EFL STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS WRITTEN FEEDBACK IN WRITING CLASSES: A CASE OF IRAQI HIGH-SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the attitudes of Iraqi high-school teachers and students towards teacher written feedback in writing classes in Suleymaniyah and Erbil. A quantitative method was conducted in this study. Two different instruments were used in the study; which are teacher questionnaire and student questionnaire. A total of 100 teachers (50 males and 50 females) and 200 students (100 males and 100 females) participated in filling the questionnaire then the collected data were analyzed through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings showed that teachers' written feedback generally plays a significant role in improving students' writing skills.

The study also showed that students are encouraged and improved, when English teachers provide them with optimistic and constructive written feedback. It was also observed that students show high preference of specific written feedback to facilitate the correction of mistakes. The findings showed that teachers' positive written feedback on their daily assignments and paper tests was highly preferred by students. Additionally, the study showed that teachers' written feedback in its time has a powerful impact on students' writing skills. A t-test analysis indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between male and female teachers and also students towards teacher written feedback.

Keywords: Written Feedback, Iraqi EFL Learners, High-School Students.

INTRODUCTION

Dealing with writing skills might not be easy as compared with other elements of language, such as speaking, listening, and reading. Though each skill involves a particular set of learning techniques, writing demands more intense focus on grammar, spelling, punctuation, form, content, and other elements of writing skills. This is why students should be provided with positive and constructive feedback by teachers so that they can attain satisfying levels of writing. Coffin states that improving writing takes a conscious effort on behalf of both teachers and students and that the provision of feedback on students' writing is a central pedagogical practice (Coffin et al., 2003).

Some researchers have demonstrated that students experience more difficulty in achieving writing skills than they do in performing the other three language skills. For example, Harmer (2012) thinks that students who make spoken mistakes can easily correct themselves or paraphrase their words to make meaning more clear, but writing requires more accuracy and people do not tolerate written mistakes in comparison with those that are spoken. Thus, giving Written Feedback (WF) on students' written assignments or paper-tests to improve writing skills is considered as one of the most significant aspects of language teaching. Hill and Flynn (2006) have stated that without feedback and correction, students are not able to progress and, thus, remain at the same levels of knowledge.

From the researchers' personal experience in Iraqi high school environment, the above challenges were proven

true, as students were indeed weak in using writing skills. Many reasons may lie behind this problem. Providing good WF might be one of the factors that would treat the problem. Iraqi high-school students are required intensive practice and constant WF to develop autonomy in their writing skills because usually they are not motivated towards writing techniques. Moreover, the process of writing is not like that of the other language skills in terms of dealing with many sub-skills, such as grammar, spelling, punctuation marks, etc. When students begin writing, they must deal with at least four stages, such as planning, drafting (first attempt), reviewing, and editing. Harmer (2012) believes that Teachers' Written Feedback (TWF) usually takes the form of written comments on students' test papers, written assignments and first drafts. As a result, these kinds of WF have a tangible impact on students, as they improve students' writing quality, increase their motivation, and reinforce sub-skills. Montgomery and Baker (2007) have stated that the significance of the writing process is grasped by both teachers and students via WF.

There have been various critiques of teachers' WF. Zacharias (2007) has stated that while teachers provide students with general written feedback, such as "revise your ideas", "many mistakes", "study better," etc., these types of feedback do not clarify for students what their specific mistakes are. As a result, they make the same mistakes again in the future. Similarly, positive expressions such as "Great job!" and "Well done" do not demonstrate for students what, exactly, they did well, just as negative expressions such as "Not quite there yet" do not indicate for students how they can improve in the future.

Some students complain that only their first drafts receive WF; moreover, these drafts are revised depending on the input that teachers provided without enabling students to understand their mistakes (Zacharias, 2007). Another point is that using red pen is problematic when teachers deal with paper tests or daily assignments. Some students believe that the use of red pen psychologically affects them negatively. Black has asserted that students do not want their teachers to use red pens because they feel that it ruins their work (Black et al., 2003).

On the other hand, English Language Teachers (ELTs) also have challenges when dealing with the provision of written feedback. Some challenges are related to the teachers themselves, and others are related to the delivery of feedback on students' papers.

Some ELTs believe that their goals are not achieved, especially when students do not benefit from their written or even oral feedback. They think that students do not pay attention to their WF and have little motivation towards WF, which is why they repeat their mistakes (Zacharias, 2007). Other teachers provide students general WF on their papers that does not help them in improving their writing skills and does indicate their definite mistakes. In addition, some ELTs do not employ WF on students' papers in a time-appropriate manner; thus, the students do not remember the exact materials included for the test. Other teachers give indirect WF to students that does not fulfill their needs therefore, they do not know what and where their mistakes are and in the end they repeat the same errors (Zacharias, 2007).

Another important point that should be mentioned is that students' preference of the use of types of feedback should be taken into the considerations of ELTs. That is, teachers would better imply the type of WF which is preferred by students, because it may help them to improve the ability of writing skills more than the one that students do not like it or do not understand it. More than that, lack of motivation and confidence in using written feedback by ELTs, make students feeble in writing activities. Therefore, it is believed that teachers can provide students with enthusiastic motivation to improve students' writing skills. In this case, students' ideas become more clear and more consistent, especially when the positive written feedback is implied (Al-Shamary, 2011).

1. Aim of the Study

The purpose behind this research is to examine the attitudes of Iraqi English Language Teachers and students towards teacher Written Feedback (WF) at high-schools to improve students' writing skills. The research questions have guided this study are as follows.

1. Does any statistically significant difference exist between male and female teachers' attitudes towards written feedback?

2. Does any statistically significant difference exist between male and female students' attitudes towards written feedback?

2. Literature Review

Writing is considered as one of the most significant skills, especially during high-school education because students are prepared for academic writing in colleges and universities. This is why teachers should be aware of how to provide the best Written Feedback (WF) to their students.

WF in high-school EFL classes is a topic, which has been much debated by both educators and learners. Different viewpoints have been observed among researchers in terms of the impact of positive WF, types of WF, and how English Language Teachers (ELTs) can employ written feedback on students' paper-tests and written assignments to improve writing skills.

Feedback plays a significant role in the process of teaching and learning and has received much attention from researchers. When students are provided with this type of feedback, they are able to think critically and self-regulate their own learning (Nicol and Macfarlane - Dick, 2006). This means that feedback guides students' paper-tests and daily assignments and indicates to students that their goals are achievable.

Researchers have held various perspectives towards feedback as a means of improving and encouraging students, especially over the past three decades. Each one of them has focused on an angle he/she supposed to be the most beneficial part of feedback. Razlina and Rohaiza (2014) focused on the importance of writing in ESL classrooms and using various strategies for improving students writing skills. Others like Hyland (2010) have mentioned that students reflect both the growing interest in different areas of research regarding WF and continued search by teachers for more effective feedback practices. Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) have compared students' and teachers' attitudes towards WF, investigating how EFL learners and teachers benefit from the different types of and amounts of WF.

2.1 Written Feedback Background

Teachers' written feedback can include comments on sub-skills, such as grammar, punctuation, spelling, ideas and content. Since writing skills are relatively difficult to acquire, few studies on writing have been conducted. Moreover, as an experience high-school English teacher of eleven years, the researcher has observed among Iraqi students they face particular difficulties in vocabulary, spelling, and other writing sub-skills.

Regarding the definition of Written Feedback (WF), Mack (2009) has defined WF as any comments, questions or error corrections that are written on students' assignments.

There have been many studies conducted for the purposes of improving students' writing via WF. Lee (2008) examined the factors influencing students' responding practices. He also highlighted four important issues that have shed light on teachers' feedback practices are accountability, teachers' belief and values, exam culture, and lack of teacher training. As an element of supporting students, Hyland and Hyland (2006) mentioned that feedback is extensively seen as important for encouraging and reinforcing learning. The signification has also been realized by those working in the field of second language writing. Its value is approved in process-based classrooms, where it composes a key element of the students' growing control over forming skills, and by genre-oriented teachers employing scaffolded learning techniques.

Cohen and Brooks-Carson (2011) investigated that teachers are able to improve students' writing skills via the use of WF. Probst (1989) stated that for the development of second language writing skills, feedback is essential, for its potential for learning and for student motivation. For instance, feedback is seen as crucial beneficial tool moving learners in process-based, learner-centered classrooms, through different drafts towards the ability for effective self-expression. Feedback is seen as significant factor of building the significance of reader responses in producing meanings from an interactionist viewpoint.

On the other hand, some researchers have concentrated their studies of WF solely on the development of particular writing sub-skills. For example, Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) conducted a study of WF in terms of students' grammatical errors, and Hyland (2000) focused on the development of learner autonomy via positive feedback. Hubais and

Dumanig (2014) examined the difference between learning and performance in giving feedback. He stated that learning means acquiring knowledge through the transfer of tasks. This implies that learning how to write can be achieved through writing new assignments. On the other hand, obtaining knowledge from repeated tasks, or performance, might be obtained by writing multiple drafts.

2.2 Types of Written Feedback Preferred by Teachers

There has been much debate among teachers regarding which type of Written Feedback (WF) is more effective and useful, and these opinions have depended on personal experience, personal belief, and personal preference. Zamel (1985) believed that it is most helpful for students if English Language Teachers (ELTs) concentrate on content more than form. Similarly, Sheppard (1992) thought providing corrective feedback on meaning to be more useful than providing it on surface-level errors, as WF on form increases students' awareness of sentence boundaries. Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) determined that during the early 1990s, ELT began to focus more on vocabulary, content, and organization. Fathman and Whalley (1990) also held the similar view that giving feedback on grammar and content has a positive effect on rewriting, simultaneously or separately. Ferris (2003) has stated that ELTs tend to regard themselves mainly as language teachers, which means that they concentrate on pupils' language mistakes instead of focusing on structure, content, ideas, or organization.

Similar to the above views, Harmer (2012) believes that commenting on the content of students' work is more important than solely focusing on their language use. Moreover, Hyland (2003) claims that the English teacher should pay attention to both the form and ideas of his/her students and that one should not be emphasized over the other.

According to teachers' preferences of when to give WF, some ELTs illustrated different points of view about giving feedback at the prewriting and evaluation stages, while others think that it might discourage students if teachers give feedback at these initial stages of writing (Hamouda, 2011).

2.3 Types of Written Feedback Preferred by Students

It is difficult to decide which type of Written Feedback (WF) is preferred by students because each type of feedback can be useful if utilized properly in terms of time, place, and situation. Moreover, sometimes students may not agree with a particular kind of feedback provided by their teachers. McCargar and Schulz believe that students' preferences for some types of WF should be taken into consideration when examining writing skills because if a student believes of a certain type of feedback to be useful, he or she might pay more attention to the feedback than those who do not favour the feedback (McCargar, 1993; Schulz, 2001).

The results of a questionnaire administered by Hamouda (2011) concerning students' preferences for types of feedback indicated that 68.8% of students preferred positive comments more than other types of feedback. They mentioned that positive comments encourage and motivate students. Moreover, about 67.5% preferred detailed and specific comments because they believed that detailed and specific feedback is more clear and effective than general feedback (Hamouda, 2011).

Wang et al. (2010) have stated that some students favour direct feedback as it increases their self-confidence in correcting their errors and motivates students.

According to Amrhein and Nassaji (2010), several researchers have suggested that effective feedback needs agreement between teachers and students in terms of developing students' writing skills. Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1994) claimed that some students believe teachers' feedback on errors to be more useful than content feedback. Saito (1994) stated that for each type of feedback, direct written feedback could be useful for some students because they want their teachers to determine their mistakes directly or they may not benefit from their teachers' indirect written feedback or codes. Nevertheless, Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1994) asserted that indirect feedback on errors such as giving students clues is better for students than direct corrections since they realize that this kind of feedback encourages them to be more active. Bitchener (2012) has demonstrated that students do not have to remember error codes and their meanings. Easy understanding is preferred rather than spending time searching for error correction and the reasons behind it.

Other studies such as that conducted by Ashwell (2000)

have determined that the form of comments on content and ideas as WF as well as clarification of grammatical, structural, and surface errors are preferred by students. In a similar study conducted by Keh (1990), it was discovered that elaborated comments are more commonly preferred by students than one-word comments. Students also prefer that specific problems be highlighted.

Hamouda (2011) demonstrated that many students prefer teachers' feedback because they believe it is the teacher's responsibility to correct their mistakes and because students trust their teachers and think that they are the source to which they may return for help.

Others prefer to teachers' feedback in its time because after the written assignments or tests, students urgently need to take their papers as soon as possible that is the materials they examined in, still present and exist in their memory. After students' written assignment, feedback must be given back to the student not long as some researchers suggest that it is too late to give feedback one week after the student has written the assignment (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). This is why to be useful to students, WF must be provided quickly enough. Therefore, teachers' Written Feedback regularly in its time provide students positive feedback with lots of fruitful information. On the contrary delayed feedback perhaps would not give students any constructive message and would be forgotten totally.

2.4 Teachers' Attitudes toward Teacher Written Feedback

The necessity of giving positive and constructive feedback in order to enhance students' writing has been proven by several studies. Though students have expressed many valuable comments and viewpoints towards teachers' feedback, teachers' opinions also should be considered. Ferris (2007) believes that instructors desire written tasks, as they encourage learners to learn and practice academic writing.

Other researchers believe that all possible positive effects of WF given by ELTs are rejected for the sake of enhancing their writing and reducing errors, especially grammatical errors (Truscott, 2007). Teachers' feedback on students' errors is ineffective and useless and should therefore be eliminated. Truscott claimed that it is the responsibility of teachers to change students' perspectives regarding what they should expect from their teachers by adopting a 'correction-free approach' in their classrooms (Truscott, 2007).

On the other hand, Ferris (2003) has disagreed with Truscott's ideas and provided evidence of the positive impact of error feedback on L2 writing by administering surveys recording students' opinions about the importance of teachers' feedback. Additionally, studies of universities have clarified that at least some English-speaking universities are less tolerant of "typical" English-language errors than of typical native speakers' errors. Third, it is critical that students become more self-sufficient in editing their writing. According to teachers' attitudes toward direct and indirect feedback, Frodesen (1991) explained that sometimes direct feedback is provided by ELTs when students' mistakes are too complex to be self-corrected or outside their students' abilities. Ferris and Hedgocok (2005a, 2005b) have stated that teachers' indirect feedback is provided when errors might be solved by the students themselves and when teachers want to influence learner autonomy. Again, Ferris (2003) has affirmed that most researchers agree that indirect feedback has more potential than direct feedback for long-term student improvement.

2.5 Students' Attitudes toward Teacher Written Feedback

Since writing demands the use of several techniques related to form, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, grammar, etc., high-school students usually have fear and anxiety, and they are not confident in their writing. Thus, Written Feedback (WF) is needed from English Language Teachers (ELTs). Kasper and Petrello (1996) stated that learners expect to perform badly on their writing; therefore, they have difficulties and tend to evaluate themselves as they write, which induces anxiety and inhibits the generation of ideas. Zhan (2016) has indicated that some learners pay close attention to almost all aspects of their writing, while some pay more attention to form and others to content.

Mostly students have a negative attitude towards written corrective feedback and view it as punishment (Barrett and Wright, 2017). One factor that may affect students'

negative attitudes towards WF is that many ELTs do not think that errors are tools of learning, which means that the more students make errors, the more creative and skillful they will become. Kasper and Petrello (1996) asserted that writing teachers should decrease students' anxiety if they want to encourage their language acquisition.

In addition, due to the cultural belief that teachers control grades, students feel that they must do what their teachers demand (Zacharias, 2007). On an item of a questionnaire completed by one student, he/she answered "whenever I didn't revise according to the teacher feedback, I got a D." Another stated that he/she wants teacher feedback because it enables him/her to get a high grade (Zacharias, 2007). This means that students are worried and feel uncomfortable while writing. Lee (2008) has demonstrated that most students are particularly positive about receiving feedback on language issues; however, they also want teachers' comments on content and ideas. Moreover, some students believe that if their teachers give too much feedback, they feel annoyed and discouraged to continue writing (Zacharias, 2007).

On the contrary, other students feel that their teachers' feedback gives them power and support. They believe that teacher feedback helps them to notice their mistakes (Zacharias, 2007). Lee (2008) has indicated that students have a wide variety of opinions concerning feedback. In a comparison of peer feedback and teacher feedback, he found that most students believe the best type of feedback to be the one that is given by teachers rather than by peers or even self-evaluation. A study of Hong-Kong high school students has demonstrated that they want their teachers to provide more written comments and they enjoy reading teachers' written comments (Lee, 2008)

3. Research Methodology

The research is a descriptive study that examines the results of both teachers' and students' questionnaires. The participants included both males and females. In order to obtain statistically predictable results, a quantitative method design was employed during data collection and analysis. Through two different questionnaires, the data was collected: teachers' attitudes toward Written Feedback questionnaires were consisted of sixteen items and students' attitudes toward written feedback questionnaires were consisting of 15 items.

3.1 Participants

Three hundred students and teachers participated in this study. Hundred was English-language teachers (fifty males and fifty females) and two hundred was high-school students (fifty males and fifty females). The selection of the participants was based on quota sampling method in a population of approximately twenty thousand from two cities (Erbil and Suleymaniyah). The native language of the participants was Kurdish.

3.1.1 Teachers

One hundred Iraqi high-school English language teachers participated in this study, and they were mixed in terms of gender. There were fifty male teachers and fifty female teachers. Almost all teachers held Bachelor's Degrees in English Literature and/or English Education. The selection of the participants was based on quota sampling method in a population of four hundred high-schools from two cities (Erbil and Suleymaniyah). The questionnaire, which included sixteen items regarding the role and effects of Written Feedback, was prepared and then distributed on the participants. Some of the participants were contacted via emails, while others were visited by the researcher in their schools during the class time. The items of the questionnaire were explained to the participants to be more understandable.

3.1.2 Students

Two-hundred high-school students ranging in age from sixteen to nineteen years participated in this study. One hundred was male, while the other one hundred was female. All the participants were in tenth, eleventh, and twelfth stages. Both male and female students were in scientific and literary branches. Scientific branch is always better than literary branch in all lessons, especially in English language.

It is worth mentioning that there is no proficiency language test in Iraqi educational system for accepting or refusing students at high-school stages and universities so far. The students that were chosen for the survey were from Erbil and Suleymaniyah governorate. The students were chosen

based on quota sampling and they were informed about the survey. They also were asked if they would like to participate the questionnaire or not. Once all participants agreed then the questionnaire was administered in Erbil and Suleymaniyah governorate and some other different districts.

3.2 Instruments

Two different instruments were used in the studies are teacher questionnaires and student questionnaires. Both questionnaires were based on those of a previous study (Al-Otaibi, 2004), which was conducted in Saudi Arabia. The teachers' and students' questionnaires were developed and modified in order to be relevant and appropriate to this study. Some items of teachers' and students' questionnaires were taken out because of repetition and irrelevancy to the subject.

3.3 Data Collections and Analysis

The sample was comprised of hundred Iraqi English Language Teachers (ELTs) and two hundred high-school students. The teachers were explained the aim of the study and the importance of teachers' Written Feedback. Then, they were given the questionnaire. Some of them were sent a paper-based version of the questionnaire, while others were contacted via email and messenger. After giving teachers enough time for choosing the answers, the questionnaires were collected.

As far as students' attitudes toward teacher Written Feedback questionnaire concerned, all of them were at high-schools at tenth, eleventh, and twelfth classes in Erbil and Suleymaniyah and the selection of the students was based on quota sampling. The researcher visited some schools to distribute the questionnaires personally, while some students delivered the questionnaires themselves. Finally, the answered questionnaires were collected by the researcher from the teachers and students.

Both teachers' and students' responses were recorded in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for statistical analysis. The frequencies of responses on the questionnaires and mean scores were calculated. Two independent samples t-test analyses were conducted to determine the differences between male and female participants and to show the statistically significant differences between male

and female teachers and students.

More than that, both teachers' and students' data were transferred into Excel program so as to form figures and charts which were shown in the findings. Also the figures were made to show the highest and the lowest rate of the participants.

4. Findings

4.1 Presentation

The questionnaire results are presented in this section to demonstrate both teachers' and students' reactions towards WF as well as the effects of WF on students' writing skills.

4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

Although this research is descriptive, the method used to analyze data was quantitative. That is, teachers' and students' attitudes toward WF are determined by questionnaire responses containing sixteen and fifteen items, respectively.

4.3 The Results of Teachers' Attitudes toward Teacher Written Feedback Questionnaire

The aim of the results of teachers' attitudes toward teacher Written Feedback questionnaire was to examine statistically significant differences between male and female teachers' attitudes towards WF. For this purpose, a t-test was conducted. The results are presented in Table 1.

According to Table 1, male teachers reported lower than females with a mean of 48.44. T-test analysis showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the scores of male teachers (M= 48.44, SD= 8.56) and female teachers (M= 49.30, SD= 5.57, t (98) = 0.595).

4.4 The Results of Students' Attitudes toward Teacher Written Feedback Questionnaire

The aim of presenting the results of students' attitudes toward teacher Written Feedback questionnaire is to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences between male and female teachers' attitudes

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t
Male	50	48.4400	8.56705	-0.595
Female	50	49.3000	5.57784	

Table 1. T-test Results of the Difference between Male and Female Teachers in Terms of Attitudes towards WF

towards Written Feedback or not. For this purpose, a t-test was conducted. The results are presented in Table 2.

According to Table 2 above, male students reported higher than females with a mean of 51.25. For further analysis, Table 2 indicates whether any statistically significant difference existed between male and female students in terms of the attitudes of teachers. It was found that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of male students (M= 51.25, SD= 9.43) and female students (M= 50.43, SD= 10.58, t (198) = 0.578). As mentioned previously, two hundred Iraqi high-school students participated in the survey. Hundred were male and hundred were female. They were chosen based on quota sampling. Then, the data was entered into SPSS for analysis. At the end, each item of the student questionnaire was converted into a chart. Moreover, most of the student questionnaire items were similar in design and form for the purpose of taking notes, comparing both teachers' and students' points of view and comparing their reactions toward each item.

5. Discussion

5.1 Discussion of the First Research Question

The findings of the first research question demonstrated that no statistically significant difference existed between male and female teachers. The reason for their similar points of view may be that they share the same educational system, geographical area, and environment. Furthermore, both male and female teachers have the same educational degree (Bachelor's), which may reflect their close attitudes. Another point is that the teachers have not participated in any course of feedback or writing skills, which might negatively reflect on their ways of teaching writing skills and providing Written Feedback.

The same result was recorded in the research of Al-Shammary (2011), which was done in Saudi Arabia between male and female teachers and students at secondary schools in Rafha City. This can show us that

teachers' attitudes of the current research are similar to the attitudes of Al-Shammary (2011) in terms of teacher Written Feedback.

5.2 Discussion of the Second Research Question

The results of the second research question demonstrate that no statistically significant difference existed between male and female students. The reason for this may be that male and female students share the same educational system and geographical as well as environmental conditions.

The same result was observed in the research of the study of Al-Shammary (2011), which was done in Saudi Arabia between male and female teachers and students at secondary schools in Rafha City. His study supports the current study and can show us teachers' attitudes of the current research is similar to the attitudes of Al-Shammary (2011) in terms of teacher Written Feedback.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of teachers' Written Feedback (WF) in improving students' English writing skills. As the study was descriptive, a quantitative method of data collection was employed. hundred English-language teachers and two hundred high-school students participated in this study. Two different questionnaires were prepared-one for teachers and one for students. The results were presented and discussed, and the viewpoints of teachers and students were compared to demonstrate the effects of WF on students' writing skills.

In terms of teachers' and students' attitudes towards WF, some discrepancies were found to exist. This study also confirmed that teachers' use of constructive and positive feedback affects the improvement of students' writing skills. To enhance the quality of teaching and learning in English writing classes, it was found that daily use of the white board is significant for providing WF.

The study also revealed that both teachers and students strongly agreed that using codes and abbreviations while dealing with students-papers has little educational benefit since the students either do not understand the meaning of the codes and abbreviations or they are unable to apply them practically.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t
Male	100	51.2500	9.43920	0.578
Female	100	50.4300	10.58802	

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of Students in Terms of Students' Attitudes Towards WF

The study also demonstrated the relation between teachers' WF and the desires of students. It was found that the more attention students pay to teachers' WF, the more teachers provide them with constructive, optimistic feedback as a means of motivation and improving writing skills.

Recommendations

Since Iraqi high-school students still have problems in acquiring English writing skills, most Iraqi English Language Teachers (ELTs) lack sufficient information about feedback. This is why it is highly recommended that ELTs should become involved in training courses that demonstrate the importance of feedback, discuss how it can be employed practically and explain the effective ways of giving feedback to students. Moreover, it is the responsibility of ministry of education to provide English high-school teachers with books, booklets, articles, or educational sites that explain the role of feedback and its effective consequences on students.

In addition to the above suggestions, it is recommended that teachers devote more class time for the development of students' English writing skills, for example ten minutes each lesson for dealing with writing. Since writing skills are neglected practically throughout the Iraqi educational system, the educational authorities should consider writing skills more seriously, as they are a pillar of learning English. To improve students' writing skills, writing composition is also recommended. Using data displays and pictures, providing some guidelines for writing, giving some techniques and clues, and providing essential vocabularies are some ideas that could improving students' writing skills.

Implications

Implications for EFL Teachers

English high-school teachers are encouraged to give general Written Feedback (WF) on daily assignments and test-papers because students benefit greatly from this regular feedback. Moreover, teachers should provide positive WF and utilize constructive expressions as a means of motivating students and, thus, improving their writing skills. Moreover, teachers should increase their use of white boards for providing general WF to their classes immediate following tests. They should also focus on providing content feedback alongside their feedback on form. Additionally, teachers provide more specific WF, as students want their teachers to underline and specify their exact mistakes on papers so that they can treat each mistake separately without any confusion.

Implications for EFL Learners

The findings of the study showed that there are some significant points students should take them into their considerations. Students' preferences of the types of Written Feedback (WF) should be shed lights on. That's, students may realize which type of WF is better for them. In this case, the effort of English teachers would not be fruitless. Also, the study of composition is another point that can be taken seriously as a means of improving language. Therefore, students certainly are provided by teacher WF to improve their writing skills and correct their mistakes. Also, dealing with semantics is important, especially in the study of stories, compositions, and other written exercises, rather than solely focusing on language-related writing sub-skills such as grammar, syntax, punctuation, etc. Focusing on the meanings of language alongside these elements can enable students to improve their comprehension of English language better.

Another point that should be taken into consideration is that some of high-school students misunderstand or have less courage to tell English teachers about how does written feedback implied on their papers so as to be fruitful for them.

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