

**Factors Affecting Written Corrective Feedback Online:**

**A Tertiary Level Scenario**

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English

English and Humanities  
BRAC University  
June, 2021

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## **Acknowledgement**

First of all, I am grateful to the Almighty Allah for providing the strength and determination to complete the research. Then I would like to express my gratitude to my parents, family members' senior and junior friends who gave me the moral support and encouragement I required.

I would also like to thank the prominent professors from prominent universities who generously gave their time to me. I was able to conduct this research because of their ideas, views, and experiences.

I am grateful to my supervisor, Mr Mohammad Mahmudul Haque, for all his help. I received encouragement from him during the supervision that allowed me to understand my area of research.

Lastly, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to all the people who helped me in many different ways during my research.

Nishat Tasmin

June 2021.

## Abstract

This study has focused on the teacher's insights regarding the factors affecting giving written corrective feedback in online teaching. This research included different private and public universities of Dhaka city to see how teachers give effective feedback and are the factors affecting teachers while giving online feedback. The researcher has arranged a semi-structured interview with university teachers. The main purpose of the study is to examine: (a) teachers' choice to provide WCF, (b) the most effective *WCF* used in L2 writing classrooms, (c) students' expectations towards teachers regarding feedback practice in virtual classrooms, (d) some challenges of online teaching. The study has highlighted the present challenges teachers are facing while teaching online. Some experts' criticisms of WCF have been analyzed to come up with possible solutions.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction:

Teachers use written corrective feedback to prevent writing errors of the students. Tanveer et al. (2018) explained the role of WCF in L2 teaching:

*“Writing is considered as predominant language skill that requires conscious effort, continuous practice, and a certain level of proficiency to achieve the competence of targeted language. Teachers in specifically in ESL and EFL contexts are concerned with the writing proficiency of their learners, and to ensure proper effectiveness and comprehensive learning of L2 learners, Teachers adopt teaching tool like WCF”*(Tanveer et al.,2018)

WCF has a significant role in improving learners' writing abilities. Teachers provide WCF to help students to achieve a certain proficiency in the target language. Henceforth, this study has focused on the factor of WCF and how teachers and students are adapting WCF in online classrooms. The researcher has considered both teacher's and students' perspectives to figure out the difficulties they face in the online classrooms and try to develop the situation. mentioned in the recommendation part. (Chapter 5)

Initially, this study has discussed the early theories of WCF and related some new research insights regarding the effectiveness of WCF online. During the pandemic, online teaching is considered as a replacement for traditional face-to-face teaching. It has offered new challenges for the teachers and learners. The main objective of this study is to bring out the difficulties faced by teachers and students while conducting online classes and providing solutions in the recommendation section.

## 1.2 Problem statement:

Providing WCF has never been an easy task for teachers, and students also face difficulties while receiving feedback. According to, Lightbrown and Spada (2013).

*“During the early 1990s, researchers and teachers of second language acquisition (SLA) highlighted the problem faced by students and teachers. Teachers could easily manage learners' speaking and reading skills. Previously, learners used to have poor performance in their writing tasks because they might not receive proper feedback in their piece of writing. Teachers started to emphasize writing skills and suggested that learners need to be informed about their inter-language errors.”* (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Hence, in the nineties (90s), researchers have started to gain insight into learners' writing errors and oversight learners to acknowledge their mistakes. Furthermore, as Myles (2002) puts it, academic writing is considered a complex task for L2 learners compared to native learner. In the second language learning process, L2 learners need to be accustomed to the "two-way process". A two-way process requires continuous development, composing, editing, and reformulating the texts and ideas side by side (as cited in Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1987). Second language learners not only need to do error correction but also need to learn how to develop ideas while they are writing in the target language. WCF helps L2 learners to erase their basic writing mistakes and gives a guideline to formulate advanced writing ideas.



### **1.3 Significance of the study:**

The importance of *WCF* has increased with time and has become an integral part of teaching. *CF* is an essential aspect for the students who want to achieve success in academic writings and professional life (as cited in Alamis, 2010). Students who work on the *CF* have gradually become proficient writers in academic writing. Baculi, A.M et al. (2020) mentioned that an English teacher is expected to provide feedback to students' composition and *WCF* provides a critical opportunity for students to revise their work and improve as writers ( as cited in, Valdez & Patthey-Chavez, 2000; Clare & Valdes, 2000).*WCF* is about correcting lexical errors; rather, it also helps to analyze learners' pieces of writing. Thus, it allows the learners to work on the given *WCF* by their instructors and improve their writing skills.

### **1.4 Objective of the study:**

*WCF* in online teaching has created new challenges for teachers who used to give *WCF* offline. This study has pointed out the teachers' challenges and how students respond towards the *WCF* and find the way out at the end of this study. The main objective is to highlight the actual problem and find out the alternative way to sustain this new teaching pedagogy.

### **1.5 Methodology:**

The methods employed for this study are:

The following instruments are employed for this study:

1. Teachers Interview
2. Internet and Library research to discuss the related theories and different types of *WCF*

### **1.6 Limitations of the study:**

The researcher has researched the pandemic and completed the data collection process online during the lockdown period. During the data collection period, This research has conducted for an undergraduate degree in English and has some time - limitations. Due to the pandemic and the limited time frame, the researcher had to confine the data collection process to 4 universities (3 private and public universities). The findings would have been more representative if the researcher could observe the offline classrooms, which were not possible due to COVID-19. The government declared all the educational institutions to be closed for an uncertain period. Therefore, only five teachers have been interviewed.

### **1.7 Conclusion:**

This chapter discusses the overall impacts of WCF and in teaching and the factors related to corrective feedback. The study would like to find out the present execution of WCF and how teachers offer CF according to the needs of the learners. It will facilitate future researchers to figure out the factors responsible for the issues about WCF existing in selected private and public universities of Dhaka City. The chapter also discusses the methodology (teachers' interview) being adopted and the limitations.

## Chapter 02 Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction:

This study looks at the effectiveness of written corrective feedback and how many factors affect teachers (tertiary level) feedback in their online classrooms. Many arguments have been made to determine the role of WCF in writing classrooms at tertiary level teaching. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010),

*“Performance is defined as a person’s actual use of language. A difference is made between a person’s knowledge of a language (competence) and how a person uses this knowledge in producing and understanding sentences (performance). There is also a somewhat different way of using the term ‘performance’. People often make errors (such as writing errors). Errors are described as examples of performance”* (p. 428).

Richards and Schmidt (2010) referred to making errors and correcting errors as one of the performances.

### 2.2: What is WCF?

WCF is defined as a teacher's response towards a writer's composition in the form of information for revision (Keh, 1990). It is also defined as information provided by teachers to help students trouble-shoot their performance. (Nicole&Macfarlane,2006). Therefore, teachers have provided their instructional notes to indicate the students writing mistakes enlighten them with useful information to develop their writing skills.

Unlike oral corrective feedback, WCF does not require learners to depend on their short-term memory heavily. It is the feedback that targets grammatical and lexical errors (Evans et al., 2010). Teachers prioritize learners' grammatical and lexical competence and provide written

corrective feedback to acknowledge their grammatical errors easily. Moreover, teachers also give feedback to develop the content, organization so that their students could deliver good quality writings (Sheen, 2007).

In the last twenty-five years, ESL experts have adopted different approaches and methods to teach English composition. However, throughout all these years, teachers tried to make composition instruction consistent and provide extensive feedback to their students. Many ESL composition instructors and teachers who provide feedback invest a large amount of time and energy. Teachers' involvement is required to prepare and conduct lessons and return students' writing and corrective feedback. (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005).

Evans (2013), have discussed the different approach of cognitivist and social-constructivist view on WCF. The cognitivist perspective is closely associated with a directive telling approach where feedback is seen as corrective, with an expert providing information to the passive recipient. On the other hand, Carlo has talked about alternative approaches to cognitive theory. One of them is a socio-constructivist approach. This particular approach considered feedback to be one of the teaching facilities. It encourages teachers to give suggestions and improvement comments to their students' writing. (As cited in Archer, 2010, p.71).Cognitivist advocates for the directive telling approach where learners received teachers CF for writing error from their teachers. However, the socio-constructivist considered the learner's involvements to regenerate writing ideas. Thus, teachers provide feedback that would help students recognize their mistakes and develop a new understanding of writing provisions.

### **2.3 Typologies of WCF:**

Corrective feedback on L2 learners' writing can take many different forms. Ellis et al. (2008) commented that teachers used to give written corrective feedback in students' scripts

based on CF concept **focused CF** vs **unfocused CF** and **direct** vs **indirect CF**. (Ellis et al., 2008) This study mainly focused on the following categories of WCF and tried to relate them with practical classroom pedagogy.

### **2.3.1 Direct CF:**

In research from Ellis (2009), Teachers want their students to follow specific forms in their writing and omit the errors in learners' written pieces. Ellis highlighted that Learners get the advantage of having direct and clear instructions from their instructor in the Direct CF strategy. Ellis (2009) believes that;

*“According to the provision of direct CF, learners get to know about their errors directly after reading teacher's feedback. Direct CF is more convenient for beginner-level learners. Direct feedback would help them improve their writing skills. On the other hand, this direct CF demotivates learners to correct too many errors at a time. Students might feel low. Teachers will not be correcting errors willingly as they do when correcting indirectly”* (Ellis, 2009).

Teachers preferred to give their learners detailed feedback. Direct feedback is very much appropriate for elementary learners. Sometimes, when students see too many errors pointed out, they might lose motivation to make the writing correction. Although direct CF might be helpful for the initial level writers, direct CF is not always a suitable way to correct errors for intermediate or advanced level writers.

### **2.3.2 Indirect CF:**

Bitchener et al. (2005) briefly explain indirect feedback where the teacher only prefers to give suggestions about the writing errors of the writer. Later on, students are going to investigate and correct it on their own. Saito (1994) considers indirect feedback as the indirect way of error

identification where teachers encouraged students' involvement to develop the overall understanding of writing skills. Teachers can use different strategies to provide indirect CF. It can be through encircling, underlining, or writing cursors near the error of the text (Liu, 2008).

According to Ferris and Robe, the processing of the indirect corrective feedback is quite demanding than the direct CF, and it requires the learner's involvement to understand the underlying meaning of indirect CF, which has considered a disadvantage of indirect CF because students with elementary L2 knowledge often face difficulties. (As cited in, Fatemipour, Safivand, Sanavi, 2010). Teachers who used Indirect CF, on the other hand, preferred two methods of correction: the first is **indicating and locating**, in which teachers attempted to underline and utilize cursors to show the oversight in the learner's text. Teachers only **marked lines that contain errors otherwise**. Teachers take a note in the margin indicating that a line of text contains a mistake or error. (Robb et al., 1986).

### ***2.3.3 Focused CF:***

Focus corrective feedback emphasizes the lexical errors and syntaxes such as; grammatical mistakes and sentence corrections. On the other hand, unfocused feedback looks at the overall. There are also reasons to question the hypothesized superiority of a focused CF. Focused corrective feedback could be considered as a form of explicit grammar education which is used to omit learners' grammatical errors (Bruton, 2009)

### ***2.3.4 Unfocused CF:***

As Van Beuningen (2010) states, the focused-unfocused CF is a separated idea based on some basic contrariness. The unfocused CF involves the comprehensive correction of errors in a

learner's text. On the contrary of unfocused CF, Focused CF targets a selective number of linguistic features only" (Beuningen 2010, p.11).

Sheen (2007) and Bitchener (2008) argued that unfocused CF is not an appropriate correction method for L2 learners. Second language learners have a limited processing capacity. Students had to deal with a wide variety of elements in ICF that could intercept the progress of writing.

Different predictions have been made concerning the relative effectiveness of focused and unfocused CF. Ellis et al. (2008) claimed that there are theoretical reasons for expecting the focused approach to be more beneficial to accuracy development than unfocused CF. They stated that learners are more likely to notice and understand corrections when they target a specific set of error types. The idea that noticing and understanding are essential for acquisition (e.g., Ellis, 2005; Schmidt, 1994) led Ellis et al. (2008) to conclude that focused CF has greater potential to impact accuracy.

### ***2.3.5 Reformulation:***

The teacher rewrites the whole text for making it closer to the first language (Karim & Ivy, 2011). The native speakers are reworking the students' entire text to make the language seem native-like and keep the original content intact. (Ellis,2008). Although reformulation is time-consuming, teachers rewrite the whole text to get native-like proficiency in le writing. Teachers have practised WCF in different places.

## **2.4 Theories in WCF**

ESL theories have focused on giving feedback in actual classrooms, such as; behaviourist and cognitive theory and mentalism. Tanveer et al. (2018) said how learners acquire language

and whether errors play a positive or negative role in the acquisition process of the target language are of main interest to SLA scholars and theorists. (Tanveer et al.,2018). The ESL researcher tried to understand the significance of WCF in learners' drafts, such as; whether the practice of error correction should be accepted positively or negatively and need to be avoided. Thus, theoretical knowledge helps the teachers to relate WCF in their teaching practice inside classrooms.

#### ***2.4.1: Behaviorism:***

Behaviourists view error as a "sin" and think that it should be eliminated from the learner's interlanguage (Brooks, 1960.). The behaviourist advocated for effective feedback so that learners could respond to any mistakes correctly. The only aim of this theory was to prevent learners from producing errors. Ill-formed utterance correction was not the concern for the majority. However, this belief has changed since the Audio-lingual method came into play. Students were required to practice correct utterances multiple times and emphasized producing error free-utterances. Students have started to spend hours drilling, memorizing different patterns. (Tanveer et al.,2018). Henceforth, Behaviorists represent CF as a tool that would help eradicate learners' errors in their writing. The audio-lingual method encouraged learners to practice error-free utterances.

#### ***2.4.2: Mentalist:***

Spino, Loewen (2018) cites the Mentalist Learning theory as an early method. Before the 1950s, mentalist learning theory had emphasized the role of the mind to acquire any language. Mentalists argue that humans are born with an innate and biological capacity to learn languages.



This theory was spearheaded by Noam Chomsky and arose in response to B. F. Skinner's radical behaviourism.

Chomsky (1959) criticized behaviourist's idea by arguing that language learning is an internal process where a critical acquisition device helps children learn the language around them. The process of language acquisition does not depend on habit formation; rather, learners have acquired it by birth. Therefore, any external feedback or form of instruction will not help them at all. (As cited in, Tanveer, et al.,2018).

## **2.5 Teachers preference:**

Teachers may prefer different types of feedback, mostly depending on their individual preference of giving feedback. Jalali & Abdeli (2011), Iranian teachers mostly provide the corrections with comments (80%) or give directions on how to fix an error (63%) and put annotation (56%). They have chosen to give direct or explicit feedback as well as indirect feedback, respectively. While in the study of Jodaie et al. (2011), it was found that the use of Direct Corrective Feedback is preferred (90%) by the majority of Persian teachers. According to their interview data, direct WCF enhances the visual memory of the learners and makes the corrections clear to the students. (Jodaie et al., 2011). Persian Teachers preferred to give direct corrective feedback to their learner.

Although ESL teachers widely accept direct CF, some contradictions have arisen based on the usefulness of direct WCF. Direct WCF suggests erasing learners' errors which would restrict learners to develop responsibility to correct their own mistakes and make them passive writers. (Chandler, 2003; Sheen,2007; Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Van Beuningen, et al.,2010).

Sometimes DCF makes learners dependent on the teacher's feedback and intercepts to become active writers.

## **2.6 Criticism of WCF:**

Bitchener and Ferris (2012) explained one preconceived notion that WCF is effective to develop learners' second language, therefore researchers and pedagogies in SLA began to focus on exploring different ways for provision of CF. Meanwhile, Truscott (1996) in his study denied the role of WCF. Truscott debated that grammar correction can harm learners' L2 development. By focusing on grammatical faults, teachers might overlook other complex and essential aspects of L2 writings. Truscott (1996) also questioned teachers' capacity to deliver meaningful feedback as well as students' ability to understand it. He rejects the idea of teaching grammar in classrooms. According to Truscott, correcting lexical errors would not be an ideal decision for L2 learners; rather, teachers should give feedback on idea generation to improve writing skills.

Some theoretical claims have been made for the effectiveness of the Indirect CF for the lower proficiency EFL learners as they cannot self-correct due to their insufficient grasp over the target language (Ferris, 2004). Consequently, the more proficient learners of the language are more advanced with the language knowledge and competence. The ICF would be more helpful for them, as it can raise their self-correction and, as a result, better self-confidence and higher satisfaction (Van Beuningen et al., 2012).

### ***2.6.1 Students Dissatisfaction:***

Often, Students have shown some dissatisfaction with the quantity of corrective feedback. Some Students are opposed to generic feedback, which supports providing feedback to the group, not to the individual. Students need to be engaged with groups to make judgments

with others, listening to each member's judgments (Ajjawi et al. 2018, 11). The external information used to establish analysis comes from peers and teachers, and feedback comments from teachers should be utilized to help students analyze their judgments' (Boud et al. 2015, P.14).

### ***2.6.2 Control group:***

Chandler (2003) discussed having a control group in which learners also received WCF. The only difference was that these students were simply told to ignore the feedback until the semester was over. Chandler (2009) argued that this group served as a control group because the students did not correct their faults until after the study was done, and they did not appear to pay attention to the inaccuracies.

### ***2.6.3 Inappropriate writing task/task conditions:***

In much research (e.g., Fazio, 2001; Kepner, 1991; Semke, 1984), many teachers preferred to give WCF to their students' writing. However, Ferris (2003), said that students' initial goal should be to improve writing fluency rather than be motivated to pay attention to grammatical accuracy. Furthermore, even in studies that used perhaps more appropriate tasks, such as compositions or summaries, the writing was done at home (e.g., Ashwell, 2000; Chandler, 2003; Sheppard, 1992). As a result, the amount of time a student spends on writing activity is challenging without any additional help (as cited in Storch, 2010).

### ***2.6.4 Grammatical accuracy:***

The experts' opinions also differed in what was counted as an error in accuracy and how grammatical accuracy was measured. For example, Kepner (1991) used a mean number of errors, and these errors include errors in morphology, vocabulary, and syntax ((e.g. Polio et al., 1998;

Robb et al., 1986). Lalande (1982) also used a moderate number of errors, including errors only in grammar and spelling. Teachers provide extensive CF to improve the morphological, syntactical, and vocabulary knowledge of L2 learners. On the other hand, some of the language instructors prefer to correct only grammatical and spelling mistakes.

#### ***2.6.4 New writing:***

In several research studies (Gu nette, 2007; Truscott, 1999, 2004, 2007), only the previously updated text was included to measure the student's accuracy in writing. That is why the learners never feel like producing a new piece of writing. The ability to revise does not provide adequate evidence that the WCF had a long-lasting effect beyond the revision stage; that is, L2 learning has taken place (as cited in Storch, 2010).

### **2.7 Computer-Mediated Language Teaching:**

Educators have started experimenting with the TBLT method in CMC contexts to promote communication and to evolve students with more task-based learning in the target language (Chen, 2012). CMC tools, such as blogs, chat rooms, wikis, and Skype, open up an interactive and dynamic arena for learners to connect to the real world around them. CMC is also closely in tune with students' day-to-day practices because they use technology-enhanced devices and social networking channels to connect with friends anywhere. Currently, Teachers adopt CMC in their teaching practice to conduct L2 classes virtually. Teachers use different apps such as; Gmail, Zoom. These apps involve computers, laptops, or mobile phones to connect with students.

## Chapter 3 Research Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction:

This chapter has discussed the research methodology part. This research has been conducted in a qualitative research method. The data collection process for this research involved a semi-structured interview discussed in detail in this chapter. It has also included connotation, interview, sampling and analysis, and research tools.

### 3.2 Method of Data collection:

This chapter involves a semi-structured interview. According to Ary's(2010) interpretation, the semi-structured interview, where each respondent is asked the same set of questions, does not follow any list of questions, and the queries will be more like open-ended questions. It encouraged interviewees to discuss opinions rather than to give straight answers. It is generally more like discussion, and most questions cannot be answered with “yes” or “no” or limited word response.”

This study has focused on some purposes of semi-structured interviews. In this study, the researcher used a semi-structured questionnaire as the data collection technique because it is easier to analyze it.

- The researchers have prepared the interview questions in advance and asked the interview questions in the same order so that the researcher can organize the response easily.
- The question can be restructured if the researcher feels the need.

- Buriro, Awan, Lanjwani (2017) cite that the interviewer in a semi-structured interview pursues a flexible procedure that may be mutually acceptable for both interviewer and interviewee. (Buriro, Awan, Lanjwani,2017).
- The interviewer has adapted different level and tone questions according to the interviewee's proficiency level. The interviewer needs to come up with clear questions so that all kinds of misunderstandings can be avoided.
- In the direct inquiry, the investigator has to collect the information through one's involvement from the sources concerned. Conducting such kinds of interviews ensures accurate investigations (Buriro, Awan, Lanjwani,2017)
- Sometimes, additional information from the interviewee helps the researcher in their data analysis.
- These interviews help gather accurate information because the interviewer can ensure a more honest response from the interviewee.
- This type of spontaneous participation is only allowed in semi-structured interviews.

### **3.3 Description of Interview for Teachers:**

The Interview questions are designed based on the theoretical concept in chapter 2 literature review part. The interview comprises eight open-ended questions. The researcher has tried to cover up the following major areas to discuss throughout the interview.

- Affected factors of WCF (Teacher's preference).
- Online teaching Experience during the pandemic (COVID-19).
- Limitations of online teaching from teachers' perspectives.

To discuss the affected factors of WCF, the researcher has tried to develop the different factors of WCF in online teaching. How many different challenges teachers face in online

teaching, and how they moderate the corrective feedback for learners to copy in online classrooms.

### **3.4 Validity relativity:**

Guba and Lincoln (2005) and Ridenour and Newman (2008) said, "Validity refers to how well a qualitative study was designed and executed so that the findings are credible and transferable. Analytical validity refers to how well qualitative data were collected and analyzed so that the findings are dependable, consistent, and plausible". Guba and Lincoln argued that because reliability is a necessary condition for validity, demonstrating validity in qualitative research is sufficient to establish reliability. In the context of a qualitative study, validity is defined as the extent to which data are plausible, credible, and trustworthy and thus can be defended when challenged.

### **3.5 Universe of the study:**

The researcher collects data from different universities in Dhaka city to sustain reliability and validity. The whole data collection process has been regulated during the pandemic period, which has created various difficulties to conduct large-scale surveys. The researcher has chosen universities keeping in mind time constraints and online accessibility. An online survey has modulated the data collection process to collect their responses for this present study. The researcher tried to focus on research questions to make the data more convincing.

### 3.6 Sampling of the study:

One teacher from each University has given an interview to the researcher. Samples selected for the survey are shown in the following table:

Table 3.6.1:

Type	Number
Teachers Interview	5

Table 3.6.2 Detailed plan – (teachers interview)

Institution	Teachers number
University A	2
University B	1



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University C	1
University D	1

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### **3.7 Administering the teacher's interview:**

The researcher has organized a pilot interview to circumvent the problem with the interview question. Before conducting the actual interview, the pilot study helps to improve the interview guide, particularly to organize the interview question. After conducting the pilot study, the researcher made necessary changes in her interview question rigorously, which previously allows teachers to avoid giving relevant examples and explanations to the question. For the pilot, the interviewing researcher has chosen one of his family friends for the pilot interview who is currently appointed as a faculty member in a private university in Dhaka city. This part of the research makes the researcher realize that she needs to improve her interview question and makes them more topics centred and relevant.

The researcher starts the main interview and conducts the whole interview process online. Firstly, she has selected four different universities and contacted the faculty members of those universities via mail. Initially, she mailed the supervisor's concern letter and detailed information regarding the interview, where she mentioned his purpose for doing this interview. Moreover, she has mentioned the other required details, such as; the duration of the interview, the title of her thesis, and attached the interview question file in the mail she sent to faculties of different

universities. Once the faculty members accept her request, she contacts them and sets an appointment for conducting the interview. She has used a zoom app for conducting the interview and set the appointment date after consulting with teachers.

The researcher has begun the first interview with the Teacher from University B. She starts the interview in the allotted time, which the teacher approves of B University. He (T) has agreed to give an interview via zoom call. Moreover, the researcher also has asked for his permission to record the whole interview. However, the researcher has terminated the earliest interview with the coronation of the T through a zoom call (zoom app).

The researcher organized the second and third interviews from the A University. She has got permission from two teachers of the same University for the interview. They have given their consent to regulate the interview. Thus, the researcher has organized the two interviews separately in their given time and date. All the interviews have been taken through the zoom app and recorded after taking the teacher's consent.

Next, two Teachers' interviews of university C and D were organized by following the same procedure as the previous one. The Teachers agreed to give an interview through zoom call in the allotted time.

### **3.8 Process of Data Analysis:**

The researcher regulates the process of data analysis in the qualitative method. In research from Crescentini and Mainardi (2009),

*“The nature of qualitative research, a schema of the phases of qualitative research can be helpful (we start from the schema of Bryman (2008) but something similar can be found in most of the*

*methodological texts*) : (1) *General research questions.* (2) *Collection of information. Selection of relevant case (s). definition of the kind of instruments; and, collecting information.* (3) *Transformation in data.* (4) *Interpretation of data.* (5) *Conceptual and theoretical work. Specification of the research questions; and. collection of further data/information (return to point 2).* (6) *Writing up finding/conclusions (in some cases here there is the generation of anew research question"* (Crescentini & Mainardi, 2009).

This study contains qualitative methods for the process of data collection. The researcher has organized individual interviews of five teachers of different (private and public) university teachers. The interview questions are focused on the two main variables that are affecting teaching pedagogy. This study mainly focused on the factors affecting giving WCF. On the other hand, how teachers adapt the WCF into practical online teaching.

### **3.9 Conclusion:**

The outcomes have been discussed based on the interview and the student survey analysis in the following chapter.

## Chapter 4 Finding and Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction:

The researcher has designed a semi-structured interview and analyzed it by following a certain convention. The study tried to analyze the conversation between teacher and researcher through this interview.

### 4.2: Interview question analysis:

*(Question 1: How much different is it to give online WCF to your learner's script than in an actual classroom? what are the problems/ challenges you have to face to provide WCF in online classrooms)*

**Theme:** Online classroom.

Emergent categories:

1. Challenges faced by teachers in online classrooms
2. Technological challenges
3. Lack of interaction in an online classroom

### Challenges Teachers face online:

Teachers have noticed a tendency among students to consider the current online version of teaching as a temporary one. Thus, students are not taking CF seriously; they only care about the marks that they are getting in their exams and assignments. Regardless of the fact, teachers who are conducting online classes still choose to give corrections. One teacher has shared that she gives one positive feedback and one improvement feedback to a PDF file of her students'

copy and sends it back to them to get still the idea of how they should improve writing skills and what they are doing wrong in their writing.

**Technological challenges:** Teachers have mostly talked about online networks while discussing technical issues they are facing. The internet connection is so unpredictable, which does affect the online class & exam schedules. Sometimes, teachers find it very difficult to manage the whole classroom online. Many times teachers could not start online classes on time due to poor internet connection. On the other hand, students could not submit their copies within the given times and attend important lectures.

**Lack of interaction:** Teachers could not communicate properly with their students in this pandemic situation that surely, they could do in their actual classroom previously. One of the teachers from University A is considered to have mentioned the lack of proper interaction. Lack of communication or interaction is considered one of the major challenges teachers face to conduct online classes. Even they consulted with students during a consultation.

*(Question 2: What types of WCF do teachers think are most useful, and*

*Why? What types of CF do students and teachers think should be corrected, and why).*

**Theme:** Effective corrective feedback.

**Emergent categories:**

1. Appropriate CF
2. Effectiveness of CF

**I. Appropriate feedback:**

While teachers are giving answers to this question, they have pointed out some factors based on their teaching experience offline and online. Teachers used to take offline classes, and they gave feedback to their students' writings. Teachers talked in detail about how they give

effective feedback to improve writing and what are the ways they preferred in terms of giving feedback on learners' writing online.

### **I. Direct vs Indirect feedback:**

The teacher from university D explained how she delivered feedback when she used to conduct offline classes. She used to give positive feedback as well as improvement feedback. She adds marginal notes in their writing, which makes her follow the indirect corrective feedback. She also underlines their spelling mistakes or marks grammatical errors, which again fall under the direct feedback method. Hence, Teachers choose DF for the low proficient learners who need more detailed and direct feedback to improve their writing. Teachers also deliver ICF for advanced learners to develop their understanding of L2 writings.

### **II. Perceiving John Truscott's philosophy:**

One of the teachers from University C shared his insights regarding choosing corrective feedback. He includes that he never prefers to give feedback extensively because it might make the students less motivated. Whenever students looked at their copy, they would feel low. Copies full of red marks and corrections can create a negative impact on the student. Students might consider themselves weak learners. If learners find much marking, the red circle they feel quite demotivated might think their writing quality is very low. John Truscott also opposed the idea of giving direct feedback extensively. Truscott believes CF would stop the self-learning process of the L2 learners.

He (T) pointed out the major mistakes of the writings and balanced them by adding much positive feedback. He realized that this sort of feedback brings positive changes in their writing.

***Question 3: How do you manage to give feedback to the students writing copies online? What do you prefer?***

**Theme:** Online classroom management.

Emergent categories

I. Alternative tasks

II. Adapting technological skill

**I. Alternative task:**

Teachers were trying to give alternative activities such as; assignments or presentations as alternatives to practical tasks and tried to help students reconnect with alternative online activities.

- a. Online course material:** During the Interview, one teacher has mentioned that mostly she takes classes of first-year students. She (T) shared that most freshers do not have any previous idea of how to regulate things online. In that case, she sends them all the related videos and other materials of the particular courses she used to take via email. She prefers to share the Google drive link with her students to access all the necessary materials in one place.

**b. Online platform:**

Teachers in University A use the online platform provided by the University to conduct online

classes more easily. Teachers and students together get connected through online platforms. Teachers and students use the online platform to access all the course materials and record lectures. Teachers could easily deliver the prerecorded lecture and related video and note for students. Students could also get a clear idea of the course before taking the course or attending the class.

**II. Adapting technological skill/ using technology to give:**

Teachers find it very difficult nowadays to give written corrective feedback online. They have to do all of it on a PDF file. Some of them have downloaded apps. One teacher mentioned that she (T) feels very comfortable using a mobile phone while she gives written corrective feedback because on a laptop, it is difficult for her to write and send the feedback, and it is very time-consuming as well. She downloaded an app called "XODO" that helps her to give feedback more frequently, like the offline class. She could easily give one positive feedback and one improvement feedback by using this certain app.

*(Question 4 how do you choose feedback for students with different proficiency levels?)*

**Theme:** Student proficiency level.

Emergent categories:

- I. Evaluate students based on their proficiency levels.
- II. Teachers choose feedback based on students' proficiency.

**Evaluate students based on their proficiency levels:**

In the interview, teachers talked about students' proficiency and shared their perspectives towards students' potentiality level. However, it mostly depends on the teacher's individual choice and how they want to perceive the whole thing.

One of the teachers has shared her philosophy on students' proficiency level and said she does not like to keep that difference in her mind while marking students' copies. She believes, every time, a student cannot write according to their proficiency level. The teacher suggested that students' proficiency levels could be improved. Although a student can be an average writer, he could improve his writing in the next assignment. Sometimes a beginner-level student writes something on his first try, and it would not be very good writing. In the next attempt, the same student could try and wrote something above his proficiency level.



Similarly, another teacher also expressed that he never keeps any idea of students' proficiency level while marking students based on their writing or speaking. He removes the idea that students of his class have a certain proficiency level. If teachers think that a student is possessed of a certain proficiency level, a teacher will be prejudiced while he is marking. Thus, he will not provide marks beyond the beginner level while she/ he is marking a beginner level student. If students get 6 out of 10 in the previous assignment, she might get 8 in the new one. Sometimes they get even lower marks than the previous one.

### **Choosing feedback based on students' proficiency:**

Teachers do not think about the students' proficiency level while they give feedback because that does not help teachers give effective feedback. At times teachers do not feel the need to give any **negative / improvement feedbacks**, but surely, they try to add **positive feedback** to motivate students.

Teachers shared their views while they were answering this. The teacher may point out two mistakes of the beginner-level learners. Meanwhile, she has also added five good things in the learner's copy. Besides that, she prefers to keep it to a minimum for advanced learners, such as; if she found out five good things in an advanced level writer, she would mention about 3. If the teacher mentioned all the positive things about advanced learners, they would think they have no improvement areas. They will not try to do better in their next assignments. The teacher pointed out at least one area of improvement. Regardless of advance or beginner learner, everyone has areas of improvement. Similarly, it is necessary to point out at least one positive thing about beginner learner struggling with their writing.

Furthermore, Teachers appreciate elementary learners' effort by saying things like; "**I appreciate the way you express your ideas** ' or "Nice way", "Nice choice of words". Teachers

had to deal with beginner learners carefully, so she never mentioned **all the improvement areas** because beginner-level learners have many areas to improve. Mentioning all the negative points would be very demotivating for them (S). They are mentioning at least one positive thing and two improvement areas that would be ideal for the beginner level writer. It is **the sandwich method** of giving feedback which consists of some positive points, then some areas of improvement, then again mentioning another positive point at the end.

*(Question 5 How do you deal with the students of different personalities while giving WCF in virtual classrooms? what kind of initiatives has been taken by the teachers to operate the online classroom?)*

**Theme:** Different personalities:

Emergent theories:

I. Consulting with the students (online version).

II. being empathetic.

III. Using Green ink

Students are going through this difficult time for almost one year. Many of them and their family members are directly affected during this pandemic period. Teachers had to handle different kinds of students of different personalities. They have adopted different strategies to make this current phenomenon less difficult for them.

**Consulting with the students (online version):**

One of the teachers has mentioned in the interview that he arranged consultation hours for his students. He tried to give feedback on his students' writing and other activities. Consultation hours are arranged to interact with students, understand their problems, and give

individual feedback to each of them. Students also get the opportunity to discuss the course matters that they are facing in online classrooms. However, teachers arranged online consultations and gave appointments to their students.

**Being empathetic:**

Teachers talked about the current pandemic crisis, and they are considering a lot of issues that students have been facing, including late submissions and internet issues. Teachers are making an effort to be empathetic to their learners and considering their difficult situations. Teachers are trying to acknowledge their learners' limitations and understand their mental health statement.

**Using Green ink:**

Teachers try to avoid red ink pens. Because using red ink can have a negative impression on learners' minds. Red ink means saying bad things about writing. To avoid such negativity Teacher started to use red ink. Despite trying, all these students do not read the teacher's feedback carefully. They think that teachers are pointing out the mistakes that they have in their time. Teachers added that the habit of accepting feedback developed over time. As in their schools and colleges, students are always shunted for not meeting expectations. Gradually they learn how to find out positive feedback or interesting things in their piece of writing.

*(Question 6 Do learners have different attitudes regarding the effectiveness of using WCF and the types which they have received?*

*Alternatively, what has been their preference while they received your feedback in their writing.)*

**Theme:** Students' preference

Emergent categories:

- I. Student's attitude towards *WCF*
- II. Understand the significance of *WCF*.
- III. Ultimate purpose / long term effect:

To explain this factor, a teacher has emphasized the student's preference regarding the teacher's feedback.

#### **Student's attitudes towards *WCF*:**

According to the teaching experience, while she gives any direct written corrective feedback on the learner's copy, most do not take the feedback seriously. It is their initial reaction when they receive any feedback.

#### **Understanding the effectiveness of feedback:**

According to this study, One of the interviewees (teacher) mentioned that only 5% of students in her class cared about the long consequences of written feedback, and 95% of them are not aware of the importance of written feedback. 95% of students think like; it is maybe the instructor who does not want to give enough marks, he(s) might do the whole thing wrong that is why teacher gives such feedback.

However, the 5% who ever look forward to getting the feedback are the 5% who work on the feedback to improve their writing. The other groups are not much concerned about the importance of feedback. The majority of students of the class only go through the feedback night before the exam. Regardless of whether students read it carefully or not, it is very important to improve their writing.

#### **Long term effect:**

Students hardly care about the long-term effects of feedback. Students are only focused on the marks. Even though most learners are concerned about the marks, not so much about the feedback, Teachers still choose to give feedback. Because there are students who want to improve their writing, the number might be very less. Some students do demand detailed feedback. However, the percentage of the students who look forward to feedback is very small.

*(Question 7: What expectations do students hold regarding teacher feedback practices in virtual classes? To what extent do teachers' feedback practices address their students' expectations and desires, especially during online classrooms?)*

**Theme:** Student's expectation

- I. Virtual classroom scenario
- II. Different responses of teachers towards WCF.
- III. Different levels of proficiency over technology.

**Virtual classroom scenario:**

Student's expectations towards feedback have changed significantly during the pandemic. The percentage of students who used to take the teacher's feedback profoundly has decreased in online classrooms. The percentage of the students who read feedback could be even higher. At least 10% of students read the feedback when they receive feedback on a piece of paper before they attend an online class. The paper has its value because the student will look at it at least once within seven days.

Conversely, the same feedback they (S) have received in a PDF file for their writing online. This pedagogical transition has created depression inside students. Teachers also faced problems because sometimes students lost the feedback file or did not want to download the file and read the feedback. This situation leads the students to focus on only marks that they would

get in the exam. Instead of thinking about what went wrong in the last assignment, students only tried to get marks in the present assignment. In many cases, students do not study properly and ask for help from other friends.

Students are not taking WCF as seriously as before. Rather students are more concerned about the marks. The situation is more like the survival of the fittest. Sometimes students get victim and misunderstood by the Teachers. Regardless of all the difficulties, few students also take advantage of this crisis period. Teachers faced real problems when they had to deal with such problems.

#### **Different responses of teachers towards WCF:**

One of the interviewees shares his personal experience. He cites that those teachers are not taking the WCF as seriously as they used to take previously. During the normal class, teachers used to discuss the feedback among colleagues and discussed how it should be provided to the learner and how much positive and improvement feedback should be given to students. Since; the pandemic started, he has not heard any colleague talk about improvement feedback. Teachers do not talk much regarding the effectiveness of *WCF* because there is no such discussion happening among teachers, and everyone is considering online teaching as the temporary one.

#### **Different level of proficiency over technology:**

Technological skills can vary from person to person. Similarly, every teacher surely would not be equally efficient. Students of the CSE or EEE department have also struggled to send emails, submit assignments or join online classes. Students and teachers have seen so many changes and have been trying to adapt themselves to the current situations. Students are still struggling to handle things online. The teachers are mostly nineties generation and some older

than that like, and they are from eighty or seventy century. As the teachers mention about the generation gap between teacher and student, which is one of the reasons for having different responses from different teachers regarding the

One of the teachers mentioned that she specialized in using **technology in teaching**. She pointed out that not every teacher would have such expertise, and every teacher is not TECH-SAVVY.

*(Question: 8 what is the role of your institution to hold back the teaching virtually? How much-facilitated teachers are from their institution during this current pandemic?)*

**Theme:** Institution.

I. Online platform.

II. Public University scenario.

**Online Platform:** Teachers from University B have mentioned the online platform where the University provides different facilities for students and teachers. The main purpose of opening this common platform is to be connected with everyone. Teachers could upload their course materials, outlines, and prerecorded lectures for each course separately. Teachers could easily conduct their online classes with the help of this platform. Students could access their necessary materials by using this online platform.

**Public University scenario:**

Due to COVID-19 government declared university closure, and public universities' academic activities were closed for almost one year. Later, they have started online classes in a limited form. During the interview, one teacher from a public university mentioned that his University's managing committee is not cordial from the initial days of this crisis moment. They have lacked in managing the new online teaching and learning scenario. Moreover, many students who study

in public universities are unable to attend online classes for various reasons. The majority of them had to leave their university halls and move to their hometowns. Most of them do not have any device (such as; laptop or desktop) to participate in any kind of distance learning. Internet connection is not available in most of the marginal areas of Bangladesh.

Thus, University could not execute any of the online classes and exams on time. Such inconvenience would affect the whole teaching pedagogy at the tertiary level.



## Chapter 5 Conclusion

### 5.1: Introduction:

The outcomes of the affecting factors of written corrective feedback are summarised and concluded, and a few recommendations are made in this chapter. The findings have been discussed in light of objectives and added initiatives to improve online teaching at the tertiary level.

### 5.2 Conclusion:

The object of the study has been to find out the factors affecting teachers in giving written corrective feedback on tertiary-level students. This study has chosen four different private universities of Dhaka city. The studies found are as follows.

### 5.3 Recommendation:

Teachers have to face different challenges to give WCF in online classrooms. Teachers and students could not communicate properly in online classrooms. Teachers could not see the learners' reaction while they are providing WCF to their students. Lack of interaction makes teaching-learning difficult for teachers and students.

#### 5.3.1 *Classroom management:*

Teachers adopt different skills to manage the virtual classroom and their learners. They have to think for alternative tasks where they choose appropriate course materials and exam patterns according to online course requirements.

### **5.3.2 Teachers' different response towards WCF:**

Teachers' response towards WCF has completely changed during the online teaching session. Sometimes teachers are not taking the WCF seriously like they used to do previously. In many cases, online CF does not help their learner to correct writing mistakes. Many teachers are technologically challenged, and they are facing difficulties conducting online classes.

### **5.3.3 Institution:**

Initially, universities took time to accustom to the pandemic changes and designed academic plans to conduct online programs. Many of the universities faced many obstacles to reach out to students staying in villages without any internet connection.

### **5.3.4 Learners' attitude:**

Teachers talked about issues and challenges regarding the written corrective feedback during the interview time. Teachers have argued that most students often do not feel the necessity to make changes in their copies according to the Written feedback they are getting from their course instructors. On the other hand, many times, students do not understand teachers' written feedback properly. That is one of the challenges T has to face while they are taking.

### **5.3.5 Recommendation:**

The researcher has suggested solutions after examining the data that teachers should keep in mind when they are giving writing feedback online. The suggestions are as follows.

1. Teachers should consider students' preferences before giving WCF. The majority of the students in online classrooms do not like to revise the CF in their writing tasks. They are

demotivated when they see too many corrections in their writing. Thus, teachers need to add the major mistakes along with some positive feedback.

2. Many teachers suggest giving oral feedback besides written feedback and advocate arranging more consultation hours to develop learners writing understanding in their target language.
3. Universities should provide basic training to teachers who are technologically challenged. Every teacher is not equally technoid, and they need all the essential support related to technology from their institution.
4. Considering the current situation of the pandemic, teachers need to keep in mind the student's mental health statements as they are also going through difficult times. The teacher should be empathetic to their learners and help them to overcome all mistakes that they have made as L2 learners.
5. Teachers also need to show a positive attitude to motivate their students and positively provide feedback. L2 learners often have problems with basic writing skills. In that case, **using green ink**, adding motivational comments would work as a positive input to develop their L2 learning.
6. Many students and teachers do not get enough facilities from their universities. It has become very hard for them to continue their academic tasks without having proper technological devices or internet connections. These logistics support need to be ensured by the university authorities. It would have been much better if the University could provide a common online platform for students and teachers to access necessary course materials. On the other hand, Universities should provide internet packages to those whose students cannot afford internet access.

7. Many teachers suggest oral instructions besides written feedback and advocate to arrange more consultation or to develop understanding between teachers and learners to make learning effective.

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## Appendix: II

### Teachers Interview question

Q1: How much different is it to give online *WCF* to your learner's script than in an actual classroom? What are the problems/ challenges you have to face to provide *WCF* in the online classroom?

Q2: What types of *WCF* do teachers think are most useful, and Why? What types of *CF* do students and teachers think should be corrected, and why.

Q3: How do you manage to give feedback to the students writing copies online? What do you prefer?

Q4: How do you choose feedback for students with different proficiency levels?

Q5: How do you deal with the students of different personalities while giving *WCF* in virtual classrooms? What kind of initiatives has been taken by the teachers to operate the online classroom?

Q6: Do learners have different attitudes regarding the effectiveness of using *WCF* and the types which they have received? Alternatively, what has been their preferences while they received your feedback in their writing.

Q7: What expectations do students hold regarding teacher feedback practices in virtual classes? To what extent do teachers' feedback practices address their students' expectations and desires, especially during online classrooms?

Q8: What is the role of your institution to hold back the teaching virtually? How are much-facilitated teachers from their institution during this current pandemic?

