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## EFL TEACHERS' AND LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVE ON TEACHERS' ONLINE WRITTEN FEEDBACK

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### Abstract

Feedback plays an important role in EFL classroom for both learners and teachers. Many theoreticians and practitioners in the field of education paid attention to the used of feedback in learning. The aim of this study is to know how EFL teacher provide written feedback in response to the learners' work and how the learners' perspective toward the teachers' written feedback during pandemic through online learning. To obtain the data for this study, a mixed method research design is used since it needs both qualitative and quantitative data. Some instruments is used to collect the data of this study are the students' graded compositions to identify the nature of the feedback provided and a close-ended questionnaire was given to the participant EFL students in order to gain insight into their opinions and attitudes to their teacher's feedback. The result reveals that the teachers provided many indirect feedbacks for their students that mostly focused on the content of their writing and sometimes on their grammar, vocabulary, and spelling. Most of the students have positive impression and feeling as they interested and satisfied with the teachers' feedback.

**Keyword:** *EFL teachers, EFL learners' perspectives, written online feedback*

### Abstrak

Umpan balik memainkan peran penting dalam kelas EFL untuk pelajar dan guru. Banyak ahli teori dan praktisi di bidang pendidikan memperhatikan penggunaan umpan balik dalam pembelajaran. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana guru EFL memberikan umpan balik tertulis dalam menanggapi tugas siswa dan bagaimana perspektif siswa terhadap umpan balik tertulis guru selama pandemi melalui pembelajaran online. Untuk memperoleh data penelitian ini digunakan rancangan penelitian metode campuran karena membutuhkan data kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Beberapa instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data penelitian ini adalah tugas siswa yang dinilai untuk mengidentifikasi sifat umpan balik yang diberikan dan kuesioner tertutup yang diberikan kepada siswa peserta EFL untuk mendapatkan wawasan tentang pendapat dan sikap mereka sebagai umpan balik guru mereka. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa guru memberikan banyak umpan balik tidak langsung pada siswa mereka yang sebagian besar berfokus pada isi tulisan dan kadang-kadang pada tata bahasa, kosa kata, dan ejaan. Sebagian besar siswa memiliki kesan dan perasaan positif karena mereka tertarik dan puas dengan umpan balik guru.

**Kata kunci:** guru EFL, perspektif pelajar EFL, umpan balik online tertulis

## Introduction

The implementation of online learning as one of pandemic Covid 19 consequences has influenced the way the teacher preparing, doing, and evaluating teaching and learning process. The teachers are forced to adapt to the new way of teaching. Early when the pandemic Covid 19 has come to Indonesia and the education minister asked people to conduct work from home as well as study from home, many teachers did not know what and how to implement such kind of online learning. Most of them (70,42%) are not ready with this situation and only few of them (14,78%) ready with it (Prabowo, 2020).

However, teachers and learners must adapt to the new situation. They learn any online learning platform to facilitate online classes. They use many kinds of online learning platform such as google classroom, moodle, zoom, and of course WhatsApp (Gunawan et al., 2020). Teachers also learn how to assess the learners' performance through online application such as Google form, Kahoot, and Quizziz. In fact, those application did not have any features to give feedback except the result in the form of learners' score. Still, if the teachers use online learning platform such as WhatsApp, google classroom, moodle, zoom, etc, they can give written feedback toward the learners' work.

Teachers' feedback can be very powerful if it is done well. Good feedback gives beneficial information the learners need so they can understand where they are in their learning and what should they do next. This is an important

approach to know the cognitive factor of learning. When the learners come to the situation that they understand what to do and why they should do it, they will develop a feeling that they control over their own learning. This is also another important approach to get their motivational factor of learning. The learners who were aware of learning purposes perceived the teachers' feedback as more useful (Vattøy & Smith, 2019).

Teachers' written response as feedback to students' writing is essential for improving both teaching and learning process. Many researchers have been investigating the important of written feedback to students' writing. Teacher written feedback to students' writing has always been an important part of writing because it helps to improve the students' writing ability (Zhang, 2016). Students mostly value all types of teacher written feedback on their compositions. Teachers' written feedback encourage student revisions in which there were attempts from students in making revisions based on teacher written feedback (Razali & Jupri, 2014). In addition, Leng (2014) stated that the teachers' written feedback which are specific and information loaded assisted the students in their essay revision. More specific, marginal comments, request for clarification, and comments on grammatical issues provided by teachers are proven to be effective. Students expect teachers to comment on those areas and feel frustrated when they do not receive any of them (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

Teachers should carefully select the most helpful feedback which motivates their learners and helps them improve their language skill. In the normal situation, teachers have some ways to deliver written feedback to the learners. Among those ways, feedback communications coded showed about 61% were in the form of grades, numbers, or symbols, and only 33% were comments (Ruiz-Primo & Li, 2013). However, it may be different if it is done during the pandemic situation through online learning. Some of the online learning platform provide some features that only give opportunity for the teachers giving feedback in the form of grades or numbers. Others give opportunity for the teachers giving feedback in the form of comments either spoken or written. This features limitation varies the form of feedback used by the teachers for different online platform.

Learners may have different interpretation toward teachers' feedback in different ways. In this sense, individual and situational characteristics can have a potential effect on how learners perceive the teachers' feedback (Havnes, 2012). This study will elaborate on (a) How do the teacher provide written feedback in response to the learners' work during pandemic through online learning? If teachers write feedback, what type of feedback do they use? And (b) How the

learners' perspective toward the teachers' written feedback during pandemic through online learning?

## Research Methods

To obtain the data for this study, a mixed method research design is used since it needs both qualitative and quantitative data. Those data would help get a deeper insight into the matter and reach a thorough understanding of the research problems (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 302)

The population involved includes two categories of participants. The first category is composed of 38 Senior High School students attending classes in two different classrooms in the same Senior High School. They took the same test in which they were required to write a 6-line paragraph (about 60 words) describing people. They are taught by teachers A and B who constitute the second category of participants in the study. Each of them teaches in one of the classrooms. Both teachers are qualified and have respectively 19 and 7 years of EFL teaching experience. Anne and Siti are the pseudonyms used in this report to refer to them in order to keep anonymity.

Some instruments will be used to collect the data of this study are: (1) the students' graded compositions will be analysed to identify the nature of the feedback provided; (2) a close-ended questionnaire will be given to the participant EFL students in order to gain insight into their opinions and attitudes to their teacher's feedback; (3) a semi-structured interview to each of the participant EFL teachers to elicit information about their rationale for providing written feedback on their students' writing and their expectations.

## Results and Discussion

### A. The nature of writing feedback provided by the teachers

Anne provided many feedbacks for her students that mostly focused on the content of their writing and sometimes on their grammar, vocabulary, and spelling. She said that implementing online learning during pandemic Covid 19 is difficult to provide many types of feedback since it is almost impossible to have a synchronous learning. It was because most of the students lives in Islamic Boarding School in which they have equipment and time limitation either using mobile phone or computer. They only may use those facilities in turn with many other students. That is the main reason why asynchronous learning is implemented in this school. This asynchronous learning did not give many chances for the teacher to provide direct feedback because it takes time and

needs more energy to do it. If the teacher provides direct feedback, means that she should also have to type explanation to correct the error made by students. On the other hand, students do not have enough time to access those feedback.

It needs big effort for Anne to provide even indirect feedback. Her feedback provides mostly information about the teacher-reader's feelings and impressions about the quality of the content of the marked texts, and their overall effect on the reader. She often uses emoticon as it is interesting and shows many impressions that the students fond of it. Besides, common simple expressions also help her to promote the students' passion in improving the quality of their writing. That is why her feedback tend to be descriptive feedback rather than judgemental feedback.

Although online learning is implemented in this school, unfortunately, other type of feedback as electronic feedback never been applied. Electronic feedback is kind of assistance can be accessed by means of software programs while students write or it can be utilized as a form of feedback. Both Anne and Siti said that equipment limitation and time limitation to use it still be a big problem for them to conduct a condusive learning activities. The students may not bring even a mobile phone or computer. Some other students get the permission to bring it but they may use it in specific and limited time.

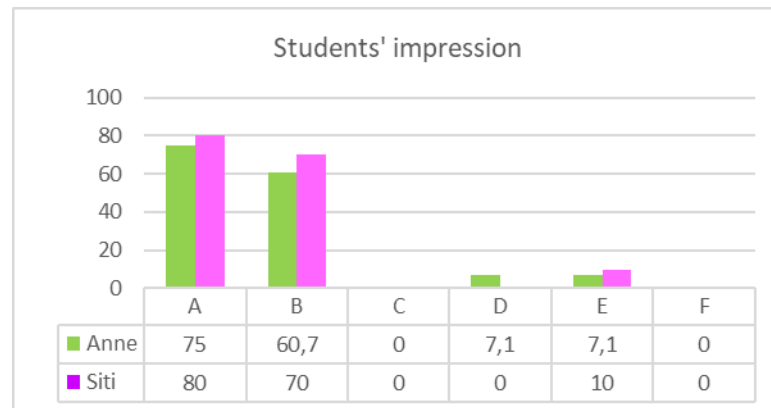
As for Siti, her feedback practices are almost the same as Anne's. Hollistically she assesses the students' assignment as what Anne did because they think that it is the easiest and best choice regarding the learning situation in this school. She said that she prefers to give compliment to support their spirit in writing. Siti's also provides many feedbacks for her students that mostly focusing on the content of their writing, but different from Anne that sometimes focuses on language usage, she does not care much about language usage. She thinks that exploring students' idea to improve their writing is more important than focusing on finding error and giving comment on students' the language usage.

## **B. Students Perspectives**

### **1. Students' impression of their teachers' feedback**

The majority of both teachers have positive impression of their teachers' feedback. As for Anna's students consider it clear (75%) and useful (60,7%) although a few of them find it confusing (7,1%) and overwhelming (7,1%). While Siti's student find it clear (80%) and useful (70%) although 10% of them consider it confusing.

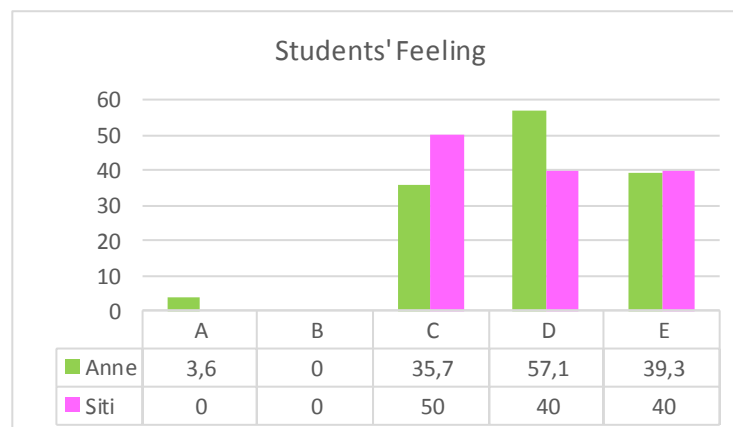
Table 4.1. Students' impression for each teacher



## 2. Students' Feeling about Their Teachers' Feedback

Both teachers' feedback positively accepted as the students feels interested in reading it, satisfied, and eager to improve their writing. Feeling satisfied appears to be the top option selected by Anne's students (57,1%), followed by eagerness (39,3%) and interest in reading it (35,7%). However, 3,6% of them feel frustrated. On the other hand, at the top option, Siti's students (50%) feel interest in reading it, and the rest both (40%) of them feels satisfied and eager to improve their writing. Table 4.3 provides detailed information about the feeling of students taught by each of the two teachers.

Table 4.3 Feeling of students taught by each of the two teachers

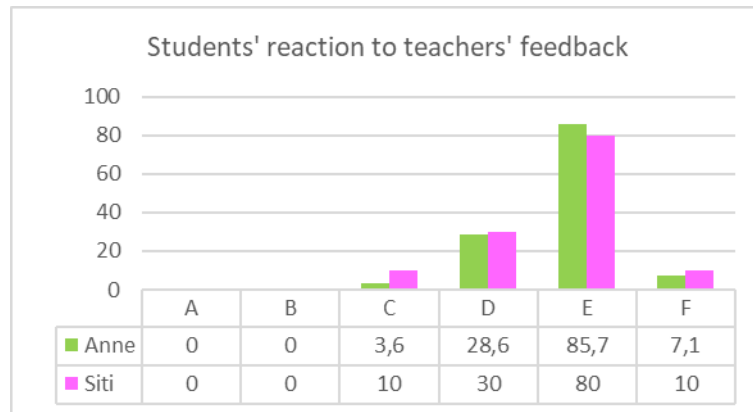


## 3. Students' reaction to the teachers' feedback

Eighty-five (85,7%) of Anne's students revise their writing taking into account her suggestions, twenty-eight (28,6%) of them correct their minor error, seven (7,1%) of them improve their writing with the help of their home tutor, and three (3,6%) of them read the grade and the comments and ask for clarification. As for Siti's, eighty (80%) revise their writing taking into account her suggestions, thirty (30%) correct their

mistake, the rest both ten (10%) of them read the grade and the comments and ask for clarification and improve their writing with the help of their home tutor. Table 4.3 provides detailed information about students' reaction to the each of the two teachers' feedback.

Table 4.5. Students' reaction to teachers' feedback

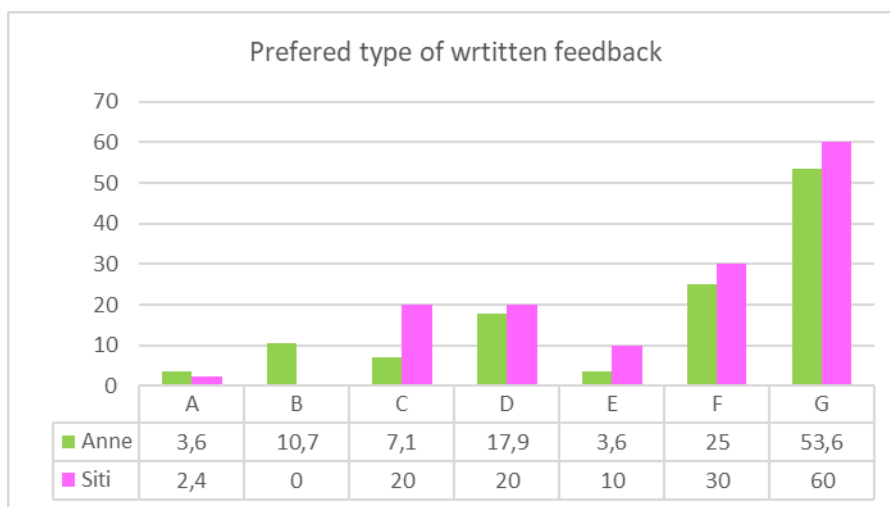


#### 4. Students Preferences

##### a. The students' preferred type of written feedback

More than a half of Anne students (53,6%) expressed preference for a written feedback that shows the grade, suggestion for error correction from the teacher, and written comments on the content. Ten (10,7%) of the students did not pay much attention to the mark as they prefer to have error correction suggestion only and seven (7,1%) preferred to have written comments on the content only. On the other hands, some of the students still paid more attention to the mark that they (17,9%) preferred to have teacher respond by giving a mark and suggestion error correction and some other (3,6%) preferred to have a mark and written comment on the content. However, a few of them (3,6%) preferred to have a mark only as the type of the teachers' written feedback. See the detailed information about students' preferred type of written feedback from each of the two teachers on table 4.7.

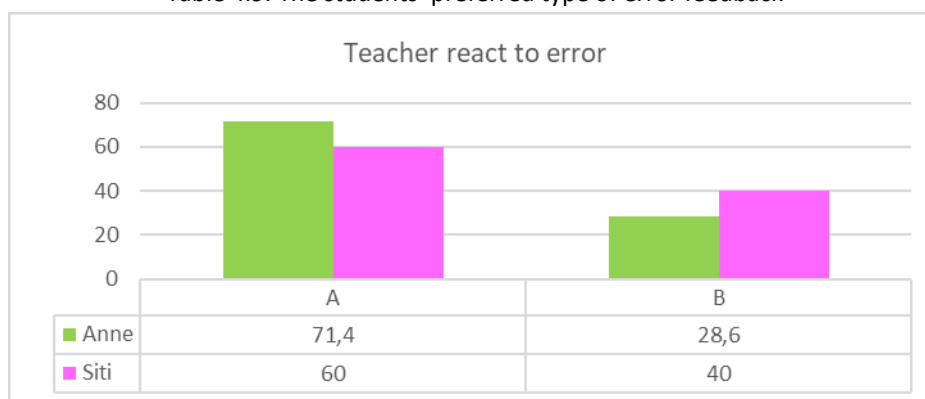
Table 4.7. The students' preferred type of written feedback



**b. The students' preferred type of error feedback**

As it is shown in table 4.9., both Anne's (71,4%) and Siti's (60%) students prefer to get teachers' feedback by suggesting correction of all errors. The remaining students, (28,6% of Anne's) and (40% of Siti's) prefer to get teachers' feedback by suggesting correction of some errors.

Table 4.9. The students' preferred type of error feedback



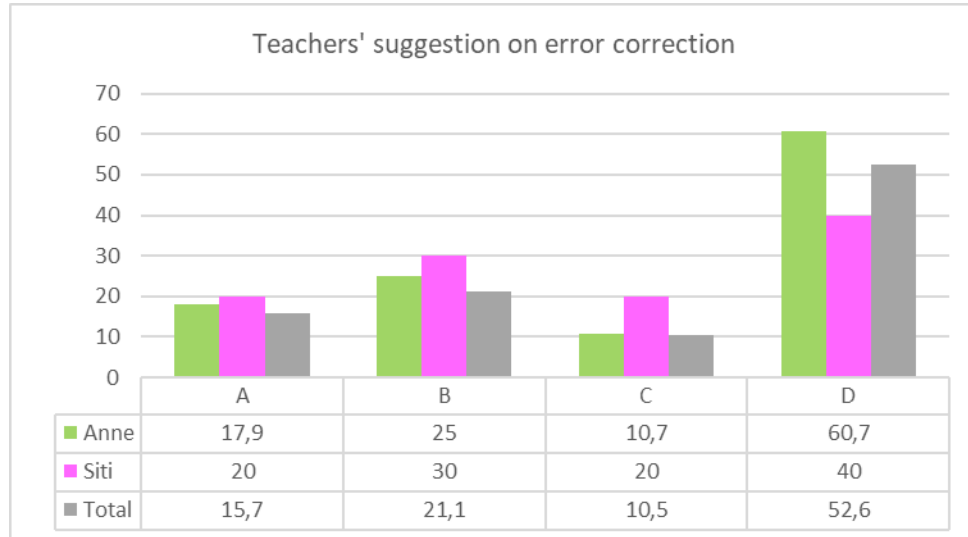
**c. The students' preferred teacher's suggestions for error correction**

Fifty-two (52,6%) of students believe that teachers' suggestion on their error correction still important since they prefer to get teachers' suggestion by cycling or underlining, using a code to indicate the type of error, and providing correction. In fact, some of them (21,1%) still think



enough to have error correction by circling/underlining errors and providing correction, (15,7%) of them just by circling/underlining errors, and (10,7%) of them prefer it by circling/underlining and using a code to indicate the type of error. Table 4.11 provides detailed information about preferred teachers' suggestion for error correction.

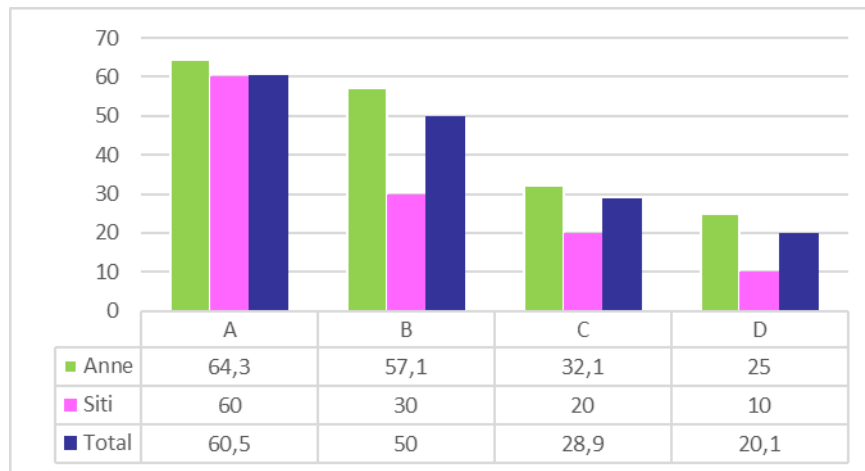
Table 4.11. The students' preferred teacher's suggestions for error correction



#### d. The students preferred focus for the teacher's error feedback

Among some questionnaires distributed to the students, one item expected them to point the aspects that they think their teacher's feedback should focus on. The result shows that grammar is the area that they consider important as Anne's students (60,3%) and Siti's students (60%) marked the grammar option. Besides, Anne's students (57,1%) and Siti's students (30%) also think that vocabulary is an aspect of writing that needs feedback from the teachers. However, Anne's students (32,1%) and Siti's students (20%) marked spelling as usually they do error on spelling that make them consider the teachers feedback focus on spelling error. The rest Anne's students (25%) and Siti's students (10%) think that they still need punctuation error as the teachers' feedback focus. Grammar is ranked first in the list as it is marked by all the students (60,5%), followed by vocabulary (50%), spelling (28,9%), and punctuation (20,1%). The information in Table 4.12. presents the ranking of the options constructing on the number of respondents who marked them.

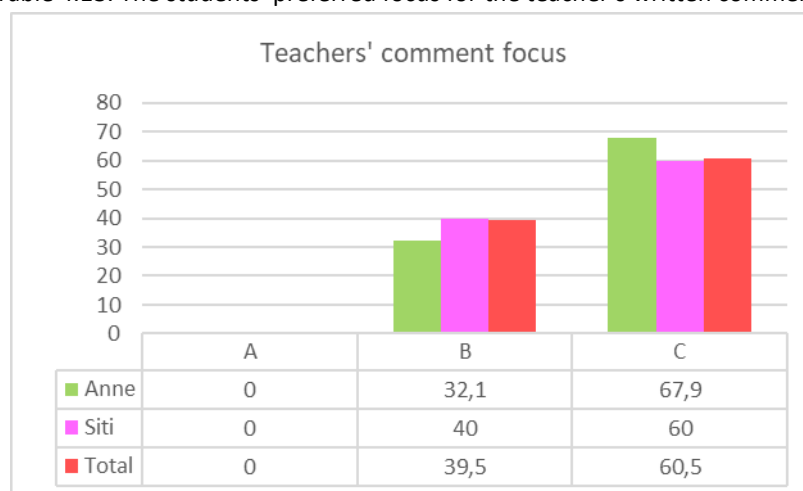
Table 4.12. The students' preferred focus for the teacher's error feedback



**e. The students' preferred focus for the teachers' written comments**

The majority of both teachers' students prefer to get a thorough and constructive teacher feedback on the content of their composition as Anne's students (67,9%) and Siti's students (60%) of them would like the teacher written comments to focus on both positive and negative aspects of their writing. Surprisingly, some of them (39,5%) would like the teacher written comments to focus on only positive aspects of their writing and no one wants the teacher written comments to focus on only negative aspects of their writing. It seems that they are not ready to criticized from the negative aspect. They think that if they get only positive aspect of teacher written comment focus, they will know their strength. On the other hand, if they get only negative aspect of teacher written comment focus, they will know their weakness.

Table 4.13. The students' preferred focus for the teacher's written comments



## Discussion

The participant EFL students indicate positive impression about the teachers' written feedback as most of them (76,3%) believes that teachers' feedback is easy and useful. They think that teachers' feedback is easy to read and understandable and shows positive points and areas that need improvement. Besides, teachers' feedback positively accepted as the students feels interested in reading it, satisfied, and eager to improve their writing. This is in line that teacher written feedback to students' writing has always been an important part of writing because it helps to improve the students' writing ability (Zhang, 2016). Teachers' written feedback encourage student revisions in which there were attempts from students in making revisions based on teacher written feedback (Razali & Jupri, 2014). In addition, Leng (2014) stated that the teachers' written feedback which are specific and information loaded assisted the students in their essay revision.

Among three types of feedback as it is stated by Ellis (2009) that a typology of feedback strategies that consist of five types and three of them are direct, indirect, and electronic feedback, indirect feedback frequently given to the students. Indirect feedback is a strategy of providing feedback usually used by teachers to help students correct their errors by indicating an error without providing the correct form (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). In fact, are two possible type of feedback used by both teachers even the direct feedback rarely been done regarding some limitations while the electronic feedback never been applied.

Regarding the students' preference, the result reveals that they mostly (68,4%) prefer to get teachers' feedback by suggesting correction of all errors. According to the students, they (52,6% of the students) actually prefer to have teachers' feedback by giving them a mark, suggesting error correction, and providing written comments on the content. Fifty-two (52,6%) of students believe that teachers' suggestion on their error correction still important since they prefer to get teachers' suggestion by cycling or underlining, using a code to indicate the type of error, and providing correction. The result shows that grammar is the area that they consider important as 60,5 % of them marked the grammar option. The majority of both teachers' students prefer to get a thorough and constructive teacher feedback on the content of their composition as 60,5 % of them would like the teacher written comments to focus on both positive and negative aspects of their writing. Those students' preference similar to the previous study in which the students reveals that while the teachers

consider their feedback as a tool to promote accuracy in writing in their EFL classes, the students prefer a type of teacher feedback that would also take into account the content of their written production (Agbayahoun, 2016).

## Conclusion

The finding of this study reveals that the teachers provided many indirect feedbacks for their students that mostly focused on the content of their writing and sometimes on their grammar, vocabulary, and spelling. Most of the students have positive impression and feeling as they interested and satisfied with the teachers' feedback.

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