



# **Analysis of Teacher-written Corrective Feedback in Second Language Writing Pedagogy in Secondary Schools, Bulilima, Zimbabwe**

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## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the teachers' practice on written corrective feedback as well as the students' response to it in a bid to find practical solutions to the problem of low performance in English composition writing at "O" Level in Zimbabwe. The study sought to find out the nature of corrective feedback that "O" Level students get from their composition teachers and how these students respond to it. In this qualitative research, seven informants ("O" Level students) were interviewed; the researchers used a semi-structured interview schedule to address them and their English exercise books were also analyzed using a document analysis guide designed by the researchers. The study concluded that the composition teacher marked the compositions thoroughly highlighting most of the errors for students' benefit. The teacher's focus on feedback was in line with the syllabus demands. The teacher also satisfied the Feed Up, Feed Back and the Feed Forward types of effective feedback. She had strength on mark allocation which acted as student guide to their stance in composition writing. However, although the students largely benefited from the teacher's corrective written feedback as well as the oral feedback, some of them

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failed to get the maximum benefit because they could not understand the correction codes. It is therefore imperative for composition teachers to provide students with a correction code elaboration whenever using a marking correction code.

*Keywords: Feed up; feed back; feed forward; correction codes; content analysis.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers' written corrective feedback is an essential element in the teaching-learning process for it enhances learning. Nielsen [1] defined feedback as information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify the learner's behaviour for the purpose of improving learning. Saaris [2] said that feedback ranks in the top 10 of the highest influences on student achievement and teachers also benefit from it for they review their performance, develop new skills and improve in their teaching.

McCarthy [3] introduced his article on feedback by a statement seemingly from students saying: "We don't know what we don't know, but with help, that can change", a statement that shows how prepared students are to receive teacher feedback and learn from it. When receiving constructive feedback, learners need to know what they did well and whether their understanding is on target for recognizing what's working reinforces those practices.

This study focuses on English composition teachers' written corrective feedback practices and the "O" Level students' response to it in Bulilima District, Zimbabwe. English composition is a major component of English Language, a subject that is mandatory at "O" Level in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe school curriculum has primary school level, whose curriculum consists of two pre-school years and seven years of primary education, a phase which is concluded by a national examination [4]. Grade seven examinations are mandatory for entrance into the second phase of education, that is, secondary education. It comprises six years in all, that is, four years for Ordinary Level ("O" Level) and two years for Advanced Level ("A" Level).

What is considered as an "O" Level pass is when a candidate passes a minimum of five subjects including English Language with a grade of "C" or better [5]. The English "O" Level examination consists of two compulsory papers: Paper One, the composition one and Paper Two which consist of comprehension and language items. This study is based on Paper One, the

composition paper. Generally, "O" Level pass rate in Zimbabwe is low and is worse for the English language; [6] showed that 'O' English Language pass rate was at 30.46% in 2014 while it was 27% in 2015 [7].

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Research has it that teacher written corrective feedback enhances learning and can be key to writing improvement. However, "O" Level English Language (a mandatory subject) has low pass rate and is not clear whether the problem is with the teachers' Feed Up, Feed Back or Feed Forward; or with the students' responses, hence this investigation.

This research, therefore, sought to conduct an investigation on the teachers' practice on written corrective feedback as well as the students' response to it using the following research questions:

1. What sort of corrective feedback do "O" Level students get from their composition teachers?
2. How do "O" Level students respond to teacher's written corrective feedback in their composition work?

### 1.2 Review of Related Literature and Studies

Related literature and studies were reviewed in order to buttress this study. Studies were carried out in various countries on teacher feedback; [8] studied the impact of teacher indication and correction of students' errors in the USA. He gathered that negative feedback from teachers adversely impacts self-confidence in writing skills and leads to negative attitudes towards writing. Since the study above already realized that negative feedback is not very helpful in the learning of ESL, this research looked into a different aspect of teacher feedback in order to find out what works.

An experimental study was carried out by [9] who investigated the effects of different types of corrective feedback on Iranian EFL learners'

essay writing. Findings showed a statistically significant difference in the participants' performance in the posttest. Oral feedback (both focused and unfocused) and written feedback (focused) were significantly effective in the posttest. It is only the written unfocused feedback which was ineffective.

One may wonder if it is oral feedback or written feedback that is helpful to students; both are significantly effective in students' learning [9], especially the coded ones [10].

### **1.3 Feedback in English as a Second Language**

Due to the complexity of the writing skills and the multifaceted nature of feedback, many linguists and researchers in the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) are concerned with Second Language Writing (SLW) especially in seeking instructional methods and techniques to improve it.

A number of researchers worldwide have been interested in studying feedback in relation to second language writing. Çagla [11] studied the similarities and differences between students' and teachers' perceptions about written corrective feedback in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The study found out that there were no significant differences between the two groups in terms of amount and type of written corrective feedback.

### **1.4 Use of Correction Codes in English Composition Marking**

In this contemporary world, educators are looking for better ways of doing things. Some teachers use correction codes. However, some of these codes are not universal; they vary among nations and even locally. Also, their significance is debatable. This has attracted research in that area.

In [12] realized that selecting a right way to provide students with error feedback in their writing of English composition has proved to be a complex task to educators. He, therefore, conducted a study to find out an effective way of error feedback. Findings showed that students prefer coded feedback to other correction modes in the process of error feedback. The study also showed that the students benefitted more from coded feedback than from non-coded feedback.

In Columbia, [10] also realized in a study that the use of coded, written and oral feedback is widely accepted by students. The current study inquired from the respondents if the corrective written feedback they got from their composition teachers was coded and how they responded to it.

### **1.5 Students' Attitude towards Feedback**

Research has shown that students' expectations on feedback are variegated; [13] realized that some students prefer only written comments from their teachers while other get along well with a combination of written comments with oral instruction during meetings with the instructors [14]. In Hong Kong, [15] worked on the response of students to teacher's feedback. He realized that although second language teachers spend a significant amount of time marking students' writing, many of them felt that their efforts were wasted mainly because the students might experience feelings of frustration and confusion when they receive the feedback. Such result brings in the idea that teacher's feedback should be informative and clear such that students can understand it.

On another note, [1] found out that many students prefer detailed corrective positive feedback which guides them in the revision process. With positive feedback, he meant that feedback which points out elements or places where the student is "on track" or has performed well also showing why that performance should be continued in future writing tasks. This stance is supported by [8] who gathered that negative feedback from teachers is detrimental to students' self-confidence in writing skills and demotivates the learners.

Although this area of study on feedback has drawn the attention of many researchers worldwide, this is not so in Zimbabwe where research, in general, is limited. The researchers tried the internet, browsed Zimbabwean universities websites, visited some universities libraries and consulted colleagues through e-mail but failed to get Zimbabwe feedback related researches. One can, therefore, borrow the description from [16], "dearth of literature", to describe this situation.

The reviewed literature above shows information on feedback as well as research finding on feedback worldwide. It shows how complicated the feedback process is; how seriously its needs

to be taken and how more focused researches are needed. For Zimbabwe, the clarion call is louder since very little has been researched in the feedback area making this study mandatory so that Zimbabwe can also benefit from academic feedback issues.

### 1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the Model for Effective Feedback by [21]. It focuses on feedback meaning and also identifies the particular properties and circumstances that make it work. The model shows the purpose of feedback, how the discrepancies can be reduced and also recognized the pertinence of feedback in the learning process of a student by addressing students' formative assessment questions, which they termed feedback questions, as shown by the model below. The questions: Where am I going? (Feed Up); How am I going? (Feed Back) and Where to next? (Feed Forward) are to be answered by teacher's feedback and therefore give direction to the learner towards the targeted goals. The researchers found these concepts essential for the study since composition writing takes a process approach and therefore used the Feed Up, Feed Back and Feed Forward concepts as the bases for analyzing the teacher's feedback for the study.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this qualitative research, seven informants, "O" Level (form four) students, were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule and their English exercise books were also analyzed using a document analysis guide designed by the researchers. The interview technique was chosen because it exposes multiple perspectives of the students as well as a complete understanding of their feelings, expectations, wants and responses while document analysis complemented the findings.

This integration of interviews and document analysis maximized the validity of the findings. The chosen research design was, therefore, appropriate because neither of the two (one on its own) could be adequate to develop multiple perspectives and a complete understanding of the research problem of this study.

### 2.1 Sample of the study

- The sample of the study comprises seven "O" Level English Language students from

one school in Bulawayo whose composition is shown on the table below.

- *Students Interviewees*

Class	Number of students by gender
A	1 Male and 1 Female
B	2 Females 1Male
C	1 Male and 1 Female

### 2.2 Research Instruments

Self-semi-structured interview schedules for students were used for data gathering. The researchers also used a document analysis guide to analyze the students' marked composition exercise books.

### 2.3 Data Gathering Procedures

The researchers planned and visited the chosen school and made prior arrangements with the English "O" Level teacher on the interview schedule.

On the agreed date and time, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews to 7 "O" Level students (one at a time) from one school in Bulawayo to find out their response to composition teachers' written corrective feedback. During interviews, the participants brought their composition exercise books for content analysis and the researchers analyzing the teachers' written comments. Both information from the interviews and the content analysis was recorded in a notebook ready for coding and analysis.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative data requires one to adopt an interpretation through identification of patterns; this entails adapting a treatment procedure that enables meaningful interpretation of the data. The researchers, therefore, took the data collected from interviews and content analysis, organized, coded and analyzed it according to the emerging themes.

The researchers used personal experience and emphatic insights while taking a neutral nonjudgmental stance towards the revealed dimensions, patterns and trends when describing the findings of the study and forming hypotheses. Findings were then portrayed in a coherent, detailed description supported by excerpts in order to capture participants' personal perspectives and experiences.

## 2.5 Findings

### Research Question One

What sort of corrective feedback do “O” Level students get from their composition teachers?

I got information to answer this research question from content analysis of the students’ composition exercise books as well as the students’ interview responses. The reviewing of students’ composition exercise books showed that students got corrective feedback, marks and comments as feedback to composition writing.

On the nature of marking indicative in the informants’ composition exercise books, one informant said that the composition teacher highlighted all the errors that he has made while others echoed that the teacher corrected most of them. I confirmed that the teacher indicated many errors in the informants’ composition exercise books. This is similar to findings by [15,17,18,19] who observed that language teachers spend much of their time marking and providing corrective feedback on students’ writing.

I coded those errors indicated by the English composition teacher in the students’ exercise books using the *six plus one method*, that is, [20]’s six types of corrective feedback: Explicit Correction, Recasts, Clarification Requests, Metalinguistic Feedback, Elicitation and Repetition plus my own classification obtained from literature review, that is, Error Indication. I then classified corrective feedback from students’ exercise books according to [21] Feedback on the task aspects, namely: Feed Up, Feed Back and Feed Forward. I further classified the feedback in the students’ composition exercise books in accordance to [22] model of corrective feedback provision’s three basic premises, namely: combining error correction with error feedback; targeting one linguistic structure at a time and providing error correction on all the functional uses of the targeted structure.

From the analysis explained above, the following patterns emerged:

#### **Feed Up**

Feed up is associated with goal clarification. From the interview, the informants told me that their composition teacher clearly tells them the composition goal: to be able to write a standard composition according to the English language

“O” Level syllabus demands. In helping the students to meet this standard in composition writing, the informants said that their teacher gave them a list of vocabulary (of about 100 words and 100 phrases) which she asked them to master and use (about five in one composition). They were given freedom to use other sources, for instance, textbooks.

Contrary to [11] findings, the informants said that their composition teacher explained to them her expectation. They said that their composition teacher gave them instructions at the beginning of the year in terms of number of words (350-450 words); Total marks (30 and 20 marks for free and guided composition, respectively) and the use of varied vocabulary, just to mention a few.

The teacher gave the students examples of what she expected; this could be found in other students’ compositions and the textbooks she recommended. One informant said that she followed the teacher’s expectations, requirements and guidance in order to get high marks.

#### **Feed Back**

This refers to teacher’s response. On the question of what the teacher’s feedback focused on, all the informants talked with the same voice. What the informants said their teacher concentrated on is also what I saw in the exercise books; one informant almost summed it all as:

*Excerpt 1:* She marks grammar, spellings, impression (like feeling), language, vocabulary, punctuation, paragraphing, monotony, the sequence of events and the subject of the paragraph.

Other informants added handwriting and composition length as areas of teacher’s feedback concentration. These aspects are the same highlighted in the Zimbabwe General Certificate in Education (ZGCE) “O” Level English syllabus, 2013-2017 [23].

Teacher’s written corrections comprised Explicit Corrections, that is, those that gave correct forms to the learner. The few cases that I observed were limited to correcting capitalization and wrong words.

The clip below shows explicit correction for a wrong word. The student put a wrong word *next*

instead of the word *following*, so the teacher underlined the wrong word and put the correct one above it.

On the wrong capitalization, the teacher underlined (using one line) the letter to be capitalized and put the capital letter above it, for instance, the (letter *t* underlined) at the beginning of a sentence; and Florence (letter *f* underlined) for a proper noun.

Recasts, Clarification Requests, Metalinguistic Feedback, Elicitation and Repetition were not indicated in the teacher's written corrections.

However, Error Indication dominated teacher error correction. It was in the form of correction codes showing the errors that the students had made. Below are some of the correction codes that the teacher used as elaborated by the informants and as I observed in the informants' composition exercise books: *gr* for wrong grammar; *sp* for wrong spelling; carets (^) for missing word/s; one line below a whole sentence for a bad sentence and one line below a word for a wrong word.

The use of correction codes that I observed in the informants' composition exercise books was supported by [22] in Columbia who, in a study, realized that the use of coded, written feedback was widely accepted by students and was

yielding positive results in the improvement of their writing skills at the paragraph level.

For further feedback in the students' composition exercise books classification, I realized that the Explicit corrections and Error indications elaborated above are in line with [22] first part of premises number one, that is, Error correction.

I also observed that the teacher wrote comments as feedback to the informants' composition performance. Teacher's comments tally [22] the second part of premises number one: error feedback, that is the global issues that affect composition meaning and organization. Thus [22] first premise *combining error correction with error feedback* was therefore fulfilled in the composition teacher's feedback of the study.

Teacher's written comments were at the end of the composition; they were short and to the point as if in response to [2] who argued that non-specific feedback falls far behind feedback that is specific and focused. See the clip (Fig. 2).

I realized that there was a strong link between the marks that the students got and the comments that came at the end of the composition. The highest mark that the teacher gave to the informants was 18/30 while the lowest was 9/30. The informants said that the teacher never gave a zero to a student.

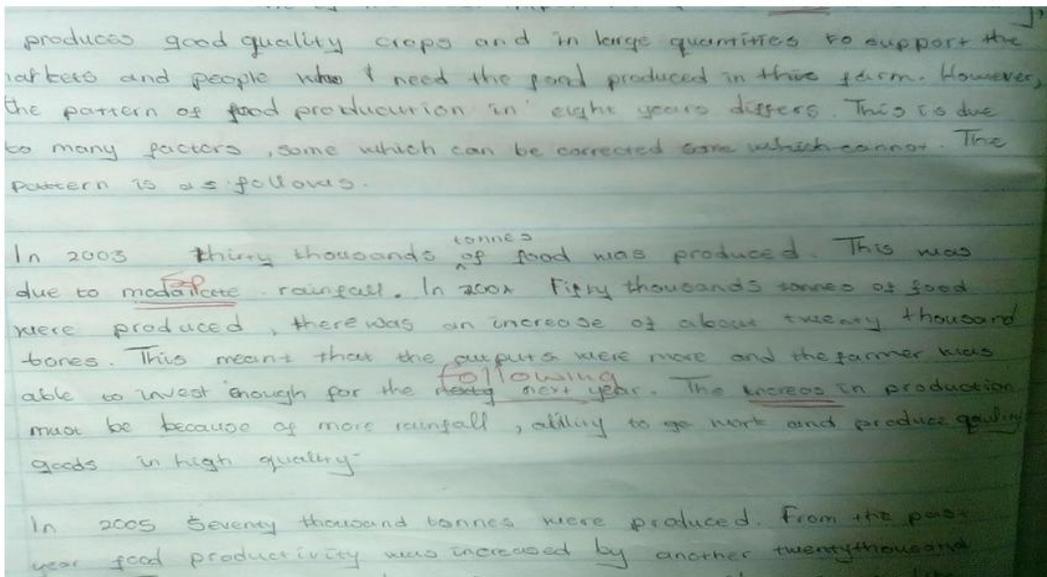


Fig. 1. Explicit correction

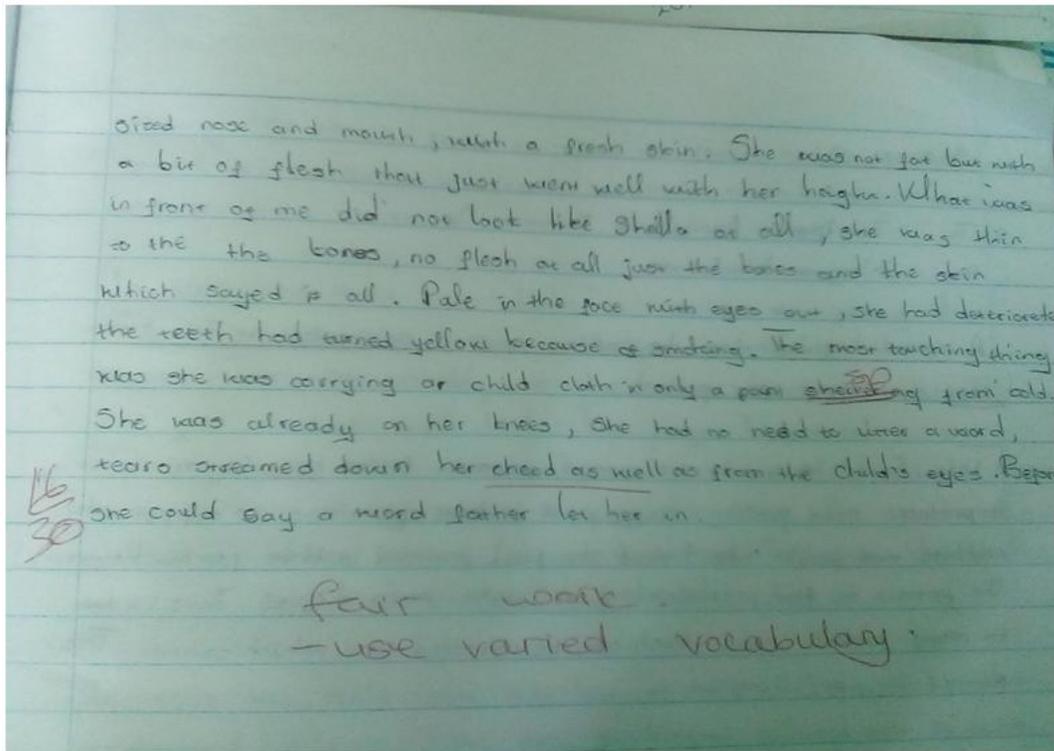


Fig. 2. Teacher's comments

Examples of the written comments and mark allocation that I saw in the students' composition exercise books include 17/30 Fairly good; 17/30 Good development; 16/30 Fair work but use variable vocabulary; 10/30 you must put more effort and 9/30 Improve. Realized that the teacher's comments addressed issues, for instance: Write clearly (commenting on handwriting); Improve length (written for short compositions) and Simple clarity (encouraging for advanced vocabulary). These aspects, when followed by students, make students improve their composition standards.

### Feed Forward

Feed forward is closely linked to the use of assessment data to plan for the future. The informants revealed through interviews that their composition teacher used the information she got from their performance for planning. When I asked the informants the types of composition they have learned, they listed the factual, narrative, argumentative and the descriptive compositions. The list tallies the ZGCE "O" Level English syllabus 2013-2017 objective number one. Among the list of the composition types, the majority of the informants indicated that they

were concentrating on the descriptive and the narrative types as their teacher had advised them. The informants exposed that the teacher recommended each student in the class to concentrate on a certain type of composition (according to that student's strength and ability).

The composition marks that the informants got were generally from average (18/30 to low (9/30); I got from the informants that this also applies to their classmates. Due to the low composition standard, as reflected by the marks, the teacher put a lot of effort into giving feedback to students. One informant said:

*Excerpt 2:* She (the composition teacher) conducts one-on-one feedback. She comes in class and sits and calls one by one of us explaining our mistakes and telling us her expectations as well as advising us on the type of composition we should concentrate on according to our strengths.

I also got that the teacher used group feedback to the students:

*Excerpt 3:* She divides the class into two (Group A and B). Individuals who fall under A, for

instance, write the same topic on description composition while those under B write on a narrative topic. The teacher selects samples from each side, reads them and comments on what is correct and wrong for the benefit of the whole class.

Again, all the informants said that the teacher extended her feedback gesture by inviting students whosoever wanted to come for consultation during free time. The other informants affirmed this and added that the composition teacher started such moves during their form four second term when she started intensively preparing them for final examinations. One informant contrasted the present teacher's actions with her old ones saying that during form four first term, they were all given the same composition and if the majority failed, she would just come with notes explaining how to write that type of a composition as a class. This is a clear evidence of Feed forward in the study.

An informant brought in the idea that the composition teacher gave them holiday composition exercises, more than five per student (for practice), which she did not

necessarily mark but just put the word *checked* to indicate that she has seen them. I confirmed it in the students' exercise books as shown in the clip (Fig. 3).

However, all the informants realized a change in teacher's intensive marking and timeous returning of the composition exercise books. They said that she intensified the number of composition they were getting per week (an average of three) all of which were marked and returned to them during the same week. The informants were quick to give a reason:

*Excerpt 4:* She is preparing us for final examinations that will come at the end of the year. She is aware of our short-falls.

These findings are similar to [24] ideas, in the improved [21] Effective Feedback Model; there is an emphasis on immediate feedback for novice learners. They also argued that feedback enhances achievement. Thus, the finding of the study and the theory of the study are closely linked. All these teacher's moves were caused by what the teacher realized on students' assessment, hence, Feed forward.

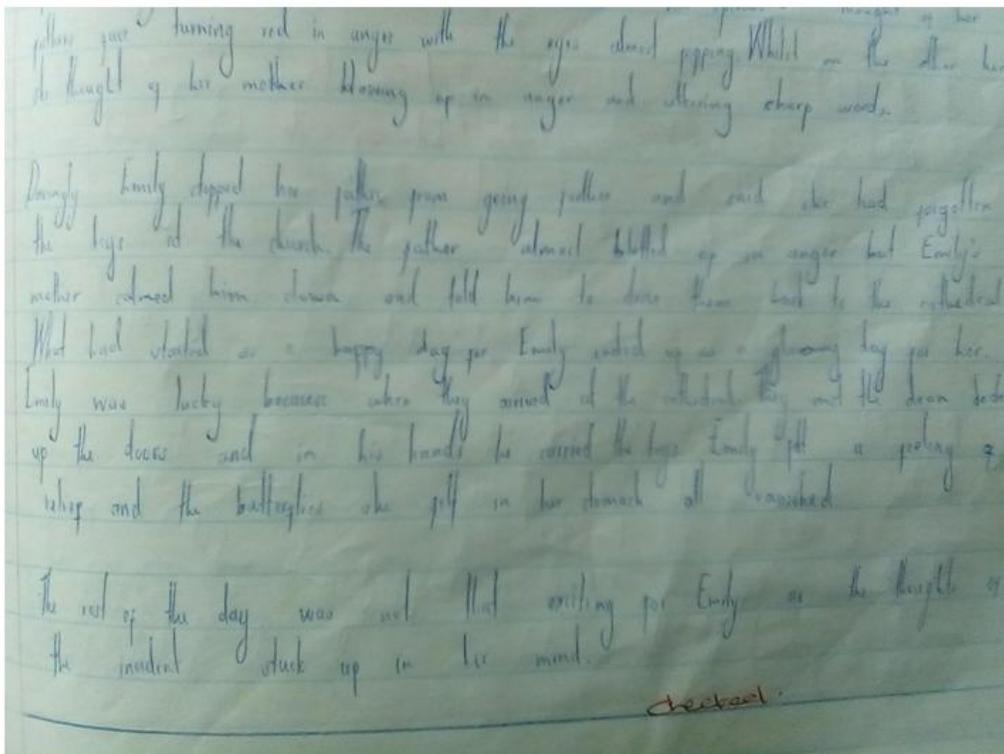


Fig. 3. Unmarked but checked compositions

## Research Question Two

How do “O” Level students respond to teacher’s written corrective feedback in their composition work?

The grand tour question asked the informants how they viewed composition writing. Almost all the informants beamed their faces before responding to the request for they seemed to know the composition subject very well and showed some interest in it. One informant rightfully said:

*Excerpt 4:* It is an art of expressing one’s imagination and feelings. Sometimes I write what is real but in most cases, I use my imagination. It is like writing a summarized novel.

She went on to say that when she writes a descriptive and narrative composition, she used the information she got from movies (since she is exposed to technology) while she believed that those from rural areas are guided by what they encounter in their rural setting.

Another informant jovially and positively said that in composition writing, one needs to be creative and should read widely in order to get ideas and facts so as to be able to write a standard composition. These ideas were complemented by another informant who echoed:

*Excerpt 5:* I like composition writing for I am given a chance to express myself and my ideas especially in descriptive and narrative composition writing. When I write a story, I think of reality then I add my imagination.

Still another informant explained that composition writing is a way of practicing language skills and exposing one’s understanding on what one gets from novels and movies; a way of expressing self-using appropriate vocabulary and good English Language. All the informants seemed to understand very well what composition writing is about.

On teacher’s feedback, one informant talked of oral feedback from their composition teacher; she said that she benefited from that oral feedback than the written feedback. This means that oral feedback should always complement teacher’s written feedback. The same finding was also made by [9] and [22].

However, another informant complained that the oral comments were only good for correct

performance, for bad ones, he said that it was not good because the teacher mentioned names. “After all, what is important is the mistake and not the name of the offender”, one informant put it that way.

When I asked the informants how they viewed the feedback they got from their composition teacher, the informants were generally happy with the feedback they got. This is in line with [15] findings who realized that students valued and wanted teachers to give them feedback on their writing.

The informants said that they have benefitted from their teacher’s feedback and have improved their work, especially on vocabulary. One informant said:

*Excerpt 6:* She (the teacher) encourages a variety of vocabulary. I have improved from a C grade to a B grade when I consider my composition marks.

Another informant contentedly said that composition length was his problem. He used to write very short compositions running short of words but he has improved greatly.

Only one informant had a worry, she said that she was not happy with the progress she was making in composition writing. She worriedly elaborated that she seemed not to improve her level of writing since the beginning of “O” Level. When I asked her what caused her not to improve, she was not sure and simply said that English is a second language that is difficult.

There are specific aspects that I asked informants about, one of them being composition marks that they received from their composition teacher. Almost all the informants commented on the marks as being fair. They said that the marks they got were a true representation of their performance. They also seemed to understand teacher’s mark allocation for they said that their teacher, in her composition expectations presentation, explained the relationship between composition standards (outstanding, generally good, average and below standard) and mark allotted to each standard.

Even the informants who were struggling and had low marks and seemingly harsh comments seemed to accept the comments they received from their teacher. One informant with a comment: *Don’t be lazy* said that the comment

was not negative but reprimanding her to work hard. I concluded that the above marks match the associated comments.

Only two informants seemed to take some offence in the comments they received. One of them explained:

*Excerpt 7:* I like some of the comments I received, for instance, *You have good writing skills*. However, other comments, like, *Improve your vocabulary*, although being informative, they discourage me.

From the general informants' responses, it can be said that the student was happy with the marking and comments they got as feedback from the composition teacher. Even those who got low marks seemed to understand their performance. One informant explicitly said:

*Excerpt 8:* My teacher writes short and precise comments at the end of the composition. In the composition, there are only codes and few corrections on capitalization. The composition is not all red.

Such sentiments from students were also found by [12] in his study where light-marking (use of correction codes) was effective and gave encouragement even to struggling students. He also realized that students understood the feedback better when correction codes were explained.

The informants said that they understood their composition teacher's comments which one informant described as;

*Excerpt 9:* Short, straight to the point and satisfying, never confusing and beneficial.

This shows that the informants understood their composition teachers' focused comments and benefitted from them. In a study, [2] had the same findings.

When I asked the informants if they concentrate on the written comments they receive, one of them answered:

*Excerpt 10:* I read the comments – I don't concentrate on them because they are short and straight forward. They don't need much attention. I understand them.

When I asked them if they understood the correction codes in their composition exercise

books, there were mixed feelings and responses. One informant from the A-Class said that the codes meanings were never given to them but she understood them all because they were using the same codes since primary education. Another informant from the same A Class said that he recalled receiving the codes meaning two years ago when they were beginning "O" Level, that is, in form three.

From the B Class, one informant said that although there were never given a code elaboration (code-meaning chart), she understood the correction codes given by her composition teacher. She went further to give a reason:

*Excerpt 11:* During revision, our teacher tells us some of the codes' meanings. After all, the same codes have been used for a long time and we get to understand them.

However, the other informant from the same B Class said that she understood some of the codes but not all, for instance, the single and the double lines, where a mystery to her. When I asked her why she never asked her teacher about the meanings, she simply said that she never thought about it.

All the three informants from the C Class worriedly echoed that they hardly understood the correction codes. One of them shyly said the following on both the single and double lines correction codes:

*Excerpt 12:* Maybe they mean that what I have written does not make sense.

This finding tallies one by [12] in Bangladesh who realized that correction codes are a necessity in English composition teaching but are only useful when they are understood by the students.

When I asked the informants how quick was their teacher in returning the marked composition, all the respondents showed concern; they said that at the beginning of the year, their composition exercise books were returned after a long time, at times, after three weeks. Some informants were not happy about it; one of them said that he became anxious and worried due to the delays for he wanted to see his mistakes and improve.

This finding tallies that by [25] who argued that feedback is often unhelpful when it is received by the students late.

However, one of the informants justified the delay:

*Excerpt 13:* Our teacher teaches all the form fours, a total of about 150 students. She needs time to mark.

I got from the informants that the teacher brought the composition exercise books very early toward the final examinations.

When I asked the informants if they wrote corrections to their marked compositions, they all said that they rarely wrote them. One informant defended her teacher saying:

*Excerpt 14:* She does it in another manner; our mistakes are indicated, there is usually an oral discussion which is enough. After all, she encourages us to improve.

One aspect that also all the informants told me is that they had the same teacher for three consecutive years. They said that they liked it for they ended up understanding each other better and got maximum help from their composition teacher. One informant knowingly said that their teacher prepared and gave them composition materials for she was with them for a long time. This finding concurs that by [26] who realized that continuous feedback can create and enhances the student-teacher relationship.

While the rest of the informants could not think of a disadvantage of having one teacher for a long time, one of them talked about labelling. He said that when one fails once or twice, one will always fail because the teacher will have classified that one as a failure.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that the composition teacher marked the composition thoroughly highlighting most of the errors for students' benefit. Also, the teachers' focus on feedback was in line with the syllabus demands thus satisfying the Feed Up, Feed Back and the Feed Forward types of effective feedback. Again, the teacher had strength on mark allocation as a student guide to their stance in composition writing. However, although the students liked and largely benefited from the teacher's corrective written feedback as well as the oral feedback, some of them failed to get the maximum benefit because they could not understand the correction codes.

### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that English composition teachers should make use of elaborated correction codes so that students can understand codes meanings and benefit from them. Teachers should always find out whether the students have understood teacher's feedback or not for they use it in developing strategic teaching tactics. Teachers should also return marked exercise books to the students on time as well as avoid negative comments as feedback to students and should avoid mentioning names when giving bad examples in class. Having the same composition teacher for a long time can be tried in the schools for the teacher comes to know every student's problem and therefore address it accordingly as the study realized. On the part of the students, they should write corrections to every given composition work so that they can refer to them during revision.

### 5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Research in peer feedback needs to be carried out in Zimbabwe since some researchers elsewhere in the world found it as one of the most powerful elements in the writing process. Research also needs to be carried out in the area of correction codes in composition writing, trying to find out how best it can be utilized by the teachers.

### CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.

### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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