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Exploring EFL University Students' Perceptions of Teacher Feedback on Writing

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Abstract:
This study explores EFL students' perceptions of teacher feedback on their writing and the challenges they face in understanding and applying it. A quantitative research design was adopted to achieve this study's aims. The participants comprised 30 EFL students enrolled in the fifth and sixth semesters at the English Language Department, University of Zawia, who were selected using a convenience sampling technique. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of 11 items, covering students' preferences, emotional reactions, and difficulties with feedback. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, with responses converted into percentages and frequencies. The main findings reveal that most students perceive feedback as helpful for improving clarity and organization, and that positive and encouraging feedback significantly increases their motivation. However, unclear or general comments were found to be confusing, and students identified *knowing how to apply corrections* as their greatest challenge. Based on the findings of this study, some recommendations are offered at the end of this paper, including the need for teachers to provide clear, specific, and encouraging feedback with explicit guidance on implementation.
Keywords: teacher feedback, EFL writing, student perceptions, motivation, feedback challenges.

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استكشاف تصورات طلاب الجامعات الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) حول ملاحظات المعلم على الكتابة

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المستخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى اكتشاف تصورات طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية (كلغة أجنبية) حول التغذية الراجعة التي يقدمها المعلمون على كتاباتهم، والتحديات التي يوجهونها في فهم هذه التغذية الراجعة وتطبيقها. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة، تم اعتماد منهج بحثي كمي، حيث شملت عينة الدراسة 30 طالباً من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الفصلين الدراسيين الخامس والسادس بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة الزاوية. جُمعت البيانات من خلال استبانة مقننة مكونة من 11 بنداً، تغطي تفضيلات الطلاب، وردود أفعالهم العاطفية، والصعوبات التي يواجهونها فيما يتعلق بالتغذية الراجعة. حُللت البيانات باستخدام الإحصاء الوصفي، حيث حُوّلت الاستجابات إلى نسب مئوية وتكرارات. وتُظهر النتائج الرئيسية أن معظم الطلاب يرون أن التغذية الراجعة مفيدة في تحسين كتاباتهم وتنظيمها، وأن التغذية الراجعة الإيجابية والمشجعة تزيد من دافعيتهم بشكل ملحوظ. في المقابل، وُجد أن التعليقات غير الواضحة أو العامة تسبب لهم الارتباك، كما أشار الطلاب إلى أن معرفة كيفية تطبيق التصحيحات تمثل التحدي الأكبر بالنسبة لهم. وبناءً على هذه النتائج، تقدم الدراسة في ختامها مجموعة من التوصيات، منها ضرورة أن يقدم المعلمون تغذية راجعة واضحة ومحددة ومشجعة، مع توفير توجيهات صريحة حول كيفية تطبيقها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ملاحظات المعلم، كتابة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، تصورات الطلاب، الدافعية، تحديات التغذية الراجعة.

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1. Introduction:

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most challenging skills for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students to master. Unlike speaking, which allows for immediate clarification and negotiation of meaning, writing demands precision, organization, and adherence to complex linguistic rules. It requires students to organize their ideas clearly, apply accurate grammar and vocabulary, and express their thoughts in a logical and coherent manner. According to Fareed *et al.* (2020), academic writing means organizing ideas logically and presenting them with correct language so readers can easily understand the message. Rahman (2021) clarifies that writing skill is not only about forming sentences but also about expressing meaning in a structured way. Furthermore, Khan and Ali (2023) emphasize that the skill of writing demands planning, organizing, reviewing, revising, and practicing in order to produce clear and accurate pieces of writing. For EFL students, the challenges are particularly pronounced. Many learners at the University of Zawia find writing in English complicated, which can be attributed to limited exposure to the English language outside the classroom, insufficient practice, and difficulties in applying writing guidelines correctly. Students often struggle to write essays and graduation projects clearly and correctly because the process demands not just linguistic knowledge but also critical thinking, logical linking of ideas, and the ability to produce meaningful and engaging texts. Without proper guidance, students may make repeated mistakes that eventually become ingrained errors, write unclearly, or lose the unity and coherence of their written texts.

Given the complexities of writing, teacher feedback plays an essential role in supporting students' writing development. Feedback can be defined as the comments or responses that teachers provide to students during writing tasks. According to Lee (2020), teacher feedback is crucial in the process of English language learning because it guides students to recognize their mistakes and to learn how to correct them. The importance of feedback extends beyond mere error correction. Effective feedback helps students understand their strengths and weaknesses, which is essential for continuous improvement. In

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addition, Saeli (2021) explains that teacher feedback can support students by encouraging them to write more organized and meaningful pieces of writing. Hyland and Hyland (2022) assert that effective written feedback can support students' progress by illustrating expectations and providing specific suggestions for revision. In the EFL context, feedback helps students notice their linguistic mistakes, develop accuracy, and gain confidence during writing tasks. Rahimi and Fathi (2023) point out that teacher feedback as a communication that motivates students to think critically and revise their writing based on their teacher's suggestions. On the other hand, feedback has significant emotional implications for students. Particularly, when teachers provide feedback in a supportive and positive manner, students feel more confident and attentive towards improving their writing. Seker and Dincer (2020) accentuate that students who receive friendly and encouraging comments from their teachers demonstrate better attitudes towards writing and are more willing to make revisions. Conversely, negative or destructive feedback can cause pressure and lower motivation for students during their writing tasks.

Despite the recognized importance of feedback in writing instruction, significant challenges persist in ensuring that feedback is effective and beneficial for students. From my experience as a teacher of Writing modules at the University of Zawia for more than five years, I have observed that while many students receive feedback on their written work, they often struggle to understand and apply it effectively. Students frequently express confusion about how to interpret comments and implement corrections in their future writing tasks. Some students feel overwhelmed by the volume of corrections, while others become discouraged by perceived criticism, particularly when feedback focuses exclusively on errors without providing constructive guidance. These observations are supported by some literature. For instance, Jonsson (2020) maintains that unclear or general comments confuse students and make them unsure how to amend their level of writing. Similarly, Mahfoodh (2021) highlights that students sometimes ignore feedback because they find it difficult to understand or because it does not provide clear guidance on how to improve. The effectiveness of

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feedback relies not only on how it is given but also on how students comprehend and respond to it. When feedback is unclear, too general, or presented in a negative tone, students may disregard it entirely or feel discouraged, thereby diminishing its potential positive impact on their writing development. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of research that specifically focuses on students' emotional reactions and perceptions of feedback in the Libyan EFL context. Understanding students' experiences, preferences, and challenges with feedback is crucial for improving teaching strategies and supporting learners both academically and emotionally. Without this understanding, teachers may continue to provide feedback that, despite being well-intentioned, fails to achieve its intended purpose. Therefore, this study addresses the gap by investigating how EFL students at the University of Zawia perceive, respond to, and utilize the feedback they receive on their writing. Specifically, the study aims to: (1) investigate students' feelings and responses toward the feedback they receive from their teachers, (2) identify the types of feedback that students find most helpful and motivating, and (3) determine the main challenges students face when trying to understand and apply feedback to improve their writing. The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide practical insights for teachers at the University of Zawia and similar institutions, enabling them to enhance their feedback practices to better support students' writing development. By understanding students' perceptions and challenges, teachers can tailor their feedback to be more effective, motivating, and conducive to long-term writing improvement.

2. Literature Review:

2.1 The Concept of Writing Skill:

Academic writing can be defined as the ability to express thoughts, opinions, and information in a distinctive and organized way through using accurate grammar, vocabulary, and well-organized structure. It helps students share their ideas in a logical and meaningful manner. According to Fareed *et al.* (2020), academic writing means organizing ideas logically and presenting them with correct language so readers

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can easily understand the message. Another definition was presented by Sari and Wahyudin (2020) who define writing as producing written language that is both understandable and meaningful for readers. Correspondingly, Rahman (2021) clarifies that writing skill is not only about forming sentences, but it also about expressing meaning in a structured way. Ahmed (2021) argues that writing helps students express their ideas clearly and meaningfully via appropriate use of language. Additionally, Ismail (2022) professes that writing skill reflects a student's ability to think critically and communicate clearly. A further definition was offered by Alghamdi (2022) who points out that writing helps learners to express themselves and develop their language competence. In terms of applicability and highlighting the process of writing, nevertheless, Khan and Ali (2023) emphasize that the skill of writing demands planning, organizing, reviewing, revising, and practicing in order to produce clear and accurate pieces of writing. For EFL students, writing is particularly challenging because it requires not only linguistic knowledge but also cognitive skills such as critical thinking and logical organization (Hyland, 2019). Unlike native speakers, EFL learners often struggle with generating ideas, organizing them coherently, and expressing them using appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures. This difficulty is compounded by limited exposure to English language outside the classroom and insufficient practice opportunities (Fareed *et al.*, 2020). Consequently, many EFL students produce written work that lacks clarity, coherence, and accuracy, which negatively affects their academic performance and confidence.

2.2 The Concept of Feedback:

Feedback can be defined as the comments, responses, or corrections that teachers provide to students during or after writing tasks. According to Lee (2020), teacher feedback is crucial in the process of English language learning because it guides students to recognize their mistakes and learn how to correct them. Mahfoodh (2021) describes teacher feedback as the comments provided on students' written work to develop their writing accuracy and clarity. Hattie and Timperley (2007) define feedback more broadly as information provided by an

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agent regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding. In the context of writing instruction, feedback serves multiple purposes: it identifies errors, provides explanations, offers suggestions for improvement, and motivates learners to continue their writing efforts.

2.3 The Importance of Feedback in Developing Writing Skills:

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the importance of feedback in developing students' writing skills. The vital role of feedback is to develop the writing abilities of students through helping them understand their strengths and weaknesses, in addition to guiding them to improve their performance. Saeli (2021) explains that teacher feedback can support their students by encouraging them to write more organized and meaningful pieces of writing. Furthermore, according to Hyland and Hyland (2022), effective written feedback can support students' progress by illustrating expectations and providing specific suggestions for revision. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), feedback helps students notice their linguistic mistakes, develop accuracy, and gain confidence during writing tasks. Therefore, it is considered an essential tool for both teaching and learning processes.

A significant point was raised by Nguyen (2022) who highlights that effective teacher feedback assists students to reflect on their progress as well as become more independent writers. Similarly, Rahimi and Fathi (2023) think of teacher feedback as a two-way communication that inspires students to think critically and review their writing grounded on their teacher's suggestions. Written feedback works as a map or guide to show students how to correct their mistakes. This feedback can encourage students, help them gain confidence, and make them motivated to write. This view was supported by Hasan and Ali (2023) when they assert that students who receive clear and constructive feedback perform better in writing tasks than those who do not.

Moreover, research has shown that feedback contributes to the development of self-regulated learning. Carless and Winstone (2020) argue that students who receive regular and constructive feedback are more likely to actively engage with their learning process and develop

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self-regulated learning habits. Feedback encourages self-reflection, allowing students to understand how to develop their future tasks. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) propose that effective feedback helps students develop the ability to self-assess and self-correct, which are essential skills for lifelong learning.

2.4 Emotional Reactions of Students Towards Feedback:

Clearly, the main function of the feedback process is to highlight the students' mistakes, yet it affects how they feel about their level of education. Consequently, when teacher provides feedback in a supportive and positive way, students feel more confident and attentive towards improving their writing. This suggestion is supported by the study of Seker and Dincer (2020) who accentuate that students who receive friendly and encouraging comments from their teachers demonstrate better attitudes towards writing and are more willing to make revisions. On the contrary, negative or destructive feedback can cause pressure and lower motivation for students during their writing tasks.

The emotional dimension of feedback has received increasing attention in recent years. Li and Vu (2021) emphasize that emotional support whilst providing feedback is important for increasing students' motivation, engagement, and persistence in improving their writing skills. Similarly, Yu *et al.* (2021) claim that students' emotional engagement with feedback significantly affects their willingness to revise and improve their writing. When students perceive feedback as supportive and encouraging, they are more likely to view it as a valuable learning opportunity rather than a personal judgment.

Research has also shown that the way feedback is delivered influences students' emotional responses. For instance, constructive feedback that focuses on specific aspects of the writing and provides clear guidance for improvement is more likely to be received positively than feedback that simply points out errors without explanation (Jonsson, 2020). Feedback that acknowledges students' efforts and progress can boost their self-efficacy and motivation, while feedback that is perceived as harsh or unfair can lead to anxiety and disengagement (Seker & Dincer, 2020).

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2.5 Types of Feedback:

There are many forms of feedback, and each form serves a different aim in assisting students to learn. Teachers use different types of feedback depending on some criteria, for example: *the purpose of the task*, *students' needs*, and *the teaching context*. As Winstone and Boud (2020) point out, adopting different forms of feedback permits teachers to direct, correct, and motivate students in ways that are suitable for their learning styles. Feedback can be categorized in various ways based on its form, timing, and purpose. In educational settings, feedback is generally divided into two main types: *formative and summative*. Formative feedback is provided during the learning process and aims to guide students toward improvement, while summative feedback is provided at the end of a course or assignment and summarizes overall performance (Shute, 2021). The present study focuses primarily on formative feedback, as this type is most directly related to students' ongoing writing development. The main types of feedback relevant to writing skill will be discussed as follows.

2.5.1 Oral Feedback:

This type of feedback is given through articulated comments, particularly during class activities and one-to-one discussions. Oral feedback has many purposes, for instance: it helps teachers respond directly to students' answers; it encourages communication and makes learning more interactive; and it also helps students correct their mistakes quickly and understand the advices easily. Generally, teachers might provide oral feedback during group discussions or presentations in order to highlight areas of strength and areas that need improvement.

In terms of sociability, Han and Hyland (2021) state that oral feedback creates a closer relationship between teachers and their students and forms a secure space for inquiries. Nevertheless, as oral feedback is spoken, many students might not be able to remember it unless they take notes or apply it immediately. However, this type of feedback allows for immediate clarification and dialogue, which can enhance understanding (Mahfoodh, 2021). Students can ask questions and seek clarification in real time, which is not possible with written feedback.

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2.5.2 Written Feedback:

Written feedback, also called commentary feedback, includes notes or corrections written by the teachers on students' papers or digital assignments. This type of feedback can be offered at any time during the writing activity. Written feedback enables teachers to provide suggestions and detailed explanations that students can read at their own pace. It is particularly beneficial for writing activities as it demonstrates specific examples of mistakes.

According to Lee (2021), written feedback has many advantages. First, it helps students recognize patterns of mistakes, develop structure of their written texts, and develop self-editing skills. Second, it helps teachers clarify vocabulary, grammar, and organization issues. Third, students can revisit these comments at any time, especially when working on similar activities, which supports long-term improvement. In contrast, this type of feedback has some disadvantages; for example, if the written comments are indistinct, too long, or not easy to follow, students may ignore them. Written feedback mainly comes in two forms, *direct and indirect*, which will be explained below.

a. Direct Feedback*:*

Zhang and Hyland (2022) explain that direct feedback is very useful for EFL learners (especially beginners' level), because it saves their time and reduces confusion. It helps students to directly see what is wrong and how to edit it. Teachers provide direct feedback when accuracy is required, especially when concentrating on grammar or vocabulary tasks. Direct feedback involves providing students with explicit corrections, which entails crossing out unnecessary words or phrases, adding missing ones, as well as giving instruction about how the text can be enhanced (Zhan, 2022). In other words, teachers write the correct form of the mistakes that their students commit directly in or on the sentence. On the other hand, this type of feedback can be less effective. This can be attributed to it directs students to heavily depend on teachers' comments instead of guessing the type and place of their own mistakes.

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***b. Indirect Feedback**:*

To apply this type of feedback, instead of giving the correct answer, the teachers show their students where the mistakes exist. This might be achieved by underlining, circling, or highlighting the positions of these mistakes. Students then have to think and try to correct them. Through this type of feedback, students are encouraged to think deeply and become more independent. In their study, Kang and Han (2020) assert that indirect feedback enhances some important skills for students, for instance critical thinking and problem-solving. Furthermore, it helps them improve awareness of common mistakes related to their writing.

Regrettably, indirect feedback consumes more time for students to interpret and elaborate. Yet, teachers and students (especially those at upper intermediate and advanced levels) prefer this type of feedback. From students' perspective, it helps them to build their independent self-editing skills in order to find solutions to their linguistic problems. From teachers' perspective, however, circling or underlining the mistakes is easier than writing the correct form as well as it doesn't consume much time.

2.5.3 Peer Feedback:

According to Seker and Dincer (2020), peer feedback helps students to be more active and responsible for their learning. This is because it allows them to understand writing from the point of view of the reader (the peer) and to easily recognize their own mistakes. From teachers' opinion, this type of feedback saves time and effort. In addition, it helps students practice giving and receiving feedback. However, teachers need to train students first to guarantee their comments are written properly.

Significantly, peer feedback occurs when students read each other's work. This type is twofold; the first is to get a reader's opinion. A peer reader can tell the peer writer where the text is not organized clearly, where there is irrelevant information, and where more details and explanation are needed. Second, peer feedback offers more examples of written texts to be read. Some peers have knowledge (or experience) that others do not; the former can show the latter other appropriate

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methods of writing. Hence, this type helps students learn how to evaluate written texts and realize how others express ideas. It also increases cooperation and critical thinking skills.

2.5.4. Summative Feedback:

Shute (2021) emphasizes that summative feedback is usually provided at the end of a course. It usually comes through the scores or results that condenses a student's overall performance. This category of feedback presents whether the students were able to meet the learning objectives. Although summative feedback concentrates especially on the final results, it can help students if the teacher uses short comments about how to improve their writing next time.

2.6 Challenges that Face Students in Understanding Feedback

Although feedback is very helpful, some students face problems understanding or following it. Sometimes the teacher's comments are too short, unclear, or written using a high level of language. Therefore, students do not know how to apply it during their next writing tasks. Jonsson (2020) maintains that unclear or general comments confuse students and make them unsure how to amend their level of writing. That is why teachers should offer specific, simple, and example-based feedback so students can understand and apply it effectively.

Several factors contribute to students' difficulties while applying feedback. First, feedback literacy, which refers to students' ability to understand, engage with, and utilize feedback, varies among learners. Students who lack feedback literacy may struggle to interpret comments or see their relevance to future tasks. Second, the way feedback is presented matters; feedback that is too voluminous, overly critical, or written in complex language may overwhelm or discourage students. Third, students may disregard feedback if they perceive it as irrelevant to their learning goals or if they have developed a fixed mindset that views mistakes as failures rather than opportunities for growth (Winstone & Boud, 2020).

It is worth mentioning that students' understanding of feedback is influenced by their prior experience as well as their exposure to different kinds of it. Diversifying the types of feedback and

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familiarizing students with them can positively affect the literacy of feedback. Moreover, creating a classroom culture that values feedback and encourages dialogue about it can help students develop more positive attitudes toward receiving and using feedback.

Despite the extensive body of research on feedback in EFL writing, there remains a scarcity of studies that specifically focus on students' perceptions and emotional reactions to feedback in the Libyan EFL context. While studies have been conducted in various educational settings, the unique challenges faced by Libyan students, including limited exposure to English Language and large class sizes, may influence their experiences with feedback in ways not yet fully understood.

Furthermore, much of the existing research has focused on the effectiveness of feedback from the teachers' perspective, with less attention given to how students actually perceive, interpret, and utilize this feedback. Understanding students' perspectives is crucial because the ultimate goal of feedback is to support students' learning process, and this can only be achieved if students are able to engage with and act upon the feedback they receive.

Therefore, the present study aims to fill this gap by exploring EFL students' perceptions of teacher feedback on their writing and the challenges they face in understanding and applying it. Specifically, the study seeks to: (1) investigate students' feelings and responses toward the feedback they receive from their teachers, (2) identify the types of feedback that students find most helpful and motivating, and (3) determine the main challenges students face when trying to understand and apply feedback to develop their writing. By addressing these aims, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on feedback in EFL contexts and provides practical insights for teachers seeking to enhance their feedback practices.

3. Methodology:

3.1 Context and Participants:

This study was conducted at the Department of English Language, Faculty of Arts, University of Zawia, Libya. The department offers a

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Bachelor of Arts degree in English Language, which students complete over eight semesters. During these eight semesters, students are required to study writing subject, beginning with foundational writing courses and progressing to academic writing. By the time students reach the sixth semester, they have studied writing for at least five semesters and have gained considerable experience with teacher feedback on their written work.

The participants of this study were 30 EFL students (of whom were 5 males and 25 females) enrolled in the fifth and sixth semesters at the aforementioned context *Department of English Language, University of Zawia*. They were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which involves selecting participants based on specific characteristics or criteria relevant to the research aims (Patton, 2015). These students were chosen because they have studied writing (as was mentioned earlier) for at least five semesters and have therefore obtained sufficient experience with feedback to provide informed responses. This purposive selection ensures that participants possess the necessary knowledge and experience to meaningfully address the research questions.

3.2 Research Design:

This study adopted a quantitative research design to collect and analyze numerical data. A quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for the systematic collection of data from a relatively large number of participants, facilitates the identification of patterns and trends, and is efficient in terms of time and resources (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The design is descriptive in nature, aiming to describe students' perceptions, preferences, and challenges regarding teacher feedback.

3.3 Data Collection Tool and Data Analysis:

To collect data, a structured questionnaire was adopted as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire comprised 11 items divided into two sections. The first section consisted of six agree/disagree statements covering topics such as the usefulness of feedback, preferences for written versus oral feedback, the impact of positive feedback on motivation, and challenges in understanding

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feedback. The second section consisted of five multiple-choice questions covering emotional reactions, difficulties faced, areas of writing improved, preferred feedback styles, and motivating factors. The questionnaire was administered during regular class sessions, and participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality.

The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Responses from the agree/disagree statements were converted into percentages to illustrate how many participants shared similar points of view. For the multiple-choice questions, the frequency of each option was counted and converted into percentages. This method of analysis simplified the identification of patterns in how feedback is understood and experienced during EFL writing classes.

4. Findings:

This section presents the findings obtained from the questionnaire administered to 30 EFL students. The results are presented in two sections: the first is dedicated to the agree/disagree items and the second is for the multiple-choice questions, accompanied by written descriptions of each finding.

4.1 Agree/Disagree Statements

Table 1 below summarizes students' responses to the first six items, which required participants to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

Table 1: Students' Responses to Agree/Disagree Statements

Item	Statement	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
1	My teacher's feedback helps me understand what makes my writing clear and organized.	97%	3%
2	Written feedback is easier for me to understand than oral feedback.	76%	24%
3	I feel more motivated to improve my writing when the feedback includes encouragement (positive comments).	91%	9%
4	Direct feedback is more straightforward and helps me recognize my mistakes directly and effortlessly.	78%	22%

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Item	Statement	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
5	Sometimes I cannot understand the feedback because the comments are unclear or too general.	74%	26%
6	Continuous feedback from my teacher helps me improve my writing over time.	95%	5%

The findings reveal overwhelmingly positive perceptions of feedback among students. The vast majority of participants (97%) agreed that their teacher's feedback helps them understand what makes their writing clear and organized, while 95% confirmed that continuous feedback improves their writing over time. Regarding feedback preferences, 78% of students found direct feedback more straightforward and more helpful in recognizing mistakes, and 76% preferred written feedback over oral feedback. However, a notable challenge emerged, as 74% of students agreed that they sometimes cannot understand feedback when comments are unclear or too general. In terms of motivation, 91% of participants felt more motivated to improve their writing when receiving positive feedback, compared to only 9% who did not. This indicates the strong influence of supportive feedback on students' attitudes toward writing.

4.2 Multiple-Choice Questions:

Table 2 summarizes students' responses to the multiple-choice questions, which explored their emotional reactions, difficulties, preferences, and motivating factors.

Table 2: Students' Responses to Multiple-Choice Questions

Item	Question	Options	Percentage
7	What emotional reaction do you most often experience when receiving feedback?	Motivated	40%
		Neutral	39%
		Stressed	19%
8	Select the greatest difficulty you face when trying to follow feedback.	Knowing how to apply corrections	63%
		Understanding comments	23%
		Feeling overwhelmed by too many notes	14%
9		Idea and organization	51%

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Item	Question	Options	Percentage
	Select the area of writing that improves the most because of feedback.	Grammar	26%
		Sentence clarity	23%
10	Select the type of feedback that you prefer your lecturer to use while providing it.	Detailed explanation	42%
		Clear and short comments	40%
		Examples	18%
11	Select the most motivating factor that helps you follow the feedback in your writing.	Positive encouragement from the lecturer	51%
		Personal desire to improve writing	29%
		Seeing mistakes clearly	20%

The findings demonstrated several important insights about students' experiences with feedback. Regarding emotional reactions, 40% of students reported feeling motivated when receiving feedback, 39% felt neutral, and 19% experienced stress, suggesting that the majority of students respond positively to feedback. Concerning difficulties, the biggest challenge faced by students was knowing how to apply corrections (63%), followed by understanding comments (23%), and feeling overwhelmed by too many notes (14%). This points out that providing guidance on implementation is as important as the feedback itself. In terms of areas of writing most improved by feedback, students believed that idea organization improved the most (51%), followed by grammar (26%), and sentence clarity (23%), suggesting that feedback is particularly effective for higher-order writing skills. Regarding preferred feedback style, 42% of students preferred detailed explanations, while 40% favored clear and short comments, and only 18% preferred receiving examples, indicating that students value thorough yet accessible feedback. Finally, the most motivating factor for students was positive encouragement from the teacher (51%), followed by personal desire to improve writing (29%), and seeing mistakes clearly (20%), highlighting the crucial role of teacher encouragement in promoting student engagement with feedback.

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5. Discussion:

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into EFL students' perceptions of teacher feedback on their writing and the challenges they face in understanding and applying it.

The findings reveal overwhelmingly positive perceptions of feedback among students, with the vast majority (97%) agreeing that their teacher's feedback helps them understand what makes their writing clear and organized. This finding aligns with the literature reviewed earlier. Saeli (2021) explained that teacher's feedback can support students by encouraging them to write more organized and meaningful pieces of writing. Similarly, Hyland and Hyland (2022) asserted that effective written feedback can support students' progress by illustrating expectations and providing specific suggestions for revision. Furthermore, the finding that 95% of students agreed that continuous feedback helps them improve their writing over time supports Kang and Han's (2020) argument that regular feedback helps students utilize accurate grammar and vocabulary in future writing tasks. This suggests that students view feedback not just as a one-time correction tool but as an ongoing process that contributes to their long-term writing development.

Regarding feedback preferences, the finding that 76% of students preferred written feedback over oral feedback is consistent with Lee's (2021) claim that written feedback is more supportive for students' understanding. Students in this study appear to value the permanence of written feedback, which allows them to review comments carefully at their own pace and revisit them whenever needed. This preference may be particularly relevant to the Libyan EFL context, where students may need more time to process feedback in English, their foreign language. While oral feedback offers immediacy and the opportunity for clarification (Mahfoodh, 2021), the findings suggest that students prioritize the ability to revisit written comments over the interactive nature of oral feedback.

One of the most striking findings of this study is that 91% of students felt more motivated to improve their writing when feedback included

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positive and encouraging comments. This finding strongly supports the work of Seker and Dincer (2020) who accentuated that students who receive friendly and encouraging comments from their teachers demonstrate better attitudes towards writing and are more willing to make revisions. Similarly, Li and Vu (2021) highlighted that emotional support whilst providing feedback is important for increasing students' motivation and engagement. The high percentage suggests that positive feedback is not merely a "nice addition", but a fundamental component of effective feedback practice. When teachers use encouraging words, students feel more confident and less worried about making mistakes during their writing classes.

Interestingly, 78% of the participants preferred direct feedback over indirect feedback, despite being upper-intermediate students who, according to Kang and Han (2020), might be expected to prefer indirect feedback to develop responsibility for their own writing. This preference may be attributed to students' desire for immediate clarity and certainty in understanding their mistakes, particularly given the challenges they face with English as a Foreign Language. This finding highlights the importance of considering students' preferences as well as the contexts they are part of when selecting feedback types. While indirect feedback may promote critical thinking and independence, direct feedback may be more appropriate for students who need immediate support and clarity.

In addition, a significant challenge emerged from the current findings. 74% of students agreed that they sometimes cannot understand feedback when comments are unclear or too general. This finding aligns with Jonsson's (2020) observation that unclear or general comments confuse students and make them unsure how to amend their level of writing. This quite high percentage indicates that this is a widespread problem that affects the majority of students. The finding also supports Mahfoodh's (2021) claim that students sometimes ignore feedback because they find it difficult to understand or because it does not provide clear guidance on how to improve. This underscores the importance of providing specific, simple, and example-based feedback so students can understand and apply it effectively.

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Regarding emotional reactions, 40% of students reported feeling motivated when receiving feedback, 39% felt neutral, and 19% experienced stress. The fact that a notable minority experiences stress when receiving feedback suggests that feedback can sometimes be perceived as critical assessment rather than a learning opportunity. This may occur when comments are unclear, focus exclusively on errors, or are presented in a negative tone. The finding highlights the need for teachers to balance constructive criticism with supportive and encouraging remarks to ensure feedback motivates rather than discourages students.

The finding that the biggest challenge faced by students was knowing how to apply corrections (63%) is particularly significant. This proposes that even when students understand the feedback they receive, they may struggle to implement it effectively. This extends the literature by identifying a specific gap in the feedback process: *the implementation phase*. While much of the literature focuses on the importance of clear and specific feedback (Jonsson, 2020; Mahfoodh, 2021), this finding suggests that clarity alone is insufficient; students also need guidance on how to apply feedback.

On the other hand, students reported that idea organization was the area most improved by feedback (51%), followed by grammar (26%) and sentence clarity (23%). This suggests that feedback is particularly effective for higher-order writing skills rather than just surface-level errors, aligning with the view that effective feedback helps students develop stronger overall writing abilities (Hyland & Hyland, 2022; Saeli, 2021). In relation to preferred feedback style, 42% of students preferred detailed explanations and 40% favored clear and short comments, suggesting that students value thorough yet accessible feedback. Concerning motivating factors, positive encouragement from the teacher (51%) was identified as the most motivating factor, reinforcing the importance of the teacher's role in creating a supportive learning environment.

In summary, the findings confirm that feedback is perceived positively by students and plays a vital role in their writing development. Students value feedback that is clear, specific, encouraging, and continuous.

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Nevertheless, significant challenges remain, particularly students' difficulty in understanding unclear feedback and applying corrections. These findings have important implications for teaching practice, which will be highlighted in the recommendations section.

6. Conclusion:

This study aimed to explore EFL students' perceptions of teacher feedback on their writing and the challenges they face in understanding and applying it. Specifically, the study sought to investigate students' feelings and responses toward the feedback they receive, identify the types of feedback that students find most helpful and motivating, and determine the main challenges students face when trying to understand and apply feedback to improve their writing. The main findings confirmed that feedback plays a vital role in students' writing development, with the vast majority perceiving feedback as helpful for improving clarity and organization and valuing continuous feedback as a means of long-term improvement. Students demonstrated a clear preference for written feedback over oral feedback, as it allows them to review comments at their own pace. Importantly, positive and encouraging feedback was found to significantly increase students' motivation and confidence, while direct feedback was preferred for its clarity and straightforwardness. However, the study revealed significant challenges: many students struggle to understand feedback when comments are unclear or too general, and the greatest difficulty they face is knowing how to apply corrections effectively. Emotionally, while most students feel motivated or neutral when receiving feedback, a notable minority experience stress, highlighting the need for teachers to deliver feedback constructively.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are offered. *For teachers*, it is recommended to adopt clear and simple language when providing feedback, to balance correction with encouragement to maintain students' motivation, and to combine written and oral feedback where possible. Teachers should focus on priority mistakes rather than correcting everything at once, besides they should provide explicit guidance on how to apply corrections in future

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writing tasks. *For students,* it is recommended to read feedback carefully, ask for clarification when comments are unclear, and actively use feedback when revising their work. Students should also consider mistakes as part of their learning journey and practice writing regularly to apply feedback effectively.

The limitations of this study should be acknowledged, including the relatively small sample size (30 students), the predominance of female participants, the single-institution context, the reliance on self-reported questionnaire data which may be subject to social desirability bias, and the cross-sectional design that captures perceptions at only one point in time. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into students' experiences with feedback. For future research, it is recommended to conduct mixed-methods studies combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain deeper insights, longitudinal studies to track how perceptions evolve over time, investigations into teachers' perspectives on providing feedback, and comparative studies across different proficiency levels and institutions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of feedback practices in EFL contexts.

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