

Giving or not giving? Experienced EFL university teachers' beliefs and rationales of written feedback

Sri Rejeki Murtiningsih*¹, Agus Sumantri¹, Sibakhul Milad Malik Hidayatulloh²

¹Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia

²Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta

Manuscript received July 24, 2023, revised August 14, 2023, accepted August 26, 2023, and published online November 7, 2023.

Recommended APA Citation

Murtiningsih, S. R., Sumantri, A., & Hidayatulloh, S. M.M . (2023). Giving or not giving? Experienced EFL university teachers' beliefs and rationales of written feedback. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities*, 11(1), 289-305. <https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v11i1.19318>

ABSTRACT

This current research aims to investigate the beliefs and rationales of EFL university teachers about giving or not giving written feedback to their students. The researchers employed a descriptive qualitative approach in the execution of this study. Three experienced EFL university teachers agreed to participate in in-depth interviews to gain the data. This research revealed five distinct beliefs regarding providing written feedback. They hold beliefs about giving feedback based on the importance of giving feedback, the role of giving feedback to other types of feedback, the length of feedback, students' competence-based in giving feedback, and the importance of giving balanced feedback. As for their rationales for giving and not-giving feedback, several findings were documented. They provided written feedback because it gave some crucial information by showing students' identifiable learning records and enhancing their academic output. Also, it holds relevance to the teachers' teaching profession. On the other hand, their rationale for not-giving written feedback could be noticed as written feedback, to some extent, demotivated students and took much more time to provide feedback. In the end, teachers' pedagogical implications are also presented by recalling the findings of this current research.

Keywords: *Teacher beliefs; EFL university teachers; Giving written feedback*

*Corresponding Author:

Sri Rejeki Murtiningsih
Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta
Jl. Brawijaya, Geblagan, Tamantirto, Kec. Kasihan, Kabupaten Bantul, DIY 55183, Indonesia
Email: jackie.murt@umy.ac.id

1. Introduction

Teacher feedback is highly regarded and recognized as essential to teaching and learning languages. Over several decades, research on teacher feedback has been conducted in a variety of contexts, including English as a Second Language (ESL) and (English as a Foreign Language) EFL both in university and secondary schools contexts (Lyster et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2018). As a result, feedback has been the subject of research in both its oral and written forms to determine its impacts on language learning and the instruction of L2 writing (Boggs, 2019; Sarre et al., 2021). Sermsook et al. (2017) and Khanlarzadeh and Nemati (2016) found that students' writing revisions and grammatical correctness improved after receiving teacher feedback. Thus, the subject of feedback in ELT is inevitable because it has a variety of repercussions, especially for students.

Despite research showing that the positive impacts of feedback are abundant, many English teachers often give little to no feedback to their students. Students often have very little knowledge of why they receive a specific grade. It is not uncommon that some teachers would be unhappy if some students showed their intention to clarify their grades. In other cases, many English teachers asked their students to write lengthy papers and never return them, let alone with feedback on each paper. Time constraints and administrative work are usually to blame for why many teachers decide not to give feedback. However, other rationales need to be explored to better understand teachers' voices on this topic.

It is important to note that teachers' teaching methods are heavily influenced by their personal beliefs (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). Prior research has demonstrated that the beliefs held by teachers may significantly impact their teaching methods within the classroom setting. For example, Farrell and Ives (2015) conducted a study on an ESL teacher's pedagogical beliefs and their implementation in the classroom. Their findings indicate inconsistencies between teachers' beliefs and practices during teaching practices. Similarly, Uysal and Bardakci (2014) studied teachers' beliefs regarding teaching grammar - form-focused or in-context. The findings indicate that teachers tended to maintain solid grammar teaching decisions, emphasizing the necessity of form-focused teaching. Thus, teachers' pedagogical approaches often separated grammar instruction from the broader macro skills associated with the English language.

Similarly, when it comes to giving or not-giving feedback, the decisions are also influenced by the teachers' beliefs. The discussion of feedback and teachers' beliefs has been engaging among scholars. For instance, Van Ha and Murray (2021) studied the influence of teachers' professional development programs (TPDP) on their beliefs about corrective feedback. Mao and Crosthwaite (2019) researched the teachers' beliefs about written corrective feedback. Also, they looked into the mismatch between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices regarding giving feedback.

In addition, Baker and Burri (2016) studied English for Academic Purpose (EAP) teachers' beliefs about feedback in the classroom. Even though a plethora of research

about feedback and beliefs has been conducted, the particular topic needs more attention in Indonesia, especially in university contexts. Teachers' rationales about giving or not-giving feedback are also worth exploring. The current research lays its basis on two research questions:

1. What are experienced EFL teachers' beliefs about giving written feedback?
2. What are their rationales for giving or not-giving written feedback?

The research findings can be utilized to increase awareness among university and English teachers regarding their beliefs and practices in providing written feedback to students. This may prompt them to evaluate their approach to feedback and determine whether it is effective or needs improvement.

2. Literature review

2.1. Written and oral feedback

Generally, two distinct forms of feedback exist, written and oral feedback. Written corrective feedback refers to providing written comments to students on their written work to help them enhance their writing skills. According to Hamtaei and Rahimy (2015), the significance of written feedback may be limited as students may read it without taking any action on it. As per Wen's (2013) findings, students are more inclined to revise their work when their teachers provide written rather than oral feedback. According to Wen (2013), demotivating feedback is more likely to be given verbally than in written form. Previous studies indicate that providing written feedback positively enhances students' motivation. In many cases, however, giving written feedback may lead to students' confusion when the feedback is too difficult to understand in written format (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010). It implies that written feedback may require verbal explanation to avoid misunderstanding.

On the other hand, oral feedback refers to providing feedback through verbal communication and interactive exchanges. Telçeker and Akcan (2010) suggest that many writing teachers maintain that oral feedback serves better than written feedback toward students' work. It may be due to the fact that effective oral feedback in the English language involves not only error correction but also gives positive reinforcement to students. Despite its positivity, according to Maolida (2013), oral feedback can negatively affect students, e.g., students become less motivated to participate in oral discussions.

2.2. Teachers' beliefs in teaching and learning practices

It is generally accepted that teachers' beliefs will have significant impacts. According to Thomas (2013) and Lee (2011), teachers' classroom instructions are heavily influenced by their beliefs, including in giving feedback. Furthermore, Graves (2000) has argued that teachers' beliefs influence cognitive and decision-making processes, meaning that their beliefs materialize in making decisions, such as deciding whether written, oral feedback, or both would benefit their students the most.

Chu (2014) noted that teachers' beliefs consist of factual information, reasoning, communication, and ideas about instructional principles, which manifest in their way of teaching and the resources used in the classroom. Thus, different beliefs create different classroom interactions and dynamics. For instance, English teachers who believe that successful English learning is measured by how lively the class is will likely use songs, videos, and repeat-after-the-teacher activities. Likewise, teachers who believe passing the tests and having high grades are important will likely use textbooks and ask their students to do as many grammar practices as possible.

2.3. Feedback and English teachers

The use of feedback and English teachers has been extensively discussed in English Language Teaching (ELT) settings. For example, Su (2019) asserted that feedback is a crucial technique in classroom-based teaching because it enhances students' learning outcomes and assists teachers in reaching students' academic objectives in both native English-speaking (NES) and non-native English-speaking (NNES). Despite research indicating that NNES and NES teachers employ distinct pedagogical approaches, feedback remains an essential teaching technique as Yu et al. (2018) maintained that feedback serves as a valuable means for students to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their learning strengths and weaknesses, as well as to enhance their learning outcomes.

English teachers give feedback not only to enhance academic performance but also use feedback as a means of rationalizing the grades they issue (Lee et al., 2016). Feedback can provide information on students' learning journey and comprehensive understanding before giving the final grade. In addition, Mendez and Cruz (2012) conducted a study on the significance of teacher feedback in facilitating teachers' comprehension of students' emotions and attitudes toward the English teaching and learning process. Their study revealed that students expressed multiple emotions and reactions in response to the feedback they provided. It is clear that feedback and the English teacher are closely connected in various ways. As stated previously, feedback plays an integral part in issuing the final grade and comprehending the emotional state of students.

2.4. The impact of feedbacks

There has been an increasing interest in researching teachers' beliefs among scholars. For instance, a study by Mao and Crosthwaite (2019) focused on finding the potential discrepancy between teachers' perceptions of their written corrective feedback (WCF) practices and their actual implementation. The research collected data by distributing a questionnaire and interviewing five English writing teachers within a Chinese context. The findings showed that teachers tend to act based on their beliefs in specific situations, indicating a level of consistency between their beliefs and actions.

Wang et al. (2018) also researched English teachers' beliefs in giving oral feedback. By interviewing and observing three Chinese EFL university teachers, they found that

they held six beliefs about giving oral feedback to the students. Their findings indicated that sociocultural factors influenced the three teachers' beliefs about feedback. These factors were the students' English proficiency level, learning requirements, and emotional states, which developed an intricate interaction with the complexity of the instructional, interpersonal, and interactional levels.

Last, Baker and Burri (2016) conducted a study on feedback in second language acquisition, specifically focusing on effective strategies for providing feedback on students' pronunciation. The study involved the participation of five proficient English teachers. Throughout the academic term, teachers participated in three different methodologies for data collection, namely three in-depth interviews, five classroom observations, and two stimulated recall interviews. The results revealed that feedback is pivotal in enhancing student improvement. Additionally, the study discovered that the teachers used two methods of delivering feedback to students, i.e., recording and providing feedback to the entire class.

On a side note, the analysis of previous research indicates the existence of a gap in the population. First, specific groups of people have yet to receive adequate attention on similar topics. The investigation of teachers' beliefs about giving written feedback, particularly in the Indonesian context and among university teachers, is worth-conducted. University teachers' beliefs and practices about giving written feedback can be a model for future English teachers so that they can evaluate their existing beliefs and learn from their personal experiences. As a result, this research may provide future English teachers with a clear and specific understanding of how to provide timely feedback when they become teachers.

Second, the prior studies mentioned earlier have predominantly concentrated on Chinese contexts. Considering that Indonesia and China categorize English as a foreign language, their unique sociocultural factors, curricula, and other contextual differences may yield different research outcomes. Last but not least, the studies did not address the rationale behind giving or not giving written feedback to the students.

3. Method

3.1. Research design

This study utilized a descriptive qualitative research design to examine the beliefs of university teachers, using a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research aims to solve problems and improve understanding (Creswell, 2012). He also stated that the main characteristic of qualitative data research was exploring some problems and developing a clear understanding of a central phenomenon. Thus, the design fits the current research aims, which explore the teachers' beliefs about giving feedback.

3.2. Research setting and participants

This research was conducted in a private university's English Language Education Department (ELED). The university was located in the outskirts of a college town in

Indonesia. The setting was selected because many teachers in the department returned students' written works in a timely fashion with written feedback. Many other teachers, on the contrary, did not implement this practice.

Three teachers from the department agreed to participate in this research. Consent was verbally obtained, and the researchers proceeded with making appointments for the in-depth interviews. The participants were three university teachers: one male and two females. This research employed a purposive sampling technique to select participants based on specific criteria. It refers to the intentional selection of a participant based on the traits that the participant holds (Etikan et al., 2016). The criteria were; firstly, the teacher gave written feedback during teaching and learning. Secondly, the teachers gave written feedback multiple times because this study aimed to identify the fundamental factors that motivated teachers to provide feedback to their students. Finally, potential participants should possess at least five years of teaching experience at the university level. Three university teachers fell into the three categories. To maintain confidentiality in qualitative research, pseudonyms were used to describe the participants. This research designated the three teachers under investigation as Teacher A (male), Teacher B (female), and Teacher C (female).

3.3. Research instrument and data collection

The current research employed an interview protocol consisting of open-ended questions. Semi-structured interviews were deemed to be fitting to explore university teachers' beliefs regarding giving written feedback. Cohen et al. (2011) posited that open-ended questions can help researchers develop well-structured interviews. The primary advantage of employing open-ended questioning lies in its unrestricted nature. Cohen et al. (2011) asserted that unstructured responses allow participants to freely answer the questions without being limited by predetermined response options. The interviews were conducted in the Indonesian language to avoid misunderstanding and make the information exchanges flow smoothly, leading to obtaining rich data. The data presented in this research report has been translated into standard English.

3.4. Data analysis

After data collection, the data were transcribed, converting the recorded interviews into written format. To maintain the trustworthiness of the data, the researchers conducted a member-checking procedure. To do this, the researchers returned the transcriptions to the participants to verify the accuracy of the transcription. The participants confirmed that the information was accurate and did not wish to alter the information given during the interviews. Upon the member-checking process, data analysis was conducted by identifying important statements and categorizing them into emergent themes.

4. Findings

4.1. Beliefs about giving feedback

In this section, the researchers presented the beliefs of three teachers (Teacher A, Teacher B, and Teacher C) about giving written feedback. The data showed that their beliefs about providing written feedback were due to its importance, other feedback complements, length of feedback, students' competence-based feedback, and the importance of giving balanced feedback.

4.1.1. Beliefs about the importance of giving feedback.

All participants believed that feedback was essential to students so they could enhance their learning. They believed that students needed to be informed about their mistakes and how they could work on them. Thus, feedback in any form needed to be given.

All forms of feedback are valuable. Written feedback is vital because it shows students where they are making mistakes. Furthermore, without written feedback, the learning process is ineffective. Surprisingly, some students liked being told [that they have made some mistakes]. (Teacher A. 3,5,6,14)

Written feedback plays a crucial role in the learning process as it informs students of the extent to which their work aligns with the instruction provided by their teachers and highlights areas that require improvement. (Teacher B.3)

It [written feedback] is good for students because it encourages them to develop their skills. Written feedback can also serve as a helpful reminder for students to address areas where they may still need improvement. (Teacher C.4,5,9,23)

All participants agreed that feedback, in any format, was important for students to develop their skills. They also believed feedback was an effective way to help students address their linguistic problems.

4.1.2. Beliefs about supporting other feedback

All participants believed that written feedback should not be the only feedback. Other feedback, like oral feedback, also needed to be provided. They believed that students would likely read and pay no attention to feedback or did not understand what the teacher meant. Thus, oral feedback is also needed to be provided.

The most effective feedback consists of written and oral feedback. Sometimes my students did not do it [written feedback], however, when I gave direct oral feedback, they immediately understood [where they did wrong]. (Teacher A.18) The optimal form of feedback combines oral and written components; they may provide better understanding, [especially] during undergraduate thesis consultation. (Teacher B.11,12)

Written feedback can be used as a discussion tool with teachers. If the written feedback is unclear, students will approach their teachers for clarification. It

means that after receiving written feedback, there will be a discussion in which students will learn more about the materials I just explained or how to revise [their work]. (Teacher C.14)

The data showed that all participants believed that oral and written feedback were equally important and that they complemented one another. Giving both oral and written feedback can result in a better quality of student work. All participants also agreed that written feedback should be accompanied by an oral explanation to make feedback effective.

4.1.3. Beliefs about the length of feedback

The data shows that two participants believed written feedback should be extensive to ensure students' understanding of the feedback. According to the two participants, extensive feedback also helped students identify specific areas they needed to improve. Short written feedback would not accommodate these needs.

[If I just] gave specific [and short] feedback, students would not know where to modify their work. I mean if the written feedback only says "Please fix this." So, I often give them longer feedback to explain certain crucial aspects. (Teacher B.7,8, 10)

Constructive written feedback that is comprehensive and lengthy typically has a greater impact on students than written feedback that focuses on grammatical errors. (Teacher C.13)

The data showed that most teachers believed in lengthy but comprehensive feedback because they believed students would benefit more. By comprehensive, they referred to feedback that focused more than on grammatical errors.

4.1.4. Beliefs about students' competence-based feedback

According to the interview findings, teachers believed it was necessary to consider student proficiency before giving written feedback.

The level of the students has a significant impact on the level of comprehensiveness written feedback is provided; for instance, students at the beginner level will have less knowledge than those at the advanced level. (Teacher B.9)

I used to give written feedback without considering the students' proficiency. That is, I offered identical written comments to different competence levels. Some students did not grasp it when I gave the written evaluation in English. In fact, it made me realize that the level of the students must be regarded. (Teacher C.15,16)

The data indicated that the student's competence must be considered, as it significantly influences the effectiveness of written feedback provided by teachers. The objective was to provide students with appropriate feedback to revise their work, which would improve their competence.

4.1.5. Beliefs about giving balanced feedback

When providing written feedback, one participant believed it necessary to include both positive and negative aspects. It means that teachers should direct their attention not solely toward the errors made by their students but also toward the positive aspects of their academic output.

I believe that providing balanced written feedback is the best option. In other words, the teachers should give encouraging feedback for the student's work as well as negative criticism. (Teacher C.15)

Feedback should not only be corrective. [On the other hand,] providing positive feedback that does not discourage students, like saying "nice try," can be challenging. (Teacher C.17)

Based on the interview, one participant expressed his belief that feedback ought to be balanced. Feedback should encompass identifying and correcting errors in students' work and recognizing and acknowledging the positive aspects of their work. Although providing positive feedback can be challenging, teachers should try to identify and acknowledge noteworthy aspects.

4.2. Teachers' rationales in giving or not giving written feedback

This section presents the answer to the second research question, i.e., the rationales provided by teachers for their decision to give or not give written feedback to their students.

4.2.1. Rationales for giving written feedback

The current research outlines three critical findings regarding teachers' reasons for giving written feedback: identifiable records, enhancement of students' academic output, and relevance to the teaching profession.

4.2.1.1. Written feedback serves as students' records.

The data showed that the teachers gave written feedback because of the perceived benefits that students might receive. For example, students could revisit the record independently, which can serve as a reminder for students about how their skills have developed.

Written feedback is very important because it leaves a personal but permanent record. In case students forget, they can refer to the previously written comments. Thus, students can study for tomorrow or the next few days based on written feedback. As a teacher, I can quickly remind them if they make the same mistakes. (Teacher A.4,25,26).

Written feedback can serve as a helpful reminder to students. I believe that one of the key aspects of learning is when knowledge is continuously reinforced. When they miss or forget about something, teachers ask the students to try again and to refer back to the previous feedback. (Teacher B.20)

Written feedback contains a record or mark, which distinguishes it from oral feedback. Oral feedback does not have a record or a mark. (Teacher C.10)

The evidence showed that all participants believed that written feedback was crucial because it has a mark or a record, which can be a helpful reminder in the future. It also means that written feedback differs from oral feedback since oral input lacks a mark or record, making students more likely to forget.

4.2.1.2. Written feedback helps improve students' general performance.

Based on the interview, participants believed that providing students with written feedback is beneficial. Students benefit from receiving written feedback for a variety of reasons. Their statement can be seen as follows:

Written feedback has an impact on students. Students decide how important written feedback is [to them]. Written feedback keeps students from making the same mistakes [repeatedly]. Students may improve since they know what they need to work on. (Teacher A.7, 10,11)

Written feedback from teachers assists students in correcting their errors and allows them to learn from their mistakes. Teachers' comments were [not meant] to cause harm to students, but rather a learning opportunity. (Teacher B.4,5,19)

I can identify students' mistakes in their writing and give written feedback. Even negative feedback can help them improve their work. Students can also keep a record of their progress through written feedback. This leads to improved work, and in the end, it influences their overall academic performance. (Teacher C.3,8,22)

Based on the interviews, all participants agreed on the same rationales, i.e., written feedback significantly impacts students' overall performance. According to the two participants, written feedback allows them to learn from their errors and helps them avoid repeating mistakes in their future work. On the other hand, a participant posited that written feedback could positively impact students' overall academic performance.

The data clearly showed that all the participants shared similar perspectives regarding written feedback. Their rationale behind the belief includes providing

opportunities for students to learn from errors, reducing the likelihood of repeating errors, and, ultimately, enhancing the quality of students' work.

4.2.1.3. Written feedback is relevant to their teaching reflection

The data revealed that the participants' rationale for giving written feedback was to assess their own teaching. Through students' written work, the participants could reflect if their teaching method fit in with the students and the materials. If most students showed a poor grasp of the materials, the participants inferred that they might need to modify their way of delivering the materials. Below are the participants' statements:

I can tell if students are passionate about studying from written feedback. Our written feedback will improve if they are serious. We may then assess student comprehension through written input. I must have explained [the materials] poorly if most classes didn't grasp them. Perhaps the materials are too difficult, or my methodology is flawed. I may have used an inappropriate strategy for the students. (Teacher B.16,17,18)

For me, as a teacher, by giving written feedback, I can check my personal improvement. (Teacher C.21)

The interviews indicated that written feedback could be advantageous for teachers as it can be a tool for them to reflect on their classroom instructions. In short, based on the findings, three main rationales for why teachers gave written feedback were revealed by the participants. The points highlight the significance of written feedback to students' overall academic performance. That written feedback can serve as a record to help students remember past materials and mistakes was also pointed out by the participants. Lastly, written feedback is a valuable tool for teachers to evaluate their professional reflection.

4.2.2. Rationales for not giving written feedback

This section presents why teachers decided not to give written feedback to their students. During their professional period, there were times when the participants chose not to give written feedback on students' work. According to the participants' responses, they refrained from providing written feedback because they felt that their feedback could demotivate students and that, at one point, giving feedback could have been very time-consuming.

4.2.2.1. Written feedback could be demotivating to students

Providing students with written feedback may have unintended consequences for them. These perceived disadvantages are why the participants decided not to give written feedback.

Written feedback containing a lot of comments can be depressing to some students. Written feedback makes some students feel foolish. [Sometimes,] I found we can't give feedback anywhere. For instance, in one paragraph, we notice so many faults, but giving criticism to each of all the errors would demotivate students. (Teacher A.12, 16)

If the feedback is negative, it can make myself feel down. It is so visible since it has my notes, which sometimes [I worried that] it demotivated my students. I recall when I finished my thesis and was told by the teacher that it was not good enough, which depressed me. I don't want it to happen to my students. (Teacher C.7)

From the data, it can be inferred that the decision not to give written feedback was made to avoid students being disappointed or depressed after reading teachers' written comments. According to the participants, written feedback can demotivate students when the feedback is overly extensive in terms of comments. Moreover, based on the data gathered, all participants' rationale was based on their personal experiences.

4.2.2.2. Written feedback was time-consuming

Another reason teachers refrained from giving written feedback to students was due to the time-consuming nature of written feedback. It mainly happened when they had to give feedback while simultaneously dealing with many other tasks. Also, written feedback was not given, according to the participants, due to the large number of students in a given class.

It took me longer to give written feedback because it is not directly explained to the students [so I have to choose the right words]. However, I believe that the shortcoming of written comments is time. Giving written feedback takes time since reading [the students' work], thinking about the remarks [that I have to write], and considering the recommendations all require a lot of time. (Teacher A.23,27)

Due to time constraints, I did not implement written feedback. Perhaps, to be perfect, I should have provided written feedback. But, I sometimes did not give written feedback because too many students were in the class. (Teacher B.13,21,22)

One of the most important reasons [to not give written feedback] is a lack of time. I have a large class, with 30 to 40 students in one class, and I have four of them. It means it will take me a long time to give written feedback to everybody. (Teacher C.18,26)

Based on the data collected, it was found that every participant expressed that providing written feedback is significantly time-consuming due to the large number of students. Apart from that, teachers must carefully consider the advice and comments they intend to provide.

5. Discussion

In this section, the researchers attempted to link the current research findings with prior scholarly inquiries. The current research found that giving feedback provided by teachers is considered a crucial component of the learning process, particularly for students. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Wen (2013), which revealed that students experienced an increased sense of motivation after receiving feedback from their teachers. Furthermore, students usually tried to promptly revise their work upon receiving teacher feedback. The motivation may come from the feeling that the teachers did pay attention to their work. It is not uncommon that teachers would regularly ask students to write a lengthy paper, and then the teachers did not return the work causing them to wonder whether they wrote the paper correctly. Having their paper returned, with teachers' written feedback, motivated students to work better.

The other finding of the current research is that a complementary aspect between oral and written feedback led to improved overall academic achievements. While it is believed that written feedback positively impacts students' competence, when accompanied by oral feedback, the impacts can be tremendous. According to Rezazadeh et al.'s (2018) study, combining oral and written feedback has resulted in better student academic performance. Alvira (2016) also discovered that students who widely received written and oral feedback showed enhanced outcomes in their writing abilities. Furthermore, the present study found that teachers emphasized balancing positive and negative feedback. It is also in line with Brookhart (2008), who discussed using positive and negative feedback in educational settings. He added that teachers should provide positive feedback that highlights outstanding performance while also offering constructive criticism accompanied by suggestions for improvement. Recently, Al-Ghamdi (2017) claimed that positive feedback, such as compliments and appreciation, is vital to maintain and encourage students' learning motivation. Hence, students would feel appreciated for their hard work when they receive positive feedback, and at the same time, they could work on their mistakes when receiving constructive feedback.

The rationale for giving written feedback was that written feedback could help monitor students' academic progress, which was also in line with the previous study. According to Hokayem et al.'s (2014) research, feedback plays a crucial role in documenting the gradual development of students' learning progression. Consequently, it offers an indicator for teachers to establish and guide suitable learning objectives for their students. In addition, Sprouls (2011) stated that the students need the teachers' feedback

to monitor their own progress and to know the weaknesses of their work. It helps students improve their work by reinforcing their strengths and correcting their mistakes for future work. Thus, written feedback has dual effects on teachers and students. For teachers, giving feedback helps them monitor the students' learning progress. As for students, it helps them to keep track of their progress in learning.

However, the current research also found that the participants sometimes decided not to give written feedback to the students. The main reasons for not giving written feedback were students' potential demotivation and the time-consuming. In fact, the demotivating effect caused by feedback has been discussed earlier by Hattie and Helen's (2007) findings. They added that critical feedback can negatively impact students, leading to decreased motivation and lower academic achievement. The finding, which refers to the thought that students would be demotivated after receiving teachers' written feedback, raised an interesting discussion on how teachers should understand each student's personality to ensure students' acceptance of constructive feedback.

This particular research finding, however, contradicts Amin et al.'s (2016). They found that the EFL learners tended to gain and increase their motivation in learning when accepting feedback. They also suggested that, as a matter of fact, students felt an increase in their motivation after receiving corrective feedback on grammar. This research has contributed to the ongoing discussion about providing feedback that may negatively affect students' motivation. It is crucial for teachers to carefully choose appropriate feedback to avoid this issue, but this does not mean that feedback should be completely avoided.

6. Conclusion

This research has effectively captured university teachers' beliefs about giving written feedback and their rationales. After listening to three experienced EFL university teachers' voices, two major findings were withdrawn after in-depth interviews and a bottom-up analysis upon obtaining the data. First, the participants hold beliefs about giving feedback that giving feedback is absolutely crucial. It is also important for teachers to provide oral feedback, in addition to written feedback, to ensure the feedback is effective. Then, teachers believed that positive feedback is an integral part of maintaining students' learning motivation, especially when students also receive constructive feedback.

Teachers' rationales in deciding whether to give or not to give written feedback to their students were also documented. The main reason for giving written feedback is to provide students with information about their learning progress. Written feedback was believed to be able to help teachers - and students monitor students' learning progress as it serves as students' record. As for not giving feedback, time constraints and the perceived demotivation factors became the underlying reasons.

This research sheds light on EFL university teachers' beliefs about written feedback and the underlying reasons why they decided to give or not give written feedback. The teachers' voice in this research can help raise understanding of written feedback, especially at the university level. Moreover, the research can help university teachers make decisions on whether or not to give written feedback to students.

Based on the findings, teachers should be more careful in giving written feedback to students, as it may cause students to be demotivated. Understanding students' responses after the feedback is returned can be a great way to understand students' acceptance of feedback - either positive or constructive. Also, it is important for teachers to give both written and oral feedback to ensure the feedback's effectiveness.

The current research has limitations on the small number of participants. Although the majority of teachers give written assignments to students, not all of them give written feedback on students' work, let alone return the work to students on a regular basis. In this case, only three teachers fulfilled the criteria. Also, the current research relies heavily on interviews to obtain the data. Thus, future researchers may need to address the current research limitation. A quantitative inquiry will be helpful to triangulate and validate this current research's findings. Also, the exploration of finding the students' post-effects towards the given feedback is also worth exploring. Doing so will retain this discussion with some additional empirical findings.

References

- Al-Ghamdi, A. (2017). Building a positive environment in classrooms through feedback and praise. *English Language Teaching*, 10(6), 37-43. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n6p37>
- Alvira, R. (2016). The impact of oral and written feedback on EFL writers with the use of screencasts. *Profile Issues in Teachers Professional Development*, 18(2), 79-92. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v18n2.53397>
- Amin, N. M., Abdul Rahman, N. A., Sharipudin, M. N., & Abu Bakar, M. S. (2016). The practice of " Grammar Naziness" on facebook in relation to generating grammar learning: A motivation or demotivation in updating statuses in english on facebook. *PASAA: Journal of Language Teaching and Learning in Thailand*, 52, 83-104.

- Amrhein, H. R., & Nassaji, H. (2010). Written corrective feedback: What do students and teachers think is right and why?. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics/Revue canadienne de linguistique appliquee*, 13(2), 95-127.
- Baker, A. A., & Burri, M. (2016). Feedback on second language pronunciation: A case study of EAP teachers' beliefs and practices. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 41(6), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2016v41n6.1>
- Boggs, J. A. (2019). Effects of teacher-scaffolded and self-scaffolded corrective feedback compared to direct corrective feedback on grammatical accuracy in English L2 writing. *Journal of Second language writing*, 46, 100671. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2019.100671>
- Brookhart, S. M. (2008). *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students*. Virginia.
- Chu, Y. (2014). Teachers' beliefs in teaching English for kids at a kindergarten: A case study of students from the department of applied English. *Canadian Center of Science and Education*, 7(10), 100-112. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n10p100>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Method in Education*. Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American journal of theoretical and applied statistics*, 5(1), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- Farrell, T. S., & Ives, J. (2015). Exploring teacher beliefs and classroom practices through reflective practice: A case study. *Language teaching research*, 19(5), 594-610. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168814541722>
- Gilakjani, A. P., & Sabouri, N. B. (2017). Teachers' beliefs in english language teaching and learning: A review of the literature. *English Language Teaching*, 10(4), 78-86. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n4p78>
- Graves, K. (2000). *Designing language courses: A guide for teachers*. Heinle & Heinle
- Hamtaei, B., & Rahimy, R. (2015). The effect of oral versus written error feedback on paragraph writing ability of iranian low-intermediate efl learners. *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods*, 5(1), 125.
- Hattie, J., & Helen, T. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81-112.
- Hokayem, H., Ma, J., & Jin, H. (2015). A learning progression for feedback loop reasoning at lower elementary level. *Journal of Biological Education*, 49(3), 246-260. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00219266.2014.943789>
- Khanlarzadeh, M., & Nemati, M. (2016). The effect of written corrective feedback on grammatical accuracy of EFL students: An improvement over previous unfocused designs. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 4(2), 55-68.
- Le, V. C. (2011). *Form-focused instruction: A case study of Vietnamese teachers' beliefs and practices* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Waikato).
- Lee, H. H., Leong, A. P., & Song, G. (2016). Investigating teacher perceptions of feedback. *ELT Journal*, 71(1), 60-68. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccw047>

- Lyster, R., Saito, K., & Sato, M. (2013). Oral corrective feedback in second language classrooms. *Language Teaching*, 46, 1, 1–1,40. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444812000365>
- Mao, S. S., & Crosthwaite, P. (2019). Investigating written corrective feedback:(Mis) alignment of teachers' beliefs and practice. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 45, 46-60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2019.05.004>
- Maolida, E. H. (2013). A descriptive study of teacher's oral feedback in an ESL young learner classroom in Indonesia. *E-Kids Cendikia*. 15 (2), 117-124. <https://doi.org/10.9744/kata.15.2.117-124>
- Méndez, H. E., & Cruz, M. D. R. (2012). Teachers' perceptions about oral corrective feedback and their practice in EFL classrooms. *Profile Issues in Teachers Professional Development*, 14(2), 63-75.
- Rezazadeh, S., Ashrafi, S., & Foozunfar, M. (2018, April). The effects of oral, written feedback types on EFL learners' written accuracy: The relevance of learners' perceptions. In *Second National Conference on English Language Studies: Applied Linguistics Perspectives on EFL, Azerbaijan*.
- Sarré, C., Grosbois, M., & Brudermann, C. (2021). Fostering accuracy in L2 writing: Impact of different types of corrective feedback in an experimental blended learning EFL course. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 34(5-6), 707-729. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2019.1635164>
- Sermsook, K., Liamnimitr, J., & Pochakorn, R. (2017). The impact of teacher corrective feedback on EFL student writers' grammatical improvement. *English Language Teaching*, 10(10), 43-49. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n10p43>
- Sprouls, K. (2011). *Teachers' use of positive and negative feedback with students who are high-risk for emotional behavioral disorders*. Arizona State University
- Su, W. (2019). Exploring native English teachers' and native Chinese teachers' assessment of interpreting. *Language and Education*, 33(6), 577-594. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2019.1596121>
- Telçeker, H., & Akcan, S. (2010). The effect of oral and written teacher feedback on students' revisions in a process-oriented EFL writing class. *TESL Reporter*, 43(1), 31-49.
- Thomas, M. (2013). Teachers' beliefs about classroom teaching—teachers' knowledge and teaching approaches. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 89, 31-39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.08.805>
- Van Ha, X., & Murray, J. C. (2021). The impact of a professional development program on EFL teachers' beliefs about corrective feedback. *System*, 96, 102405. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102405>
- Wang, B., Yu, S., & Teo, T. (2018). Experienced EFL teachers' beliefs about feedback on student oral presentations. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 3(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-018-0053-3>
- Wen, Y. (2013). Teacher written feedback on L2 students writings. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 4 (2), 427-431. <https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.4.2.427-431>
- Yu, S., Wang, B., & Teo, T. (2018). Understanding linguistic, individual and contextual factors in oral feedback research: A review of empirical studies in L2 classrooms. *Educational Research Review*, 24, 181-192. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2018.06.001>