

## **ORIGINAL**

### **The Practice of Feedback Provision in teaching writing skills: Adu Sigimo High School Grade 10 in Focus**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*The goal of this study was to investigate the practices of feedback provision in teaching writing skills at Adu Sigimo high school. To attain the purpose, a descriptive research method was employed. The participants of the study were 126 grade 10 students and five English language teachers. Close and open ended questionnaires were used to gather data from the participants. Classroom observation and text analysis on teachers' written commentary on students' written composition were employed to triangulate the findings of the questionnaires. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive survey statistics, frequency and percentage. The study showed that the teachers and students had positive perception towards the contribution of feedback provision in improving writing skills. The study also showed that teachers don't provide regular writing activities which create conducive environment and encourage multi draft writing. The study further showed that the teachers were not selective in the types of feedback and focus on surface features of writing than major features of students writing in their feedback. Moreover, the teachers rarely provide immediate feedback for students' writing and they usually provide summative feedback on the final drafts of students' papers. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that teachers should consider that writing is a recursive process in which it passes through different phases. Therefore, to help students improve their writing skills, they should provide regular writing activities that encourage multi-drafting process and create opportunities to practice different types of feedback.*

**Key words:** Feedback, peer-feedback, teacher-feedback, writing process, summative feedback, immediate feedback

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Based on the natural order hypothesis, writing is generally considered the language skill obtained last, but it is as

important as the rest. The skill of writing is especially important in academic settings where most ESL teaching occurs.

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However, many researchers and scholars notice that despite writing being a very important form of expression and communication, teaching tends to be a much neglected part of the language program in both first and foreign languages (Badger & White, 2000). Writing has also been described as a 'complicated cognitive task', because it is an activity that demands careful thought, discipline, and concentration, and it is not just a simple direct production of what the brain knows or can do at a particular moment (Widdowson, 1983).

Writing difficulty increases if English is not the writer's first language, hence learning to write in English when it is a writer's second language poses its own additional problems. Hopkins (1989) mentions that for most non-native learners, writing is considered to be the most difficult skill to learn. Moreover, the task of writing in a second language is particularly severe when students are required to produce a high-quality outcome, as is the case in academic settings (Widdowson, 1983).

In Ethiopia, English is used as a medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary education. But learners proficiency remains low and the effectiveness of English language teaching remains always questionable, despite the efforts being undertaken by the Ethiopian government and concerned institutions. Presently, teachers at schools and employers in industries have been complaining about the low level English language competence of students and graduates, respectively. Ethiopia's need for English language is more intensified as globalization is the agenda of the time, whereas the 'depressing picture of English language teaching' never improved. Students who join colleges and universities are unable to express

themselves in English well; graduates who join the world of work fail to write their own CV and application letters for job. Teachers in primary and secondary schools and even in colleges and universities lack the proficiency to teach well and become role-models (Fisher & Swindells, 1998).

Even though the importance of feedback in promoting students writing is the truth accepted by most researchers in the field of language teaching, the actual practices of feedback in Ethiopian high schools ELT classes seems different. From our personal teaching experience as high school English language teachers, the pedagogical implementation of feedback provision in ELT writing classroom instruction to promote students' writing skills is limited. However, the researchers believe that the writing problems of the students' can be alleviated through provision of effective feedback to their written work. So, this study was intended to explore teachers' and students' perceptions and practices of feedback provision to students' written work in Adu Sigimo High School and to suggest some possible ways of feedback provision to help them improve their writing skills. Therefore this study was designed to investigate the current practice of feedback provision to students' writing in Adu Sigimo High school grade 10 ELT classes by searching answers to the following questions:

1. How do teachers and students perceive feedback provision to writing activities?
2. How often do students get feedback to their writing activities?
3. What are the most common feedback provisions schemes practiced writing classes?
4. What are the factors that affect feedback provision?

**Limitations**

Certainly, it would have been preferable to have more subjects and more high schools involved in this study. But due to time constraint and financial and material problems, the study has been limited to only on one high school particularly grade 10 students and teachers. So, it is difficult to make reliable generalization from the results of this study for the whole high schools in Ethiopia. Moreover, the shortage of recent research on this particular topic in Ethiopian context may limit the depth and the scope of the review literature concerning local study.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY****Research Design**

In this study, a descriptive survey design involving both qualitative and quantitative techniques was employed. The target population of this study was grade 10 students of Adu Sigimo high school who were 126 in number and five EFL teachers in the school. Adu Sigimo high school is found about 135 kms to the South West of Jimma town and it is among high schools opened in recent years. Therefore, no significant study has been carried out. Moreover, the researchers' prior knowledge and experience at this school as EFL teachers helped them to observe the situation.

There were 280 students 129 male and 151 female in grade 10 in six sections with an average number of 46.7 students in each section. From the total population of 280 students, 126 (45%) of them 58(46.03%) male and 68(53.97%) were taken as the representative sample. To balance the composition of the representative sample in terms of sections and sex/gender the percentage used to select the representative sample was manipulated. Then, lottery method of probability sampling technique was employed to select a sample of

students from each section. All English language teachers who teach grade ten English, who were five in number, were taken as participants of the study.

**Instruments**

To gather dependable data for the under takings, the researches have used multiple instruments, namely questionnaire, observation and text analysis.

**Methods of Data Analysis**

After the responses gathered by means of different instruments were organized, edited, coded, classified and tabulated manually, the collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. That is to say the collected data were tabulated and simple statistical techniques which are percentages and mean values were used for the numerical interpretation. The percentages were used to show the proportion of the responses; whereas the weighted means were computed to describe the characteristics of given items. On the other hand, because the classroom observation was basically used to triangulate the data obtained through questionnaires, the data gathered through classroom observation checklist were described in connection with the data gathered through questionnaires. That is to say the data gathered through observations and the students' texts marked by the teacher were narrated in an intermingled way with the data collected through questionnaires. Finally, based on the findings, conclusions and recommendations were made.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION****Perceptions and Preferences**

This section deals with examining teachers and students perception towards feedback provision in writing. It also tries to identify

students' preferences to peer and teachers' feedback. With this regard 10 questionnaire items were administered for the teachers to see the way they perceive feedback provision in teaching writing. Moreover, 12 items which deals with students' perceptions and preferences towards feedback provision in writing skills were also administered for the students. From these 12 items the first four items (1-4)

deals with students' perception and the rest eight items (5-12) deals with students' preferences to teachers' and peer feedback.

### Teachers' Perception to Feedback Provision

This section is intended to examine the way teachers perceive feedback provision in teaching writing.

**Table1:** Responses of Teachers Concerning their Perception to Feedback Provision

Feedback to writing means.....	Responses					Total
	S.agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	S.disagree	
One way of motivating students for writing.	3	2	-	-	-	5
Encouraging collaborative learning.	4	1	-	-	-	5
Praising learners' writing for its strengths.	1	4	-	-	-	5
Crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure.	-	2	1	2	-	5
Giving selective feedback to learners written work	2	2	1	-	-	5
Rewriting answers after teachers have commented them	-	3	2	-	-	5
Assess and diagnose the problematic of my students' writing	5	-	-	-	-	5
Giving marks /grades	2	1	1	1	-	5
Encouraging learners to experiment with the language	4	1	-	-	-	5
Collecting important errors for analysis by the whole class	2	3	-	-	-	5

As can be seen from Table1, item 1 which states that "feedback to writing means one way of motivating students for writing." In response to this item three teachers showed their strong agreement while two of them showed agreement. This shows that teachers believe in the motivational power

of feedback. On the other hand, item 2 was posed to elicit teachers' perception towards the value of feedback in encouraging collaborative learning. In response to this item, 4 teachers replied that they strongly agree and one teacher showed his/her agreement. This can also be an indication

of teachers' positive perception towards feedback provision. Regarding item 3, one teacher showed strong agreement and four teachers showed agreement that they assume feedback to writing is praising learners' writing for its strength. However, the text analysis depicted that there were very limited praising comments in students' marked papers. This implies that there is a discrepancy between what the participants said and what they actually practice in feedback provision.

As revealed by responses to item 4 all the teachers showed their strong agreement that feedback to writing is crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure instead. In this regard, text analysis also revealed that there were many crossed out and replaced words or structures in students' commented papers. From this data one can conclude that teachers have some theoretical gap about feedback provision.

Responses of teachers to item 5 showed that two teachers strongly agreed and two other teachers agreed that teachers should be selective in providing feedback. One teacher replied that he/she was not sure about the item. In contrast, the text analysis depicted that teachers use different types of feedback forms in their comments to students' written text at a time. They tried to address every issue and problem they saw in students' papers. Item 6 which states that "Feedback to writing means rewriting answers after teachers had commented them." In response to this item three teachers showed their agreement while two

teachers showed that they were not sure about the item.

In response to item 7 all the teachers indicated their strong agreement that feedback is a means of assessing and diagnosing the problematic issues in students writing. Regarding item 8, three teachers strongly agreed that feedback is suggesting mark or grades and the rest two teachers showed their agreement to the point. This data can be an implication of teachers' misunderstanding about the difference between feedback and assessment.

Regarding item 9, four of the teachers showed their strong agreement and the other one teacher indicated his/her agreement that feedback is a means of encouraging students to experiment with the language in writing. As for responding to item 10, two of the teachers and the rest three teachers indicated their strong agreement and agreement respectively that feedback is a means of collecting important errors for analysis for the whole class.

#### **Students' Perception and Preferences to Feedback Provision**

Separate questionnaire items, 12 items, which deals with students' perceptions and preferences towards feedback provision in writing skills, were prepared. The first four items (1-4) deal with perception and the rest eight items (5-12) deals with students' preferences. Again the last eight questions which deal with students' preferences were divided into students' preferences to teachers' and peer feedback to make analysis easier.

**Table 2:** Response of Students Concerning their Perception to Feedback

Questionnaire Item	Frequ & percen	Responses					Total	Mean
		S. agree	Agree	Not sure	D. Agree	S. disagree		
I have no fear of being commented by my teacher on my written work.	Fr	96	30	-	-	-	126	4.7
	%	76.19	23.80	-	-	-	100	6
I think it is important for teachers to give feedback on students' written work.	Fr	98	24	2	2	-	126	4.7
	%	77.77	19.04	1.58	1.58	-	100	3
I always pay close attention to my teacher's written feedback on my writing.	Fr	64	47	-	13	2	126	4.2
	%	50.79	37.30	-	10.31	1.58	100	5
Teacher's feedback helps me learn and improve my writing skills.	Fr	106	20	-	-	--	126	4.8
	%	84.12	15.87	-	-	-		2
<b>Grand mean = 4.64</b>								

As can be seen from the Table 2, item 1 was used to draw information whether students fear being commented by their teachers on their writing practices. In response to this item, 76.1% and 23.81% of the respondents showed their strong agreement and agreement respectively. The mean score of this item indicates 4.76 which incline to strong agreement. This implies that students have positive perception towards teachers' comment.

Item 2 was posed to elicit whether students think feedback help teachers to know more about students writing difficulties. As can be seen from Table 2, 96.77 % (with 77.77% strongly agree and 19% agree) of the participants showed their agreement that it is important for teacher to provide feedback to students' written work. The mean value of this item is 4.73 which is close to strongly agree. This implies that students highly value comments they receive from their teachers on their writing practices.

Item 3 investigates how much students pay attention to written feedback they receive

from their teachers. As revealed in Table 4.2, almost 88% of the respondents (with 50.79% strongly agree and 37.30% agree) showed their positive attitude. The mean value of this data is 4.25, which falls between strongly agree and agree. Only 11.12% of the respondents showed their disagreement with this point. With this regard, item 4 was intended to draw information about learners thought with the helpfulness of correction they receive from their teacher to improve their writing skills. The response to this item was overwhelmingly affirmative: with 84.12% strong agreement and 15.87% agreement. From this data we can conclude that all the respondent students felt their teachers' feedback indeed help them improve their writing.

### Students' Feedback Preference to Teachers' Feedback

This section deals with the analysis of students' level of preference regarding feedback they receive from their teachers and their peer. Likewise, items 5-7 deals with drawing information about feedback

they receive from their teachers and the rest preference towards their peer feedback. five items (8-12) deals with their

**Table 3:** Students’ Feedback Preference

No	Questionnaire Item	Frequ & percen	Responses					Total	Mean
			S. agree	Agree	Not sure	D. Agree	S. disagree		
5	It is more helpful to give clear, direct instructions about my writing errors than suggesting a correction.	Fr	93	26	-	5	2	<b>126</b>	4.61
		%	73.80	20.63	-	3.96	1.58	<b>100</b>	
6	I do not make the same errors once the teacher corrects me.	Fr	49	45	-	12	20	<b>126</b>	3.72
		%	38.88	35.71	-	9.52	15.87	<b>100</b>	
7	Some codes that my teacher uses during error correction are difficult to understand.	Fr	58	47	4	11	6	<b>126</b>	4.57
		%	46.03	37.30	3.17	8.73	4.67	<b>100</b>	

As can be seen from Table 3, item 5 which states that “It is more helpful to give clear, direct instructions about my writing errors than suggesting a correct answer,” 73.80% and 20.63% of the students replied that they strongly agree and agree respectively that they prefer clear instructions than receiving correct answer from their teacher for their writing errors. The mean score of this item is 4.61 which is between strongly agree and agree. This shows that students need clear direction from their teachers than suggesting them the correct answers for their errors.

Item 6 was intended to check whether written comments students receive from their teacher for their writing helped them to avoid repeating similar errors in the next writing activity. As can be seen from the above table, 38.88% and 35.71% of the

students disclosed that they strongly agree and agree respectively about their preference to receive the correct written comment from their teachers. However, 9.52% and 15.87% of the respondents showed their disagreement and strong disagreement to the helpfulness of error correction in avoiding similar error in the next writing activity. This implies that students use feedback they received from their teachers or peer to substantiate or to improve the next drafts of their writing.

Item 7 deals with the clarity of correction codes used by teacher during feedback provision. As displayed in the Table 4.3, 46.03% and 37.30% of the respondent strongly agree and agree respectively that the correction codes teachers use during feedback on student paper are vague and the smaller portion (8.73%) of the

respondents showed their disagreement. The rest 4.67% replied that they strongly disagree and 3.17% of the respondents

failed to make decision. The mean value of this item is 4.57 which are between strong agreement and agreement.

### Students' Preference to Peer Comments

**Table 4:** Students' Peer Feedback Preference

Questionnaire Item	Frequ & percen	Responses					Total	Mean
		<i>s. agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	<i>D. Agree</i>	<i>S. disagree</i>		
I feel free when I discuss with my peer on my writing activities.	Fr	75	40	9	2	-	<b>126</b>	4.49
	%	59.52	31.74	7.14	1.58	-	<b>100</b>	
Classmates' Comments helped me to rewrite my first draft.	Fr	87	34	-	3	2	<b>126</b>	4.59
	%	69.04	26.98	-	2.38	1.58	<b>100</b>	
I don't want to be commented by someone who is in the same status with me.	Fr	2	12	1	42	59	<b>126</b>	1.61
	%	1.58	9.52	0.79	33.33	46.82	<b>100</b>	
Since students' comments were misleading and useless, I did not use their comments.	Fr	10	12	-	45	59	<b>126</b>	1.86
	%	7.93	9.52	-	35.71	46.82	<b>100</b>	
Exchanging comments with my classmates on writing increased my confidence in writing.	Fr	88	35	2	1	-	<b>126</b>	4.66
	%	69.84	27.77	1.58	0.79	-	<b>100</b>	
<b>Grand mean =3.44</b>								

Five items were posed to the students to draw information about students' attitude towards peer feedback. Accordingly, in response to item 8 as can be seen in Table 4 above, 59.12% and 31.74% of them showed their strong agreement and agreement respectively that they feel more relaxed when they discuss about their writing activities with their peer. However, 7.14% of the respondents couldn't be sure to make decision. In relation to item 8, item 9 is to see whether peer comments are helpful in writing their first draft. As disclosed in Table 4, concerning this item, 96.12% (with 69.04% strongly agree and 26.98% agree) of the participants claimed

that comments they receive from their peer helped them to write their first draft. Only about 3.80% Of the respondents showed their disagreement to the helpfulness of peer comments in writing the first draft. This implies that the students have strong preference to feedback they receive from their peer on their writing.

Item 10 is also posed to fix students preference on peer comments. As can be seen from Table 4, 101(with 33.33% disagree and 46.82% strongly agree) of the students agree with the idea not to be commented by someone who is in the same status with them. The mean value we get 1.61 which is in between the points of

strong disagreement and disagree. The remaining 11.10% replied that they don't want to be commented by someone who is in the same status with them. This implies that the majority of the respondents 80.15% showed their agreement with the idea of being commented by peer. Similarly, item 11 which state "Since students' comments were misleading and useless, I did not use their comments." In response to this item, the total of 82.53% (with 35.71% disagree and 46.82% strongly disagree) showed their disagreement to the point. However, some portion of the respondents 16.45% stand against the point. When we see the overall result of the response, we get a mean value of 1.86 which is very close to disagreement. That is to mean that the respondents give high value for comments they receive from their peer.

Item 12 also deals with the contribution of peer feedback in building students' writing confidence. The result obtained shows that almost all respondents 97.61 % (with 69.84% strongly agree and 27.77% agree)

claimed that it adds their writing confidence. The mean score of this data is 4.66. This indicates strong agreement of students to the contribution of peer feedback in building their writing confidence.

#### **Provision of Writing Activities**

This section is intended to draw information about the extent and type of writing activities being provided by teachers because of the fact that the type and extent of writing activities exercised in the language classroom play a prominent role in determining the type of feedback provision. In other words, the types of feedback students' receive and teachers provide depend on the types of writing approaches being implemented in the classroom. To identify these, four items were posed for both teachers and the students in order to see types of writing being exercised by teachers in writing lessons.

**Table 5:** Perception on Provision of Writing Activities

Questionnaire Item	Respondents	Frequ & percen	Responses					Total	Mean
			Always	Usually	Some Times	Rarely	Never		
Provision of writing assignments for students	S	Fr	-	48	75	3	-	<b>126</b>	3.2
		%		38.09	59.52	2.3		<b>100</b>	3
Provision of home take writing assignments for students	T	Fr		4	1	-	-	<b>5</b>	
		%	-						
Giving feedback on the first draft of student' writing assignments	S	Fr		29	48	37	12	<b>126</b>	2.7
		%		23.01	38.09	29.36	9.52	<b>100</b>	4
Giving feedback on the final draft of writing assignment.	T	Fr	1	1	2	1	-	<b>5</b>	
		%							
Giving feedback on the first draft of student' writing assignments	S	Fr	-	13	30	66	17	<b>126</b>	2.3
		%		10.3	28.8	52.38	13.49	<b>100</b>	0
Giving feedback on the final draft of writing assignment.	T	Fr	-	-	5	-	-	<b>5</b>	
		%							
Giving feedback on the final draft of writing assignment.	S	Fr	4	61	45	16		<b>126</b>	4.0
		%	3.17	48.41	35.71	12.7		<b>100</b>	6
Giving feedback on the final draft of writing assignment.	T	Fr	2	3	-	-	-	<b>5</b>	
		%							

Key =S=Students

T=teacher

Item 1 is intended to find out how often teachers provide writing assignments. As it is indicated in Table 5, 97.61% (with 38.09% usually and 59.52% sometimes) of respondents said that they were given writing activities. The mean score is 3.23 which is nearly 'sometimes'. However, four teachers claimed that they provide writing assignments usually and one teacher replied that she/he provides writing activities some times. In relation to item 1, item 2 is also designed to draw information concerning home take assignment provision. As displayed in Table 5, 23.01% of the respondents said usually, 38.09% sometimes and 29.36% said rarely. The rest 9.52% said never. The mean score of data obtained to this item is 2.74% which is nearly 'sometimes'. On the other hand, two teachers one for each replied 'always' and 'usually' and the other two teachers said

that they provide home take assignments sometimes. Only one teacher said that she/he rarely provides home take writing assignments. Evidences from the description of the above data, classroom observation and text analysis of students' marked papers by EFL teachers show that the teachers provide writing activities which should be done in the class and out of the classroom. Data obtained from teachers through open ended questions also revealed that they rush to cover the portion and give much concentration for skills which help students pass the national examination. This implies that the insufficiency of practical writing activities for the skill which need extensive exercises.

Items 3 and 4 were intended to elicit information about writing approaches

teachers implement in writing lessons through types of feedback they provide for students written work. In this regard item 3 asked the students if they receive feedback on the first draft of their written work. The responses to this item revealed that 10.3% and 28.8% of them respectively reported that they usually and sometimes receive feedback on the first draft of their written work. 52.38% and 13.49% of the respondent replied rarely and never respectively. Here the majority of the responses with the total of 80% fall between sometimes and rarely with mean value 2.3 which is almost between sometimes and rarely. In response to this item all five teachers claimed that they provide feedback on students' first draft sometimes. This implies that the students receive feedback on their first draft sometimes.

On the other hand, in item 4 students were also asked how frequently they receive feedback on the final drafts of their written output. As can be seen from the Table 5 above, 4% of the respondents said always, 48.41% usually, 31.71% sometimes and

12.7% said rarely. From this result we can obtain mean value of 4.06 which almost 'usually'. Teachers' response to this item shows that two of them said always and the other three teachers said they usually provide feedback on the final drafts of their students' writing. When this result is compared to result obtained from item 3, most of the students claimed that they receive more feedback for the final drafts of their writing and the teachers' response also witness this.

#### **Teachers' Feedback Practices**

As EFL teachers have lion's share in feedback provision, the majority of the questions were also circle around the teachers. Ferris (2003, p.134) argues "Individualized teacher feedback is a powerful tool and perhaps the greatest gift a writing instructor can give to his or her students." In this regard 7 questions were posed for both the teachers and the students to draw information about teachers' feedback practices in teaching writing skills.

**Table 6:** Teachers Feedback Practice Scheme

Questionnaire Item	Respondents	Frequ & percen	Responses					Total	Mean
			Always	Usually	Some Times Times	Rarely	Never		
Giving oral comments for students during writing activities.	S	Fr	3	12	69	38	4	<b>126</b>	2.77
		%	2.38	9.52	54.76	30.15	3.17	<b>100</b>	
	T	Fr	1	3	1			<b>5</b>	
		%							
Conducting face-to-face dialogue with my students about their writing assignment.	S	Fr	-	-	5	14	107	<b>126</b>	1.19
		%	-	-	3.96	11.11	84.92	<b>100</b>	
	T	Fr	-	-	-	4	1	<b>5</b>	
		%	-	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>	
Providing immediate feedback to students' writing activities.	S	Fr	-	7	20	48	51	<b>126</b>	2.46
		%	-	5.55	15.87	38.09	40.47	<b>100</b>	
	T	Fr	5	-	-	-	-	<b>5</b>	
		%	-	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>	
Giving feedback on the next day for home takes writing assignment.	S	Fr	-	-	27	28	71	<b>126</b>	1.65
		%			21.42	22.22	56.38	<b>100</b>	
	T	Fr	1	1	2	1	-	<b>5</b>	
		%	-	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>	
Reacting to all errors observed in students' written assignment	S	Fr	54	57	15	-	-	<b>126</b>	4.30
		%	42.85	45.23	11.90	-	-	<b>100</b>	
	T	Fr	2	2	1	-	-	<b>5</b>	
		%	-	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>	
Facilitating peer feedback during writing activities in the classroom.	S	Fr	13	16	32	19	10	<b>126</b>	2.16
		%	10.31	12.69	25.39	15.07	7.93	<b>100</b>	
	T	Fr	1	1	3	-	-	<b>5</b>	
		%	-	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>	
Giving students' brief orientation on how to give peer feedback.	S	Fr	-	7	38	77	4	<b>126</b>	2.38
		%	-	5.55	30.15	61.14	3.17	<b>100</b>	
	T	Fr	1	1	1	2	-	<b>5</b>	
		%	-	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>	

*Key=S=students**T= teachers*

Accordingly, item 5 is intended to find out how frequently the EFL teachers provide oral feedback to students' writing. As can

be seen from the above Table 6 the total of 84.91% (with 54.76% sometimes and 30.15% rarely) replied that they receive oral feedback. This result gives mean value

of 2.77 which is nearly 'sometimes'. However, in response to this item one of the teachers said he/she always provides oral feedback for students writing and three of them replied that they play the role usually. The other one teacher responded that he/she does the activity only sometimes. This implies that students don't get oral feedback for their writing frequently.

Goldstein (1990) argues that in face-to-face conferencing, teachers can often see whether students understand what they are saying by reading their faces and can respond accordingly. Coming towards face-to-face discussion in the form of conferencing, item 6 illustrate that the great majority of the respondents, 96.03% (with 11.11% rarely and 84.92% never) responded that they did not have face-to-face discussion concerning their written work. The mean value of item 6 is 1.19 which inclines to never. When results obtained for item 5 and item 6 are compared, teachers provide oral feedback to students' written output in the classroom only sometimes. However, they never make face-to-face conferencing with their students on their written work. Data obtained from teachers also revealed that four of the respondent said that they do it rarely and one teacher replied that he/she never does it at all because of time constraints. Data obtained from both sources show that there is almost no face-to-face conferencing concerning writing activities. In contrast to this data Hayland (2001, p.134) recommends that "Both teachers and students need to prepare carefully to make the most of face-to-face conferences".

Regarding immediate feedback from their teachers, students' response to item 7 depicted that 5.55% usually, 15.87% sometimes, 38.09% rarely and 40.47% never receive immediate feedback from

their teachers. As can be seen from the data, the majority of the respondents (78.56%) said that they receive immediate feedback rarely or never. This result gives mean value of 2.46 which is below the average of rating scale 'sometimes'. Similarly, teachers' response to this item reveals that, four teaches said sometimes and one teacher replied that he/she gives immediate feedback rarely because of time constraints, large number of students in one class and lack good awareness on feedback provision.

Item 8 is also intended to find out whether students receive feedback for home take assignments just on the next day. As indicated in the above table 21.42% of the respondents said 'sometimes', 22.22% 'rarely' and the rest 56.38% replied that they 'never' receive feedback on the next day for their home take assignments. This result gives mean value of 1.65 which falls between rarely and never. Responses of teachers to item 8 is the same as that of item 7 (four sometimes and one rarely). The data obtained from the two items (7 and 8) depict that students get immediate feedback almost in rare cases for both in classroom and home take written assignments. Classroom observation checklist also complements the data obtained through items 7 and 8. No teacher is observed moving through the class or collecting students' exercise books and marking what they have written through the whole observation sessions. Moreover, data collected from teachers and students through open ended questions also reported that teachers don't provide immediate feedback because of tighten class schedules and time constraints for students' written work.

Teacher written feedback should respond to all aspects of student writings: structure, organization, style, content, and presentation, but it is not necessary to cover

every aspect on every draft at every stage of the teaching writing cycle (Hayland, 2001, p, 185). To this end, item 9 is intended to draw information on the way teachers react to students writing errors. As shown in the above table, 88.08% (42.85% always and 45.23% usually) of the participants said that their teachers react to all errors they have observed in students' writing. The mean value of this data is 4.30 which is between always and usually. Two of the teachers also said they always react to all errors and the other two teachers replied that they play the role usually. Only one teacher said that he/she reacts to all errors sometimes. This implies that the teachers react to both major and minor errors they have observed in the students' writing. Similarly, text analysis conducted on students' marked papers also display that teachers reacted to all errors they have observed in students' writing. This implies that teachers are not selective to the types of feedback they provide for their students' written work.

Item 10 is intended to find out whether teachers facilitate peer feedback during writing activities in the classroom. The responses to this question revealed that

10.31% of them said always and 12.69% usually facilitate peer feedback during writing activities in the classroom. While 25.39 % of the respondents said their teachers sometimes facilitate peer feedback. Of the remaining, 15.07% disclosed they rarely facilitate this kind of activity. The rest 7.93% of the students; however, replied that their teachers do not facilitate peer feedback. The mean score of this item is 2.16 which incline to rarely. Teachers' response to this item reveals that two teachers one for each said always and usually. The other three teachers replied that they facilitate peer feedback session sometimes. During classroom observation, four sessions were observed while teachers make attempts to bring students in pairs or in groups to do certain writing activities. However, the inconveniences of the classroom seats for group work, vague instructions from teachers and the way teachers form group don't seem effective. Some students simply sit and do other activities they simply ask their students to be in group or pair and do the activities in the text books after they had given them some explanations followed by certain examples.

**Table 7:** Feedback Utilization

Questionnaire Item	Respondents	Frequ & percen	Responses					Total	Mean
			Always	Usually	Some Times	Rarely	Never		
Students consider and utilize feedback they have received from their peers in the next draft.	S	Fr	66	37	17	6	-	<b>126</b>	4.29
		%	52.38	29.36	13.49	4.76	-	<b>100</b>	
	T	Fr	3	1	-	1	-	<b>5</b>	
		%	-	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>	
Students consider and utilize feedback they received from their teacher in the next draft.	S	Fr	62	35	22	7	-	<b>126</b>	4.20
		%	49.21	27.77	17.46	5.55	-	<b>100</b>	
	T	Fr	-	1	3	1	-	<b>5</b>	
		%	-	1	3	1	-	<b>5</b>	

**Key, S=Students T=teachers**

Teacher feedback is only helpful to student writers if they read it, and seriously consider whether or not to act on it (Ferris, 2003 p, 130). Accordingly, items 12 and 13 are to find out whether students consider feedback they have received in their next draft. As shown in Table 7 above, 82.74% of the respondent (52.38% always and 29.36 % usually) replied that they consider feedback they have received from their peer in their next draft. The other 13.49% and 4.76% of the respondent replied that they play the role sometimes and rarely respectively. The mean value of this item is 4.29 that are between always and usually. Teachers’ response to this item show that three said always, one usually and the other one teacher replied rarely that students consider comments they received from their peer in the next draft. This shows that students give due consideration for

feedback they have been given from their peer.

Similarly, item 13 is also intended to draw information whether students consider feedback they received from their teachers in writing the next draft. Data obtained regarding this item reveals that 76.98% of the respondent (with 49.21% always and 27.77% usually) with mean value 4.20 responded that they usually consider feedback they have received from their teachers. On the other hand data obtained from teachers disclosed that one teacher ‘usually’; three teachers ‘sometimes’ and the other one teacher said rarely consider feedback they received from their teachers. When we observe results obtained from the two items (12 and 13) we get aggregate mean value 4.24 which is almost in between always and usually.

**Table 8:** Students' Feedback Practice

Questionnaire Item	Frequ & percen	Responses					Total	Mean
		Always	Usually	Some Times	Rarely	Never		
My teacher encourages me to revise my first draft before I had my written work to somebody else for feedback.	Fr	5	13	49	42	17	<b>126</b>	2.57
	%	3.96	10.31	38.88	33.33	13.49	<b>100</b>	
My teacher returns my written work with the correct form of errors I have committed.	Fr	9	18	23	36	40	<b>126</b>	2.36
	%	7.14	14.28	18.25	28.57	31.74	<b>100</b>	
My teacher's written comments are discouraging.	Fr	2	7	16	33	68	<b>126</b>	1.74
	%	1.58	5.55	12.69	26.19	53.96	<b>100</b>	
Written comments I receive from my teacher are encouraging.	Fr	9	23	64	29	1	<b>126</b>	2.84
	%	7.14	18.25	50.79	23.01	0.79	<b>100</b>	
My teacher corrects my written assignment for evaluation.	Fr	52	49	25	-	-	<b>126</b>	4.21
	%	41.26	38.88	19.84	-	-	<b>100</b>	

Tesfaye's study (1995) on the effectiveness of students' self-correction in writing shows that self-correction was more effective in helping students learn than where teacher gives direct correction. His argument is that students develop their skills if they discover by themselves the error in their writing rather than the direct correction teachers give. In this regard item 14 is intended to draw information whether the teacher encourage learners to make self revision before they hand their first draft to somebody else for feedback. As shown in Table 8, 10.31% of the respondents replied usually, 38.88% sometimes, 33.33% and 13.49% and 13.49% replied rarely and never respectively. When we see the responses, the upper hand of the respondents 72.21% said their teacher encourage self revision only sometimes or rarely. The mean score of this item also indicates 2.57, which is between some times and rarely. However, classroom observation reveals that the teachers do not

play the role. Soon after the classroom activities the teachers asked their students to be in pairs or groups to discuss on their written work. They didn't give them a chance to revise by themselves before they hand to their partners for comments. This shows that students were given few chances to make self revision to their written output.

In response to item 15 which deals with the way teachers react with students written out put which states that "My teacher returns my written work with correct form of errors I have committed," 7.14% responded always, 14.28% usually, 18.25% sometimes, 28.57% rarely and 31.74% replied never. From item 15 results, we can get mean value of 2.36 which lies below the average frequency rating scale 'sometimes'. Data obtained from text analysis also reveals that teachers replace incorrect forms occasionally. From this data we can conclude that teachers return

students' written paper with correct answer only sometimes or rarely.

Hyland, (2001) contained that teachers need to use positive comments with care, but a lack of positive comments can affect both students' attitudes to writing and their perception of feedback. In this regard, items 16 and 17 were intended to draw information whether written comments learners receive from their teachers to their written work are discouraging or encouraging. Accordingly, in response to item 16 which is intended to see whether the written comments they receive from their teachers are discouraging. As can be read from Table 8, the result on this item depicted that 80.15% (26.19% rarely and 53.96% never) replied discouraging. The mean score of this item is 1.74 which inclines to rarely. This reveals that almost written comments teachers provide to their students are not discouraging. Similarly, in response to item 17, 18.25% usually, 50.79

% sometimes and 23.01% rarely said that teachers written comments are encouraging. The mean score of this item is 2.84 which is nearly 'sometimes'. However, in text analysis the researcher didn't observe any praising word or phrase which praise students for the job well done. This seems that teachers undermine the effects of positive comments in motivating students learning in writing.

Item 18 is intended to see whether teacher relate feedback and assessment. As shown in Table 8, the data obtained concerning this item reveals that the total of 80.14% (with 41.26% always and 38.88% usually and smaller portion of the respondents 19.84% replied that their teacher relate feedback sometimes. From this result we can get mean value of 4.21 which is between usually and always. This implies that teachers relate feedback for performance (evaluative role).

## Types and Focuses of Feedback

Table 9: Teachers' and Students' Focus Areas of Feedback Provision

Specific types of feedback	Sources of F. back	Rating Scales										Total	Mean	
		Always		Usually		Some times		Rarely		Never				
		Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%			
Organization	P	2	1.59	8	6.43	35	27.77	79	61.11	4	3.17	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	2.45
	T	31	24.60	66	52.38	23	18.25	5	3.96	1	0.79	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	3.96
Content	P	7	5.55	19	15.07	55	43.65	42	33.33	3	2.38	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	2.88
	T	73	57.93	48	38.88	9	7.14	5	3.96	-	-	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	4.74
Grammar	P	55	43.65	62	48.20	4	3.17	3	2.38	2	1.55	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	4.30
	T	76	60.31	33	26.19	15	11.90	9	7.14	3	2.38	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	4.58
Vocabulary	P	20	15.87	11	8.73	63	50	28	22.22	4	3.17	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	3.11
	T	84	66.66	21	16.66	7	5.55	8	6.34	6	4.76	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	4.34
Mechanics (spelling, pun.)	P	93	73.80	25	19.84	8	6.34	-	-	-	-	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	4.67
	T	22	17.46	59	46.82	37	29.36	7	5.55	1	0.79	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	3.74
General comment	P	11	8.73	12	9.52	56	4.44	47	37.30	-	-	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	2.89
	T	21	16.66	66	52.38	32	25.39	5	3.96	2	1.59	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	3.78

Accordingly, item 1 is intended to see how frequently peer feedback and teachers' feedback focus on organization of students written texts. As can be seen from Table 10 above, concerning the focus of peer feedback on organization 1.59% replied always, 6.34% usually, 27.77% sometimes, 61.11% rarely and 3.17% of the respondent said never. Here the majority of the response (88.88%) falls between sometimes and rarely. The mean score of this item is 2.45 that is almost between sometimes and rarely. In response to this item, the response obtained from students about the focus of their teachers on students' text organization show that 24.60% of the respondent replied always, 52.38% usually, 18.25% sometimes and 0.79% never. The majority of the response (76.98%) is between always and usually. The mean score of this result also indicate 3.96 which are nearly 'usually'. When results obtained in both cases compared, discrepancy is observed. According to this data feedback on organization is mostly focused by teachers than by peer.

Item 2 deals with the amount of focus given by peer and teachers during feedback provision on contents of students' written work. As shown in the above table, 5.55% always, and 15.07% usually, 43.65% sometimes, 33.33% rarely and 2.38% of the respondents replied that peer feedback focus on content. In response to this item, the total of 88.98% (with 57.93% always and 30.95% usually) replied that feedback they receive from their teachers focus on content. The results obtained from this item shows that content is also mainly focused by teachers than do students in the feedback provision of students' written work.

On the other hand, item 3 deals with the focus given to grammar in feedback provision both by the teachers and the students in writing activities. As can be

seen from Table 10 above, the vast majority of the respondents 92.85% (with 43.65% always and 49.20% usually) replied that peer feedback focus on grammar. Similarly, response obtained from students disclosed that the total of 86.50% (with 61.31% always and 26.19% usually) replied that feedback they receive from their teachers focus on grammar. The result obtained from students in both cases; depict an aggregate mean score of 4.44 which is between always and usually. From the data one can conclude that grammar is still the center of attention both by teachers and students in feedback provision particularly in teaching writing skills.

Item 4, which is intended to find out how feedback in writing focus vocabulary by both feedback providers. Regarding this point, data obtained from students revealed that 15.87% of the respondent replied always, 8.73% usually, 50% sometimes, 22.22% rarely and 3.17% of them said never receive feedback on vocabulary from their peer. The mean value of this item is 3.11 which is almost 'sometimes'. This shows that peer feedback focus on vocabulary sometimes. In response to this item, the majority of the respondent 83.32% (66.66% always and 16.66% usually) replied their teachers' feedback focus on vocabulary. The rest 5.55% and 6.34% said sometimes and rarely respectively. The other 4.76% of the students' respondents replied that their teacher never provide feedback on vocabulary. The mean score of this data is 4.31 is between always and usually. The comparison between these two data shows that teachers' feedback focus on vocabulary than those of students' peer feedback.

As indicated in Table 10, item 5 was intended to draw information from students how frequently teachers' and peer feedback focus on mechanics. The result obtained

regarding this item shows that the great majority of the respondent, 93.80% (with 70.80% always and 19.84% usually) replied that the feedback they receive from their peer focus on mechanics (such as spelling and punctuation). The remaining smaller portion said sometimes. The mean score of this item is 4.67 which incline to always. On the other hand, the result obtained regarding teachers' focus showed that 17.46% always 46.82% usually and 29.36% sometimes replied that feedback they receive from their teachers focus on mechanics. Only 5.55% replied rarely. The majority of the respondent 77.18% went for usually and sometimes. The mean score of this item is 3.74 which lie between usually and sometimes. When results obtained in both cases compared feedback to mechanics is focused by peer than teachers in writing.

Item 6 which deals with how often teachers and peer provide general comments to students' written work. In response to this item, 81.70% (with 44.44% sometimes and 37.30% rarely) of the respondents said that they receive general comments from their peer. The mean value of this item is 2.89 which is almost 'sometimes'. However, data gained from the same respondents on this item show 16.66% always, 52.38% usually, 25.39% rarely and the rest 1.59% said they rarely receive general comments for their written output from their teachers. The mean score of this item is 3.78 that is nearly 'usually'. From the comparison of these two mean scores it seems logical to deduce that teachers provide more general comments than peer do.

In general, the above data reveal that the major features of writing; idea organization, content and vocabulary are more focused by teachers in feedback provision to students' written work. On the other hand surface features of writing such as grammar and mechanics are more

focused by students (peer) when compared with teachers. According to the above data surface features of writing has got more attention from both feedback providers in writing than major features of writing.

To make the above findings more concrete text analysis was held on students written compositions commented by the teachers based on procedures recommended by Ferris (2003) for teachers' commentary analysis. According to this analysis the teachers used various types of feedback techniques which focus on different writing features such as organization, content, and language use. In their commentary they tried to react to all types of errors they have observed in the student's texts by using different methods such as underlining, replacing the incorrect by the correct one, by putting question mark (?) to indicate types of errors or problems the words or sentences contained. In addition to these, at the end of the papers the teachers provided comments in the form of end notes which were appeared to communicate different aims such as suggestion, critics, and comments on issues of organization, content, grammar, and mechanics.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

Data obtained from participant teachers revealed that they have positive perception towards feedback provision to students' written work. However, some of the data obtained through questionnaire, classroom observation and text analysis indicate that teachers have low theoretical orientation about feedback particularly in writing. Students' perception about the necessity of feedback provision to writing activities is commendable. Data obtained through questionnaire regarding student's perception towards feedback provision for writing activities is close to strongly agree. The aggregate mean value of the scores is 4.64. This would suggest that students have

strong perception to feedback provision in writing. However, the results obtained concerning the students' feedback preference implies that error correction codes (wo, ws, sp, ss, ww) used by teachers seem unclear to them. Students perceive written feedback that is vague and focused on negative aspects of their writing as unhelpful (Weaver, 2006).

When we observe the overall results of data obtained from students concerning their feelings to peer feedback depicts positive attitude. The result showed that students have high preference to their peer feedback in writing. From the data it is also possible to deduce that teachers most frequently provide feedback on final drafts of students' writing than on the first draft of their writing. This shows that teachers practice summative feedback which is product oriented than formative feedback which is process oriented.

With regards to feedback utilizations, the data implies that students highly value and use comments they have received both from their teachers and peer to their writing activities whenever they got these chances.

The results of the study indicate that feedback students receive from both teachers and students focus on surface features of writing than major features which have greater role in improving students writing skills. This implies that teachers were not selective and specific in their feedback provision. Data from the text analysis showed that the teachers provide excessive amount of comments which have different aims, both implicit, explicit, general comments and end notes at a time on a single paper.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusions**

On the basis of the results obtained from the questionnaires, the classroom observations and the text analysis and discussions made the following conclusions are drawn:

- Wide range of students showed positive perception towards feedback provision for both teachers and peer because of strong desire they have for improvement their writing skills.
- Teachers don't provide regular writing activities which help students have more practice in writing (Table 5).
- Teachers more frequently exercise summative feedback than formative feedback. Hairston (1982) argues that adopting this approach in teaching will not encourage students to practice writing because it does not show them how writing works in real-life situations.
- Students prefer immediate feedback at different levels of the writing activities.
- Teachers written feedback are not selective. They tend to react to all types of errors they found in students' written work. And the comments are so excessive and lack clarity.
- As can be elicited from teachers' response for close ended questions and their report from open ended questions, the teachers lacked practical skills of implementing integrating feedback with teaching writing skills and facilitating peer feedback so that rarely plan feedback provision with their writing lessons.

- Teachers' written feedback and peer feedback focus on surface features of writing such as grammar and mechanics than major features of writing like idea organization and content.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions reached above, the following recommendations are forwarded:

- Teachers should consider that writing is a recursive process in which it passes through different phases. So, to help students improve their writing, teachers should provide regular writing activities which encourage multi drafting process and create opportunities to practice different types of feedback.
- Teachers should be able to plan feedback provision with writing lessons ahead of time and integrate with writing activities.
- Peer feedback enhances students' interaction and collaborative learning when effectively used in writing classes. So teachers should take responsibility of giving clear guidance in how to use it and create conducive environment for peer feedback provision.
- Teachers need to be selective in the type of feedback they provide for students. Reacting to the all types of errors at a time may negatively affect students writing development and attitude towards feedback. So teachers should limit comments according to fundamental problems, keeping in mind that students cannot pay attention to everything at once.
- Feedback to surface errors such as grammar and mechanics were excessive. So teachers should

address higher order of writing features such as content and organization to help students improve their writing skills.

- Teachers should make their own personal effort to equip themselves with current theory and practices of feedback provision in language teaching in general and teaching writing in particular.

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