijver, and Mohler (2003) model of basically asking the same question originally worded in the source language (i.e. English) into the target language (i.e. Arabic), the main objective was: “not to achieve literal, word-by-word translations but a functional equivalent formulation” (Zavala-Rojas, 2014, p. 7). To ensure this, four associate professors from King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia were asked to aid in the processing of translating the English version of the survey into Arabic as well as comparing it afterwards (the Arabic version) with that of the original one in English. Two associate professors from the faculty of Translations made the initial translation separately without consulting each other initially and then they met, at a “reconciliation meeting” (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012, p. 67) with two associate professors where one acted as a reviewer and the other as an adjudicator (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012). This gave the survey a more authentic and trusting translated version of the original English survey.

2. Distribution and collection of the questionnaires. There was a need for a thorough plan for sending the questionnaire to the main participating universities in Saudi Arabia where constant follow up was inevitable due to some bureaucracies that existed at some universities in Saudi Arabia. The surveys were posted online on the www.surveymonkey.com® where a platinum account was set up which accommodated the large number of participants with the feature that enabled the ease with which data was exported into file formats that were compatible with MS Excel® and IBM SPSS Statistics 23® software packages and utilised in the data analysis (Chapter 4).

3. The wording and phrasing of the questions needed to be clear and relevant as well as avoiding hidden bias or leading the participants to answer predictably to the questions presented in the questionnaire. Cox and Cox (2008) state: “Avoid phrasing items in a manner that may

forester a “response set”. A response set is a “condition of mind that causes a respondent to answer each specific question according to a conscious or unconscious bias.” (p.15). On the same note, questions had to be unambiguous and not confusing. The lack of this may have led to what is known as the double-barrel questions phenomena which usually creates problems for the participants since they are forced to choose from two contrasting elements in the question (for example) to respond to, and for researchers, who have no means of identifying the part the respondents chose (Johns, 2010). Furthermore, the length of the questions (thus, the questionnaire) needed to be kept to a minimum length so as to avoid random responses by the frustrated participant. This is also reflected in Cox and Cox (2008) who assert that: “The length of the form [questionnaire] is important. If it is too long, the respondent may not feel like completing the whole thing, and responses to the last questions may reflect fatigue. The respondent will not continue to read as careful after answering for a prolonged period of time” (p.17). I consulted my supervisor and an associate professor colleague to advise that there were no ambiguity or confusion in the structures of the questionnaires (face validity).

4. Piloting the survey. In order to achieve a sense of validity and reliability of the survey, it should be pilot-tested (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010). Bloor and Wood (2006) state that: Piloting refers to the conduct of preliminary research, prior to the main study. It provides a structured opportunity for informed reflection on, and modification of, the research design, the research instruments, costings, timing, researcher security and indeed a whole gamut of issues concerning the everyday conduct of the research (p.131).

Piloting of the survey as well as the interview instruments helped in determining the feasibility of the study as well as the trustworthiness of respondents for data collection in the main study. The pilot study targeted a small number of prospective participants or volunteers who had similar characteristics to those of the target group of the respondents (Lochmiller & Lester, 2015). Both samples selected for the piloting the questionnaires and the interview questions were all

EFL teachers and students with characteristics similar to the target of participants at the same six targeted government universities in Saudi Arabia.

The teachers' survey was divided into six main sections. These sections are:

3.67.1 Teachers' Questionnaire

3.6.1.1 Section 1

This is a demographic simple part (one item) that looked at the genders of the participants. It was included in order to have an overall idea of who participated in the survey and whether a good diversity of respondents took part in the survey or not.

3.6.1.2 Section 2

A professional experience and qualifications item was included so as to explore their expertise as it relates to the issue of WCF. The students' survey. The section included two items.

3.6.1.3 Section 3

The third part is the classroom WCF practices part which was included in order to explore the parameters behind how EFL teachers practice their WCF as it relates to certain elements of their actual EFL teaching tasks with their students. This will highlight any particular element (time, class sizes, teaching load, proficiency level) that affects the teachers' perception relating to their WCF practice. This section comprises of seven items.

3.6.1.4 Section 4

The fourth part relates to the WCF specifics and practices part which was included in order to explore more specific elements of the teachers' actual WCF practices. In this section, a reflection on direct indications of teacher practices are given to form a generalised understanding of what specific practice in the Saudi EFL context do teachers believe in when giving WCF. This section also comprises of seven items.

3.6.1.5 Section 5

The fifth part focusses on the challenges to giving WCF. In this section, the main objective is to look at the main obstacles that the EFL teachers face when giving WCF (if any). This part is an essential part in the survey since it reflects on the particular elements that EFL teachers in the Saudi context perceive as factors in hindering their practice in giving WCF to students on their written assignments. This section comprises of five items.

3.6.1.6 Section 6

Table 4 below provides a summary of the structure of the questionnaire and the number of items in each section.

Table 3.3 A summary of the structure of the teachers' survey.

PART I Personal background/gender (Demographics)	Item 1
PART II Professional experience and qualifications	Items 2 and 3
PART III Classroom Particulars	Items 4 – 10
PART IV WCF specifics and practice	Items 11 – 32
PART V Challenges to giving WCF	Items 33 – 37
PART VI Participating in an interview	Items 38 and 39

As can be seen in the table above, the sixth and final part of the teachers' survey, is an optional part relating to volunteering in participating in a semi structured interview. This section comprises of two items.

On the other hand, the students' survey was divided into four main sections.

These sections are:

3.6.2 Students' Questionnaire

3.6.2.1 Section 1

This is a demographic simple part (three items) that looked at the genders of the students as well as their ages and parents' jobs. It was included, similar to the teachers' first section in the survey, in order to have an overall view of who participated in the survey and whether a good diversity of respondents took part in the survey or not. Additionally, it was included to have the ages of those who participated and to explore what the background of their family is in terms of parents' jobs and careers where this may have an indication of an education level affecting the students' level of English as L2.

3.6.2.2 Section 2

This is the education level part which explores the students' current level of English as an L2 which may indicate a relationship between their L2 level and their perception of WCF. There are two items in this section.

3.6.2.3 Section 3

The third part is the WCF particulars which is the biggest part of the students' survey where an overall view is given on the specific perception and beliefs of the EFL university students in the Saudi context as it relates to WCF. This section comprises of 15 items.

3.6.2.4 Section 4

The fourth and final part of the students' survey is an optional part relating to volunteering in participating in a semi structured interview. This section comprises of two items.

Table 5 below provides a summary of the structure of the questionnaire and the number of items in each section.

Table 3.4 A summary of the structure of the students' survey.

PART I Personal background/gender and parents' jobs.	Items 1 – 4
PART II Education level	Items 5 and 6
PART III WCF particulars	Items 7 – 21
PART IV Participating in an interview	Items 22 and 23

The designed surveys can be shown in Appendices A (teachers' questionnaire), B (students' questionnaire in English) and C (students' questionnaire in Arabic), all of which were hosted online. However, despite the fact the links to the surveys were sent electronically (by electronic email) to teachers and students, there were hard copies as plan B for those teachers or students might not have had access to the internet. The hard copies were handed to the students with full description of the research study and the request to sign the consent form and all those hard copies were kept in a sealed envelope for data entering and analysis stage.

3.7 Semi-structured Interviews

As part of my mixed methods design, I conducted semi structured interviews with the participants (teachers and students) who have previously participated in the survey and agreed to take part in the semi structured interviews. Due to the dual nature of the theoretical perspective underpinning this study, both deductive and inductive research approaches were applied where both quantitative as well as qualitative methods as well as data collection and analysis, were integrated (Clark & Ivankova, 2015). Thus, the qualitative part of the study was the interviews I conducted with my participants.

Polit and Beck (2010) give the definition of this type of this qualitative data collection method by stating that:

Semi-structured (or focused) interviews are used when researchers have a list of topics or broad questions that must be addressed in an interview. Interviewers use a written topic guide (or interview guide) to ensure that all question areas are covered. The interviewer's function is to encourage participants to talk freely about all the topics on the guide (p.341).

Lewis-Beck, Bryman, and Liao (2004) further elaborate on the semi-structured interviewing by stating that: Semi structured interviewing is an overarching term used to describe a range of different forms of interviewing most commonly associated with qualitative research. The defining characteristic of semi structured interviews is that they have a flexible and fluid structure, unlike structured interviews, which contain a structured sequence of questions to be asked in the same way of all interviewees (p.1021). Thus, my intentions were to gain in-depth information and insight into the WCF issue I, as a researcher, am familiar with and semi structured interviewing is one way of achieving this (Morse & Richards, 2013). I also intended to allow the participation of female colleague teachers and students so as to allow my research to have the uniqueness of the inclusion of diverse points of views from both genders as well as eliminating any gender bias (towards male participants) that might accompany my research. In Saudi Arabia, gender mixing in nearly all aspects of the society is not permitted and therefore, most researchers carrying out qualitative research study will almost always have their results based on single-gender views and participation. Al-Saggaf and Williamson (2004) state this fact by noting: "One of the important features that profoundly influence every aspect of public and social life in Saudi Arabia is the segregation of sexes. Segregation of the sexes is maintained physically, socially and psychologically" (p.2). The approach I followed in interviewing female participants was either going to be conducted through the strict Saudi cultural tradition of interviewing the female participants while accompanied by their male guardians (chaperons) or, alternatively, by interviewing at conferences or seminars held abroad where less restrictions are imposed on mixing. An alternative and as a last resort was to have telephone interviews which might be less intrusive, culturally more appealing but with certain disadvantages such as cost if carried out over a

direct telephone call or the risk of having poor internet connection if carried out using one of the online calling software such as Skype®. In addition, I personally felt that when trying to gain an insight into an important issue such as WCF, it is important to concentrate fully on the views of the teachers and students while accompanied by facial expressions reflecting those views due to the fact that the absence of a face-to-face interaction will arguably restrict the development of a sense of rapport and a 'natural' encounter with the participant (Shuy, 2003). It is worth noting that even though telephone interviews are suitable in some situations (e.g. discussing sensitive or personal issues), there are relatively few qualitative studies that employ telephone interviews (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). Furthermore, Novick (2008) mentions that: "When qualitative telephone interviews are discussed, they tend to be depicted as the less attractive alternative to face-to-face interviews" (p.391). The semi structured interviews were an essential part of this research since they aided in having an encompassing view of the teachers and students on WCF in their own opinions. Additionally, it expanded the initial points obtained from the interview and allowed the participants to expand more and have the freedom to express their ideas in a more relaxed manner that would have been nearly impossible to obtain by a questionnaire in the Saudi context. As such, I was able to interview the female participants at conferences and seminars which gave a better setting than a telephone conversation one.

3.8 Procedure

3.8.1 Piloting the Questionnaire

Wiersma and Jurs (2009) define a pilot study: "A study conducted prior to the major research study that in some way is a small-scale model of the major study: conducted for the purpose of gaining additional information by which the major study can be improved – for example, an exploratory use of the measurement instrument with a small group for the purpose of refining the instrument" (p. 427). Additionally, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) assert that pilot studies are beneficial in research that adopts either quantitative or qualitative approach. The main purpose for conducting the pilot study was to allow me to gather vital feedback regarding the questionnaire and the interviews whether they performed the purpose they were designed for or not. Thus, for an initial piloting, randomly selected participants for piloting the surveys were 10

male and 10 female EFL university students aged 18-20 who came from six different universities in Saudi Arabia and were studying various levels of EFL courses. I approached three associate professor colleagues at the university. Two of the colleagues were qualified experts in TESOL and the third associate professor was qualified in business administration. Based on their feedback as well as my supervisor's feedback, I carried out recommended changes and a near-final version of the questionnaire was prepared for the second and final stage of the piloting. Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009) refers to the second stage of piloting as the "Dress Rehearsal" (p.55) stage. Two small modifications, the font size and contrast of the printed text were carried out after noticing the issue during the volunteers attempt to completing the questionnaire. While taking all of the above into consideration, the initial drafts of the surveys (for both teachers and students) needed to include various elements relating to the essence of this WCF issue, to provide or not to provide WCF, and if geared towards giving WCF, what type is the most favoured by the EFL teachers and students. Each main construct of the questionnaire was purposefully included in order to explore the main elements of perceptions about the choices and practices in WCF, in the case of teachers, and elements of perceptions and preferences of the students when it comes to having WCF on their written scripts. The surveys provided the main ideas behind the general perceptions of WCF from both the teachers and the students' points of view.

3.8.2 Piloting the Semi-Structured Interviews

In the piloting of the semi-structured interviews, there were 2 male and 2 female EFL university teachers who also taught at six different universities and were of various nationalities and backgrounds with various teaching experiences and were teaching various EFL courses. Similar to the piloting of the questionnaires, I approached the same three associate professor colleagues at the university and based on their feedback as well as my supervisor's feedback, I carried out recommended changes to the wording of two of the questions prepared for the semi-structured interviews.

3.8.3 Administration of the Research Instruments

As this is a research carried out on large number of samples, the questionnaire link was sent to the participants and completed online, using the group administration method (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009) due to the fact that it was convenient to administer the instruments with the Saudi government universities' context. Also, the manner with which it was possible to collect the necessary data (survey data or interviews data) in a very short time scale.

3.9 Data Analysis

As part of the mixed methods research design adopted in this research study, the 'mixing' concept occurred throughout the study and not merely in the data collection process. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) state that: "The cycle [of mixed methods] includes all stages of the research process, from conceptualization (research purpose, informed by worldview and existing theory, research, practice or policy) to implementation (sampling to data analysis) to inference (data inference, inference quality, data representation) and application" (p.322). Thus, in a sequential, explanatory mixed methods research study, results of the quantitative and qualitative components were analysed separately, with the data sets and their analysis to be integrated at the discussion stage. The results in this study were discussed from the two main data sources, the surveys and the semi structured interviews. The main platform for the data input and initial analysis of questionnaire data is IBM SPSS Statistics 23® and MS Excel® software packages. The features in these two software packages allowed for the ease of input and the processing of quantitative data. Having said that, there was a need to have a careful consideration of carrying out the appropriate data analysis that corresponded to the type and nature of data collected such as the Likert Scale data. Boslaugh (2012) highlights this fact where she states that: "Data gathered by Likert scale is ordinal because although the choices are ordered, there is no reason to believe that there are equal intervals between them. For instance, we have no way of knowing whether the distance between "Strongly agree" and "Agree" is the same as the distance between "Agree" and "Neither agree nor disagree." (p.19). Boone and Boone (2012) further point out that: "One mistake commonly made is the improper analysis of individual questions on an attitudinal scale"

(p.1). Thus, careful considerations not to use the incorrect analysis with the survey data will be taken on board and relevant statistical analysis will be performed such as the Cronbach's Alpha as a measurement for internal consistency (reliability) of the questionnaire (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). With regards to the qualitative data collected from the semi structured interviews, I invited willing participants to participate (both teachers and students) in a 30 – 45 minutes interviews where I audio recorded those interviews, transcribed them verbatim and input this data into QSR NVivo 11® software in order to organise the qualitative (interview) data, code this data and then analyse it for emerging themes (Auld et al., 2007). The interviews with the teachers will be in English while the interviews with the students will be either in English or Arabic, depending on the preferences of the students so as to allow them a more freedom to express their views without any linguistic barriers and to give as much details as they wish to do. Because these were semi-structured interviews, the questions were not entirely fixed, and those questions were flexible and responsive. Those interviews were conducted as an approach to draw upon important elements in the questionnaire and allow the participants to go into deeper details and go beyond the survey to address certain issues relating to WCF which were not addressed in the questionnaire. With regards to my data analysis as it relates to answering my research questions, I analysed my survey data using frequency tables and as well as bar charts due to the fact that data were mainly nominal and ordinal. Additionally, I carried out correlational analyses between the groups and compared them accordingly. I analysed the semi structured interviews using thematic coding with the assistance of QSR NVivo 11® software package. All of the twenty gathered transcripts (ten transcripts from the teachers' interviews and ten transcripts from the students' interviews) were analysed utilising a coding procedure that is popularised by the grounded theory method, which is an inductive approach to inductive analysis, which seeks to discover rather than impose codes and themes on the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). In essence, it was basically comprised of open coding followed by axial coding and at the final stage, by the identification of emerging themes or what are sometimes referred to as selective codes (Yin, 2015).

3.10 Validity and Reliability

Without validity and reliability, the credibility of the research will be questioned and challenged. In other words, they are crucial elements to the research since they enhance the accuracy of the assessment and evaluation of a research work (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Picardi and Masick (2013) state that: "Validity is referred to as the accuracy of the results and reliability is defined as the consistency of the results" (p. 56). Some researchers highlight an important distinction between the terms by giving the following adage: "A valid test is always reliable, but a reliable test is not necessarily valid" (Mertler, 2015, p. 258). As mentioned in section 3.8 (Data Analysis), I employed the Cronbach's Alpha as a measurement for the internal consistency (reliability) of the survey. Additionally, the surveys were piloted to test their validity and reliability before administering them to the teachers and students' participants. In addition, I checked the contents of the questionnaire items and survey questions for their eligibility, accuracy and face validity. Additionally, three associate professor experts in the field were approached in order to confirm the eligibility, accuracy and face validity of the questionnaire. With regards to the semi-structured data, there have recently been ongoing debates as to whether validity and reliability are appropriate to evaluate qualitative research (Rolfe, 2006). Notwithstanding, there has been strong support for ensuring reliability and validity in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014; Noble & Smith, 2015). In essence, the credibility in qualitative research can be implemented through the trustworthiness of the procedures and the data generated (Stiles, 1993). In other words, are the results repeatable in different circumstance? (Bryman, 2015). Thus, to confirm trustworthiness and repeatability, we will need to confirm it by revisiting data in different circumstances where I asked those participants in the interviews to discuss certain points and elaborate more on them. On the other hand, validity in qualitative research is assessed by determining how effective the chosen research tools are in measuring the phenomena under investigation (Punch, 2013). A barrier that may limit validity in qualitative research is the researcher's bias, which can arise out from the selective collection and recording of data, or from interpretation based on the researcher's personal perspectives (B. Johnson, 1997). In the case of interviews, the validity of the interview data needed to highlight the fact that self-reporting is accurate and therefore valid

(Appleton, 1995; Burns & Grove, 2005). Thus, an approach I adopted was, ensuring credibility of the qualitative data as highlighted in Lacey and Luff (2001) who confirms that validity in qualitative data can be achieved by ensuring: “Adequate and systematic use of the original data (for example using quotations, and not all from the same person!) in the presentation of your analysis so that readers are convinced that your interpretations relate to the data gathered” (p.27). Furthermore, I adopted the member checking procedure where I discussed several participants’ (in both learners and teachers interviews) responses to the interview questions and asked those participants to view my own interpretation of their responses in order to further allow those participants the liberty to clarify and verify their statements (Midgley, Danaher, & Baguley, 2013). In considering how to add credibility to the interview data, it is usually achieved by dependability of the procedures which is used to analyse the data and the development of a clear audit trail as well as transparency in the data analysis process (Schwandt, 1997). On the other hand, the trustworthiness part is also perceived to be related to confirmability. The concept of confirmability indicates whether the data analysis process has been reviewed by an expert in the field who can endorse it and confirm the robustness of the coding process of the qualitative data. In certain occasions, confirmability can be further achieved by reviewing the interpretations built on the statements of the participants who took part in the interviews in a process known as member-checking (Brown, 2016). The participants in this study were asked to check their transcripts in order to confirm the accuracy and agreement on certain issues as well as identify areas of disagreement, if any (Creswell, 2014). This procedure gave extra assurances to the credibility of the process from the participants’ perspective and thus, having more confidence in the validation and accuracy of the findings. Transferability, on the other hand, as opposed to generalizability in quantitative research, refers to the extent to which researchers have provided sufficient account of the data collection and analysis procedures and the sample to enable a reader to identify the potential relevance of the findings to their own research context (Brown, 2016). Considering all these steps, I believe that I was able to demonstrate the authenticity and the trustworthiness of the qualitative data collection and analysis processes in this study.

3.11 Triangulation

Triangulation is perceived by researchers as a verification procedure where the main target of the researchers (within this parameter) is to identify any convergence among multiple elements and sources of information to form a particular themes and categories in those research studies. Cohen et al. (2013) define triangulation as: "Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. The use of multiple methods, or the multi-method approach as it is sometimes called, contrasts with the ubiquitous but generally more vulnerable single-method approach that characterizes so much of research in the social sciences" (p.195). Brown (2014) explains triangulation in terms of: "gathering and interpreting data from multiple viewpoints" (p.37). Denzin (1989) claims that: "By combining multiple observers, theories, methods, and data sources, researchers can hope to overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-methods, single-observer, and single theory studies" (p.307). In essence, using mixed methods design is in itself a triangulation practice which adds richness to the study and gives it a more trustworthiness in the academic world (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Newhart, 2011). The two types of triangulation adopted in this study were the data triangulation and method triangulation.

3.11.1 Data Triangulation

Lewis-Beck et al. (2004) refers to data triangulation as that: "which entails gathering data through several sampling strategies so that slices of data at different times and in different social situations, as well as on a variety of people, are gathered" (p.1142). Data triangulation is appropriate in this study since it involves collecting data from two sources, EFL students and teachers.

3.11.2 Method Triangulation

Hair, Celsi, Money, Samouel, and Page (2015) states that "Method triangulation involves conducting the research project using several different methods and comparing the findings, including sometimes findings from both qualitative and quantitative approaches" (p. 289). Method triangulation, which is sometimes

referred to as overlapping methods, was also appropriate in this study since it involved the gathering of data through surveys and interviews (Brown, 2014).

3.12 Ethical Considerations

It was of paramount importance to take into considerations the ethical issues relating to the protection of the feelings, welfare and rights of the participants taking part in this research. Strike et al. (2002) state:

Educational researchers conduct research within a broad array of settings and institutions, including schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, and prisons. It is of paramount importance that educational researchers respect the rights, privacy, dignity, and sensitivities of their research populations and also the integrity of the institutions within which the research occurs. Educational researchers should be especially careful in working with children and other vulnerable populations. These standards are intended to reinforce and strengthen already existing standards enforced by institutional review boards and other professional associations (p.43).

In considering certain sensitivities of this research, it was important to realise that some teacher participants in the semi-structured interviews, in their arguments on WCF, may criticise their own institutions they work with in Saudi Arabia and that is always something that causes friction between the EFL teachers and their upper management where, in the worst case scenario, it can lead to the termination of work contracts for the teachers if such discussion is discovered by the upper management of that institution. Therefore, to protect the identities of the participants, there were no items on the questionnaires asking for personal details whatsoever. In addition, the names of those participating in the interviews were pseudonyms and no identifiable personal data was disclosed or stored on file. Password protected files known only to the researcher was utilised at all times and no data was disclosed to anyone at any circumstances. Taking such sensitive matters into consideration, I managed to seek consent from those teachers and students who volunteered to take part in the semi-structured interviews. The consent to participate in the questionnaire was automatically registered online at the beginning of the survey where the first part was basically a short description of the survey and a statement on whether the participant agreed to take part in the survey or not. I also managed

to seek ethical approval from the University of Exeter (see Appendix I) as well as ethical approval from the English Language Departments at the Saudi Institutions which were targeted in this research (Appendix J).

3.13 Challenges and Limitations

Planning for the data collection process and the actual data collection process was not without its challenges. I had to make sure that all the questionnaires (teachers and students) as well as the Arabic and English version of the students' questionnaires accurately uploaded to the website and also, whenever a change was advised by the supervisor or experts I consulted, the changes were made immediately and in case of the students' questionnaire initial (minor) changes before sending the links off, those changes were made in both the English and Arabic versions.

Additionally, I had to make sure that all the universities involved were disseminating the questionnaires in time and to all their students since there are few interruptions (holidays) during the academic year and I tried to avoid these interruptions as much as I could possibly can which was proven difficult to achieve on a couple of occasions where some students at three universities had their own break (i.e. no attendance at their own universities) due to designated departmental exams at their own universities.

Also, during the interviews and due to the fact that WCF is not an easy topic to tackle, a couple of interviews took much longer than expected since the participants (teachers and students) digressed into other areas of L2 such formative and summative assessments, rubrics, and overall educational policies relating to EFL in KSA. Two of the interviews had to be re-arranged twice. The first case was due to the teacher participant's heavy teaching schedule and other one was re-arranged since the student had exams as well as other study tasks to complete.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, chapter 4, the results of the gathered data in the first phase of the data collection process, the quantitative part, will be presented as it relates to the constructs of the two questionnaires (teachers and students) pertaining to the research questions of the study. The data presented will follow the order of the participants' responses and not in the order of the research questions. The chapter will discuss the quantitative data analysis of the teachers' and students' questionnaires including validity, reliability, piloting, Linear Correlations of the Constructs – Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) as well as descriptive statistics of the surveys.

The teachers' questionnaire was completed by 380 EFL teachers and the students' questionnaire was completed by 840 EFL students, at universities in different cities in Saudi Arabia. The piloting stage that preceded the questionnaire phase, was completed by ten students and ten teachers.

In the second phase, the qualitative data gathering, and analysis is presented. Similar to the piloting stage of the two surveys in the first phase, two teachers and two students were interviewed initially before the main semi structured interviews with the intended participants, were conducted.

Following the analysis of the qualitative data, thematic coding generated four emerging main themes and twelve sub themes.

All the data that was gathered, recorded or analysed from both piloting stages (quantitative and qualitative phases), were discarded off and was not part of the main data analysis part of the study.

4.2 Phase I – Quantitative Data Analysis

4.2.1 Face and Content Validity

To ensure the face validity of both questionnaires, they were introduced to a group of specialists, three bilingual (Arabic and English) associate professors of

TESOL and Arabic Literature at a Saudi University and my supervisor in order to:

- a. Determine the suitability of the suggested items to participants.
- b. Add, omit or modify other components such as the ones relating to the Arabic wording of some of the questions in the questionnaire.

This is a step I took as an extra assurance of the face validity of my questionnaires. Thus, the questionnaires were submitted to three qualified and experienced specialists in the TESOL field intimately. They were approached and asked to comment on the linguistic feature of the questionnaires with specific reference to the wording of the items (content validity), appropriateness and fitness of the items for the participants, applicability for the participants, and how the items measure the study objectives (Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2017). Their suggestions were taken into consideration. They confirmed the suitability and applicability of the questionnaires. The next step was to pilot the questionnaires as illustrated in the next section.

4.2.2 The Piloting Stage of the Questionnaires

In this stage, the students' questionnaire was piloted with 10 students and the teachers' questionnaire was piloted with 10 teachers. The main aim behind conducting the pilot study was to check the content validity of the wording of the questionnaires, their clarity and comprehensibility.

Once I, along with my supervisor, agreed on the final version of both questionnaires, after being modified and refined twice, I sent out the links of the relevant questionnaire to the 10 students and 10 teachers in an attempt to obtain a better view of the actual status of the structure of the questionnaires as well as to ensure that none of the items could be considered to be either too biased or leading in design, or even likely to cause any embarrassment or discomfort to any of the respondents. I decided to use a reversed (five-point) Likert scale where the first option is *strongly disagree* and the last option is *strongly agree* and the idea was mainly to provoke a better attention from the participants than the usual scale starting with the common predictable choice of

strongly agree and finishing with *strongly disagree* (Baumgartner & Steenkamp, 2001; Herche & Engelland, 1996). Table 6 illustrates the scale used.

Table 4.1 The five-point Likert scaled items

Weight	Agreement Level
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

Fortunately, there were no issues with both questionnaires except for some minor modifications to the wording of the Arabic version of the students' questionnaire which were made so as to have an identical reflection of the English version. Teachers and students were both willing and happy to participate in the initial pilot questionnaire. The completion of each of the questionnaire, either by the students or by the teachers did not take more than 10 minutes maximum where it was decided that the questionnaires are both clear and readable as well as being easily completed in a short and convenient duration of time. Those teachers and students did not participate in any further work in this study and as mentioned previously, their responses were discarded before the sending out the main questionnaires.

4.2.3 Data Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

4.2.3.1 Reliability of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The first step of the data analysis was to ensure the reliability by measuring the internal consistency of the questionnaire items by calculating the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The Cronbach's alpha measure is a statistical term which researchers commonly quote to demonstrate that their tests and scales (e.g. questionnaires) that have been constructed or adopted for research projects are fit for purpose (Taber, 2017). By definition, the reliability of test scores or measurements which has a Cronbach's coefficient value of 1.0 indicates that no measurement error exists (i.e. perfect reliability) and a Cronbach's coefficient

value of zero indicates very poor reliability (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). Soh (2016) elaborates further on this issue by stating that: “When items of a test are measuring the same kind of ability or knowledge, they will yield a high internal consistent reliability. If a test is made up of different kind of items assessing different kind of abilities and knowledge, Cronbach's alpha coefficient tends to be low as a result of the heterogeneity of the items in terms of format and content” (p. 108).

Table 4.2 shows the calculated Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the teachers’ questionnaire.

Tale 4.2. Reliability Statistics for teachers’ questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.754	37

As can be seen in table 4.2 above, the reliability coefficients of the items used in this questionnaire were found to be 0.754, they were considered acceptable according to the guidelines of Nunnally and Bernstein (1994); who believe that reliability coefficients should be greater than 0.70 to be internally consistent.

4.2.3.2 Linear Correlations of the Constructs – Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) of the Teachers’ Questionnaire

As an additional measure of reliability, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC or Pearson correlation coefficient for short) was calculated in order to measure the strength of association between the variables (constructs) set in the teachers’ questionnaires in this research study. The stronger the association of the two variables, the closer the Pearson correlation coefficient, r , will be to either a value of +1 or a value of -1 depending on whether the relationship is positive or negative, respectively and the closer the value of r to zero, the greater the variations are between the variables (Howell, 2016). Jaeger (1990) explains: “a correlation that is less than 0.30 is small, a correlation that is between 0.30 and 0.70 is moderate, a correlation that is between 0.70 and 0.90 is large, and a correlation that is greater than 0.90 is very large” (p. 66). As such, r was calculated for the constructs and the results are presented in table

4.3 which shows the linear correlation between the constructs of the teachers' survey.

Table 4.3. Pearson Correlation Analysis of the constructs

	Class.Particul	WCF Pract.Speci	Challenge.WC	WCF & KSA
Class.Particul	1	-	-	-
WCF Pract.Speci	0.73*+	1	-	-
Challenge.WCF	0.62*+	0.67*+	1	-
WCF & KSA	0.64*+	0.78*+	0.90*+	1

*p ≤ 0.05;

+ r ≥ 0.50 - Practically significant relationship (Large effect)

Class.Practice = Calsroom Particulars (Items 4 – 10)

WCF Pract.Speci = WCF Practice Specifics (Items 11 – 32)

Challenge.WCF = Challenges of Giving WCF (Item 33)

WCF & KSA = WCF and the Saudi Context Specifics

The calculated values above were encouraging and indicating good internal consistency and validity of the items of the teachers' questionnaire since the values were ≥ 0.50 and thus, indicating significant relationship.

4.2.3.3 Descriptive Statistics of the Teachers' Questionnaire

In this section, data analysis relating to the research questions 1 and 3 which deal with the preferred method of WCF among EFL teachers working in KSA and why (research question 1) as well as whether the chosen method of WCF which the EFL teachers in the Saudi context is reflective of their own pedagogical beliefs and why (research question 3), will be presented and discussed.

4.2.3.3.1 Demographics

The genders of teachers who volunteered to participate in this study is given in figure 4.1. Even though there were more males (52.5%) than females (47.5%), it can be said that there was rather equal distribution of male and female EFL teachers.

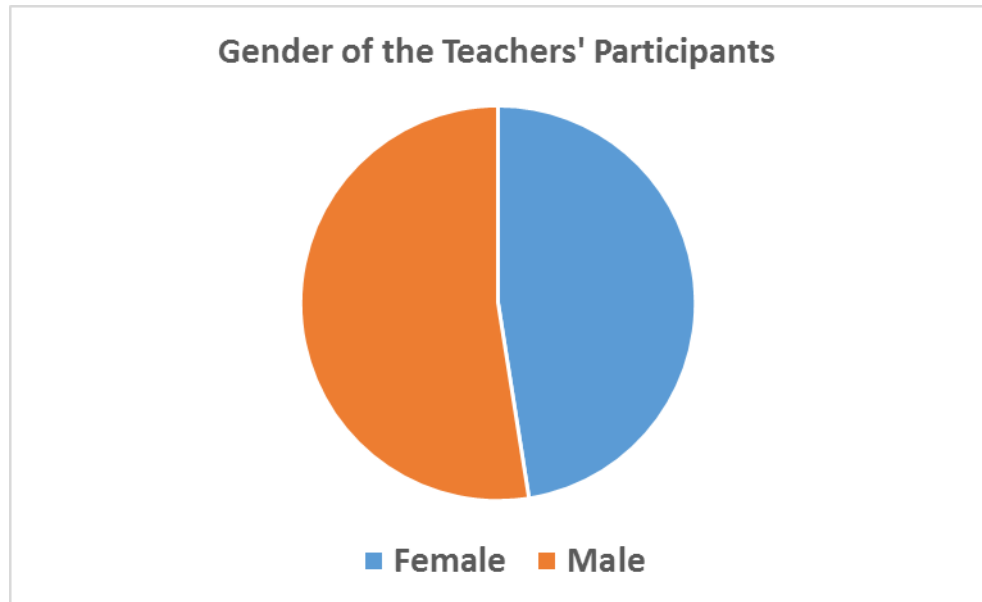


Figure 4.1. Gender of the Teachers' Participants.

4.2.3.3.2 Professional Experience and Qualifications

With regards to the years of experience, the majority of the teachers (44%) had 8 – 14 years of experience, followed by about 25% who had 1-7 years of experience, then by 21% who had 16-23 years of experience and finally by about 10% of those who had more than 24 years of experience, as shown in table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4. Years of teaching experience

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 – 7 years	79	24.7	24.7	24.7
8- – 15 years	142	44.4	44.4	69.1
16 – 23 years	70	21.9	21.9	90.9
More than 23 years	29	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	320	100.0	100.0	

Similarly, the teachers who participated in the study had different qualifications ranging from TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), DELTA (Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), master’s or doctoral degrees. The majority of the participants have CELTA (51%) followed by Masters (18%) then by 120 Hours TESOL/TEFL Diploma at 17% then by DELTA at 9% and finally by doctoral qualifications at 5%, as shown in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5. Highest qualification of the teachers

	Frequency	Percent
Valid 120 Hours TESOL/ TEFL Diploma	55	17.2
CELTA	164	51.2
DELTA	28	8.8
Masters (TESOL/TEFL/Applied Linguistics)	58	18.1
Doctoral degree in English Language Education/Applied Linguistics	15	4.7
Total	320	100.0

4.2.3.3.3 Classroom Particulars (Items 4 - 10)

Regarding the item relating to class sizes, the majority of teachers indicated that their class sizes are 31-40 (53%) then followed by 11 -20 students (20%) then by 21-30 students (15%) and finally, by 5 – 10 students at 12%. Since all tertiary institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia prohibits co-education, all

male teacher participants indicated that they teach male students and all female participants indicated that they teach female students. None indicated that they taught mixed gender classes. With regards to contact hours, the majority of the participants indicated that they worked 21 – 30 hours per week (44%) then followed by 31-40 hours per week (26%) then by 10 – 20 hours per week (22%) then by more than 40 hours per week at 8%. Around 30% of teachers indicated that they assign writing tasks twice to three times a week. When asked about introductory training, approximately (50.63%) of them responded that they had the training at the beginning of their career. Out of those (50.63%), only (22.81%) had an introductory training in writing and in WCF. Moreover, over half (51.25%) of the teachers reported that their department provided them with pre-exam training that included instructions on how to provide WCF on students' scripts.

4.2.3.3.4 Written Corrective Feedback Practice Specifics (Construct 2 – Items 11 - 32)

4.2.3.3.4.1 Answering Research Question 1 (Items 11-13 and 15): What is the preferred method of WCF among EFL teachers working in the Saudi context and why.

With regards to item 11 of the questionnaire, 51.56% of those teachers confirmed receiving a revised version of their students following an initial written corrective feedback. Moreover, (25.63%) and (18.75%) of teachers respectively agreed and strongly agreed that Metacognitive WCF helps increase the students' autonomous learning giving an indication of their WCF preferences which relates to the first research question.

When asked to respond whether they give WCF on the returned written tasks by the students or not, around half of them (49%) mentioned that they do sometime whereas 25% said they do by very rarely and 26% mentioned that they always do.

When asked to respond to the main WCF type they preferred the majority of teacher participants (59%) replied that sample B (Coded WCF) is the best WCF style to be used by the teachers. Table 4.6 highlights this frequency of selected WCF samples.

Table 4.6. Preferred WCF amongst teachers.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Sample A (Unfocussed WCF)	44	13.8%
	Sample B (Coded WCF)	192	60.0%
	Sample C (Meta-Cognitive WCF)	28	8.8%
	Sample D (No WCF)	36	11.3%
	A combination of samples	20	6.3%
	Total	312	100.0
Total		320	100.0

4.2.3.3.4.2 Answering Research Question 3 (Items 14 and 16 - 32): Does the chosen method of WCF which the EFL teachers in the Saudi context is reflective of their own pedagogical beliefs and why.

When asked (in the subsequent question) to respond to their preferred choice to the one they are currently using (item 14), 35% of the teachers indicated that they preferred a different method than the one they selected in item 13 while less than half indicated that they preferred the same type they chose in item 13 but not always and 31% indicated that it is the same choice as the one they indicated as using in item 13 which basically indicates their cognitive and pedagogical beliefs regarding WCF. Table 4.7 below highlights this observation.

Table 4.7. Whether chosen WCF is reflective of the teachers' cognitive beliefs.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No, I prefer a different WCF	113	35.3	35.3	35.3
Yes, but not always	103	32.2	32.2	67.5
Yes	104	32.5	32.5	100.0
Total	320	100.0	100.0	

When item 15 was introduced to the teachers which related to the WCF type given to the students on their second drafts, the majority of the teachers (58%) indicated that they would use a less detailed one and 28% indicated that they would use the same type they used in the first draft. 14% indicated that they

cannot remember which type they used (if any). The results of items 16-32 results are listed in Appendix L.

With regards to items relating to item 16 which specifically asked whether marking all the errors is an effective strategy or not, a collective 56% disagreed with the statement while 37% were neutral and 7% collectively agreed with it.

When teachers were asked whether unfocussed WCF is time consuming (item 17), they overwhelmingly agreed with this statement (81%) and 19% had no opinion. On the other hand, when the teachers were introduced with item 20 relating to coded WCF being the least time consuming, they overwhelmingly agreed with the statement (78%) and 22% did not agree with it.

When the teachers were asked the questions regarding WCF being within an acceptable and reasonable requirement of their contractual job agreement, the majority collectively disagreed with the statement (74%) and 21% had no opinion and 5% collectively agreed with the statement.

Item 29 asked the teacher participant to express their opinion on whether EFL students should (in principle) benefit from WCF, they overwhelmingly agreed with the statement at 81% and 14% had no opinion and 5% disagreed with the statement. However, the question relating to whether the students took WCF seriously in practical terms in the Saudi context (item 30), the majority (74%) disagreed with the statement, 20% had no opinion and 6% percent agreed that the students do take WCF seriously and work on it. Item 31 on the questionnaire asked the participants if their students did not respond positively on the WCF given on the first draft, what would be the course of action for the second draft in terms of WCF. The majority of the participants (63%) indicated that they would do nothing and provide no further WCF on the second draft while 33% indicated that they would instruct their students re-write a second draft of the essay and 4% expressed their practices in using a follow up method other than WCF. An interesting result regarding item 32 which asked the teacher participants to indicate their preferred colour to use when giving WCF revealed that 25% preferred to use the red colour pen, 36% preferred the green colour pen and 39% had no preferences towards the colour used when giving WCF.

4.2.3.3.5 Challenges of Giving WCF (Construct 3)

4.2.3.3.5.1 Answering Research Question 3 (Item 33).

When the participants were asked to rank the challenges in giving WCF on a scale from 1 to 6, where of 6 (being the most challenging) to 1 (being the least challenging), a significant majority (at 78%) indicate that time is the most challenging factor, followed by the way writing is taught in the first place in KSA (at 11%), then by lack of training for EFL teachers (at 5%) then by administration bureaucracy (at 4%) and finally, content at 2%. This undoubtedly has a big implication for the way WCF is practiced in the Saudi context.

4.2.3.3.5.2 Answering Research Question 3 (Items 34 - 36).

Item 34 asked the participants to comment on whether there is a department mandatory instruction to use a certain type of WCF or otherwise. The majority of the participants collectively agreed with the statement at 76% while 20% did not have any opinion and 4% disagreed with the statement indicating that there was not any mandatory instruction to use a particular WCF type in marking students' written exam papers.

Items 35 and 36 which asked the participants to comment on whether they are free to choose the type of WCF given to the students which saw roughly equal responses across agreeing, no opinion and disagreeing. While 44% of the participants disagreed with item 35 which asked if they were free to choose the type of WCF given to the students, 20% indicated that they had no opinion on this matter and 36% agreed that they had a choice of WCF given to the written tasks carried out by the students.

Similarly, item 36 asked whether the participants had this freedom due to their position in the department, 33% indicated that they did not hold that privilege, 33% indicated that they sometimes have that privilege and 34% indicated that they did have that privilege. Item 37, which is the last item relating to the research study, asked the participants to comment on whether WCF regime was beneficial in their contexts or not. The participants had approximately, equal responses across the board where 36% collectively disagreed that it is beneficial, 20% had no opinion on the matter and 44% have collectively agreed with the statement.

The table in Appendix L shows descriptive analysis for teachers' questionnaire for the essential items relating to the constructs of the items in the teachers' questionnaire 2-37.

4.2.4 Data Analysis of the Students' Survey

4.2.4.1 Reliability of the Students' Survey

The calculated Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for students' questionnaire was 0.89 indicating a strong internal consistency of the items of the students' questionnaire.

4.2.4.2 Linear Correlations of the Constructs – Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) of the Students' Questionnaire

Similar to the teachers' questionnaire, and as an additional measure of reliability, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC or Pearson correlation coefficient for short) was calculated in order to measure the strength of association between the variables (constructs) set in the students' questionnaires in this research study.

Thus, PPMC (r) was calculated for the constructs of the students' questionnaire and the results are presented in table (14) which shows the linear correlation between the constructs of the teachers' survey.

Table 4.8. PPMC of the students' questionnaire constructs.

	WCF.Particul	Fav.WCF.Type	Percep.Benef.WC F
WCF.Particul	1	0.77*+	0.69*+
Fav.WCF.Type	0.89*+	1	0.82*+
Percep.Benef. WCF	0.90*+	0.66*+	1

*p ≤ 0.05;

+ r ≥ 0.50 - Practically significant relationship (Large effect)

WCF.Particul = WCF Particulars (Items 9 - 23)

Fav.WCF.Type = Favourite WCF type (Items 24 – 28)

Percep.Benef.WCF = Perception Benefits of WCF (Items 29 – 31)

As can be seen from table 4.8 above, all the values are bigger than 0.50 and thus, they indicate significant relationship of the constructs of the students' questionnaire.

4.2.4.3 Descriptive Statistics of the Students' Survey

4.2.4.3.1 Demographics.

In this section, the demographic details will be highlighted as they pertain to the students' demographics.

The gender part of the demographics of the students' participants as can be seen in the graph in Figure 4.2 below which indicates that nearly 48% were males and 52% were females.

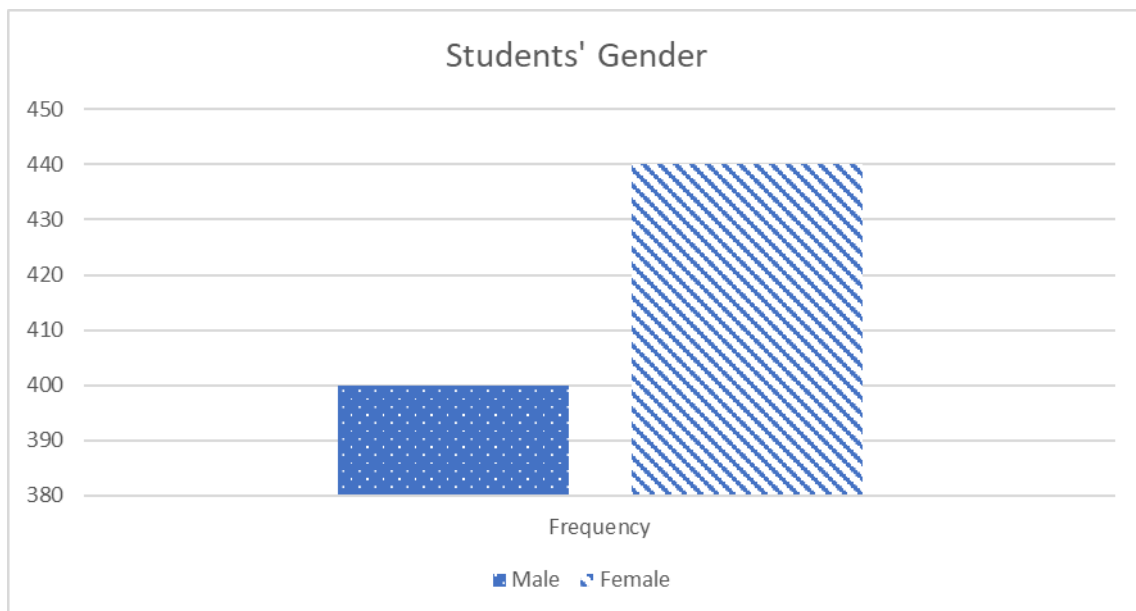


Figure 4.2. Students' Gender.

Whereas their ages are given in figure 4.3 below which indicates that the majority were between the age of 18-20 years old (76%) and 24% were of the age of 21-23 years old.

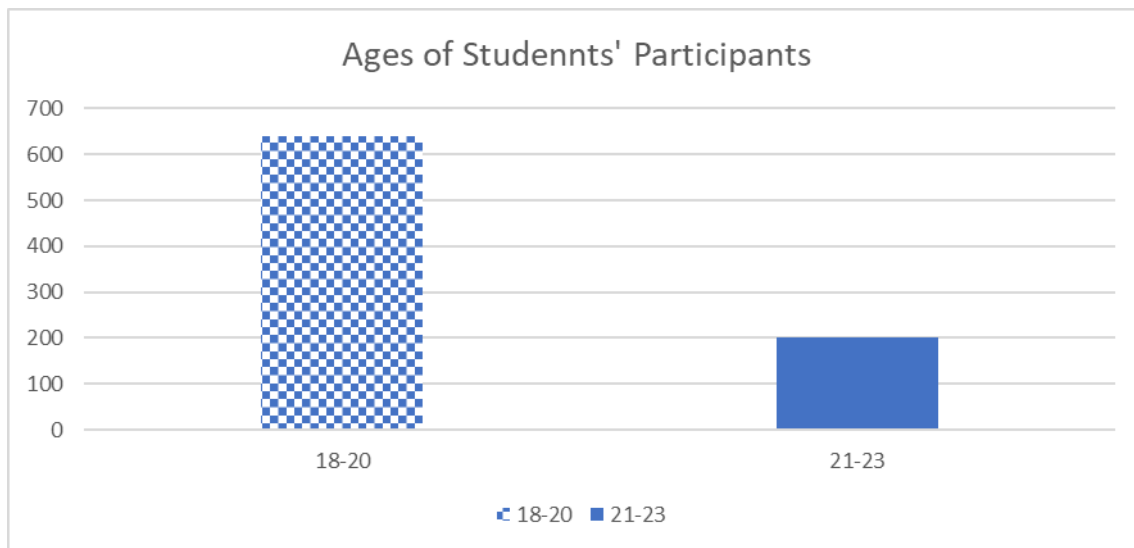


Figure 4.3. Students' age range.

When the students were asked about whether their parents worked or not, 98% of the students' indicated that their parents worked (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9. Parents' Work (Yes/No)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid No	18	2.1	2.1	2.1
Yes	822	97.9	97.9	100.0
Total	840	100.0	100.0	

With regards to the nature of the job of the parents' jobs, the majority of the students (39%) indicated that their parent(s) worked in the government sector as table 4.10 below illustrates.

Table 4.10. Parent(s)' type of work

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Doctor	55	6.5	6.5	6.5
Nurse	77	9.2	9.2	15.7
Lecturer	59	7.0	7.0	22.7
Teacher	65	7.7	7.7	30.5
Police	61	7.3	7.3	37.7
Army	70	8.3	8.3	46.1
Businessman / Businesswoman	70	8.3	8.3	54.4
Employee (private)	54	6.4	6.4	60.8

Employee (government)	329	39.2	39.2	100.0
Total	840	100.0	100.0	

4.2.4.3.2 Answering Research Question 2 (Construct 1 - Items 9 - 23 and Construct 2 – Items 24 – 28).

With regards to construct 1 (WCF Particulars), the questionnaire items 9 to 23 of the students' questionnaire detailed the students' perceptions of WCF and how they related it to their L2 (English) learning. Table 4.11 below shows the descriptive statistical analysis of students' questionnaire items. Since these questions are exploratory in nature, they addressed indirectly this study's research question two relating to the students' favourite WCF type and why.

As for getting corrective feedback (item 10), while only 30 out of 840 participants (4%) reported that they never got WCF, 71 out of 840 (8%) also reported that they only received WCF before the exams. On the other hand, 130 and 609 (16% and 77%) of the student participants reported that they received WCF always and sometimes, respectively.

When the students' participants were asked whether they received a copy of the rubric at the beginning of the course or not (item 11), 34% indicated that they did not receive a rubric, 4% indicated that they did, and the majority of the students indicated that they cannot remember (64%). This considerable percentage of students who did not or cannot remember having a rubric indicates that students do not highly estimate using the rubric and in addition, can act as an indicator for intervention in the procedure of rubric awareness sessions with the students.

As for how students perceive the importance of WCF (item 12), although 223 (27%) combined between disagree and strongly disagree, did not perceive WCF as important or essential, 358 (43%) of students perceived WCF as important and 206 (25%) as extremely important for them. It indicates how the students perceive the general concept of WCF and some may simply do not perceive it as important.

However, when asked about whether they believed that the teacher should mark every error in the written assignments (item 14), a combined strongly

agree with agree of the majority of the students at 72% said they believed it is necessary for the teacher to mark every error whereas 18% were neutral and 11% disagreed with the statement.

Moreover, item 15 asked the students' participants to comment on whether they would look at the grade first (before the WCF comments), WCF comments first (before the grade) or they would not have any priority, the majority of the students (66%) indicated that they would look at the grade first while 17% indicated that they are not sure or they would either look at the grade or WCF first and 17% indicated that they will look at WCF comments first.

Consequently, item 16 related to the students' opinion on whether they would read the WCF comments left to them by their teachers, or not. The majority of the students collectively disagreed with the statement (71%), while 23% indicated that they did not hold any opinion and only 6% indicated that they collectively agreed and strongly agreed with the statement in item 16.

As such, item 17 aimed at asking the students' participants to indicate whether they gave a revised (second) copy of their marked written assignment back to their teachers, a staggering 91% indicated that they did not give any revised version to their teachers where a mere 9% indicated that they gave their teachers a second revised draft.

Consequently, item 18, which asked those participants who did answer yes to item 17 of submitting a second draft to their teachers and whether they would get WCF on that second draft, the same number of participants in item 17 gave the same responses where 91% indicated they did not receive any WCF (expectedly) and 9% indicated that they rarely received WCF on their second draft and no responses were recorded for either yea, always or yes, sometimes to indicate receiving WCF on the second draft.

Interestingly, item 19 asked the students participants to comment on their preferred colour of pen used in marking their written scripts and assignments. While 21% had no preference, the majority (68%) preferred getting their WCF marked with green ink pen, 6% preferred it with black ink pen and 5% preferred it being marked with red.

With regards to item 20, the students were asked whether it was useful to look at peers' errors and the majority at 67% indicated that they agreed to the statement and 33% indicated that they did not hold any opinion. No students disagreed with the statement.

When the students were asked about the writing routine practice (item 21), their responses were almost equal where 32% indicated that they rarely practice, 36% indicated that they sometimes practice and 32% indicated that they regularly practice.

When asked if WCF has a motivation effect to write better (item 22), 22% of the students indicated that WCF did actually motivate them and 26% indicated that it highly motivates them to rewrite a better script. Twenty-six percent indicated that it did not motivate them and 27% were neutral.

When the students were asked about whether they agreed with the statement that teachers should mark every error (item 23), the majority of the students (67%) indicated that they agreed and strongly agreed (collectively) with the statement. Whereas 26% indicated that they had no opinion and only 7% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 4.11. Descriptive analysis of students' questionnaire items

Questions	Levels	N	Percentage s
Q7 Enrolled Course	101 – Beginner Level	149	17.70%
	102 – Elementary Level	168	20%
	103 Pre-Intermediate Level	185	22%
	104 – Intermediate Level	173	20.60%
	Medical/Business	165	19.60%
Q8 writing grade	Less than 45%	128	15.20%
	45 – 57%	138	16.40%
	58- 65%	147	17.50%
	66-74%	127	15.10%
	75-87%	144	17.10%
	88-100%	156	18.60%
Q9 Avg written assign	Once – Twice a week	595	71%
	Twice – Three times a week	128	15%
	Four – Five times a week	31	4%
	More than five times a week	86	10%
Q10 Getting WCF	Never	30	4%
	Only before exams	71	8%
	Sometimes	130	15%

	Always	609	77%
Q11 having WCF rubric	No	285	34.0%
	Yes	29	4%
	I can't remember	526	64%
Q12 importance of WCF feedback	Strongly Disagree	157	18.70%
	Disagree	166	19.80%
	Neutral	153	18.20%
	Agree	158	18.80%
	Strongly Agree	206	24.50%
Q13 cause of Importance of feedback	I do not know	138	16.40%
	Because it is the teacher's job to do so	87	10.40%
	It helps me in getting a good grade in the exam	152	18.10%
	Because it helps me understand why I was given a certain grade	274	32.60%
	Because it helps me improve my written skills	189	22.50%
Q14 Mark every error	Disagree	191	22.70%
	Neutral	247	29.40%
	Agree	200	23.80%
	Strongly Agree	202	24%
Q15 first look at after WCF	Either/Not sure	540	64%
	Grade first	256	31%
	Feedback first	44	4%
Q16 Reading comments of WCF	Strongly Disagree	190	22%
	Disagree	407	49%
	Neutral	191	23%
	Agree	46	5%
	Strongly Agree	6	1%
Q17 Giving back a revised version	No	765	91%
	Yes	75	9%
Q18 Getting feedback on the revised version	No, I never get WCF	765	91%
	Yes, but very rarely	75	9%
Q19 Marking colour	No preferences	175	21%
	Black	51	6%
	Green	571	68%
	Red	42	5%
Q20 look at error correction	Neutral	279	33.20%
	Agree	303	36.10%
	Strongly Agree	258	30.70%
Q21 Freq of practice writing	Rarely	268	31.90%
	Sometimes	301	35.80%

	Regularly	271	32.30%
Q22 motivation to rewrite	Disagree	218	26%
	Neutral	226	26.90%
	Agree	182	21.70%
	Strongly Agree	214	25.50%
Q23 Mark every error	Disagree	105	12.50%
	Neutral	174	20.71%
	Agree	292	34.76%
	Strongly Agree	269	32.02%
Q26 understanding codes	Neutral	287	34.20%
	Agree	275	32.70%
	Strongly Agree	278	33.10%
Q27 peer feedback	No	417	49.60%
	Yes	423	50.40%
Q29 Benefits of WCF	Agree	422	50.20%
	Strongly Agree	418	49.80%
Q30 serious consideration of WCF	Agree	399	47.50%
	Strongly Agree	441	52.50%
Q31 looking at sample script	Agree	425	50.60%
	Strongly Agree	415	49.40%

4.3 Answering Research Question Four – Shared Perceptions between Teachers and Students on WCF

In this section, few important statistical representations are given. These statistical representations are focusing on answering the fourth research question which is exploring the shared perceptions between the EFL teachers and learners when it comes to WCF. Figure 4.4 below illustrates the type of WCF which the teachers use (or prefer to use) as compared to the type of WCF the students prefer to have.

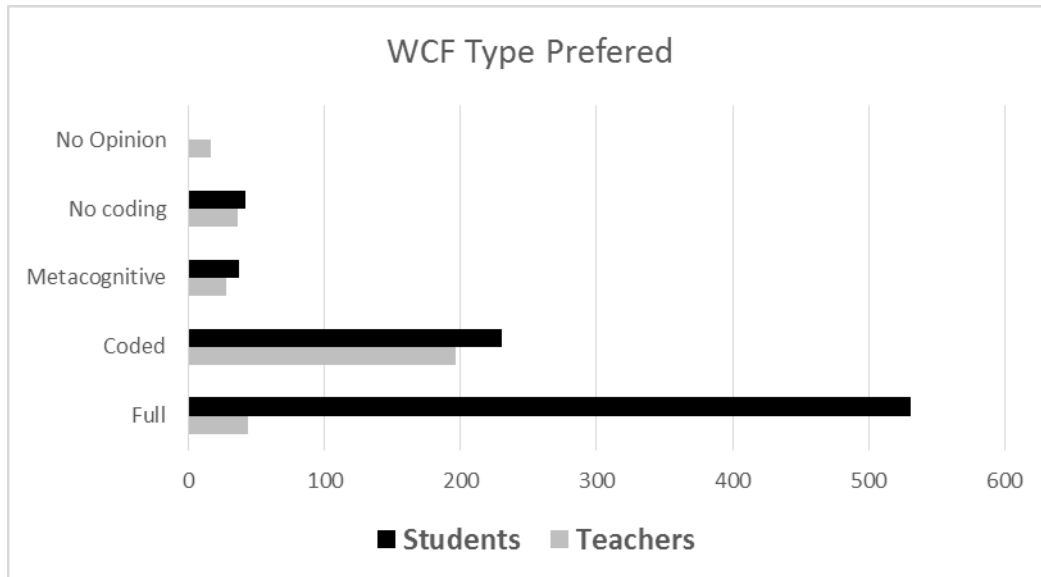


Figure 4.4. Comparing WCF preferred type between the teachers and students.

As can be seen from figure 4.4, significant differences were found in the teachers and students' perceptions with regard to their preferred WCF type. The majority of the students (63%) preferred receiving unfocussed, full WCF (Sample A) whereas, the majority of the teachers (60%) preferred giving coded WCF (Sample C).

With regards to the ranking of the error types of the language which are mostly focussed on by the teachers when giving WCF (item 25 of the teachers' questionnaire – 6 being the most important and 1 being the least), the majority of the teachers ranked grammatical errors as being the most important to correct (rank 6), then spelling (rank 5) then vocabulary errors (rank 4) as shown in figure 4.5.

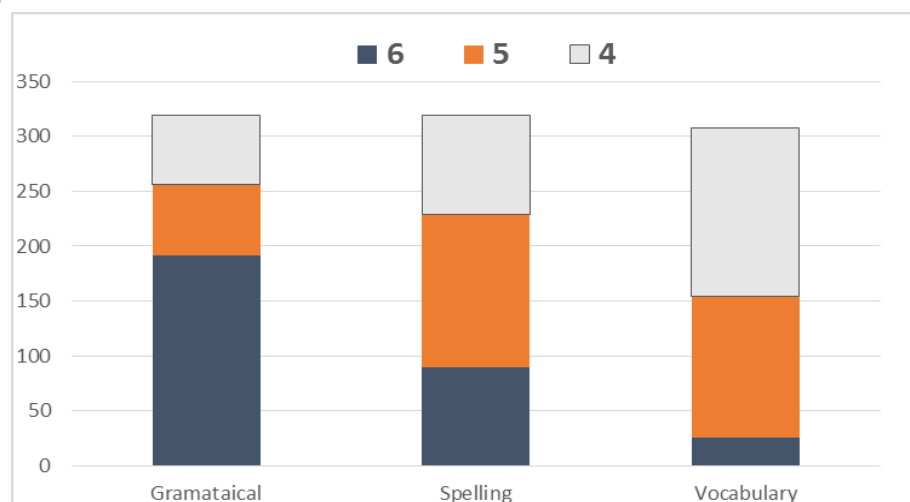


Figure 4.5. Most focussed-on errors when giving WCF by the teachers.

Similarly, item 33 of the teachers' questionnaire (construct 3), asked the teachers to rank the most challenging element in giving WCF to students. The majority of the teachers responded with the time factor since they perceived it as the most challenging factor when giving WCF to students' written work. This is followed by the way writing is taught at universities and in the third place, the lack of training for EFL teachers at their institutes. This is illustrated in figure 4.6 below.

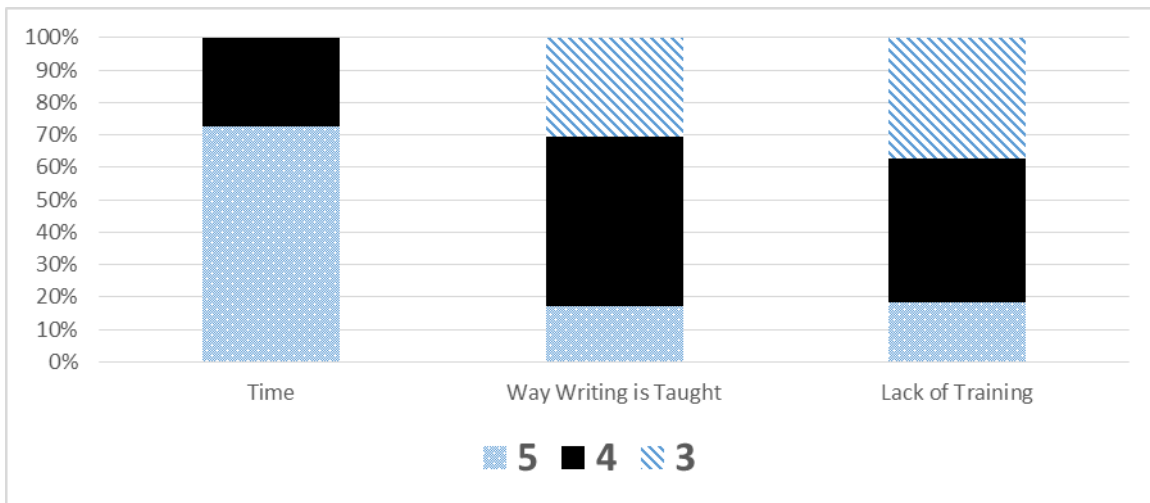


Figure 4.6. Most challenging elements in giving WCF to students.

Rank 5 (time) being the most important followed by 4 (the way writing is taught in the first place) then by 3 (lack of training for EFL teachers).

With regards to the class sizes, tables 4.12 and 4.13 indicate the responses as informed by the teachers and students, respectively.

Table 4.12. No. of students in classes – Teachers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5 – 10	38	11.9	11.9	11.9
	11 – 20	62	19.4	19.4	31.3
	21 – 30	49	15.3	15.3	46.6
	31 – 40	171	53.4	53.4	100.0
	>40	0	0	0	100.0
	Total	320	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.13. No. of students in classes – Students

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5-10	73	8.7	8.7	8.7
	11-20	175	20.8	20.8	29.5
	21-30	149	17.7	17.7	47.3
	31-40	261	31.1	31.1	78.3
	>40	182	21.7	21.7	100.0
	Total	840	100.0	100.0	

As can be seen from both tables, the students and teachers have both indicated that their classes are quite large, and the majority of teachers indicated that their class sizes are 31-40 students and a large portion of the students indicated that their class sizes are also between 31-40 and more than 40 students per class. Thus, both teachers and students gave almost identical responses to the class sizes at their institutions. As such, an important observation from both tables is that well over half of the teachers' responses (53%) as well as the students' responses (53% - class sizes 31-40 and >40 combined) indicate that the class sizes are overcrowded with mostly (31-40) and >40 students' class sizes which is even more alarming. Thus, the fact that both students and teachers share these, almost identical responses, indicate the perception and sense of inconvenience of having large class sizes which may lead to many difficulties in L2 learning in an EFL context such as KSA. Sharing this same opinion of having large class sizes by a large number of teachers as well as students at six different Saudi government universities indicates a sense of trustworthiness of their opinions.

4.4 Stage II - Qualitative Data

4.4.1 Findings

As part of the mixed-methods design and analysis, this section of the chapter presents the qualitative findings of the gathered data which was collected through audio recorded and transcribed semi-structured interviews with 10 EFL teachers and 10 EFL learners at six various tertiary level government institutes in Saudi Arabia. The interviews aimed at exploring the teachers' and students' views on their preferred methods of WCF and thus, answer the four research questions. The findings are divided into four subsequent themes where the first theme is further divided into two subthemes, the second theme into six sub themes and the fourth theme into five subthemes. The first and second themes present the participants' quotes and explains their interpretations to answer research questions 1 and 2, whereas the third and fourth theme introduce the participants' perceptions to respond to research question 3. Table 4.14 below highlights the designation of themes and sub themes.

Table 4.14. Emerging Themes and Sub Themes.

Theme	Sub-themes
EFL Learners' Preferred Method of WCF	Students' Attitudes Towards Different WCF Types
	Students' Attitudes Towards Coded WCF
EFL Teachers Preferred Method of WCF	Unpopularity of Comprehensive WCF Amongst EFL Teachers
	Awareness of the Significance of the Writing Skills
	Teaching Basic Rules of Writing
	Pair Work Activities
	Verbal Feedback
	Learner Self Correction
Learners and Teachers' Attitude towards WCF in	

EFL Classrooms	
Suggestions (by the teachers and learners) to Improve WCF System	Awareness of the Role of Writing Skills
	Issues in the Existing Writing System
	Issues with Writing Assessment Rubrics
	Lack of Time in Giving WCF
	Training and Workshops to Improve WCF System

In the next table, table 4.15, two lists of the pseudonyms of the teachers and students' interviewees are presented.

Table 4.15. Pseudonyms of teachers and students' interviewees.

Pseudonym	Gender	Teacher/Student
Samirah	F	Teacher
Samah	F	Teacher
Manal	F	Teacher
Budour	F	Teacher
Sana'a	F	Teacher
Ali	M	Teacher
Rami	M	Teacher
Rida	M	Teacher
Samara	F	Student
Suzan	F	Student
Tasneem	F	Student
Sarah	F	Student
Kamal	M	Student
Ridwan	M	Student
Bader	M	Student
Dawood	M	Student

The four research questions are:

1. What is the preferred method of WCF among EFL teachers working in the Saudi EFL context and why?
2. What is the preferred method of WCF among Saudi EFL learners and why?
3. Is the chosen method of WCF which the EFL teachers practice in the Saudi context, reflective of their own pedagogical beliefs and why?
4. What are the shared perceptions between the EFL teachers and learners when it comes to WCF?

4.4.1.1 EFL Learners' Preferred Method of WCF

As the key research aim is to understand what EFL teachers and students in the Saudi EFL context prefer to use as a written corrective feedback method, the emerging themes (extracts) from the interview transcripts give a comprehensive overview of what EFL teachers and learners would like to have in the EFL classrooms including the particular WCF type which the teachers and students prefer. All the learners expressed their satisfaction with the teachers' role in their progress as language learners. For instance, Samara (student) believes: *my writing skills were really bad, but now I'm improving*. Similarly, Suzan (student) comments: *honestly, before university, my writing was very bad, but since I started level 1, my writing has really improved*. Like other seven students in this study, Kamal (student) has acknowledged the role of EFL classroom teaching and its impact on his learning and developing writing skills.

Kamal: The teacher's correction of my writing work in different level of classes here at the university is the reason that my writing improved.

The analysed data from the interviews show a reflection of written corrective feedback on the learners' listening and speaking skills which was not even expected by the researcher in the first place. Five learners show improvement in their ability to understand English movies without playing the subtitles. In addition, the detailed corrective feedback has impacted the learners' ability to interact with non-Arabs in a confident way. Samara and Kamal explain this point in clear words:

Samara:

Now I can watch movies without subtitles. Also, now I can communicate while travelling and speaking with non-Arabs. I can also feel good when writing in English because I can make the connection with the film. I sometimes write to my teacher something that I learnt in a movie and she will make a comment on it.

Kamal: The teacher's feedback on my written essays helped me a lot in my daily life. I'm a better writer and speaker.

Hence, it appears from the data that all the interviewed students benefited from the corrective feedback and improved their writing skills. As Tasneem (student) explains:

Tasneem: Teachers' continuous feedback on my writing drafts in four different levels was the reason why I developed my writing skills.

As such, it is clear that the students reflected positively on the benefits of WCF as she acknowledged the development of her L2 writing skills due to WCF provided for her.

4.4.1.1.1 Students' Attitudes Towards Different WCF Types

As the learners were pleased with the teachers' methods of corrective feedback and they could see improvement in their writing skills, the students were asked to comment on their preferred method of corrective feedback in EFL classrooms. They were given four options A, B, C and D (See Appendix G) with description of four types of corrective feedback. The data indicate that 9 out of 10 participants chose 'comprehensive method' or sample A to be used by EFL teachers in classrooms which confirmed the results earlier in the questionnaire. Tasneem's and Kamal's words are specimen of what other seven EFL learners believed.

Tasneem: I like comprehensive methods when the teacher highlights my mistakes and tells me how to correct them. This is the best way to learn.

Kamal: *The teacher would correct my writing and tell me what my mistakes are and how to correct them. His written and verbal feedback really helped me a lot to improve.*

In a similar way, Sarah (student) makes a very strong point about her preference of receiving comprehensive feedback in the classroom. She goes a step further and asks for the teacher's written and verbal feedback on her own draft. She says:

Sarah:

I prefer to write and get my writing corrected by the instructor in my presence so I can see my mistakes and work on them. I don't think that seeing a corrected sample will help as if you see the correction you may forget what you just saw, but if it the teacher gives feedback while discussing the mistakes with you, you will correct them in a better way.

Their preference for comprehensive methods has almost identical reasons. For example, they like to know about their mistakes, so they can improve and achieve good grades. Contrary to what two teachers thought, "students are only interested in grades and they pay no attention to teachers' comments", all the students expressed their interest in teacher's feedback to learn, practice and improve their writing skills.

Ridwan: *I prefer getting grades and the detailed feedback of my teachers because I really want to learn from my mistakes.*

However, one student, Bader believes that option B (Coded WCF) is the best choice for students to learn from the teacher's feedback which involves the instructor to underline the mistakes and write the code for spelling, punctuation or grammar errors. Bader thinks that commenting on every mistake is not always important and students should put in their own efforts too.

Bader: *I prefer B because it makes you work hard to find the correct answer. This will make the answer stick in your mind. However, sample A will give the correct answer right away and this is not going to make you learn anything.*

This also shows the learners' awareness of the significance of writing skills. All the learners were of the same view when they were asked a question about how important they considered writing skills as part of their language learning process.

Bader: *Writing is a key to get good grades. I cannot be a good professional if I don't work on my writing skills.*

4.4.1.1.2 Students' Attitudes Towards Coded WCF

As students were asked about the use of codes in the process of corrective feedback, they came up with negative comments. Eight out of ten of the students were not familiar with the coding technique. More importantly, their unfamiliarity with codes caused them problems to understand the teacher's comments. Their lack of understanding of codes can be seen in the following extracts from the interviews of Kamal and Dawoud (students).

Kamal: *I find coding difficult to understand and every now and then I go back to the codes table. It takes lots of time.*

Dawoud: *I did not know anything about coding. Teachers did not discuss it with class.*

4.4.1.2 EFL Teachers Preferred Method of WCF

The above section of the data presentation suggests that majority of the students preferred to receive teacher's feedback using comprehensive method. It is interesting to see that all learners consider it a time-consuming activity for the teachers; however, the students deem it very effective in terms of their learning and development. It is worth noting the existing methods of corrective feedback (mainly coded WCF) are useful for students, as those particular existing methods are perceived to be popular amongst teachers, and they have seen improvements in their writing proficiency owing to the feedback and comments they received on their written work. Samirah (teacher) thinks, "comprehensive correction takes too much time and effort on part of the teachers, but it's really a good way to teach". When the teachers were asked why students prefer comprehensive method of WCF, seven out of ten teachers came up with common views. For instance, Samah (teacher) said;

Samah:

Of course, students like to be spoon-fed because this is what they are used to at schools. It is easy for them. They can see the mistakes underlined and corrected and they do not have to put anymore effort.

4.4.1.2.1 Unpopularity of Comprehensive WCF Amongst EFL Teachers

The data explicitly explain why EFL teachers do not prefer the comprehensive method as WCF in their classrooms, they have unanimously given their verdict in favour of option B which involves underlining mistakes and writing error codes. Like other teachers, Manal, Ali and Samah (teachers) put their views forward:

Manal: When I used sample B, I often want my students to look for the correct answer and work hard to correct it. However, not all students like to do that, especially lower level.

Ali: In comprehensive method or sample A, it is like giving everything to the students. They will not make any effort to think and learn.

Samah: I believe sample B is good as it allows students to reflect and work collaboratively to find a correct answer.

The teachers also gave their reasons for out rightly rejecting samples C (metacognitive WCF) and D (no WCF). They believe that learners need feedback, comments and remarks about their work which lead to their learning and development. if students receive no feedback, their learning will not be facilitated. Rami (teacher) summarises this point well.

Rami:

The ones that I do not like or prefer are sample C and D where you write nothing. There is not any kind of feedback in these two samples and it will not help the students at all. B is what we are told to do in our institution to underline the mistakes with error codes. Nevertheless, feedback and comments must be there, so the learners know their performance.

However, Budour thinks if teachers have sufficient time and the class strength allows, s/he can go for option A.

Budour: If teachers can manage time, comprehensive method is the best as this sample lets the students know what exactly their mistakes are and how to correct them. Probably, they won't repeat them in the future.

Samah believes that teachers should be flexible and use an eclectic approach when it comes to correcting learners' writing mistakes. She suggests an alternative model or sample E that would be a combination of A and B.

Samah:

I guess there should be sample E. It should be a combination of sample A and B where we give the comprehensive correction when it is really needed. The correction method differs in each level. We should be flexible and dynamic to meet the students' needs to work a little bit harder to meet halfway.

Manal shared a similar view as she thinks that teachers need to assess the learners' needs and adjust their feedback according to what learners require to focus on. She said:

Manal:

The instructor does not have to apply sample A for all the students. Some students may have simple mistakes that can be corrected using sample B. However, other students may have a lot of mistakes in many areas and their needs the comprehensive correction, so the instructor should use sample A.

Similarly, Sana'a and Ali (teachers), having opted for sample B, considers comprehensive method useful if teachers can afford time and resources. She thinks that teachers can give comprehensive feedback to students who need more attention.

Sana'a:

Yes, I agree that sample A will take longer time, but instructor can apply it only for the students that are really committed and want to learn. He does not have to use A with all students, and if he is using sample B, he needs to explain the codes to the students. The instructor can also discuss the common mistakes and show the students the correction to help save time.

Ali: I believe students should be given feedback based on sample B, however, we can use sample A with lower level proficiency students as they often require more time to do correction.

The quote from Sana'a indicates the significance of teaching codes to the students as well. As learners complained about their lack of ability to understand the coding process, teachers in their interviews emphasised on teaching and explaining codes in the class. Samah makes a very strong point:

Samah:

The codes should be explained to the students from the beginning. They need to see samples of the correction and the codes so they will be familiar with this method. The students should also use the codes to correct their mistakes. That is what I believe that the one session that we offer to introduce the codes is not enough. They should practice the codes more. So, if we are using sample B we should make sure they really understand the codes and we should give them 2 or 3 sessions of feedback before we give them the final test score. So, oral and written feedback are very important.

Rida (teacher) also highlights the importance of teaching coding system before giving writing lessons. Like other teachers, he is also aware of learners anticipated difficulties in understanding the writing mechanics if they are not explained the coding scheme.

Rida:

Whatever sample we use, either A or B, we should make sure that students really understand the codes and we should give them 2 or 3 sessions of feedback before we give them the final test score. Teacher should explain codes and the process of feedback upfront to develop learners' understanding of and familiarity with the writing process.

4.4.1.2.2 Awareness of the Significance of Writing Skills

As the data show the learners' awareness of the significance of writing skills (based on the output of the students' questionnaire) as part of their language learning process, the EFL teachers have also expressed their intent to enable their learners to write well. All 10 EFL teachers consider their teaching methods to be aiming at learners' language learning and development. They use a variety of techniques to make writing easy for the learners. Sana'a's words encapsulate this point nicely.

Sana'a:

My aim is to make students write well. I believe that writing is a skill that needs to follow up from the beginning. Every module, I have new students that I don't know about their previous writing skills. So, I start by telling them to write a small paragraph to get to learn about their skill and level. The assessment of the learners' writing skills help me design, supplement, and adapt writing material according to the students' needs.

As such, it can be seen that the teachers are conscious about their role in trying to help their students improve their L2 writing skills. Furthermore, it shows that teachers are also keen on adapting their teaching styles so as to accommodate for their students' needs. It can also be seen that teachers give high consideration to the writing skills by creating an atmosphere of gradual learning which echoes Vygotsky's ZPD principles.

4.4.1.2.3 Teaching Basic Rules of Writing

In a similar way to what Sana'a reflected upon regarding her practices in teaching writing, Samirah begins with teaching very basic rules of writing especially to students with limited knowledge of writing in English. The teachers have commonly voiced their concerns about the low level of learners' proficiency. They attribute this weakness to the low-quality education in primary schools.

Samirah: Some students in higher levels come to us knowing nothing about the basics of writing, such as punctuation. So, I have to teach them this first. At the same time, I must cover the syllabus as well. The students here do not know the basics that they should learn in primary schools.

Samirah's account is a reflection on the challenges many teachers in KSA may face when teaching EFL students where a teacher might be having a high expectation of some students who are enrolled in the higher proficiency level and thus, a struggle may exist between meeting the needs of the students in the writing skills and covering the mandatory syllabus of the course in the, usually, short time of the modular semester (7 weeks). Furthermore, it can be sensed from Samirah's account, which is echoed by many EFL teachers in KSA, the need to have a framework for teaching and assessing writing where WCF plays an important role in the development of the writing skills of the students.

4.4.1.2.4 Pair Work Activities

Samah involves students in the process of writing and correcting their drafts. She finds pair work activities very effective for students' learning in the writing class which make them more active and interdependent learners.

Samah:

In my class, the students write the first draft and they exchange it with their partners. They highlight each other's mistakes and then correct their own drafts. This is followed by submitting the final draft that gets corrected and graded by the

instructor. I believe this helps the students to work harder and look for their mistakes. At the end, the instructor gives his feedback and comments on the final draft.

Samah's reflection was similar to a short account which was given by another teacher, Rida who states:

In trying to assist the students understand their mistakes as well as the error codes, I always ask them to exchange their sheets with their peers and check each other's writing script. This way, the students are more at ease and having pair work activities always motivate them. They even have fun marking each other's mistakes.

As such, it can be seen from both, Samah and Rida's statements that teachers recognise the importance of work activities in helping students be motivated, recognise writing errors as well as feeling more at ease when both, receiving and giving feedback to their peers. This is beneficial on many fronts, but mainly, in helping the EFL learners improve their writing skill as well as encouraging the learners to become autonomous learners through peer discussion and feedback.

4.4.1.2.5 Verbal Feedback

Budour (teacher) has a different approach to giving feedback on learners' writing drafts. She considers verbal feedback more effective than written comments on the learners' drafts. Her reason is:

Budour:

The best correction way is when the instructor sits with the student and explains to her each mistake and shows her how to correct it. I do not like correcting their errors on the paper because the students will get confused and they will not learn anything.

From Budour's account above, it can be clearly seen that many teachers have different approaches they perceive as the most effective when giving the student CF. Also, this indicates that teachers can adopt different approaches to CF depending on various factors such as class sizes and L2 proficiency levels

of the students. Budour reflected on her perception that providing the students with coded WCF may not be effective for some of the students since there are a large number of them who struggle with the whole concept of error codes especially if they are L2 lower ability students. Furthermore, having a one-to-one feedback sessions with the students can accelerate the L2 learning process where this individuality of CF sessions can help the students recognise written errors more cognitively and more attentively.

4.4.1.2.6 Learner Self Correction

Samirah's way of dealing with learners is not much different from other teachers in the study. She gives learners an opportunity to correct their mistakes. If they fail to do so, she is always there to help. Her role as a writing teacher is more of a facilitator as she explains:

Samirah:

The aim of giving students feedback on their written work is to offer them something constructive. So, what I do is that I identify their mistakes and then let them try to self-correct if possible. If it is not easy or possible for them to correct their mistakes, I explain to them and show them the right way to do it.

Again, Samirah's account of her approach to WCF is rooted in her motive to help her students become autonomous learners and help them become more self-determined to learn from their errors and notice those errors themselves. This is certainly echoed by many EFL teachers in KSA who believe that some students are accustomed to copying blindly what their teachers write on the board and asks them to do in class and how it is necessary to break this so called "spoon fed" issue which some students in KSA may have been accustomed to from school days. Another advantage to this self-correction process is that it gives the teachers ample time to inspect their students' progress and address the needs of each student individually which far better than having a group session for the whole class where some students may benefit (usually higher abilities) and some may not. Thus, this is one of the approaches which the teachers follow in order to tackle the burden of time issue which is the most troublesome for the teacher when it comes to providing WCF.

4.4.1.3 Learners and Teachers' Attitude towards WCF in EFL Classrooms

EFL learners in this study are all Saudi nationals who speak Arabic as their first language and study English as a foreign language in the preparatory year programme of a Saudi Arabian state university. The learners' proficiency levels and their responses to interview questions suggest that all 10 learners have urge for learning English language. Their love for learning English language can be seen in their attitude towards watching English films, songs, documentaries and TV programmes that helped them achieve English proficiency. For half of these EFL learners, English learning journey began at home with the support of their siblings; however, all the learners find language classroom a fun place where they could hone their language skills in the expert guidance of EFL teachers. The extracts from the interviews by Bader (student), Kamal and Samara are suggestive of how EFL learners benefited from their own proactive approach to learning English language.

Bader: My English language learning journey started at home. My father didn't speak English, but he really wanted me to learn even though I wasn't interested. He used to buy me video tapes to learn. This continued till I started elementary school.

Kamal: English is my favourite language and it's not very hard to learn it.

Samara: I started watching English movies and listening to English songs that helped me a lot.

Suzan has developed her writing skills through practice and hard work. She has shown great progress that also indicates her level of motivation and interest. Her continuous practice has made her an effortless writer.

Suzan:

I enjoy writing. Now in the final exam I write fluently and I do not even stop to think what to write. Most of the students are scared to use some words as they are not sure of the spelling and makes their writing look bad. That is why practicing writing is very important to improve all the needed skills for writing.

As the interview transcriptions of the EFL learners suggest their intrinsic motivation and a positive attitude to learning English language; however, the EFL teachers in this study mainly paint a negative picture of the EFL learners and classroom environment. Dawoud calls these classrooms “a fun place to learn English”, whereas Rami believes “students lack interest and motivation”. This contradiction between the perception of having a ‘fun classroom’ and ‘lack of motivation by the students’ is found in the interviews of 6 other teachers as well those who consider their learners disinterested in EFL classes. These eight teachers are of the view that learners rarely learn anything from the WCF they receive on their written work and thus the whole effort is usually a futile one.

Budour: The biggest issue is that our students are used to be given everything to memorize. Even the answers to the exams which they memorize and produce them in exam. However, the memorization technique doesn't work in language learning.

Rami: Very few students learn from the feedback, but only those who are eager to learn the language. Overall, students are really affected by the lack of motivation, which comes first from the family. Not everything is the responsibility of the teachers.

The above quote also shows the teachers’ belief that Saudi parents hardly support their children in their studies, which is also contradictory to what Bader and other learners expressed in their interviews, quoted above.

In relation to the learners’ lack of motivation, interest and seriousness about written corrective feedback, the teachers highlight a very serious issue. Eight teachers believe that Saudi EFL learners do not benefit from the teachers’ written or verbal feedback on their writing drafts and the goal of the learners is to achieve passing grades and move to the next level. This attitude spoils teachers’ endeavour to motivate learners as well as it affects teachers’ motivation to put in their effort and give a detailed feedback on the learners’ drafts. Quotes from Rida’s (teacher) interview exemplify this point.

Rida: The students often do not care about the correction or feedback, they just want to know if they have passed or failed. They expect you to give them the answer and help them pass or they expect the magic word “bonus” to get an extra mark.

Rami (teacher) further exemplifies this point:

Rami: Our students just want to see the grades. If they get 9 or 8 out of 10 and they pass the exam they do not even bother to ask what the mistakes were. On the other hand, if they do not pass or get low score they come and complain about their grades.

Although Budour (teacher) does not fully agree with Rami and Rida as she thinks: *this differs from a student to another” and EFL teachers in the Saudi EFL context ...should deal with students according to their dedication for learning.*

In her opinion, teachers’ assessment of their learners’ learning needs and motivation for learning are key to successful teaching of writing skills in the EFL classrooms. Sana’a (teacher) concludes this point by calling it precisely a reciprocal process between the student and the teacher in the process of learning and teaching.

Sana’a: Learners’ writing can only be improved if both the teachers and students take interest in teaching and learning of writing skills. If the instructors used sample A for correction and explained the mistakes, the students have to make corrections. If learners are careless, they won’t learn.

4.4.1.4 Suggestions to Improve WCF System from the Teachers’ Perspective

4.4.1.4.1 Awareness of the Role of Writing Skills

Despite varied opinions about the learners’ motivation to learn from the corrective feedback, the EFL teachers in this study have unanimously underscored the role of developing writing skills which play an important part in the learners’ development. There are challenges and teachers are aware of them and they know how to overcome them.

Rida:

In Saudi schools, writing is not a priority, but in this institute, I can see the difference. The instructors are really dedicated and they concentrate on each skill. I must say that writing here is a priority because if we improve it other language skills will be improved automatically.

4.4.1.4.2 Issues in the Existing Writing System

EFL teachers in this study associated various issues with the existing writing system. One prominent example of the teachers' concern is that almost half of them believe that the existing system in the institute is a replica of western practice that does not suit the contextual realities at the English language institute, where the participants work. The exported system (e.g. from Western countries) often creates problems related to students' streaming in different levels and managing classrooms. Rami's extract is a sound example of what other four teachers think.

Rami:

The management applies western teaching standards that are quite incompatible to our system. We are different and our needs are different. A student may pass the placement test but when he memorized all possible answers just to pass the placement, it will not guarantee his placement in the right level. So, when he goes to the assigned level, he will be behind his classmates. Placement in an inappropriate level will affect teaching and pose classroom management issues as well which includes teaching writing, assessment and corrective feedback.

As can be seen, Rami's reflection is indicative of highlighting issues related to exporting certain procedures relating to teaching L2 and assessment relating to it, including WCF. His account highlights the fact that some EFL students in KSA are accustomed to blindly memorizing information learned in lessons and from books. For instance, students tend to memorise generic written essays in the hope that the writing exam question will be the same (by chance) as one of those they memorised for the exam.

4.4.1.4.3 Issues with Writing Assessment Rubrics

The writing assessment rubrics used for various levels of writing pose another challenge to the teachers. These rubrics often reflect international standards; however, the lower level of Saudi EFL students often fail to meet those

standards. Therefore, all the teachers in this study demand revised rubrics meeting the needs of the learners in the Saudi EFL context.

Budour:

We are using a rubric and standards that are completely incompatible to our learners' learning needs. These rubrics and standards may be good for the western schools or ESL learners; however, they do not work with our EFL students. We have to come up with standards that fit our students and our own context in Saudi Arabia.

Budour's account of the issue with ready-made rubrics from the publishers is that these rubrics might have been designed globally and perhaps to suit certain contexts but not others. As such, her perception on this issue seems to be directed to the stakeholders in the Saudi context so as to design a more suitable rubrics tailored towards meeting the specific structure and layout of different EFL courses at different institutions in KSA.

4.4.1.4.4 Lack of Time in Giving WCF

Another major issue that is surfaced in the data is the lack of time for EFL teachers to give feedback on the learners' writing drafts. This is one of the key reasons why most of the teachers prefer to apply sample B and not to use the comprehensive method as a WCF model. In teachers' opinion, time constraints affect the quality of teaching writing skills as dealing with 30-40 students in a 75 minutes long session is always a challenge that impacts on the quality of teaching in learning EFL students. Extracts from Rida's, Rami's and Samah's interviews are similar to what other seven EFL teachers believe.

Rida:

The key to do the learners justice in terms of writing is to give them time and we lose so much time on other things. We have to give them a lot in short time which doesn't help. I would love to take them out to practice the language or do more writing skills test in a fun way, but unfortunately, there is not enough time for that kind of creativity.

Rami: *I believe students can improve their writing skills, if teachers have sufficient time to go through the whole process and expose learners to a variety of writing samples. Based on our system, we do not have that time to review, as a result learner suffer.*

Samah: *Giving feedback and comments on learners' writing is a time-consuming task and teachers never had enough time to finish the prescribed syllabus.*

Owing to the aforementioned issues, such as lack of time and inappropriate assessment rubrics, EFL teachers and students prefer to have more designated time to be allotted to work on the writing skills and on WCF. Samara's comments are specimen of what the other 9 students think whereas Sana'a's suggestion is representative of 9 other teachers' views.

Samara (student): *We need more time to think, write, discuss and correct our mistakes.*

Sana'a (teacher): *Students need time to reflect on their mistakes and benefit from the teacher's feedback.*

As can be seen, Sana'a's reflection is indicative of allowing teachers independence in this issue and allow them the freedom to make their own judgement with regards to WCF.

4.4.1.4.5 Training and Workshops to Improve WCF System

Apart from allocating sufficient time, teachers wish to have more training and workshops on how to give effective feedback to students of different levels in an EFL classroom. They believe that the four WCF samples in this study can be further developed and adapted to the levels and needs of our students. Rida's views are in line with five other teachers' opinion on this topic.

Rida (teacher): *I believe teachers should get more frequent training on using these rubrics and giving more constructive feedback to students.*

4.5 Summary of the Qualitative Data Analysis

This section of the chapter has presented the qualitative data gathered from 20 semi-structured interviews with 10 EFL teachers and 10 EFL students at six

different tertiary level institutions in Saudi Arabia. The findings of this section attempted to answer the four relevant research questions. It can be inferred from the findings that the (majority) of the EFL students' preferred method of WCF is the comprehensive method that offers an opportunity to the learners to see their mistakes and learn how to correct them, as per what they perceived to be the case. However, the teachers and students consider this method a time-consuming, but greatly beneficial to the learners' development. On the other hand, EFL teachers largely opted for option B which involves underlining and coding errors in the learners' drafts. Teachers believe that comprehensive method would obstruct learners' thinking to reflect on their mistakes and try to correct them. Nevertheless, the teachers suggested to be more flexible and adapt their ways of giving feedback according to the learning needs of the learners by mixing sample A and sample B as needed. With regards to the current WCF methods in classrooms, teachers voiced their concerns about the lack of time to give detailed feedback to students, insufficient training on how to give effective feedback to learners of varied proficiency levels and the inappropriacy of the assessment rubrics that affect the assessment of writing tests. The next chapter presents the discussions and conclusions as they emerged from the data analysis.

Chapter 5: Discussions

5.1 The Research Questions and The Foci of The Study

The main foci of this mixed-methods study are to identify the preferred method of WCF in the Saudi EFL context and explore EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions about the suitability and effectiveness of the WCF methods applied in the EFL classrooms.

Following the data collection and analysis in the previous chapter (Chapter 4), this chapter interprets the findings as they contribute to providing answers to the four research questions of this research study and explains how they fit in with the previously published literature on the practices of WCF in other contexts, as discussed in the literature review chapter (Chapter Two). The discussion of the findings in this section revolves around the following three research questions:

1. What is the preferred method of WCF among EFL teachers working in the Saudi EFL context and why?
2. What is the preferred method of WCF among Saudi EFL learners and why?
3. What are the shared perceptions between the EFL teachers and learners when it comes to WCF?

In the second main part of this chapter, the fourth research question will be discussed as it related to the chosen WCF method by the EFL teachers and whether it is reflective of their own cognitive beliefs and why. The rationale behind designating a separate section for this research question is due to the fact that it may have important pedagogical implications for the EFL teachers in their practices of WCF. This is not to mention that the essence of this research study from the teachers' perspective, is to explore the real choice of WCF type and why and furthermore, if they would choose another time if the circumstances are different (say, the classroom setting or the proficiency level of the students).

5.2 Part 1 – Preferred WCF Type Amongst Teachers and Students

The study has been a gradual development in its original focus on the preferences and perceptions of teachers and students on WCF, to a much wider arena and viewing the issue from the surface, at first glance, this study can be perceived as having an element of predictability as an apparent sign of the its' findings where it resembles similar studies such as the one conducted by Al Shahrani (2013) in the Saudi context. However, the study conducted on WCF by Al Shahrani (2013) involved only 41 male, student and teacher participants in the survey part of the study and a mere three male teachers who agreed to participate in the semi structured interviews' part of the study, where all the participants belonged to one university in Saudi Arabia. Thus, this study had the inclusion factor of the opinions and perceptions of both, male and female teachers and students, as a prominent feature and without any limitations or restrictions (set by the researcher) towards having male or female EFL teachers or students' participating in the study so that the overall picture of their opinions and perceptions on WCF are made clear. The latter characteristic of this research has been one of the major aims and a positive feature where the huge number of both male and female teachers (320 in total) and student participants (840 in total) in the questionnaire part of the study and 10 teachers as well as 10 students in the semi structured interview part; provided a more comprehensive view of this controversial heated and debatable area of research in TESOL. More interestingly, teachers as well as students have shown great enthusiasm and were very keen and interested in participating in this research because they viewed it as an important topic having an impact on their teaching (for the teachers) and learning (for the students). They were driven by the fact that they wanted to make their contribution clear and their voices heard towards an issue they feel strongly about which is both a feeling and a concern that are shared amongst several researchers in the field (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Ferris, 2014; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Norouzian, Farahani, & Akbar, 2012).

Looking at the results of the analysis of the gathered data from both the quantitative as well as the qualitative data of the study, it can be clearly seen that all the participants, teachers and students, had their perceptions regarding

this issue (WCF) which materialised in their responses to the various items in the questionnaires as well as their statements in the semi structured interviews (Norouzian et al., 2012).

In both questionnaires' responses (teachers and students), the wide range of qualified teachers with many years of experience (tables 4.4 and 4.5) as well as the diversified socio-economic background and proficiency level of the students (tables 4.10 and 4.11) gave a wealth of responses and opinion with regards to WCF in the Saudi, EFL context. This was a positive sign for this study since it aimed at having a broad base of participation from EFL teachers as well students with their wide range of opinions and responses (if any).

5.3 The Impact of WCF on the EFL Learners' L2 Writing Skills

Error correction and the provision of corrective feedback on EFL learners' writing drafts can have a great impact (as perceived by the teachers and the learners' participants in this study) on their language proficiency. The findings of this study have unequivocally shown that written corrective feedback, when appropriately implemented, can lead to improvement in learners' writing skills. There is a strong evidence in the literature that corrective feedback is one way of developing language learners' writing skills (Hartshorn et al., 2010; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011; Spada, 2011; Valeo & Spada, 2015).

The current study also indicates that EFL learners have expressed their views that they made noticeable progress and developed their language skills owing to the teachers' corrective feedback in different level of classes at the university. More interestingly, the findings of this study show that the positive influence of certain written corrective feedback approaches on the EFL learners' listening, speaking and reading skills. Their confidence in being interacting with non-Arabs in English and watching English movies without subtitles are instances of their development as English language learners. However, there is not a global consensus in the literature to see the impact of corrective feedback on the learners' other language skills, such as reading, listening and speaking. Nevertheless, the findings of this study answer a key question: Does WCF lead to SLA? and based on the findings of this study which are evident in the gathered and analysed quantitative and qualitative data, the answer is yes. This

is evident both in the data collected from both questionnaires as well as the semi structured interviews with teachers and learners. This is supported by the studies of Hartshorn et al. (2010), Ferris (2010b) and Ferris (2012).

The EFL learners' satisfaction with the teachers' comments and feedback on their writings is indicative of the fact that WCF plays a major role in giving feedback to L2 learners (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Ferris, 2014). The EFL teachers in this study too, consider WCF an important aspect of language learning and teaching which contributes to the development of EFL learners' L2 proficiency. The findings are also in line with other researchers who perceive feedback to be useful as well as beneficial to the L2 learners in general where its effects are powerful and positive. (Alfieri et al., 2011; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Steedly et al., 2008). The findings of the study do not outrightly support the sociocultural theory or classroom learning as socially constructed as students' learning does not occur as a result of interaction with peers; rather it is a unidirectional process which involves teacher and student which might be seen as a sociocultural practice in which the learners are interacting with a more knowledgeable person (the teacher). Although this type of learning cannot be seen as a purely individual-based process as teachers themselves are the source of information for their students, the absence of interaction patterns with other students poses questions on the nature of classroom teaching and learning. It appears to be independent learning and not inter-dependent where the learners take initiatives in their learning independently from their teachers or peers. This also shows that the individuals' own effort and interest can be equally effective ways of language acquisition, and social interaction, collaborative efforts or scaffolding are not necessarily the key to one's ZPD in relation to developing writing skills. The scaffolding part is one of the interesting outcome concerned with the issue of types of WCF provided by the teachers where the teacher can, at an initial stage, utilise a comprehensive and unfocussed WCF correcting globalised errors for the learners then at an intermediate stage, utilise focussed WCF while marking selective and localised errors. Eventually, the teacher can opt for the coded WCF where the learners have become more confident and proficient in their L2 writing skills. The latter is supported by the literature exploring the development of L2 writing skills as it relates to various WCF types received at different stages of drafts' submission

(Bitchener & Storch, 2016; Utami, 2014). However, the interaction between teacher and students aims to promote an advance level of negotiation between them which is based on the students' specific ZPD as seen by Devrim (2014) and Pawlak (2013). In the EFL context, this one-on-one negotiation between teacher and students may help the EFL learners to develop their L2 linguistic accuracy as individual students receive attention and expert guidance which help them understand their errors and dealt with them separately.

5.4 WCF practices in Saudi EFL context

In the process of giving corrective feedback to the EFL learners, one common strategy is to highlight or underline the errors to make them noticeable to the students. It is an indirect approach to dealing with learners' errors and providing them with comments. Noticing is considered an effective technique to promote learning and development of learners (Bitchener & Storch, 2016; Sheen, 2010). The findings of this study support Bitchener & Storch as well as Sheen's stances on the significance of noticing errors and gaps in the learners' writings, which eventually leads to language acquisition. EFL teachers in this study expressed their opinion that they find it sufficient to highlight learners' errors that could bring some stimulus into focal attention (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). As Schmidt (1990) believes, noticing is the process necessary for L2 learning and serves as a bridge between learners' awareness and L2 learning (Loschky & Harrington, 2013). In the same way, the findings illustrate that EFL students learn and develop their cognitive ability by consciously considering the errors highlighted by the teachers.

Schmidt (1995) stresses the point that corrective feedback should involve three main steps: noticing, understanding and awareness. Though the data indicate the significance of noticing, there is a lack of substantial evidence in the data whether the EFL teachers consider understanding and awareness as important as noticing. Despite it, teachers do consider learners' awareness of the error codes important for their understanding and language development. Further research in this direction can determine the concept of whether understanding and awareness of errors can equally impact learners' development of L2 proficiency.

There is a common belief that identifying errors in learners' writings can lead to their de-motivation and overdependency on their teachers. The perception of seeing errors negatively is mainly based on the notion that if the learners are allowed to continue making them, these errors will become habits (Loewen & Reinders, 2011). On the contrary, it is also believed that identifying errors and making them more noticeable can positively impact learners' motivation and awareness (Durkin & Rittle-Johnson, 2012). The findings of this study show support to the latter view and shows a positive impact of WCF on the EFL learner's ability to write well. EFL Learners in this study have shown great interest in their writing skills and the majority of the interviewed student participants have expressed their preferences towards receiving detailed feedback on their drafts, meaning that the errors pointed out by the teachers do not negatively influence their motivation. Instead, they are considered as significant signs that guide the L2 learners to recognise and analyse these errors in order to develop L2 proficiency and avoid the shortcomings arising from the traditional "errors corrected whenever discovered" (Selinker, 1972, p. 23). With regards to the EFL teachers' perceptions, there is no clear evidence in the data to indicate that if they find errors as part of the learners' habits or whether giving feedback can negatively influence learners' motivation.

A detailed feedback on the EFL learners' writing draft can lead to their development as language learners (Bitchener & Knoch, 2015b). In line with Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, the learners' views in this study make a very strong point that if they receive comprehensible input, they will move to a higher proficiency level. The learners' belief that they have greatly improved their language skills due to the teachers' feedback on their writing drafts, supports the view that no explicit teaching of grammatical structures or drills are necessary if the L2 learners are exposed to sufficient comprehensible input which ultimately will lead to language development (Krashen, 1985). However, the findings are in stark contrast with Krashen's (1985) claim that error correction and WCF should not take place in L2 learning since he views language acquisition as a natural process that occurs over time and error correction or WCF may hinder this natural process. On the contrary, the EFL learners' participants in this study consider error correction an important factor and key to their development of L2 proficiency which does not occur naturally;

rather it requires conscious effort and attention to notice and understand the mistake and then improve it. The EFL teachers in this study also indicate that EFL learners with low proficiency level can require very detailed feedback and they may take longer than expected to absorb the feedback and develop their understanding. The teachers' and students' views in this study refute Krashen's (1985) and Lemke's (1990) claim that L2 learners are capable of writing fluently in the target language through acquisition via exposure to authentic text in a natural process of communication. So, the findings confirm the fact that direct intervention in the form of error correction or language rules, can contribute to a large extent to the learners' language development, as perceived by the responses of the teachers.

As the interaction hypothesis supports the notion of feedback and to provide the L2 learners with WCF, there is no mention of the three key elements: input, output and feedback. The teachers have expressed their views on the aspects of output and feedback; however, there is no stated evidence of the input. It can be assumed that teachers give instruction on the writing tasks first and expect learners to produce their own drafts, a way of giving them input. In terms of giving feedback on the learners' writings, the EFL teachers in this study believe that the learners' attention should be drawn towards the form, spelling and structure by highlighting the errors. On the contrary, various literature shows that teachers should only focus on the form which highlights the need to raise students' awareness of their mistakes in spoken and written discourses (Long, 1991, 1996, 1998). The EFL teachers in this study emphasise that learners should be given time to think about their errors and make informed decisions. Presumably, this will involve learners to work together, think about and discuss their errors and make corrections with their peers in pairs or groups; however, the findings do not explicitly state this practice and further research can solidify the impact of collaborative error correction on learners' L2 development in EFL context.

5.5 EFL Teachers' and Learners' Views on WCF

The findings have explicitly indicated that the majority of the learners' preference is to receive detailed, direct and comprehensive feedback on their work whereas the majority of the teachers indicated that their preferred WCF is

the coded WCF type. From the perspective of interaction hypothesis, detailed feedback will involve varied interactions, such as input, output and feedback, which can enhance learners' understanding of their mistakes (Polio, 2012). Although it requires a substantial amount of effort on the part of the teachers and may not be feasible in large size classrooms, its impact on learners' development cannot be denied. In certain classes where time allows to correct global errors, this strategy can be an effective and productive one. However, teachers in this study have expressed their displeasure regarding time constraints and believe that, giving comprehensive and unfocussed feedback is not feasible and they can only highlight the learners' errors. Interviews' findings show that teachers talk about errors in general and it is not clear from the data if they refer to global errors or local errors (Bates, 1993; Van Beuningen, 2010). It is evident from table 4.6 that the majority of the participating EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia (60%) use coded WCF type on their students' written assignments or exam papers. This has significance as an indication of what the majority of tertiary level institutes prefer their teachers to use when providing WCF. However, coded WCF, apparently, does not necessarily reflect comprehensively on what the teachers believe as the best type of WCF to provide for their students. This is apparent from table 4.7 where more than a third of the teachers' participants expressed their beliefs that they prefer to use a different WCF than the one they selected in table 4.6 as well as another third who believed that the chosen type, though reflected on their own belief as the best choice of WCF to provide to the students, however, they expressed that it was not always the case. From the latter and taking the majority of the teachers who selected coded WCF type into consideration, it can be understood that many of the teachers, feel that they may wish to provide a more diverse selection of WCF types depending on the proficiency level of the learners. Also, they take into consideration the dedication of the students. This is clear from the comments made by two of the teachers' participants in the semi structured interview expressed, by stating that they sometimes opt to provide a more comprehensive and unfocused WCF to keen and serious lower abilities' students so as to help them recognise their errors and prevent such errors from occurring in the students' subsequent drafts. This practice of differentiation when deciding to give a particular type of WCF to learners, is evident and in line with various hypotheses such as the noticing hypothesis by Schmidt (1990) as

well as the interlanguage hypothesis by Selinker (1972), from the responses of the teachers' participants where marking errors play an important role in WCF. The latter is echoed in the teachers' responses to item 16 in the teachers' questionnaire where many of the participants (56%) indicated that they disagreed with marking all the errors on the script of the students. This reflection on the practice of marking all the errors was also echoed in an interview with a male teacher where he reflected on the negative effect of marking all the errors for the students: "...if I mark all the errors for my students, they will not learn much because they will get confused" (#Ali – pseudonym). The same conclusion is also confirmed in research studies carried out by Bitchener (2008), Bitchener and Ferris (2012), Ellis (2009), Evans et al. (2010), Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2012), Ferris (2002), and J. Hartshorn and N. Evans (2012). More research on different types of errors and their significance in the EFL context will further contribute to the pedagogical practices in the EFL context.

The findings also show that EFL teachers do not prefer to give learners comprehensive feedback on their form and content of writing drafts as it is time-consuming. Similarly, literature illustrates that comprehensive and holistic feedback that involves form and content-focused WCF can be extremely subjective (Schwartz, 1984) and time-consuming (Hartshorn et al., 2010; Truscott, 1999). The EFL teachers believe that learners' low-level proficiency cannot benefit from direct, comprehensive WCF and teachers will take unnecessary stress and make their jobs more challenging. This is exactly what was noted by Lortie (1977), J. Hartshorn and N. Evans (2012) and Bitchener and Ferris (2012) who assume that low proficiency of learners can result in a futile purpose of WCF. The findings of the study may contradict the outcome of studies conducted in other contexts, such as Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia, which consider comprehensive, direct and focused WCF are the most frequently applied methods of providing feedback to learners (Alshahrani & Storch, 2014; Lee, 2013). As such, we can also conclude that WCF is indeed an issue when it comes to time and work load as perceived by the teacher participants. This is in parallel with the thought provoking paper by Truscott (1996) who states: "researchers have paid insufficient attention to the side effects of grammar correction, such as its effect on students" (p. 328). A decade

earlier, Hairston (1986) stated: To grade the paper of the average writer thoroughly, including positive as well as negative comments, takes at least thirty minutes frequently more. Two sections, forty-eight students twenty-four hours of grading for every set of papers. Add time for class preparation, classes, office hours, and conferences, and the workload for half-time teaching jumps to at least forty hours every time a set of papers comes in (p. 118). As such, the responses to several items of the teachers' questionnaire indicate that time is a major concern. This was also evident in the teachers' responses when they selected time as their major concern. Also, the relevant questionnaire items related to challenges of WCF, which can be concluded that the teachers were concerned about time and as such, they resorted to coded WCF which they perceived as the least time consuming. Furthermore, they indicated the same reflection in their responses to the items relating to their workload and whether it fairly reflected on their contractual agreement of contact hours. However, several participating teachers expressed that when time is not an obstacle or a cause for concern, they would gladly provide a more detailed, comprehensive or unfocussed WCF since they saw a window of opportunity to allow the students to explore many other areas needing improvement in their writing assignments and drafts.

There is an apparent mismatch between the teachers and the students' perception on WCF. As contrary to the EFL teachers' preferred way of giving feedback, the voices of the students put forward their demand to receive comprehensive feedback, both verbal and written in a recurrent form, so they can overcome their weaknesses. The findings of this study are aligned with the claim made by Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) who believe that direct or comprehensive feedback is the most popular and preferred way of receiving feedback among English language learners in the Iranian EFL context. The learners' desire to have such repeated comprehensive feedback resonates with the findings by Sommers (1982) who suggests that teachers should respond to the learners' written *content* in the first phase and in the later phase, the written *form* should be focused on which will involve learners to concentrate more and not to be distracted by their linguistic difficulties. As the studies suggest, the standard practice of providing WCF by L2 teachers has been form-focused rather than content-focuses (Storch, 2010), it helps the writers to improve the

accuracy of their writing. When the EFL teachers in this study were asked in the interviews about the important issues and factors which they take into consideration when giving WCF, they indicated the same choice of giving learners form-focused feedback. The findings resonate with literature which suggest that indirect feedback will help EFL learners to make progress in accuracy over time more (Ferris & Roberts, 2001) and it will provide learners an opportunity to correct their own errors which – in the long run - may contribute to less dependency on the teacher (Ferris, 2006a) as well as improving proficiency through student centeredness and autonomy (Ferris, 2003).

5.6 EFL Teachers' Challenges Related to WCF

EFL teachers in this study consider the students' attitude towards writing tasks and teacher's feedback obstacles in the way of providing effective WCF. Teachers believe that some learners are unable to understand the purpose of WCF or they are least interested in the feedback given to them; rather their main goal is to gain passing marks. These views are identical to what Boud (2000) has found that students' lack of ability to use the feedback to produce improved work or re-do the assignment can spoil the whole purpose of the feedback. However, the teachers in this study also suggest that learners' varied levels of motivation and self-regulation should be taken into account while giving them feedback. This suggestion resonates with authors who recommend the teachers' understanding of learners' needs (Boekaerts & Corno, 2005; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Kohn, 2011). The teachers in this study also expressed their opinion to adopt more flexible approaches while giving feedback to EFL learners of different levels and backgrounds. Flexibility in WCF and understanding of learners' needs are highlighted in the literature too, as 'one size fits all' approach cannot address everybody's learning needs. Similar to Ellis et al. (2008), Chandler (2003) and Ferris and Roberts (2001), the EFL teachers think that comprehensive or direct WCF will help lower level students to see their errors in detail and it will have positive outcome on the EFL learners' grammatical accuracy. However, the teachers will have to conduct the needs analysis of their learners in order to develop familiarity with them, since it is not easy for teachers, initially, to make informed decisions without knowing their learners well as pointed by Ellis et al., (2008). Moreover, adopting a flexible approach, focussed WCF in its selection of specific errors and ignoring

others, will target a single error type (e.g. errors in the use of the past simple tense). On the other hand, indirect WCF will be applied to more than one error type but will still restrict correction to a limited number of pre-selected types (e.g. simple past tense; articles; prepositions). However, as it is the case with all issues and elements related to WCF, no one strategy has proven to have any greater success over the other and further research in this direction is required.

The EFL teachers' views coincide with the literature as their vote for a flexible approach can have further benefits to the EFL learners. As no single strategy can be effective in every context, teachers should vary their approach by choosing one strategy over the other in order to address the learners' needs. On the benefits of adopting eclectic or flexible approach to WCF, the EFL teachers' views are in line with the researchers in the field. For instance, direct, comprehensive WCF is more suitable for lower proficiency level L2 learners whereas indirect WCF is can benefit advanced L2 learners as the majority of the teachers in this study indicated (Ellis, 2009). In a nutshell, the EFL teachers and scholars in the field recommend using a combination of strategies or methods to facilitate learning and improve learners' writing skills (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Ferris, 2011; Lee et al., 2015).

The EFL teachers' concern about their learners' lack of interest in writing and feedback is a common perception in the context of this study. However, it does not necessarily indicate that teachers should stop their efforts to work on the learners' proficiency. It should be the teachers' sole responsibility to take the lead, show interest in giving learners the appropriate feedback and encourage them to think about the comments and feedback provided to them. This positive attitude by the teachers can enhance learners' confidence and interest in classroom activities and it can ensure future participation (Neman, 1995; Raimes, 1991; Perrott, 1982).

With regards to the learners' attitude, the lack of student motivation highlighted by the EFL teachers impacts the practice of providing students feedback on their writing drafts. The EFL teachers in this study believe that learners should be motivated to take responsibility of their own (William, 2011). In their opinions, giving detailed feedback will be synonymous to spoon-feeding and they will not take ownership of their learning. Thus, EFL teachers in the Saudi context preferred indirect feedback which is merely is a process of providing feedback

by indicating where the error or incorrect form occurred by underlying, highlighting or circling it without actually providing the student with the correct form (Bitchener et al., 2005; Lee, 2008).

The findings of this study also highlight other challenges that EFL teachers associate with comprehensive, direct and focused WCF. Although students prefer this method and despite the literature showing the positive impact of this type of feedback on the learners' development of L2 proficiency, EFL teachers believe that it adds to their workload and leads to their burnout. This is exactly what Lee (2013) found out that teachers continued the practice of giving comprehensive WFC to their learners, thus, becoming a major source of their anxiety and burnout, and therefore, it calls for reconsideration of the practice in the field.

The qualitative findings of this study also bring forth challenges of the EFL teachers which are not evidently supported by studies in other contexts. For instance, the nature of the writing assessment rubrics used for various levels of writing raise questions on their validity, which make the teachers' job more challenging. These rubrics often reflect international standards; however, the lower level of Saudi EFL students often fail to meet those standards, thus affecting the quality and efficacy of feedback given to them. Further research as how the writing rubrics can influence EFL learners' writing skills and teachers' abilities to provide effective feedback is required in TESOL (Obeid, 2017).

The significance of familiarity with WCF codes and coding process is evidently found in the data. Students have voiced their concerns about the lack of familiarity with codes which impacts their understanding and comprehension of the feedback. Teachers have also expressed their views about the importance of the coding process; however, the data show no signs of teachers providing support to students in developing familiarity with the coding scheme. The findings of this study lend support to the claims made by other researchers in various contexts that show that L2 learners do not find it easy to understand and familiarise themselves with different types of errors and error codes that are used by the teachers while giving comprehensive feedback (Holtgraves, 1999). As teachers pointed out that this can be due to learners' lack of motivation or due to their low L2 proficiency levels (Ferris, 2002; Lee, 1997). However, this issue, the lack of familiarity of errors codes amongst the students, can be

rectified by conducting regular review sessions namely, on the students' second essay drafts as well as encouraging them to be engaged in peer review sessions as well as reinforcement of knowledge of correct forms and consolidation of error codes understanding.

5.7 Cognitive Beliefs of the EFL Teachers on the Chosen WCF Type

The fourth research question of the study relates to the chosen WCF types by the teachers and whether those chosen types reflect cognitively on the real preferred types by the teachers. Exploring the evidences supporting cognition of EFL teachers when providing WCF and whether their choices of WCF types reflect truly on their cognition as the appropriate choice suited for the students. Looking at the main data collected from the teachers' questionnaire which initially asked for their responses to the preferred WCF type, and then asking them in subsequent questions whether or not this is a true reflection of their own choice. It was evident that the majority of the surveyed teachers responded that their initial responses to the WCF type chosen, did not necessarily reflect on their best choices of WCF type and that the majority would certainly choose a different type given a change in circumstances and settings such as the number of the students in their classrooms as well as the proficiency levels of the students. This is in agreement with Norouzian et al. (2012) who question the deeper, inner beliefs and perceptions of teachers for choosing a particular WCF type. This issue has not been dealt with extensively in the literature. The scarcity of the studies exploring cognitive beliefs of EFL teachers on the preferred type of WCF chosen can be attributed to the controversial nature of WCF and difficulty in acquiring the teachers' cognitive thinking through casual research approaches. Teachers might, on the surface, mention a particular use of a specific WCF type but when probing the issue further with them in a thorough discussion, they might express their (true) preferences for another type if they are given total freedom of choice and having different circumstances or class settings (Junqueira & Payant, 2015). Four of the interviewed teacher participants expressed their frustration with WCF since they feel that they spend a significant amount of time marking students' writing (Li, Zhu, & Ellis, 2016), and they felt that their efforts do not pay off (Ghani & Ahmad, 2016). They also expressed that they might start considering the need to use an alternative WCF type which might not be any better than the original type they initially used but

they felt the need to have this alternative WCF type because the first WCF type did not lead to improving the learners' writing proficiency in the short run or eventually, to SLA. Looking deeper into this issue, it was evident that the teachers who were interviewed mentioned several issues that are related to their cognitive beliefs on WCF. These issues are:

1. Time. WCF can be very time consuming for the teachers and perhaps for the students themselves when they are reviewing their teachers' comments in unfocussed and direct WCF. Some students may lose interest in reading extensive comments and feedback if it will take long time to do so. Some of the interviewed students gave this perception on time as it relates to WCF. This is in agreement with the studies conducted by Ghani and Ahmad (2016); Truscott (1996); Guénette and Lyster (2013) and (Kurzer, 2017).
2. In the Saudi context, some of the students may not actually review or go through any WCF especially if there is a whole host of these comments and WCF on their written work. This is in agreement with Alkhatib (2015) , Al Shahrani (2013) and Alshahrani and Storch (2014). As such, there needs to be instructional sessions where the teachers elaborate and review WCF with the students' written work.
3. Students may not understand WCF. This concern was actually shared by both, students as well as teachers during the questionnaires' data analyses as well as the interviews' data analyses. That may depend on the WCF we are giving or that may be the students not understanding the issue. This is in agreement with studies conducted by Ferris (1995) and F. Hyland (1998).
4. Some WCF may not be effective. In other words, certain practices by teachers when choosing a particular WCF type might be effective generally but may not be effective for the student. As such, following a sound pedagogical approach, as some of the teachers' participants have expressed themselves, is of paramount importance. This is in agreement with what Bitchener and Ferris (2012) and Ferris (2014).
5. Finally, as many of the teachers have responded in the questionnaire and during the interviews, there is occasionally a general lack by the newly qualified or appointed teacher of having trouble identifying certain errors and giving WCF in accordance to the institution's policy and practice since they did not have enough training. This is a point that needs to be taken into

considerations since many EFL teachers may, at different stages of their career, experience this, especially if it is a newly qualified (or appointed) teachers. There are always those areas in teaching EFL which are not immediately mastered, and it takes a long time to expand the knowledge on those linguistics areas as a teacher. This is in agreement with studies that recommend that L2 teachers go through necessary training especially when it comes to WCF practices (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Chen, Nassaji, & Liu, 2016; Guénette & Lyster, 2013).

Looking at these aforementioned five issues, I believe that the teachers as well as students wanted to voice their concerns and strong beliefs about WCF. It is apparent that there is an indirect indication that the whole issue goes beyond the boundaries of WCF to what seems like the roots of the problem or even to the beginning of EFL early learning days for the EFL Saudi learners. These issues can be clearly seen as leading, retrospectively, to how the Saudi EFL learners are introduced to EFL writing learning and how their teachers provide them with WCF (or not) on their written assignments or tasks. I personally believe that there are indeed these issues in EFL in Saudi Arabia (in general) of poor writing skills, lack of motivation to write in L2 as well as the lack of gaining the optimum benefits from WCF as it contributes towards improving the English L2 writing skills of the learners.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter will conclude the analysis and finding from this research study. I will discuss the outcome and summary of the study as it reflects on the entire thesis. In essence, I will highlight the most important outcome of the study as it relates to WCF from both, male and female, teachers and students' perceptions and beliefs on various aspects of WCF at tertiary level institutions in the Saudi context. I will then discuss the three major recommendations to be made following this study as well as pedagogical contribution. Finally, I will conclude with a final anecdotal reflection on my study.

6.1 Summary of the Findings of the Study

As discussed in chapter 5, the analyses of the data confirmed earlier numerous studies on issues and concerns relating to WCF. Students in general perceived direct, explicit WCF and global error correction as a favourite type since they perceive it as an easier approach to writing the second draft. This is followed by focussed, indirect WCF where selective, local errors are corrected, as the students' favourite type and finally by coded WCF. These three types are in reverse popularity with the teachers. As such, the research concluded with the main findings which were mainly time, lack of students' motivation, lack of knowledge of the WCF as a learning process by the students and more importantly departmental and institutional bureaucracies, as perceived by the teachers. From the students' point of views, there seems to be also that sense of feeling underprivileged in learning the essential elements of WCF by not having the explanation to the various concepts of WCF and what these different parts and elements contribute towards their development of L2 writing. In other words, there is this strong feeling amongst the majority of the students that they are unaware of the rubrics or codes used in coded WCF. This lack of knowledge is perceived by the students as a disadvantage as well as a big barrier in L2 learning and feel that teachers have a responsibility to tackle it so as to ameliorate the issue of L2 writing proficiency in the Saudi EFL context. Furthermore, most of the students surveyed and interviewed, view correcting all the errors as a must have from their teachers since that is the duty of the

teacher since they are accustomed to (generally) be spoon-fed corrections and feedback from some schools and institutes in the Saudi context (Althaqafi; Alzubi & Singh, 2017). Many students feel that when they see their scripts full of WCF, they perceive this as a satisfaction in learning even if it may not lead to the improvement in their L2 writing or in SLA in the long run. It could be that the students have carried out this from high school (in the Saudi context), where they had the impression that when their teacher fills their script with WCF, it shows dedication from the teacher's part. However, when the students were presented with the argument which alerted them to the fact that this process is an arduous one and some of the students do not give WCF much attention, their responses were very interesting. They argued that the teacher(s) should provide coded WCF in general and if a particular, keen, student wishes to have more detailed, focussed or unfocussed WCF, then the teacher(s) should grant that wish. One of the interesting outcomes from this research is the suggestion given by nearly every single EFL teacher participant interviewed where they suggested that their institutions should establish writing centres where a designated writing EFL teacher(s) manage those centres and provide the EFL learners with learning strategies, techniques as well as the proper WCF, coded or otherwise, to those students who join the centres so as to improve their L2 writing skills in the short term and SLA in the long term. Another important recommendation given by the teacher participants is that there needs to be an extensive orientation for all the teachers, especially newly appointed, into the institute's own policy and practice of WCF. The latter, as perceived by the teachers, will ease some of the pressure and confusion when giving WCF to the students.

Also, an interesting outcome which was revealed by the interviews conducted with at least three male EFL learners and four female EFL learners is that they were hoping for something different from the status quo EFL academia has generally concerned itself with when providing feedback and that is to shift the focus to merely providing '*error correction*' but rather, provide a more comprehensible WCF in terms of not just providing error corrections, but also, providing praise for good writing a students may have presented. Additionally, the majority of the students interviewed expressed their dissatisfaction of certain WCF practices, not in terms of the type of WCF provided, but rather, what

follows from the process of WCF when grades are given. Some gave details of an example that when a teacher provides comprehensive, unfocussed WCF, the grade given (may) sometimes be harsh due to the immediate judgement of a script full of written errors even though that a fairer rubric may allow the student a higher grade. Some even went further to suggest that they may not wish to only see WCF targeted at only the errors, but rather, their organisation, content and structure of their written work.

Towards the end of this research study whereby looking at the previous literature and the collected data in this study, it is apparent that from the various types of WCF utilised by teachers, it became apparent that this research was not actually looking at whether WCF is effective compared to the way of looking at it from the perspective of *how* the WCF benefits can be maximised if and when a sound pedagogical approach is followed. Limiting the research into a narrow angle of a single variable will restrict looking holistically at the issue and thus, to obtain a much wider and more comprehensive results and conclusion such as the ones seen in this study is by looking at the two variables in terms of learners' variables and instructional variable (teachers' variable). Furthermore, WCF is not an isolated entity in TESOL and a factor that is sometimes (wrongly) perceived as having minimal influence and impact in the language learning. On the contrary, WCF is strongly related to the main writing skill which is designed to improve the linguistic accuracy of the L2 learner and as such, the writing task and the feedback to the writing task should be timely and constant.

As such, and in conclusion of this research study, several recommendations should be taken into considerations for future research into WCF.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the analysis and conclusions which this study has drawn upon, it is recommended that future research studies take into considerations:

1. Conducting a similar research in an EFL context and compare it to this one (the Saudi context). It will be recommended to see the outcome of such research in a different EFL context and what outcomes are generated from such a research.

2. Conducting an extensive research which may have a wider focus beyond the elements of WCF, to include perceptions of the teachers and learners with regards to writing assessment and instruction in an EFL context.
3. Conducting a longitudinal study of some sort where the researcher explores the participants' (teachers and learners) perceptions of WCF throughout an academic year or university L2 course. This longitudinal study can further look into exploring the actual impact of the various types of WCF on improving the students' L2 writing proficiency and whether a scaffolding strategy of WCF will result in improvements in the learners' L2 written proficiency and whether it will lead to SLA in the long run or not. Such research will start by exploring the gradual utilisation of direct, unfocussed WCF with global error correction approach, followed by the focussed, direct WCF with local error correction approach and in the final stage, the utilisation of coded WCF. Such a research design will truly reflect more comprehensibly on the various aspects of WCF.

6.3 Pedagogical Contribution

A big inspiration in conducting this research study was the need to explore the opinions of the EFL teachers and students on WCF and their favourite WCF type (both teachers and students). As such, and as per the summary of the findings mentioned earlier in this chapter (section 6.2), it can be said that there needs to be a structured system with which the teachers can follow the progress of their students' writing especially following the provision of WCF. Such a system will help the teacher monitor the student writing skill progress and simultaneously, provide the suitable type of WCF based on the proficiency level of the students as well as their level of motivation to write and notice their errors with the chosen WCF type.

However, an important pedagogical implication in this study is the fact that individual feedback conditions are unfavourable to the learners if applied alone without strategically combining it with other feedback conditions. For instance, direct WCF can yield better immediate improvement rates with the learners' written work, however, its long-term acquisition benefit has been questionable by researchers (STEFANOU & RÉVÉSZ, 2015). Thus, EFL teachers are urged not to choose the easy way and decide in favour of using exclusively one WCF

type (e.g., coded WCF) across the board. EFL teachers should instead, be trained to recognise the errors that students can manage to correct on their own (treatable errors) and separate them from errors at each particular stage of the instruction process which the students are unable to correct themselves (untreatable). This is in agreement with (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009) and (Ferris, 2010b) who suggested that using direct WCF should be reserved for “untreatable” errors such as words and structures that learners are not familiar with. However, these teachers’ suggestions in direct WCF is best kept to a minimum in order to avoid the appropriation of student texts (K. Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

One important pedagogical implication arising from the results of this research study and perhaps other existing and ongoing research studies relates to the need for the integration of various WCF in order to enhance learners’ writing accuracy. This was evident from the data analysed in this study which highlighted the fact that no feedback type alone was unambiguous enough for the learners to make successful revisions of all errors. Thus, it is recommended for the teachers to diversify writing tasks and to make sound decisions by employing the appropriate WCF type which is suitable for each individual task.

6.4 Anecdotal and Some Personal Reflections

This research study has been an interesting journey from start to finish. It has lasted over four years of research. I was initially driven casually by my beliefs as an EFL teacher with over 14 years of experience and thus, I did not initially (in the first few weeks of my research) have that sound academic rigour of looking at various areas of this issue. As a result, I started looking at the literature in all directions and at all concepts relating to WCF and how this troublesome, controversial and heavily debatable area of TESOL can be approached from EFL teachers and students’ perspectives so as to formulate a more in depth and comprehensive view of issues causing disputes and gaps that exist in the literature in the Saudi context. Prior to conducting this research, I was not aware of what to expect, however, I was amazed to read a plethora of research studies from all around the world and as I started narrowing my research focus to the Saudi EFL context, I started looking at research studies in the EFL contexts. Once I managed to formulate my own research questions and began

my data collection and analysis, I discovered that my own findings were more or less parallel to research findings of previous studies but with the special two unique characters of this research, by having a large number of participants from both sections, teachers and students as well as both genders, males and females. As a matter of fact, this research study is possibly the first ever study to directly involve female EFL teachers as well as female EFL learners. Thus, the study allowed an enormous and diverse amount of data to be gathered and analysed, thus, new wider views and new perspectives were obtained which gave this research that overall feature of how WCF is perceived by teachers and students in an EFL, Saudi, context.

Being a novice researcher, conducting this research study on the perceptions of EFL teachers and learners on WCF in the Saudi context has been a challenging but also, an interesting endeavour. As stated at the beginning of this research, the journey was enticed and encouraged by my own desire to approach WCF from a pedagogically sound and appropriate approaches so as to present some suggestions to wider academic world in what could be successful strategies in the practice of providing WCF to the students' various written work. However, having looked at this widely debatable and controversial area in the TESOL arena, I quickly learned that since there is a paucity of research studies conducted in the Saudi context and conducting this research on a wider scale in KSA was definitely a must. This was evident in the large number of participants in this study which although was not difficult to gather responses from, it was certainly difficult to arrange and conduct interviews with female participants due to the cultural restrictions in KSA. Nevertheless, with a bit of determination, it was possible to conduct those interviews and place the responses of the female teachers as well as students into the big pool of data with the male teachers and students' responses. Prior to this research, I have not had any experience with data collection and analysis of qualitative data. Thus, it was challenging at the beginning to construct the interview questions, conduct the interviews and then, analyse the qualitative data. However, once I became familiar with the process, it became a straightforward step and was indeed an enlightened experience for me. I learnt various issues and started looking at WCF beyond its surface and mechanical nature. Deep inside, I believe the process of WCF should not be about frustration by the L2 teacher and feeling confused and

unfairly graded by the L2 learner, but rather, a deeply cognitive process that needs to be regulated and should be approached into various carefully calculated pedagogical steps which does not stop at the WCF given to the student, but rather a holistic approach of L2 writing skill learning which will hopefully and eventually lead to SLA.

In summary, although I have no regrets in taking on such a tough beast (WCF) to the research battleground, I believe I could have focussed my research into a narrower area, say, the exploration of one type of WCF and its contribution to L2 learning and SLA as a whole. Still, I believe that this research made an important contribution to the Saudi EFL context and hopefully, to the wider EFL (and maybe the ESL) various contexts worldwide. I also hope that my contribution will help raise awareness amongst various stakeholders at tertiary level institutions of this vital issue and the findings in this study which hopefully may present a platform for a positive approach and practice when it comes to the practice of WCF in the Saudi EFL context.

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APPENDIX A

Survey of the Perception of EFL Teachers at Tertiary Level Saudi Institutions on WCF

Dear Esteemed Colleague

As part of a doctoral thesis, this survey aims at exploring the perceptions of EFL Teachers on Written Corrective Feedback (WCF for short) in the Saudi context. This is a research project being conducted by lecturer Hussam Rajab who is a TESOL Ed.D student at the University of Exeter. You are invited to participate in this research project because you are an EFL lecturer/instructor/teacher at a Saudi University/College. I would like to highlight few points about the survey:

1. Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate.
2. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw at any time.
3. If you decide not to participate in this study, please click 'No' below.
4. If you decide to withdraw during the survey, just close the web page on the top right-hand corner.
5. This is a reflection of your ideas and opinions and there are no right or wrong answers to these questions.
6. The outcome and results of this research study will help in promoting teaching-learning processes in teaching English as a second language.

The procedure involves filling an online survey that will take approximately 6 minutes. Your responses will be confidential, and we do NOT ask you for any personal details unless you choose to volunteer to be interviewed at a future date, in which case, we ask you to fill in the last part of the survey. You are obviously under no obligation to take part in this survey or in the interview. All data is stored in a password protected electronic format. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only. If you have any questions about the research study, please contact Hussam Rajab on hr280@exeter.ac.uk OR Dr. Esmaeel Abdollahzadeh on E.Abdollahzadeh@exeter.ac.uk who is the project supervisor of this research study and if you would like more specific details on this project, please feel free to contact him.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that:

- you have read the above information
- you voluntarily agree to participate
- you are at least 18 years of age

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the "disagree" button.

Thank You.

* Please use blue or black pen *

Demographics

1. Gender: Male Female

Professional Experience and Qualifications

2. Number of years teaching EFL:

- 1 – 7 years 8 – 15 years
 16 – 23 years More than 23 years

3. Highest Teaching English as a Second Language/Teaching English as a Foreign Language/ qualifications achieved:

- 120 Hours TESOL/ TEFL Diploma
 CELTA
 DELTA
 Masters (TESOL/TEFL/Applied Linguistics)
 Doctoral degree in English Language Education/Applied Linguistics

Classroom Particulars

4. Number of students in your classroom:

- 5 – 10 11 – 20
 21 – 30 31 – 40
 More than 40

5. Gender of students in your classroom

- Males only Females only Mixed

6. Number of contact hours per week:

- 10 - 20 hrs 21 - 30 hrs 31 - 40 hrs More than 40 hrs

7. On average, how many written tasks do you assign to your students every week?

- Once – Twice a week Twice – Three times a week
 Four – Five times a week More than five times a week.

8. Have you had an induction (an introduction) training at the start of job at your current institution?

Yes No

9. If you have answered yes to the last question; did your induction include training on writing?

Yes No

10. Does your department provide you with pre-exam training that includes instructions on how to provide WCF on students' scripts?

Yes No

Written Corrective Feedback Practice Specifics

11. Do your students give you a revised version following an initial written corrective feedback?

Yes No

12. Do you give WCF on the returned written tasks the students hand in to you?

Yes, always Yes, sometimes Yes, but very rarely.

No, I never give WCF¹.

13. If you have answered yes to the last question, what type of WCF do you give to your students?

- Sample A (Unfocused WCF: correcting all the errors in the script)
- Sample B (Meta-cognitive WCF: underlying errors and allowing the students to figure out the correct form themselves)
- Sample C (Coded WCF: underlying errors and giving those errors codes)
- Sample D (No WCF: just giving the grade)
- A combination of samples depending on the level of the student and work load

¹ End of Survey.

14. Does the type chosen in Question 12, consciously reflect on your belief as the best WCF type?
- Yes
- Yes, but not always. It depends on the circumstances.
- No, I prefer a different WCF approach/type. Please specify: _____
15. Which type of WCF would you give the students on their second drafts following an initial WCF on their first draft?
- The same as the initial draft
- A more detailed WCF (i.e. Sample A for the second draft).
- A less detailed WCF (i.e. Samples B or C for the second draft).
- Don't know.
16. Correcting all the errors in the students' script is inefficient for my students
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
- Agree Strongly Agree
17. Unfocussed WCF is time consuming compared to other WCF types
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
- Agree Strongly Agree
18. I feel obliged to provide my students with unfocussed WCF so they can see all that is needed to be corrected
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
- Agree Strongly Agree
19. My students understand coded WCF and what the codes stand for
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
- Agree Strongly Agree
20. Coded WCF is the least time consuming for teachers
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
- Agree Strongly Agree
21. Coded WCF can be easily utilised in peer feedback strategy
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
- Agree Strongly Agree
22. Metacognitive WCF helps increase the students' autonomous learning of their errors
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral

- Agree Strongly Agree
23. Metacognitive WCF is more effective when students are advanced level students
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
- Agree Strongly Agree
24. Metacognitive WCF seems vague to learners and can be counterproductive
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
- Agree Strongly Agree
25. Please rate the following six areas targeted when giving WCF to the students (6 being is the most important are and 1 being the least important):
- Grammatical errors Punctuation errors Content/idea errors
- Organisation errors Spelling errors Vocabulary errors
26. I spend considerable time giving WCF to my students.
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
- Agree Strongly Agree
27. On average, the time I dedicate to give WCF on students' written tasks is:
- a. Daily: 0 – 1 hrs 1-3 hrs 3- 5 hrs 5 – 7 hrs
- b. Weekly: 1 - 3 hrs 3–5 hrs 5 –7 hrs More than 7 hrs
28. The time and efforts I spend on WCF is within reasonable requirements of my job (i.e. reflective of the general requirements of your contract as an EFL teacher).
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
- Agree Strongly Agree
29. In principle and as a desired expectation in general, students should benefit greatly from WCF.
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
- Agree Strongly Agree
30. From the last statement and in real life, the majority of your own students take your WCF seriously and work on it.
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
- Agree Strongly Agree
31. If a student did not respond positively to the WCF, I:
- Usually ignore them and do not provide more WCF.
- Instruct them to write a different draft
- Use follow-up methods other than written feedback. (specify): _____

32.The preference to the pen colour used when giving WCF is?

I prefer using red

I prefer using green

I have no preference.

Challenges of Giving WCF

33.Please rate the following six factors, by giving 6 to the most challenging and 1 to the least challenging when giving WCF?

Time

Content (not reflected on the students' levels)

The way writing is taught in the first place in your context

Administration bureaucracy (i.e. enforcing a certain procedure and not giving the teachers a say in how they can choose to deal with WCF)

Lack of training in giving WCF in your context

Other, please specify: _____

34.In my context, there is a mandatory departmental instruction to follow a certain type of WCF

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral

Agree Strongly Agree

35.In my context, I am free to choose the type of WCF I give to my students

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral

Agree Strongly Agree

36.In general, does your position in the department allows you to make a decision on HOW and WHAT you are able to do (or not) with regards to WCF? (i.e. do you have complete freedom to give or not give, WCF?)

Yes

No

Sometimes but not always

37.In my opinion, the current WCF regime in my context is productive and beneficial for the students:

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral

Agree Strongly Agree

Participation in an Interview

38. Would you agree to take part in a short interview as a follow up to this survey?

Yes Maybe (I need further details) No

39. If you have answered yes or maybe to participate in the interview, kindly write down your email OR mobile telephone number and I will contact you soon. Thanks.

Email and/or mobile number: _____

Thank You 😊

APPENDIX B

Semi-Structured Interview Questions (EFL Teachers)

1. How often do you generally offer feedback to your students' written assignments?
2. As an EFL teacher, what do you aim for when you give WCF? Does this reflect what you truly believe is the right and professional way to deal with it? Why?
3. What are the important issues and factors which you take into consideration when giving WCF?
4. From the last question, how are these factors addressed by your institution/department? If they are not, Why?
5. Have a look at the picture showing four different types of WCF. Which one do you prefer to use and why?
6. From a student's perspective, what type of WCF do you think they would like to see on their written assignments? Why?
7. How can we reach a consensus between what the teacher wants and what the students want when it comes to WCF (if the interviewee believes there are differences between the perceptions of both the teacher and student)?

APPENDIX C

Survey of the Perception of EFL Students at Tertiary Level Saudi Institutions on WCF

Dear Student

As part of a doctoral thesis, this survey aims at exploring the perceptions of EFL students on Written Corrective Feedback (WCF for short) provided to them by their teachers in the Saudi context. This is a research project being conducted by lecturer Hussam Rajab who is a TESOL Ed.D student at the University of Exeter.

You are invited to participate in this research project because you are an EFL student registered at a Saudi University/College. I would like to highlight few points about the survey:

1. Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate.
2. Your participation (or not) is NOT part of your syllabus or course curriculum and there are NO GRADES to be awarded (in case of participation) or taken off (in case of no participation).
3. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw at any time.
4. If you decide not to participate in this study, please click 'Disagree' below
5. If you decide to withdraw during the survey, just close the web page on the top right-hand corner.
6. This is a reflection of your ideas and opinions and there are no right or wrong answers to these questions.
7. The outcome and results of this research study will help in promoting teaching- learning processes in teaching English as a second language.

The procedure involves filling an online survey that will take a maximum of 5 minutes. Your responses will be confidential, and we do NOT ask you for any personal details unless you choose to volunteer to be interviewed at a future date, in which case, we ask you to fill in the last part of the survey. You are obviously under no obligation to take part in this survey or in the interview. All data is stored in a password protected electronic format. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only. If you have any questions about the research study, please contact Hussam Rajab on hr280@exeter.ac.uk Dr. Esmaeel Abdollahzadeh on E.Abdollahzadeh@exeter.ac.uk. who is the project supervisor of this research study and if you would like more specific details on this project, please feel free to contact him.

Thank You.

*** Please use blue or black pen ***

Demographics

1. Gender: Male Female

2. What is your age range?

18 - 20 21 - 23

24 - 26 More than 26

3. Do any of your parents' work?

Yes No

4. If yes, what do they do (You may select one or two options):

Doctor Nurse

Lecturer (university or college) Teacher (school)

Pilot Police

Army/Navy/Royal Air Force Food Industry

Businessman/Businesswoman Employee (private)

Employee (government) Farming Industry

Other (please specify): _____

Classroom Particulars

5. How many classmates are there in your classroom?

5 - 10 11 - 20

21 - 30 31 - 40

More than 40

6. What is the Gender of students in your classroom?

Males only Females only Mixed

Education Level

7. What course are you currently studying?

101 - Beginner Level 102 - Elementary Level

103 Pre-Intermediate Level 104 - Intermediate Level

Medical/Business Other. Please Specify: _____

8. Last writing exam grade?

88-100% 75-87%

66-74% 58- 65%

45 - 57% Less than 45%

WCF Particulars.

9. On average, I am given written assignments:

- Once – Twice a week Twice – Three times a week
 Four – Five times a week More than five times a week.

10. I get written corrective feedback on my written work/assignment

- Always Sometimes Only before exams
 Never

11. I received the rubric for grading written work/assignment at the beginning of the term from my teacher or coordinator.

- Yes/True No I cannot remember

12. It is important for my teacher to give me written corrective feedback on my written work/assignment?

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
 Agree Strongly Agree

13. It is important to get written comments on my draft because (please click all that applies)

- Because it helps me improve my written skills.
 Because it helps me understand why I was given a certain grade.
 It helps me in getting a good grade in the exam.
 Because it is the teacher's job to do so.
 I do not know.

14. To what extent is the following statement true for you: "Teachers should mark every error in the written assignment given to us.

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
 Agree Strongly Agree

15. When my teacher gives me WCF on my written work/assignment, I look at:

- Feedback first Grade first Either/Not sure

16. I always read the comments my teacher makes on my written errors.

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral
 Disagree Strongly Disagree

17. Do you give your teacher a revised version of your written assignment after receiving written corrective feedback on that first draft?

Yes No

18. If you have answered yes to question 17 above, does your teacher give you written corrective feedback on the second draft you hand in to your teacher?

Yes, always Yes, sometimes Yes, but very rarely.

No, I never get WCF.

19. What is your preferred colour of error marking made by your teacher?

Red Green

Black No preferences

20. I find it useful to look at written error corrections from a marked paper of a peer to learn not to make their errors.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral

Disagree Strongly Disagree

21. On average, I practice my English writing:

Regularly Sometimes

Rarely Never

22. When I learn from my written errors which my teacher points out to me, this motivates me to practice writing more.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral

Disagree Strongly Disagree

23. It is important for teachers to mark every error in my writing tasks.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral

Disagree Strongly Disagree

Favourite WCF type

24. Have a look at the samples of written corrective feedback given by a teacher. Which style do you prefer your teacher to give you written corrective feedback on your written work/assignment?

Sample A Sample B Sample C Sample D

25.If you have answered yes to question 24 earlier, what type of written corrective feedback do you get from your teacher on your revised manuscript?

Sample A Sample B Sample C Sample D

26.I understand coded written corrective feedback (Sample B) and what each code stands for:

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral

Disagree Strongly Disagree

27.My teacher asks us occasionally to mark each other's tasks/written exercises.

Yes No

28.If you have answered yes to the last question, which sample do you use to mark your classmate's written work?

Sample A Sample B Sample C Sample D

29.I think written corrective feedback given by the teacher is beneficial in our learning of English.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral

Disagree Strongly Disagree

30.I always take the written corrective feedback given by my teacher, seriously and work on it

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral

Disagree Strongly Disagree

31.I find it extremely useful to look at a sample of a written script with no errors, so I can learn the correct way and style of writing in English as a second language.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral

Disagree Strongly Disagree

Participation in an Interview

32. Would you agree to take part in an interview (recorded audio) as a follow up to this survey (it will be completely anonymous, and your details will NOT be disclosed to anyone)?

Yes Maybe, I need to think about it No

33. If you have answered yes (or maybe) to the last question, please write your email address and mobile telephone number below, thanks!

Email: _____ Mobile No: _____

Thank You 😊

APPENDIX D

(Arabic Survey – Students)

استطلاع آراء طلاب/طالبات اللغة الإنجليزية لغير الناطقين/الناطقات بها في السنة التحضيرية فيما يتعلق بملاحظات المدرسين/المدرسات الكتابية للتصحيح

كجزء من أطروحة الدكتوراه، يهدف هذا الاستبيان إلى استكشاف تصورات الطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على الملاحظات الكتابية التصحيحية (ت. أ. ك - إختصار) والتي تعطى للطلبة من قبل معلمهم في المملكة العربية السعودية. يشرف على هذا المشروع البحثي المحاضر حسام رجب وهو طالب دكتوراة (TESOL (Ed.D في جامعة إكستر - المملكة المتحدة.

انتم مدعون للمشاركة في هذا المشروع البحثي لأنك طالب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية مسجلة في جامعة / كلية السعودية. وأود أن أسلط الضوء على بضع نقاط بخصوص هذا الاستبيان:

1. مشاركتكم في هذه الدراسة البحثية طوعية تماما. يمكنك اختيار عدم المشاركة.
 2. مشاركتكم (من عدمها) ليست جزءا من المنهج الدراسي الخاص بك، ولا توجد أي درجات إضافية (في حالة مشاركة) أو عقابية (في حالة عدم المشاركة).
 3. إذا كنت ترغب في المشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية، يمكنك الانسحاب في أي وقت.
 4. إذا قررت عدم المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، يرجى اختيار "لا" أدناه.
 5. إذا قررت الانسحاب خلال الاستبيان، فقط إغلاق صفحة الويب من أعلى الزاوية اليمنى.
- الإجراء ينطوي على ملء استطلاع على الانترنت التي سوف تأخذ بحد أقصى 5 دقائق. سوف تكون جميع أجوبتك وإختياراتك سرية، ونحن لا نطلب منك أي تفاصيل شخصية ما لم تختار على التطوع لإجراء مقابلة قصيرة في وقت لاحق، في هذه الحالة، فإننا سنطلب منك ملء الجزء الأخير من الدراسة. نود أن نذكرك أنك لست ملزم/ملزمة بالمشاركة في هذه الدراسة أو في المقابلة. سيتم تخزين كافة البيانات في شكل إلكتروني محمي بكلمة مرور. وسيتم استخدام نتائج هذه الدراسة لأغراض علمية فقط. إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة حول هذه الدراسة البحثية، يرجى التواصل مع الأستاذ حسام رجب على hr280@exeter.ac.uk

الرجاء تحديد اختيارك أدناه. بالنقر على زر "موافق/موافقة" أدناه يشير إلى أن:

- المعلومات المتعلقة بالإتيان (أعلاه) واضحة
- أنت توافق/توافقين طوعا على المشاركة
- السن لا يقل عن 18 سنة

إذا كنت لا ترغب/لا ترغبين في المشاركة في هذا الاستبيان، يرجى الضغط على زر "غير موافق/غير موافقة".

شكراً ،

موافق/موافقة

غير موافق/غير موافقة

الرجاء استخدام قلم الحبر الأزرق أو الأسود (دون استخدام قلم الرصاص) واختيار مربع واحد فقط.

•الجنس:

ذكور أنثى

•ما هو الفئة العمرية التي تنتمي إليها؟

18 - 21 20 - 23

24 - 26 أكبر من 26

•هل يعمل أحد والديك (أو كلاهما)؟

نعم لا

•إذا كانت إجابتك بنعم للسؤال السابق، فما هو مجال العمل (يمكنك إختيار وظيفة واحد أو وظيفتين لكلا الوالدين):

مدرس/مدرسة طبيب/ط

ممرض/ممرضة محاض حاضرة بكلية أو جامعة

طيار في سلك الشرطة

الجيش/البحرية/الملكية وية في مجال المطاعم والفندقة

رجل/سيدة أعمال موظف ووظيفة (قطاع خاص)

موظف/موظفة (قطاع مي) مجال الزراعة

أخرى، رجاء أذكرها/أذكرها: _____

•كم يبلغ عدد الطلاب/الطالبات في فصلك

5 - 11 10 - 20

21 - 31 30 - 0

أكثر من 40

•ما هو جنس الطلبة في فصلك؟

ذكور إناث لا (ذكور وإناث)

•ما هو المقرر الذي تدرسه/تدرسينه؟

- 101 مستوى مبتديء 102 مستوى تمهيدي
- 103 مستوى ما قبل المتوسط 104 مستوى متوسط
- برنامج اللغة الإنجليزية الطبي/التجاري ، رجاءً أذكرها/أذكرها: _____

• كم كانت درجة آخر امتحان كتابة (اللغة الإنجليزية)؟

88% - 100% 75% 8%

66% - 74% 58% -

45% - 57% أقل من %

• بشكل عام، كم عدد المهام الكتابية التي تأخذها/تأخذها؟

مرة - مرتين في الأسبوع ثلاث - أربع مرات في الأسبوع

خمس - ست مرات في أسبوع أكثر من ست مرات في الأسبوع

• هل تعاد لك المهام الكتابية مع التصحيح للأخطاء الكتابية من المدرس/المدرسة؟

نعم، في كل مرة نعم ولكن أحياناً

فقط عندما يكون تدريب قبل الامتحان لا، لا أستلم أي تصحيح كتابي من المدرس/المدرسة

• هل تم إعطائك نسخة من الإرشادات واللوائح الخاصة بكيفية تصحيح الأخطاء الكتابية من قبل المدرس/المدرسة (أو المنسق/المنسقة)؟

نعم لا أذكر

• هل تعتقد/تعتقدين أنه من الضروري أن يقوم المعلم/المعلمة بإعطاء تصحيح كتابي على الوظائف الكتابية؟

لا أوافق بشدة لا أوافق

لا رأي لي

أوافق بشدة

● إن كانت أجابتك بنعم للسؤال السابق، لماذا تعتقد/تعتقدين أنه من الضروري أن يتم إعطاء تصحيح كتابي من قبل المدرس/المدرسة؟

- لأن ذلك يساعدني على تطوير مهاراتي الكتابية باللغة الإنجليزية
- لأن ذلك يساعدني على معرفة سبب إعطائي درجة معينة مقابل كتابتي
- لأن ذلك يساعدني على الحصول على درجة أفضل في المرة القادمة من خلال معرفة أخطائي الكتابية
- لأن ذلك جزء من مهمة المدرس/المدرسة (إعطاء تصحيح كتابي للطلاب)
- لا أدري

● ما هي درجة موافقتك على هذه الجملة: "يتوجب على المعلمين/المعلمات تصحيح كل خطأ يجده/تجده في امتحانات كتابة مقال/فقرة".

- لا أوافق بشدة لا أوافق
- لا رأي لي أو أوافق بشدة
- إذا تم إعطائك تصحيح كتابي من قبل المدرس/المدرسة، هل تقوم/تقومين بقراءة التصحيح أولاً أو النظر إلى الدرجة أولاً؟

- التصحيح أولاً/الدرجة أولاً لا أذكر ليس لدي تفضيل معين

● أقرأ دائماً التعليقات التي يكتبها معلمي/معلمتي على أخطائي الكتابية

- لا أوافق بشدة لا أوافق
- لا رأي لي أو أوافق بشدة

● هل تقوم/تقومين بإعطاء المعلم/المعلمة نسخة منقحة عن المهمة الأولى بعد تصحيح الأخطاء؟

- نعم لا

● إن كان جوابك بنعم للسؤال السابق، فهل يقوم/تقوم معلمك/معلمتك بإعطائك تصحيحات جديدة على النسخة الثانية المنقحة؟

- نعم ، دائماً نعم ، أحياناً ، ولكن نادراً
- لا ، لا أستلم أي تصحيحات على النسخة الجديدة

● ما هو لون قلم تصحيح المدرس/المدرسة المفضل لديك؟

- أحمر أخضر

أسودلا فرق لدي

• أجد الاطلاع على تصحيحات الأخطاء الكتابية لورقة طالب زميل/طالبة زميلة لي مفيدة جدا.

لا أوافق بشدة لا أوافق

لا رأي لي أو أوافق بشدة

• وسطيا، كم تمضي/تمضين في التدرّب على الكتابة (اللغة الإنجليزية)؟

غالبابعض الأحيان

نادرا لا أتمرّن أبدا على الكتابة بل الإنجليزية

• التعلّم من أخطائي الكتابية يدفعني للحماس على التدرّب أكثر على الكتابة (اللغة الإنجليزية).

لا أوافق بشدة لا أوافق

لا رأي لي أوافق أوافق بشدة

• ينبغي على المدرس/المدرسة تصحيح كل الأخطاء الإملائية/الكتابية لدى الطلاب.

لا أوافق بشدة لا أوافق

لا رأي لي أوافق أوافق بشدة

• الرجاء إلقاء نظرة على النماذج التصحيحية المكتوبة الأربعة التالية، أي منهج من التصحيح تفضل/تفضلين؟

نموذج A نموذج B

نموذج C نموذج D

• تبعا لإجابتك في السؤال الأخير، ما هو النموذج الذي تستلمه فعليا من معلمك/معلمتك على مهامك الكتابية؟

نموذج A نموذج B

نموذج C نموذج D

• لدي خلفية عن التصحيح الكتابي باستخدام الترميز (نموذج ب) وأدرك ما يعنيه كل رمز.

لا أوافق بشدة لا أوافق

لا رأي لي أوافق أوافق بشدة

●يطلب/تطلب منا المدرس/المدرسة تصحيح المهام أو الواجبات الكتابية فيما بيننا نحن الطلاب/الطالبات

نعم لا

●إن كانت إجابتك بنعم للسؤال الأخير، فما هو النموذج (من النماذج التصحيحية الأربعة) الذي تستخدمه في تصحيح المهمة الكتابية لزميلك/لزميلتك؟

نموذج A نموذج B

نموذج C نموذج D

●أعتقد أنه من المفيد لنا كطلبة الحصول على تصحيح كتابي لمهامنا وواجباتنا الكتابية ممن أجل تحسين مستوى أدائنا في اللغة الإنجليزية.

لا أوافق بشدة لا أوافق

لا رأي لي أوافق أوافق بشدة

●أنا دائما ما أخذ التصحيح الكتابي الذي يقدمه/تقدمه لي المدرس/المدرسة بشكل جدي وأعمل على اتباع هذه التصحيحات في عمل التعديلات والتصحيحات المطلوبة.

لا أوافق بشدة لا أوافق

لا رأي لي أوافق أوافق بشدة

●أجد أنه من المفيد جدا الاطلاع على مقالات نموذجية مكتوبة لتفادي الوقوع في أخطاء كتابية والكتابة بشكل صحيح في اللغة الإنجليزية.

لا أوافق بشدة لا أوافق

لا رأي لي أوافق أوافق بشدة

●هل توافق/توافقين بالمشاركة في مقابلة قصيرة (صوتية) كمتابعة لهذه الاستبيان مع العلم أنها ستكون سرية تامة وبدون ذكر الاسم أو المعلومات الشخصية للمشارك/المشاركة؟

نعم ممكن، و أي أريد معلومات أكثر لا، لا أرب

●إذا كانت أجابتك بنعم أو ممكن، الرجاء كتابة إي ميلك أو رقم جوالك أدناه

الإي ميل: الجوال: _____

APPENDIX E

Semi-Structured Interview Questions (EFL Students)

1. Tell me a little bit about your English language writing learning journey. How did you learn it? How do you find it? What is the best thing about it?
2. In your opinion, how could you make sure that you are acquiring enough knowledge and skills to write properly in English? For example, writing revision sessions, past term marked scripts, model scripts....etc
3. What about written corrective feedback? Do you think it helps in building up your writing skills in English at university?
4. Some students prefer to just get the grade on their written assignments, others prefer to get both. What do you think?
5. Out of the four samples in Appendix G, which one do you prefer? Why?
6. If I was to tell you that many teachers believe that it takes a lot of time to give WCF within the short time frame of the modular semester, what would you say?

APPENDIX F

Semi-Structured Interview Questions (EFL Students - Arabic)

1. قل لي قليلا عن رحلة تعلمك للغة الإنكليزية. كيف تعلمتها؟ كيف وجدتتها؟ ما هو أفضل شيء حول هذا تعلم اللغة الإنكليزية؟
2. ماذا عن مهاراتك الكتابية باللغة الإنكليزية؟ كيف كانت تجربتك في تعلم ذلك؟
3. في رأيك، كيف يمكن لك التأكد من أن لديك المعرفة والمهارات اللازمة للكتابة بشكل صحيح في اللغة الإنكليزية؟ على سبيل المثال، كتابة حصص المراجعة، نماذج مصححة لطلاب/لطالبات من الفصل السابق، كتابات نموذجية ... الخ
4. ماذا عن التصحيح الكتابي من قبل المدرس/المدرسة؟ هل تعتقد أنه يساعد في بناء مهارات الكتابة في اللغة الإنكليزية؟
5. بعض الطلاب يفضلون مجرد الحصول على الدرجة، والبعض الآخر يفضل أن يحصل على الدرجة ولكن مع تصحيح للأخطاء الكتابية. ما رأيك؟
6. من بين العينات الأربع في المرفقة هنا، أي نموذج تفضل/تفضلين؟ لماذا؟
7. إذا كنت لاقول لك ان العديد من المعلمي-ن يعتقدون أن التصحيح الإملائي لكتابات الطلاب يأخذ الكثير من الوقت والجهد ضمن فترة زمنية قصيرة من فصل دراسي. ما رأيك بهذا القول؟

APPENDIX G

Samples of WCF

No need for "the" here.

Today, I am going to write about Hyderabad. The climate is hot and wet in summers, mild winters, and rains in the summer. The population is 6,809,970. The area is 650 km². The city is very crowded especially in the city centre. The city is famous for information technology in culture. It is famous for the founded 1541 was a centre for the diamond trade in history. The things to see in Charminar, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, and Golkonda Castle. This is good work but you need to work on your spelling and word order. Try to read a sample writing to get more ideas.

Sample A

121 ENGL00 SH Shift CA 3: Writing About The Past
Name: ID:
Write about what you did at the weekend. Write at least 80 words. Time: 20 minutes

I went to Briene want go to cinema was watching TV film in the cinema and played tennis. There are went go to hotel liberte I friends names Ahmed and gasi Tal. at 21:45 chick emiel's Finish at 22:00 There went go to sleeped. There get up brush and shower at 9:00 every day. I went go to masjid at 12:00 after noon.

Sample C

I like Jeddah because first I was born in Jeddah. There it has the biggest stadium in Saudi Arabia it is called King Abdulaziz it has a beautiful sea also it has the tallest tower in the world and the Real Madrid club is there. Finally I think it is the best city in the world because it is a clean city and big city then you must visit Jeddah and see the people there. The airport in Jeddah is big and clean. Also Jeddah is rich city the streets there made from gold and diamond also there is no traffic light and it has a big hospital.

Sample B

"Hyderabad"
Today, I am going to write Hyderabad from India. The see map south in India. The popul. 6,809,970 and 650 km² very big city centre for information technology.

Sample D

APPENDIX H

Participant Consent Form (Teachers)

CONSENT FORM

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me
any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications

If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form

all information I give will be treated as confidential

the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

.....

(Signature of participant)(Date)

.....

(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)

Contact phone number of researcher(s):.....

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

.....

OR

.....

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

APPENDIX I

رمز النموذج 391203-0101

Research Unit
English Language Institute
King Abdulaziz University
P.O.Box 80200
Jeddah, 21589
Saudi Arabia

ELI
معهد اللغة الإنجليزية
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE



Research Project Testimonial/Approval Form

Title of Research Project:

EFL Teachers' and Learners' Perceptions, Beliefs and Practices on Written Corrective Feedback in the Saudi Higher Education Context

Name and title of Researcher:

Hussam Rajab

Definition of invited participants:

Teachers and Students

Data or information to be collected, and the use that will be made of it:

Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews

How will the information supplied by participants be stored?

Digitally in two factor authentications

Contact for further questions (email address):

hr280@exeter.ac.uk

TESTIMONIAL:

I, Hussam Rajab, testify that no name of any participant/coordinator/senior faculty/management at the ELI will be included in the interviews database (or any data collection process) and in case a particular name is unintentionally or accidentally mentioned during the interview, that part of the interview is removed and deleted from the database records. I also testify that all the data collected from the interviews will be guaranteed safe and secure storage without any public access. In case I intend to publish the findings from these interviews, I will first seek permission from the *Research Unit* at the ELI before submitting any manuscripts for journal publications.

Signature of researcher: H. Rajab Date: 7/9/2016

Approved by Dr. TAREK EL YAS Signature [Signature]

One signed copy to be retained by the researcher, and one by the Research Unit at the ELI.

APPENDIX J

MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses.



Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications> and view the School's Policy online.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter).
DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND

Your name: Hussam Rajab

Your student no: 600053759

Return address for this certificate: Flat 64, 41 Seymour Grove, Manchester, M16 0NB

Degree/Programme of Study: TESOL Ed.D Part Time - Exeter

Project Supervisor(s): Dr. Esmaeel Abdollahzadeh

Your email address: hr280@exeter.ac.uk Tel: 0161-2419471

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed:.....*H. Rajab*..... .date:.....Friday, 07 September 2018.....

APPENDIX K

Certificate of ethical research approval

TITLE OF YOUR PROJECT:

Peer Evaluation and Task and Relationship Conflicts in the Saudi EFL Context

1. Brief description of your research project:

The assignment explores the theoretical aspects relating to peer (supervisor) evaluation and conflict in the workplace. Part 1 of the assignment gives a critical analysis and overview of peer evaluation as well as conflict in the workplace supported by literature review. Part 2 of the assignment is also a critical analysis of the theoretical areas covered in Part 1 is reflected and is intersected with my own professional practice (i.e. The Saudi Context).

2. Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

Participant	Gender	Qualifications	Nationality	Years of Service in Saudi Arabia
1	Female	Masters	Indian	8 years
2	Female	Masters	UK	5 years
3	Female	Masters	UK	5 years
4	Male	Doctorate	USA	5 years
5	Female	Doctorate	USA	6 years
6	Female	Doctorate	Syrian	10 years
7	Male	Masters	Pakistani	9 years
8	Male	Doctorate	Egyptian	6 years
9	Male	Masters	Australian	7 years
10	Male	Masters	UK	15 years

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:

N/A (No Children involved in this research).

3. **informed consent:** Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document. a blank consent form can be downloaded from the GSE student access on-line documents: Each consent form MUST be personalised with your contact details.

N/A

4. **anonymity and confidentiality**

5. Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

Ethical consideration was taken into account as in any social sciences or educational research. The participants' rights to withdraw at any stage of the research and even afterwards was communicated by e-mail to them. Additionally, the promise of anonymity and confidentiality was made to the participants as well as giving them the opportunity to use pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality

6. Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project - e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires, or All the audio files are stored under password only known to me.

There were no photos or videos taken as the study was quite a sensitive one.

7. special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.

No special needs participants were involved in this research study.

8. Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

Any participant who took part in the research and spoke critically against his or her department head may potentially lose their job if the identities of those participants are revealed.

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period:

until:

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature):

.....**date:**.....

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.

GSE unique approval reference:.....

Signed:.....**date:**.....

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

APPENDIX L

Constructs of the teachers' survey

CONSTRUCT (1) Professional experience and qualifications

Item	levels	N	Percent
Q2 Teaching Experience	1 – 7 years	79	24.7%
	8- – 15 years	142	44.4%
	16 – 23 years	70	21.9%
	More than 23 years	29	9.1%
Q3 Qualification	120 Hours TESOL/ TEFL Diploma	55	17.2%
	CELTA	164	51.2%
	DELTA	28	8.8%
	Masters (TESOL/TEFL/Applied Linguistics)	58	18.1%
	Doctoral degree in English Language Education/Applied Linguistics	15	4.7%

CONSTRUCT (2) Classroom particulars

Item	levels	N	Percent
Q4 No of students in class	5 – 10	59	18.44%
	11 – 20	66	20.63%
	21 – 30	50	15.63%
	31 – 40	73	22.81%
	5	72	22.50%
	Total	320	100.00%
Gender of your students	Female	152	47.50%
	Male	168	52.50%
Q6 Number of contact hours per week	10 - 20 hours	72	22.50%
	21 - 30 hours	82	25.63%
	31 - 40 hours	84	26.25%
	More than 40 hours	82	25.63%
Q7 Freq of assigning writing	Once – Twice a week	76	23.75%
	Twice – Three times a week	94	29.38%
	Four – Five times a week	68	21.25%
	More than five times a week	82	25.63%
Q8 introduction training	No	158	49.38%

CONSTRUCT (3) WCF Specifics and Practice

Item	levels	N	Percent
Q11 giving a revised version	No	155	48.44%
	Yes	165	51.56%
Q12 WCF on the returned written tasks	Yes, but very rarely	80	25.00%
	Yes, sometimes	157	49.06%
	Yes, always	83	25.94%
Q13 type of WCF given	Sample A	44	13.8%
	Sample B	187	58.4%
	Sample C	28	8.8%
	Sample D	36	11.3%
	A combination of samples	16	5.0%
Q14 belief as the best WCF type	No, I prefer a different WCF	79	24.7%
	Yes, but not always	142	44.4%
	Yes	99	30.9%
Q15 WCF given to the students on their second draft	Don't know	45	14.1%
	A less detailed WCF	184	57.5%
	The same	91	28.4%
Q16 Correcting all the errors	Strongly disagree	77	24.1%
	Disagree	101	31.6%
	Neutral	117	36.6%
	Agree	16	5%
	Strongly Agree	9	2.8%
Q17 Unfocussed WCF is time consuming			
	Neutral	60	18.8%
	Agree	116	36.3%
Q18 obliged to provide my students with unfocussed WCF	Strongly disagree	60	18.75%
	Disagree	67	20.94%
	Neutral	51	15.94%
	Agree	74	23.13%
	Strongly Agree	68	21.25%
Q19 students understand coded WCF	Strongly disagree	61	19.06%
	Disagree	56	17.50%
	Neutral	71	22.19%
	Agree	67	20.94%
	Strongly Agree	65	20.31%
Q20 Coded WCF is the least time consuming			

	Neutral	71	22.2%
	Agree	173	54.1%
	Strongly Agree	76	23.8%
Q21 Coded WCF can be easily utilised			
	Neutral	71	22.2%
	Agree	173	54.1%
	Strongly Agree	76	23.8%
Q22 Metacognitive WCF helps increase the students' autonomous learning	Strongly disagree	66	20.63%
	Disagree	61	19.06%
	Neutral	51	15.94%
	Agree	82	25.63%
	Strongly Agree	60	18.75%
Q23 Metacognitive WCF is more effective	Strongly disagree	65	20.31%
	Disagree	52	16.25%
	Neutral	63	19.69%
	Agree	67	20.94%
	Strongly Agree	73	22.81%
Q24 Metacognitive WCF seems vague to learners	Strongly disagree	65	20.31%
	Disagree	80	25.00%
	Neutral	57	17.81%
	Agree	59	18.44%
	Strongly Agree	59	18.44%
Q26 spend considerable time giving WCF	Neutral	71	22.2%
	Agree	173	54.1%
	Strongly Agree	76	23.8%
Q28 WCF is within reasonable requirements	Strongly disagree	110	34.4%
	Disagree	125	39.1%
	Neutral	66	20.6%
	Agree	15	4.7%
	Strongly Agree	4	1.3%
Q29 students should benefit greatly from WCF	Strongly disagree	8	2.5%
	Disagree	9	2.8%
	Neutral	45	14.1%
	Agree	124	38.8%
	Strongly Agree	134	41.9%

Q30 students take WCF seriously and work on it.	Strongly disagree	110	34.4%
	Disagree	125	39.1%
	Neutral	66	20.6%
	Agree	15	4.7%
	Strongly Agree	4	1.3%

Q31 If a student did not respond	Usually ignore them and do not provide more WCF	203	63.4%
	Instruct them to write a different draft	104	32.5%
	Use follow-up methods other than written feedback	13	4.1%
Q32 The preference to the pen colour	I prefer using red	80	25%
	I prefer using green	114	35.6%
	I have no preference	126	39.4%
Q34 mandatory departmental instruction	Strongly disagree	50	15.63%
	Disagree	73	22.81%
	Neutral	65	20.31%
	Agree	66	20.63%
	Strongly Agree	66	20.63%
Q35 free to choose the type of WCF	Strongly disagree	74	23.13%
	Disagree	68	21.25%
	Neutral	60	18.75%
	Agree	57	17.81%
	Strongly Agree	61	19.06%
Q36 make a decision	No	107	33.44%
	Sometimes but not always	104	32.50%
	Yes	109	34.06%
Q37 WCF regime in my context is productive and beneficial	Strongly disagree	61	19.06%
	Disagree	55	17.19%
	Neutral	65	20.31%
	Agree	75	23.44%
	Strongly Agree	64	20.00%

APPENDIX M

A Sample Coded Interview Transcript (Teacher)

A key for the different colours used for coding:

Challenges of teaching EFL in KSA

Basic rules of writing

Awareness of the significance of the writing skill.

Importance of WCF

Pair work

Challenges of WCF

Learner self-correction

Training and workshops to improve WCF system

Preferred WCF type amongst teachers

Preferred WCF type amongst students as per teachers' opinions

Interviewer:

Good morning Samirah. Thank you for joining me today, I appreciate your time. The main purpose for this interview is to gain some insight into the perspective on the written corrective feedback as an element of teaching English as a Foreign language in Saudi Arabia. This research is part of my doctoral studies at the University of Exeter and thank you again for agreeing to participate and for completing and signing the consent form that indicates that your participation is voluntary and that you may exit the research at any time as well as the fact that anonymity is guaranteed through the research.

Do you have any questions at this stage?

Samirah:

No.

Interviewer: If you need any clarification, please stop me at any point. Let us start with your EFL teaching journey, how is your experience of teaching English as a Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia when it comes to pros and cons?

Samirah:

I started my work journey at KAU. I was in India before where I taught English for two years at a college. I wanted to gain more experience and I saw an

advert for a job in Saudi Arabia, so I then moved to KSA six years ago and started at University. It was and still is a great experience for me. You have a wide range of levels of students here in Saudi and what you learn in books about teaching English is not always the same when you practice it. Students, when they move to university from high school, seem to be lacking great deal of knowledge about the structure of the language. I find it strange that some of the girls have almost missing links of language in every skill listening, speaking, writing and reading. Every semester, I have to spend a great deal of time going through basic rules and important foundation of the language which I thought would have been covered at school with the girls. For instance, some students don't seem to be enthusiastic about reading. Also, many of the lower abilities students seem to be unaware of basic writing rules and even do not initially understand the importance of writing in their future academic life.

Interviewer:

Thank you for this. Well, leading on from what you have just mentioned, let me know get into a relevant point which is related to teaching EFL in KSA and that is written corrective feedback. How often do you generally offer feedback to your students?

Samirah:

Ah...this is a good question. It is actually an important point since it is one of the major issues I have to work on with my students. From day one of the course, I like to get the girls to get used to a different environment and different learning atmosphere. I do not like them to just copy things from me and wait for me to give them the answer. I like them to understand the language and therefore, I want them to do things by themselves at certain stages and work together either in pair work or groups so they are more engaged. You asked me about written corrective feedback. It is really a serious issue since we have students who are a little bit unmotivated to write and we need them to be encouraged to write and we have to go back to basics and teach them writing rules and show them their mistakes so they can avoid it next time. However, it is not always easy and we sometimes have to think about time. Some students in higher levels come to us knowing nothing about the basics of writing, such as punctuation. So, I have to teach them this first. At the same time, I must cover the syllabus as well. The students here do not know the basics that they should learn in primary schools. Having said that, I like to give my student comprehensive feedback but comprehensive correction takes too much time and effort on part of the teachers, but it's really a good way to teach.

Interviewer:

So as an EFL teacher, what do you aim for when you give WCF and does this reflect what you truly believe is the right and professional way to deal with it?

Samirah:

For me, the aim of giving students feedback on their written work is to offer them something constructive. So, what I do is that I identify their mistakes and then let them try to self-correct if possible. If it is not easy or possible for them to

correct their mistakes, I explain to them and show them the right way to do it. But, let me tell you something. It is not easy even for two or three students to receive full details and comprehensive feedback because time is really short and we always struggle at the end of the semester to cover everything that is there to cover in the syllabus and even though I like to be there for the students to answer their questions about their assignments, I like them to make an effort and figure few of the mistakes I highlighted for them by themselves or even check with their friends.

Interviewer:

Great. So tell me about important issues and factors which you take into consideration when giving WCF?

Samirah:

I always think of time and the level of the students. These two are very important for me when giving feedback to the students.

Interviewer:

From the last question, how are these factors addressed by your institution or department and if not, why?

Samirah:

Our department has a good system where they conduct workshops to address these issues but it is not almost impossible to ameliorate and address all the issues of concern because there is a syllabus and an overall curriculum to follow and there are sometimes compromises we make in order to make two ends meet.

Interviewer:

Ok. This is good. Thanks for that. Now can I ask you please to have a look at the picture and tell me which one do you prefer from these four samples of writing correction and why?

Samirah:

I prefer sample B. This sample lets the students know where the mistakes are and then work on their own to learn what it is exactly and how to correct it. Obviously, this is a type which all the teachers like since it is the least time consuming.

Interviewer:

From a student's perspective, what type of WCF do you think they would like to see on their written assignments and why?

Samirah:

As I mentioned before, most of the instructors prefer sample B because it is easier and needs less time while the students, I am sure, prefer sample A

Interviewer:

This is a big problem isn't it? So this may cause a conflict. How do you think we can fix this conflict?

Samirah:

I think that each student should be dealt with according to their dedication in learning.

If the student is really interested they should have sample A. if the student is careless they should have B. **But yet again, we have to this about time.**

Interviewer:

Thank you very much for your time Samirah. You are free to add anything you like here.

Samirah:

Thank you so much for considering me to take part of your important research. I am really glad I took part in it since it is a very important issue and effects nearly all the teachers in the field. Good luck with your studies.

Interviewer:

Thank you very much.

Samirah:

You are welcome.

APPENDIX N

A Sample Coded Interview Transcript (student)

A key for the different colours used for coding

A key for the different colours used for coding:

Background of learning EFL

Perception of EFL teachers

Progression of writing instruction

Awareness of the role of writing skills

Importance of WCF

Pair work/Peer correction

Learner attitude towards WCF

WCF general practice by teachers as perceived by the student

Preferred WCF type amongst students

Students' attitude towards different WCF types

Self motivation in writing skill

Interviewer:

Good evening Kamal. Thank you for joining me today, I appreciate your time. The main purpose for this interview is to gain some insight into the perspective on the written corrective feedback as an element of teaching English as a Foreign language in Saudi Arabia.

This research is part of my doctoral studies at the University of Exeter and thank you again for agreeing to participate and for completing and signing the consent form that indicates that your participation is voluntary and that you may exit the research at any time as well as the fact that anonymity is guaranteed through the research.

Do you have any questions at this stage?

Kamal:

No.

Interviewer:

Let us start with your English learning journey, how did it start? I mean how did you learn it? How did you find it?

Kamal:

It started at home. My father did not speak English, but he really wanted me to learn it even though I was not first interested. He used to buy me video tapes to

learn. This continued till I started elementary school and we started learning English at school. And then I liked the language and I kept learning. It became my favourite subject. What really helped me is watching English movies in high school. I reached a point that I watch movies without Arabic subtitles. Then I joined ***** University and I was put in level 3. But the instructor in level 3 was not good. He gives the high grades to the students who talk to him and the students he likes. Then at level 4, the instructor was amazing. I had issues and I used to come late sometimes, but he was very understanding. And he appreciated my hard work. And I had high grades in level 4. But I did not finish the university as I did not pass the other subjects of my major because I did not understand the math other subject's terms in English. Then I transferred to ***** University. I started the English program there I used to pass even without studying. The instructor there was British and he was really helping us to understand everything. He always motivated us to keep going. The classes were really fun. For me, English is my favourite language and it's not very hard to learn it.

Interviewer:

Ok, this is interesting Kamal. So now tell me about the writing? How did you learn it?

Kamal:

In level 1 writing was included in the book. There is a writing exercise every 3 chapters. The instructor used to give us a subject to write about and we have to stick to it. In level 1 our writing was only graded for the writing skills, but in level 2 writing was in a separate book for writing basics. We were graded for the skills and the subject. In level 3 we only studied writing from a book designed by the university. This book was called Composition. The whole level was about writing. In this level, the instructor concentrated on the composition skill itself more than the other skills such as: spelling and grammar. He was really looking at the paragraphs structure. The topic sentence, the introduction etc. in level 4, it was about presentation and public speaking. We had to prepare PowerPoint presentations and present them to the class. We could choose any subject, it was fun and helped us to be creative. Level 5 was all about technical writing: reports, CV's and letters. In this level, mistakes of any kind were not allowed. We had 2 projects in this level. First project was the technical report for any subject related to the major. This report had to be 10 pages that include table of content, introduction, body, conclusion, references and resources. The second project was to write a cover letter and a CV. In this project if the student made any mistake he will get zero. That made me really work hard and now I don't only read and write English, I know academic writing which is very beneficial for career. I really saw a big progress when I used to go through my reports and assignments. The teacher's comments and feedback on my written essays helped me a lot in my daily life. I'm a better writer and speaker.

Interviewer:

In your opinion, how could you make sure that you are acquiring enough knowledge and skills to write properly in English? For example, did you have writing revision sessions, past term marked scripts, model scripts, and so on.

Kamal:

We always had revision sessions and the teacher always gave us exercises and many worksheets to do. Mmmm...Also, the teacher used to ask us to revise our answers with each other and he will ask other students to mark each other's work which helped me a lot because my friends used to come to me and ask me to mark their papers and show them their mistakes. I really improved from doing this.

Interviewer:

So did you used to have writing exercises in class?

Kamal:

Yes. Each class had exercises. And even I have in the summer classes we had home works. We had to write formal letters every day in the last level in order to be trained for the final exam writing. So all the students used to write and send their paragraph to a WhatsApp group where the students see the writings, find the mistakes of their peers and correct them. This way helped us a lot, as we could see other students' mistakes and learn from them.

Interviewer:

Oh, so how did the students react with this method?

Kamal:

The first time we started to do this, it was difficult in the beginning and the students did not like it and interact. Because this way was not applied in the 2 previous levels and they thought it was difficult to do. But then with the instructor's motivation they got used to it.

Interviewer:

Ok. Let me now ask you about something a little bit more specific. What about written corrective feedback? You know, when the teacher puts some comments and show you some mistakes on your writing paper. Do you think it helps in building up your writing skills in English at University?

Kamal:

Yes. It is very helpful for me since I am always trying to learn from my mistakes. The teacher's correction of my writing work in different level of classes here at the university is the reason that my writing improved. If I write something, I like to see what the teacher thinks of it and what he can tell me to make it better. The way the teachers here at university do it is very simple. The teacher would correct my writing and tell me what my mistakes are and how to correct them. His written and verbal feedback really helped me a lot to improve.

Interviewer:

Some students prefer to just get the grade on their written assignments, others prefer to get both. What do you think?

Kamal:

No, I disagree with that. I really want to see feedback so I can learn from my mistakes. If I only see the grade, how can I improve my writing?

Interviewer:

Ok. Now, Kamal, please have a look at this picture [Appendix G]. Which one do you prefer from these four samples of writing correction? Tell us why?

A – is the comprehensive way of correction, this one the instructor writes all the comments and corrects all the mistakes

B – the instructor only underlines the mistakes and writes the code “spelling, punctuation or grammar”

C - the instructor just underlines the mistakes

D – the instructor just writes the final grade on the writing

Kamal:

My instructors in levels 1 and 2 used to correct using sample B and it is not really a favourite type for me. I find coding difficult to understand and every now and then I go back to the codes table. It takes lots of time. But when the instructors in levels 3 and 4 explained the codes to us, I think it was OK for me. But, I still think that sample A is the best one for me since I can work on my mistakes better. This helped me to know the area that I need to work on. Even if I get A in the exam, I like to know why I didn't get A+. And this way of correction will show you your mistakes.

Interviewer:

Most of the students said that they prefer sample A. what do you think about that knowing that sample A is really time consuming unlike sample B?

Kamal:

Well, I think that I can work with sample B as well. But if the student prefers sample A, then why not provide it to those who want more. Some students will benefit, and others may just want to see the correct answer right away in sample A and this is not going to make learn anything. So, I think maybe the teacher can see who deserves A and who deserves B.

Interviewer:

Did any of your instructors show you a corrected sample of old students' writing?

Kamal:

An instructor showed us samples of his own writings not for old students' writing. The instructor of level 3 used to show us different ways to write, and he used to tell us all of them are correct so we can choose the way we prefer.

Interviewer:

So now writing is enjoyable for you?

Kamal:

Yes, I enjoy writing. Now in the final exam I write fluently and I do not even stop to think what to write. Most of the students are scared to use some words because they are not sure of the spelling and this makes their writing weak. That is why practicing is very important to improve all the needed skills for writing.

Interviewer:

Well, that was really interesting Kamal. Thank you for taking part in this research. Would you like to add anything else?

Kamal:

No, nothing. Wishing you all the in sha' Allah.

APPENDIX O

104 Writing Rating Scale Sample – ELI - KAU

104 Writing Rating Scale

Score	Structure & Length	Content	Lexical Range	Grammar & Mechanics	Cohesion
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three or more well-developed paragraphs are produced. Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence and clear and relevant supporting details (body). The final paragraph has a concluding sentence. Response is approximately 50% longer than the stated minimum word count. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is focused and consistently relevant with no digression providing a strong sense of unity. It represents a full and appropriate response to the prompt and all of its components and/or bullets. The response to the topic and all bullet points is well-developed. 	<p>A wide range of words covered in the book and related to the prompt are used accurately. Collocations taught in the book are consistently used correctly. The response may also contain other words and collocations more advanced than the coursebook used mostly accurately, but with some errors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenses appropriate for the prompt are used effectively and accurately throughout the writing with almost no errors in tense formation, tense choice, tense meaning, and subject/verb agreement. Spelling of words commonly found in the book, capitalization, and punctuation are all correct with almost no errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and ideas are sequenced and organized coherently. A variety of more advanced linking words (such as “moreover”, “it may appear”, “as a result”) are used correctly. A variety of cohesive devices (such as reference pronouns, the use of substitution, and ellipsis) are used correctly and accurately.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three or more developed paragraphs are produced. Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence and reasonable supporting details. The final paragraph has a concluding sentence. Response is approximately 25% longer than the stated minimum word count. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is consistently relevant with almost no digression from the main topic, showing unity. All components and/or bullets of the writing prompt are addressed. The response to the topic is well-developed and most bullet points are well-developed, although some could be more developed. 	<p>A wide range of words covered in the book and related to the prompt are used mostly accurately. Collocations taught in the book are often used correctly, reflecting a good knowledge of common collocations. The response may also contain words and collocations more advanced than the coursebook, but with some errors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenses appropriate for the prompt are used effectively and accurately throughout the writing although there may be a few errors in tense formation, tense choice, tense meaning, and subject/verb agreement. Spelling of words commonly found in the book, capitalization, and punctuation are all mostly correct with only a few errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and ideas are organized coherently. Some more advanced linking words (such as “moreover”, “it may appear”, “as a result”) are used correctly. Some cohesive devices (such as reference pronouns, the use of substitution, and ellipsis) are used correctly.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three or more paragraphs are produced. Each paragraph has relevant supporting details, although some paragraphs may be better developed than others. Response meets or slightly exceeds the stated minimum word count. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is relevant but may have occasional minor digression from the main topic. The main topic of the prompt is answered and at least 3 of the 4 bullets are addressed. The other bullet may be missing or only briefly addressed. The response to the topic and bullet points is developed, but in general it could be more developed. 	<p>A range of words covered in the book and related to the prompt are used with some confusion and errors in word choice or use. There is some correct use of collocations taught in the book. Vocabulary used is mostly on the same level as the book.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenses appropriate for the prompt are used mostly accurately throughout the writing, but there may be some errors in tense formation, tense choice, tense meaning, and subject/verb agreement. There may be some errors in spelling of words commonly found in the book, capitalization, and punctuation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizes information and ideas in a clear progression. Mostly basic linking words (such as “because”, “first of all”, and “finally”) are used. A limited number of cohesive devices (such as the use of reference pronouns, substitution, and ellipsis) are used.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be two or three paragraphs in length. However, the paragraphs are not supported very clearly and some supporting details may be off topic. Response is at least 3/4 of the stated minimum word count. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is mostly relevant with some digression from the main topic into clearly “off topic” points. The general topic of the prompt may only be partially answered. Only some of the bullet points are addressed. In general, the response to the topic and bullet points is not sufficiently developed and needs more development. 	<p>Some words covered in the book and related to the prompt are used accurately, but there are often errors in word choice and/or word use. In addition, simpler words may be used repetitively instead of more complex words. Collocations taught in the book are rarely used correctly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenses appropriate for the prompt are used with many errors in tense formation, tense choice, tense meaning, and subject/verb agreement. There are many errors in spelling of words commonly found in the book, capitalization, and punctuation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and ideas are not well organized in a clear progression. The response is connected primarily using basic, high-frequency linking words (such as “and”, “but”, and “because”).

Version A

Curriculum and Test Development Unit

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1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writing is two paragraphs or less in length or may not even be written in paragraphs at all. There is no clear introduction or conclusion and supporting details are weak. Response is less than 3/4 of the stated minimum word count. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is irrelevant in most parts with a lot of digression from the main topic. Only the general topic of the prompt is partially addressed and the bulleted items are barely addressed. Supporting ideas are extremely limited and sometimes irrelevant. 	<p>Many errors in word choice and/or word use are evident and few words covered in the book and related to the prompt are used accurately. The overuse of simple words is common and collocations taught in the book are almost never used or are always inaccurate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous errors are present in tense formation, tense choice, tense meaning, and subject/verb agreement. Numerous errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and ideas are not organized in a clear progression. Even basic, high-frequency linking words (such as “and”, “but”, and “because”) are not used frequently and/or accurately.
0	Give this score if the student is absent, the writing is completely illegible, and/or if the response is completely off topic (completely irrelevant to the prompt)				

Important Notes:

- Half scores (for example, 3.5) may be awarded **ONLY** for the categories of “Structure & Length” and “Grammar and Mechanics” if the student partially meets the descriptors for 2 bands (for example, if the student meets the “4” criteria for grammar and the “3” criteria for mechanics).
- Any piece of writing that is rated “1” or “1.5” in terms of “Paragraph Structure and Length” is to receive a maximum of “2” in all other categories.

Examples of “cohesive devices” for the “Cohesion” Category:

Substitution	“There are two women in the picture. The one on the right...”
Ellipsis (notice how “car he owned was” is dropped in the second half of the sentence)	“The first car he owned was a convertible, the second a family car.”
Reference Pronouns (the following can all be used as cohesive devices):	
• Personal Pronouns	“I really enjoyed my meal at the Cheesecake Factory. It was delicious.”
• Possessive Pronouns	“Ahmad and Abdullah are students in my class. Their questions are always really good.”
• Demonstrative Pronouns (this/that/these/those)	“Language learners need a lot of outside practice using the language. This can be difficult in some learning contexts.”
• Comparatives (including another, other, both, similar, the same, better, more, earlier, later, previous)	“The steak I had at the restaurant was delicious. The same could be said about the chocolate lava dessert.”

Cohesion rubric criteria partially adapted from <http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/231794-cambridge-english-assessing-writing-performance-at-level-b1.pdf> (pp. 2 and 17) and Cohesion examples were adapted from the same website and from http://writeseite.learn.usyd.edu.au/m3/m3u5/m3u5s5/m3u5s5_2.htm