

Reflections, perceptions, and thoughts on learning and feedback during COVID

Abstract

Effective formative assessment is hinged on comprehensible feedback which results in meaningful uptake. However, the phenomenon of COVID brought exponential changes to learning and the realization of learning outcomes. Hence, this present study seeks to investigate the feedback strategies language instructors adopt and adapt to meet the demands of these current realities of learning and the perception of these strategies by learners who are the end users. The study notes that learner's proficiency, underlying motivations, learning strategies, and individual preferences influences the effectiveness of feedback provided. Thus, while language instructors might have devised novel feedback mechanisms, the individual-preferences-cum-learning-styles of learners are important in realizing meaningful uptake.

Introduction

Online learning is different from the face-to-face instruction due to the absence of real-life physical interaction and connection. The current COVID pandemic has revolutionized the world education system as it has made online learning the default instructional platform, hence it is salient to examine how written corrective feedback are given during this timing/period and the perception of students and teachers to these feedback strategies with regards to uptake, learning outcomes and teachers' philosophies.

One-way students can gauge their learning outcomes and literacy milestones is through the feedback (both formative and summative) they received from their teachers (learning oriented feedback). The indispensable role of feedback in making students self-regulating and independent learners has spurred different forms of feedback such as peer feedback, oral feedback, written corrective feedback, technology enhanced feedback, and teachers' commentaries. This perhaps explains Lee (2007) conception of feedback as an all-encompassing qualitative appraisal of students' performances meant to track their learning and precipitate changes in their learning journey ('feed backward, forward and upward'). Hence, there is a transition of feedback from a monologic process to a dialogic activity as learners are expected not to be passive participants but actively engaged in the 'activities' of feedback.

For literacy instruction, feedback transcends grammar (language) to content, organization, and specific genre stipulations and conventions. These literacy analytical points are referred to as global and local issues which have been perceived differently by the different education stakeholders. This explains the product and process-oriented approaches to feedback which is further influenced by contextual factors like institutional mandates, curriculum requirements, teachers' philosophies, teachers' beliefs, learners' characteristics, and the larger institutional contexts (such as national and local policies, standardized and high-stake assessments, sociopolitical issues, examination culture etc.) (Lee, 2007) which influence feedback indirectly. However, contextualized feedback that raises learners' consciousness and awareness to specific customized writing issues is recommended. Although, there is the argument for the production of grammatically accurate written products which espouses that comprehensive feedback might be plausible as the endpoint of feedback is the transference from declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge.

Literature review

Feedback influences learners' uptake hence its definition as directed treatments from teachers to meet (unattained) learning outcomes (Chen, Lin & Jiang, 2016). A vivid yet concise description of feedback is by Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick (2006) who sees feedback as "closing performance gap" based on the current performance of learners with respect to the targeted performance. To achieve this targeted learning outcome, feedback has to be "specific, informative, directive, goal oriented" and disseminated in a non-judgmental manner hinged primarily on boosting learners' self-esteem and providing extrinsic motivation (Duijnhower, 2010) thus, justifying the assertion that the endpoint of feedback is to make learners self-regulating beings and increase their learning outcomes. For learners to become autonomous and independent, feedback has to clarify goals, criteria, and standards of learning outcomes (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) which would engender learners' self-assessment and reflective abilities. The thrust of all these submissions is that feedback is a dialogic interaction between teachers and students, which provides opportunities for learners to bridge the gap between current and expected levels and avenues for teachers to improve their pedagogy and instructional aids.

Feedback in the context of second language writing means "written responses towards students' written work, with the aim of improving the student's performance" (Van den Bergh, Ros, & Beijard 2014). Hence, written feedback is expected to be an interactive and engaging activity between the teacher and the learners who are collaboratively involved in the realizations of specific learning outcomes. Price, Handley, & Millar (2011) emphasize the engagement dimension of feedback. Thus, engagement practices in feedback involve the use of questions, praise, and constructive criticism (Goldstein, 2004). Ferris (2004) opines that the use of questions in feedback fosters critical student cognitive engagement as they reflect on the probes of the teacher which engenders learners' autonomy and self-regulation. Nurmukhamedov & Kim (2010) opine that questions should be used for ideas clarifications while imperative should be used for revising grammatical errors, and feedback should be tailored to the specific learners' needs. Chin (2006) notes that questions in feedback should be supportive, neutral, and responsive towards the path of self-corrections. However, there is the propensity for ambiguities in written feedback, hence the advocacy for oral feedback as a follow-up practice with written feedback. Oral feedback could be implicit or explicit. Explicit feedback requires the use of oral metalinguistic direction (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam 2006). Implicit feedback promotes agency, problem solving skills, and ownership of learning (Lalande, 1982) as there is absence of metalinguistic directions. Biber, Nekrasova, & Horn (2011) claims that oral feedback is less effective compared to written feedback although the zone of proximal development, joint transaction, and negotiation of meanings is plausible in oral feedback. However, oral feedback might be unrealistic in a large class. Aside feedback, teachers should follow up on their learners by recommending external resources and support systems to enhance the internalization of directed feedback.

Written corrective feedback could be direct or indirect. Direct written corrective feedback means explicit correction by the teachers while indirect involves using 'coding systems' to raise learners' awareness to the errors but corrected by the learners (Lee, 2007). While the direct approach aids efficient internalization of correct grammatical structures, the indirect approach facilitates higher cognitive abilities of independent thinking because learner's self-correct without any clue. Different strategies have been recommended in feedback generation, one that is prominent is qualitative feedback that comments on the strengths and weaknesses of learners and how specific

language milestones can be attained in previous drafts or subsequent academic progression(s). Studies (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a; Lee, 2007) have examined how to provide customized feedback to learners from different linguistic backgrounds and varying levels of proficiency. For instance, treatable errors are only recommended as untreatable errors are perceived to be redundant (Lee, 2007). With regards to written commentaries, questions, and statements are advised for low proficiency students; imperatives for immediate feedback, and hedges for high proficiency students (Ferris, 1997).

The dimension of feedback varies among teachers and language instructors who mostly belong to two polarized groups. The product-oriented approach emphasizes grammar and mechanics (Cummings, 1985; Lee, 2008; Zamel, 1985) while the process approach prioritizes content, organization over grammar (Conrad & Goldstein 1999). Ferris (1997) study used a quantitative approach and realizes that 15% of teachers address local issues in their feedback while 85% address global issues. This introduces the perception of teachers to feedback. Teachers' perception of feedback is usually viewed as a herculean task characterized with uncertainties and displeasures (Ferris, 2014). However, there seems to be a favor for selective feedback by teachers (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012) this is because learning is seen as an incremental attainment of milestones which is progressive and not immediate. However, stigmatizing errors that borders on high frequency words must be corrected regardless of the position the teacher adopts as they are the markers of low or high proficiency. (Bitchner & Ferris, 2012).

The question of information overload has been a pertinent issue as regards the depth of written corrective feedback. This result in two polarized positions: comprehensive/unfocused and selective/focused. Proponents of selective feedback argued in terms of manageability because focused error correction is selective attention on "treatable linguistic features of a certain linguistic structure" (Ferris, 1995) as learners' comprehension of specific errors outweighs the comprehensive feedback they receive. Various strategies have been adopted in written corrective feedback. Aside from providing the locations of errors, the debate has been either to provide metalinguistic explanations or not (direct and indirect feedback). While metalinguistic explanations are meant to be directive and spur cognitive engagement, its absence is perceived to engage students in "guided learning and problem solving" (Lalande 1982, p. 143) which facilitate the reflective practices of the internalization of declarative knowledge and the accuracy of procedural knowledge. A plausible reconciliation to these divergent perspectives is offered by Bitchener & Ferris (2012) who advocate for a middle approach which combines focused and comprehensive written corrective feedback. Thus, a thorough feedback could be given to a short writing task or a paragraph in a text. However, newer perspectives (Hyland & Hyland 2006a) have emphasized an eclectic approach to feedback which incorporates both local and global issues. However, there are still domineering teachers' idiosyncrasies' as regards the way to give feedback. Schulz (2001) notes that teachers' perceptions of feedback are influenced by generational myths regarding the importance of comprehensive feedback and explicit grammar corrective feedback as a mandatory duty of every writing teacher. Also, teachers' personal experiences that their writing proficiency were hinged on explicit corrective feedback and comprehensive grammatical rule awareness might bias their perception of how feedback should be given. Relating to this viewpoint is Chapin & Terdal (1990) who opine that teachers focus on local issues in their written corrective feedback as 64% of the teachers' feedback on these areas in their study. Furthermore, Lee, Leong & Song (2017) note from their study that teachers give feedback based on the proficiency level of

their students as giving feedback above their proficiency level(s) could be demoralizing to the students. They cautioned that feedback would only be beneficiary if the teachers know what the students want to learn (intentional/deliberate feedback). Their study also highlights the contextual issues affecting feedback such as: course requirements, marking guidelines, and institutional mandates. Also, they recommended qualitative feedback rather than numeric score to make students reflect on their current levels and targeted outcomes. The study used 9 respondents (6 females, 3 males) who are university writing instructors with over 8 years' experience using focus group interviews. However, Lee (2008) investigates the disparities in feedback among teachers and attributes it to different factors. He posits that institutional mandates influence comprehensive and unfocused feedback which sometimes might be incongruent with the teacher's personal teaching philosophy. This is further affected by the accountability systems teachers have to other stakeholders like parents, school administrators and students. Also, the emphasis of examination bodies on the accuracy culture influences the adoption of unfocused feedback by some writing instructors.

Feedback usually revolves around addressing local and global issues. Local issues include spellings, grammar, and punctuation while global issues include content, organization, and ideas. With regards to the effectiveness of local issues feedback, Truscott (1996) argued that local issues mastery takes a longer period of assimilation and internalization which cannot be fully comprehend from the written feedback of the teachers. With regards to the perception of students to feedback, Baker & Montgomery (2007) study notes that students are highly receptive to little global issue feedback as they prioritize local issues feedback. This contrast with Leki (2006) study as the students were unsatisfied with the feedback on global issues which they felt is too meager and insufficient. This perhaps spurs a personalized feedback based on the preference of the learners. This might only be possible in institutions where teachers have full autonomy as regards feedback giving. Furthermore, Cohen (1987) notes from his study that students preferred local issues than global issues as feedback on local issues helped improve their writings. Schulz (2001) notes that explicit corrective grammar feedback plays a positive role in their ESL learning. This viewpoint was reached from 607 Colombian ESL students (33% male and 67% female) and 122 instructors from eight postsecondary institutions in Bogota who unanimously agreed on the effectiveness of local issues.

Similarly, with regards to engaging feedback, students advocate for a shift from a monologic system where they are passive recipients to a dialogic system where they can inquire more from their teachers. They are of the view that the power imbalance between them and their teachers make it difficult for dialogic conversations and advocate teachers taking the lead through the use of open ended questions Quaquebeke & Felps (2018). According to Han, Whip, Gander & Quaquebeke (2018), dialogic feedback makes students feel capable, engaged, and have a sense of agency in their ability to evaluate their work and become self-driven learners. Also, a quality teacher student relationship enhances positive reception of feedback including the constructive one. Dialogic feedback according to Han, Whip, Gander&Quaquebeke (2018) spur clarity in "task requirements, independent repair of learning gaps, self-regulated cognitive abilities." They note also that the verbal behavior of open-ended questions in feedback is perceived positively by students as instructors' tendencies to listen to them. They arrived at this conclusion using 32 participants (16 males and 16 female students) from six independent schools within the Perth metropolitan area of Western Australia.

In oral feedback, there are non-verbal clues behaviours that engender students' attitude to learning. Van Quaquebeke & Felps (2018) termed these "listening behaviours" which include eye contacts, nods, and appropriate facial expressions. These "nonverbal attentive listening behavior" communicate to students' teachers' care, understanding, and support which brings ambience and rapport to the environment. According to Han, Whip, Gander & Quaquebeke (2018) the verbal behavior of open-ended questions in feedback is perceived positively by students as instructors' tendencies to listen to them.

It is significant to note that feedback is integral in learning consolidations as writing is a "recursive, cyclical, nonlinear process" hence, emphasis should be on the process and not the product. Furthermore, content and form-based feedback should be prioritized in written corrective activities. More so, oral feedback should be a follow up activity with written corrective feedback to allow for meaningful engagement between learners and their instructors. Also, while institutional mandates might be beneficial as regards the guidelines for feedback, teachers should be given adequate flexibility because they understand the contextual demands and the idiosyncrasies of each learner.

Theoretical evolvement of feedback

Theories on feedback spanned from contrastive analysis, error analysis, processability theory, skill-based theory, interactional approach, and sociocultural theory. Since one of the aims of feedback is the correction of learners' errors, error corrections have been investigated from different scholarly purviews which explain different approaches like contrastive analysis and error analysis whose insights can be applied to feedback generation. Contrastive Analysis firmly hinges on the behaviourist school of thought which notes that error is an influence of learners L1 (cross linguistic transfer and linguistic interference) hence, the linguistic background of learners must be considered in feedback which would influence necessary scaffolding and interventions. Error analysis sees errors as an indication of learners' mental processes. Thus, the instructor pays attention to instances of simplification, overgeneralization, and avoidance in learners writing as they are aware that errors are not usually from the learners' L1 but errors are both interlingual and intralingual. Processability theory (Pieneman, 1998) emphasizes feedback based on the current cognitive abilities of learners hence, information overload should be avoided in feedback but manageable feedback based on the capabilities of the learners should be provided. Skill based theory (Anderson, 1985) aims at developing learners' declarative knowledge of consciously monitoring wrong information into accurate procedural knowledge. Interactional approach (Long, 1996) emphasizes communicative oriented corrective measures to facilitate meaningful intake and uptake. Sociocultural theory affirms the principle of the zone of proximal development, scaffolding measures and social interactions between learners and peers to make them autonomous and self-regulating learners. Hence, feedback is specific with close attention to learners' current proficiency levels and abilities. Al Jarrah (2016) designs a three-component feedback model which includes error corrections and error feedback; targeting one linguistic structure per time; providing error corrections on all the functional uses of the target structure. He called his approach "focused corrective feedback comprehensively" which means correcting all errors within the teachers' current focus domains. Also, Long's (1997) focus on forms is firmly rooted in the communicative approach in which attention to linguistic elements (local issues) are contextualized. Hence, correction is only made to issues that borders on comprehension and production. (Errors are only

corrected when they distort meaning). Insights from all these theories and approaches would guide the analyses of the perception of teachers and students to online written corrective feedback. Furthermore, these theoretical paradigms in feedback has usually been used in face-to-face medium of instructions (prior to the COVID pandemic) however, the recent world crisis inflicted by the COVID pandemic has revolutionized learning pedagogy hence investigating the strategies (and theoretical approaches) writing instructors used in giving written corrective feedback in their synchronous and asynchronous online learning and investigating teachers and students perception with regards to its effectiveness on student uptake and attainment of learning outcomes. Thus, this proposed study intends to investigate the following research questions:

1. What strategies are deployed by writing instructors in providing online written corrective feedback?
2. What are the perceptions of students and teachers to these strategies?
3. How effective are these strategies on learners' uptake and learning outcomes?

Rationale for the study

Learning is a measurable activity that can be appraised and evaluated by both the teachers and the students. Teachers assess the progress and performance of students through the feedback they provide to their respective students. However, the effectiveness of these feedback strategies could be perceived differently by students either from their uptake or the idiosyncratic perception by students about the feedback provided. Usually, the feedback strategies adopted by teachers might be influenced by institutional mandates, class size, and other variables which determine its effectiveness. Hence, eliciting the responses of teachers about the rationale for the feedback strategies they use and its effects as regards to students' uptake and the realization of learning outcomes is indispensable. Similarly, the end users of the feedback are the students whose perceptions are also solicited to inquire which feedback strategy works for them and why. Furthermore, the resort to online instruction as a result of the current COVID pandemic has revolutionized learning and feedback generation, hence investigating the strategies teachers adopt in providing feedback and how these strategies are perceived by the students in achieving their targeted learning milestones (in an online community). This proposed study intends to elicit the perception of teachers and students to the effectiveness of feedback provided and how they feel feedback should be given.

Methodology

To answer the research questions, semi structured interview is the data elicitation technique that was deployed to obtain firsthand teachers' and students' perception about feedback. The choice of the selection of semi-structured interview is to allow for flexibility and spontaneity among the respondents to talk freely and probe further on their responses. This is also to have a detailed perception about written corrective feedback with regards to their uptake (for students) and attainment of learning outcomes (for teachers).

Participants

Three (3) experienced teachers with over ten years teaching experience would constituted the respondents for this study. Also, six (6) students currently enrolled in the Intensive English Program of the department of English Language Instruction are be interviewed to elicit their perception about written corrective feedback. The students are from differing proficiency (high, mid, and low ability students) purposively

selected to investigate how the variable of proficiency influences learners' perception to written corrective feedback. The respondents for this study are purposively selected. The students are freshmen within the age bracket of 18 to 21 (of mixed gender) who are experiencing online feedback for the first time in their college instruction.

Data collection tool

To gather specific information about teachers and students' perception of online written corrective feedback, primary and original data in the form of verbal responses would be elicited from teachers and students to assess their perception of online feedback.

Semi-structured interview is the data collection tool to elicit these qualitative responses that are accurate, and in-depth. Hence, the researcher's phone audio recorder would be used to gather this audio and verbal data. There were question checklists but the responses of the teachers and students determined follow-up questions. Also, the online written feedback of teachers and students' responses influenced the question checklist in order to ascertain why certain feedback strategies were used and its effect and perception by the students and teachers.

Results

Feedback strategies

1. Oral feedback
2. Audio feedback recorded for unlimited accessibility
3. Selective feedback
4. Comprehensive feedback
5. Genuine praise of specific input in students' essays
6. Teacher's curiosity about specific input in the students' essays.
7. Technology enhanced feedback strategy: such as turnitin (bubble comments); google classroom, edpuzzle, and hypothesis.
8. One-to-one online conferences to discuss students' essays via Zoom screen share
9. Group conferencing through Zoom breakout rooms
10. Collective feedback using specific technology platforms like Loom and flip.
11. Students engage in reflective activities about written corrective feedback received to determine their respective uptake.
12. Multitype dimensional feedback to accommodate the different learning styles
13. Use of model essays for students to self-assess themselves.

Discovered Feedback Strategies from Written Feedback

1. Genuine praise, and teacher's interest.
2. Questioning
3. Specific and focused praise
4. Hedges
5. Conveyance of empathy
6. Affirmation sentences, hint on one-to-one conference
7. Engaging feedback; use of exclamation 'oh' which has resemblance of real-life communicative scenarios
8. Mitigated control and power through the use of please
9. Mitigating control and providing other options through the use of alternatives
10. Comprehension check through the use of 'okay'

11. Hint about more content development

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Research question 1 (strategies deployed by writing instructors)

The multi-dimensional feedback is the prevailing feedback strategy used by writing instructors during the COVID pandemic to accommodate the different learning styles. This includes the use of voice notes, documented feedback in form of written online comments on Google classroom and Turnitin, referral to other electronic materials and resources, and use of model essay as requested by students. Teachers use more oral corrective feedback and intentional feedback strategy done in consonance with the sociocultural approach to feedback. This is because one of the teachers argued that the Egyptian culture of chattiness and camaraderie makes learners more receptive to face-to-face feedback which they substituted by giving virtual face-to-face feedback. However, there was a strong favour for the online written corrective feedback on Google classroom because students can always refer to previous drafts and feedback because of its unlimited accessibility online. Furthermore, to mimic real-life interactive settings, teachers strive to meet with students in smaller groups (group conferences) on zoom to interact while learning from one another's strengths and weaknesses. This strategy, the teachers claimed spur a sense of community which was difficult to achieve due to the COVID pandemic. The feedback strategy of group conferencing has succeeded in adhering to the social interaction theory to feedback in which peers interact with one another in a meaningfully oriented discourse. Scaffolding is also done through the use of mentor or model texts to prescriptively serve as a guide for low proficiency students. Another strategy identified was teachers' genuine praise of students' efforts and awesome ideas found in their writing. This strategy teachers' claim ignites the beginning of interaction as they appreciate teachers' curiosity although they claim that students do not read long comments hence they make it concise and brief-though-engaging. More so, writing instructors have resorted to give selective feedback that is manageable to prevent information overload. However, they only give comprehensive feedback whenever students request it. Furthermore, they refrain from numeric grades and focus only on qualitative feedback. Also, they give statistics of the class average on every writing assignment to give the learners a 'general sense' of how the class is performing although they are specific in individualized conferences and give a hint of their proficiency levels. With regards to language, the teachers are of the opinion that they only identify prevalent issues on all students' writings and correct them collectively.

Teachers relied extensively on technology enhanced feedback during COVID such as Turnitin bubble comment; Turnitin voice audio recording to highlight certain issues further discussed in one-to-one conferences. The most utilized technology is zoom which was preferred because students and teachers can share screen and collectively interact on the students' essays. Teachers have identified that students prefer visual learning especially videos hence reference to useful YouTube videos for extra resources and assistance in addition to eBooks. However, corrections are done in a conversational way (similar to the interactional approach). For instance, one of the teachers noted that when individual conferences are held, students are expected to react to the bubble comments they received on Turnitin which is a strategy to ensure internalization and application of the written corrective feedback. However, this might not be the same for graduate writing students (who are not AUC students at their undergraduate studies) as they are not familiar with technology enhanced feedback so they need to be orientated about the technology affordances as they are comfortable with paper and real-life face-to-face conference.

Research question 2 (teachers' perception to these strategies)

The interviewed teachers unanimously agreed that students' response to feedback is not necessarily about proficiency but students' motivation which is a psychological construct in feedback internalization and use. They note that some students are resistant to feedback (especially proofreading) especially when they receive positive feedback from their speaking and listening instructors. Furthermore, the teachers stated that learners' exhibits the conception that the amount of time spent on writing should be commensurate with their writing performance. Also, they stated that feedback is perceived by some students to mean the teacher rewriting the whole essays and not just highlighting and giving general comments (this practice they claim is common among older students in addition to preference for negative feedback [areas to improve] and do not appreciate positive feedback). Similarly, the teachers claimed that learners are not receptive to selective feedback because they believe that their essays are graded analytically and not holistically.

Teachers' feedback and institutional mandates

The interview showed that the teachers' feedback should be in confinement with institutional mandates to ensure uniformity across arms and sections. Also, some of the feedback strategies are in alignment with institutional mandates such as giving personalized feedback to learners. However, from the interviewed writing teachers, their prevalent teaching philosophy is selective feedback which is "somewhat" against the institutional mandate of comprehensive feedback. However, norming sessions help harmonise the teaching philosophies of teachers within the confinement of institutional mandates to have unilateral grading mechanism. Aside that, the feedback of the teacher seems to be incongruent with institutional mandate. The pressure to correct grammar and language which is an institutional mandate is not welcome by some teachers as their teaching philosophy sees language as communication and not a prescription. Hence, they are of the view that feedback should be in consonance with what students' want. This deviant view seems to 'hold sway' as teachers have the autonomy "to do whatever they want within the confines of the system".

Research question 3 (students' perception to these strategies)

From the interview, it was deduced that students are grade-oriented and solely preoccupied to transit to the next stage and only pay attention to qualitative feedback to move on to the next level. Usually as noted by the teachers, students' feedback is more of querying the numeric grades and not necessarily the qualitative feedback received. Feedback perception on students is hinged on their priorities and how they feel it is useful to them. Also, students cannot see the link between the feedback given and their prospective courses. For example, Engineering and Science major students feel all their courses are experimentally inclined and thus cannot see the significance of the written corrective feedback. Thus, feedback uptake is hinged on students' motivation, and commitment levels. Also, uptake is hinged on teachers' genuine interest in providing learners with encouraging comments. Furthermore, group and one-to-one conferences lead to uptake, also students prefer personalized feedback and face-to-face interaction on writing.

Student perception to teachers' corrective feedback

Students' perception to feedback is analysed based on the proficiency levels of the interviewed participants with the aim of determining if the variable of proficiency determines the perception of feedback. The proficiency levels of the learners are low, mid, and high.

Low proficiency student

The interviewed participant felt the feedback was helpful in writing varied sentence types especially the compound complex sentences which was a linguistic gap prior to the feedback. Similarly, the participant stated that the feedback received also helps in being careful to read writing prompts correctly and accurately. Hence, there is a constant and frequent referral to the prompt in addition to adhering to task instructions which was absent prior to the feedback. Thus, the participant always considers the instructor's feedback in subsequent drafts because the participant upheld the view that every comment is important because all feedback is aimed at improving writing skills. However, the participants did not feel the writing class is beneficiary for undergraduate studies and future goals. Hence, the participant only applies the feedback for her immediate demands which is to transit to the next stage.

However, the participant does not seek further clarification from their instructors on vague feedback, rather they use the Google search engine or refer to the power point slides on google classroom. For instance, when the feedback on writing in compound complex sentences was given, the students claimed that that specific feedback was not comprehensible and had to refer to the internet for its explanation. Thus, there is the advocacy on further elaboration and metalinguistic cues on feedback given. Hence, the participant was of the view that writing teachers should demonstrate what they mean in their feedback.

This participant prefers virtual comments on google classroom for easy accessibility and reference. Also, is the preference for one-to-one (virtual) conference because group/whole class feedback as claimed is difficult to comprehend as the participant feels the instructor is referring to others and not him/her specifically. Thus, feedback has to be personalized. In addition, this participant requests one-to-one conference every fortnight to track writing evolvement. Similarly, the participant prefers comprehensive feedback with the argument that selective feedback does not help detect needs of improvement and can result in lower grade. Also, the participant identified organization as an area of improvement and needs elaborate feedback on that.

Mid-level proficiency

The participant has a positive perception of the feedback. The participant feels feedback is effective as it helped self-predict actual writing level as upper/mid intermediate level. Similarly, the feedback received was helpful in writing different sentence types as the participant now transits from simple sentences to compound and complex sentences and now uses transitional words and phrases appropriately to aid the organizational sequencing of her work. Also, the participant claimed that her vocabulary has improved to include strong academic words. Furthermore, grammar mistakes have improved as the participant is now conscious of not mixing present tense with past tense and to be consistent with her tenses within parallel constructions.

The participant prefers recorded feedback to group feedback. Also, there is the preference for face-to-face feedback (because the facial expression of the writing instructor communicates performances) and thus sees the online personal conference as a plausible mimic of realities. The participant only seeks further clarifications from the instructor in cases of low numeric grades on specific unsatisfactory assignments. The participant feels most feedback received is not

comprehensible and thus seek clarification and elaboration of vague feedback from her classmates and only consult the writing instructor if colleagues cannot proffer satisfactory feedback although the participant feels the written feedback is useful just for undergraduate studies alone and not for future life skills.

The participant prefers selective feedback for manageable and comprehensive input, washback, and uptake. Also, the participant noted that selective feedback assists in directed drills and focused writing practice. Hence, the selective feedback helped to have a clear-cut agenda on the specific writing areas that needed concentration which is applied to subsequent drafts and also to keep himself/herself in track. The participant identified detailed feedback on language and insisted that there is no reason to draw the teacher's attention to this customized need because the teacher could deduce that from prior written essays.

High proficiency 1

Sees feedback as the 'sine-qua-non' to attain the highest level in writing. This is because feedback has helped create awareness about errors on sentence structures, grammar, transitional devices, and in writing compound complex sentences. Feedback has also helped identify weak writing points which made the participant to be a self-regulating student.

The participant also admitted that feedback received could be vague. Also, similar to the other proficiency levels, the participant would only seek writing instructor clarification on vague feedback rarely rather there is the heavy reliance on the internet for detailed elaboration. The participant provided rationale for this action that there is the lack of cordial relationships between teacher and students which serves as a barrier from seeking further clarifications although cordial relationships between students and teachers is limited by COVID. However, the participant is of the view that teachers should highlight the part they want students to focus on in their feedback and elaborate further on it.

The participant advocates for comprehensive feedback to holistically work on his areas of improvement. The participant prefers more detailed feedback on vocabulary development based on the diagnosis of the teacher but felt ample feedback on how to write conclusions is his self-diagnosed need. The participant feels the written corrective feedback would help in understanding complex psychological terminologies which is the proposed major of the participant. The participant prefers face-to-face interaction to see facial reaction, and to avoid internet glitches. Also, the participant shows huge preference for group feedback so as to benefit from the feedback given to other students.

High proficiency 2

The participant stated that the feedback received was expected as the participant is aware that proofreading of essays is crucial (which is the usual feedback given). The participant feels the feedback received is both useful and redundant. The useful part is that the received feedback has helped identify and correct slips and grammatical errors. Also, the participant claimed her writing proficiency has improved significantly to include more compound-complex sentences, good punctuation skills, parallel sentences with similar tenses, stronger introduction and conclusion. Furthermore, the participant has clearer expression and well-developed content which has resulted in higher grades. However, applying received feedback is a huge challenge for the participant. For

example, the participant claimed that teachers' comments like "*push yourself more into writing*" is rather vague and indistinctive as such comments are incomprehensible. Thus, the participant prefers face-to-face interaction for easy conversation and for reassurance from the writing instructor. Also, the participant prefers Google classroom feedback for easy reference and accessibility.

The participant only seeks feedback on issues that lack total comprehension. The participant recommended that teachers should be explicit in their feedback. Also, the participant prefers one-on-one feedback to address customized writing issues. The participant prefers selective feedback for focused goal attainment and perfection in that specific component. Hence, the participant claimed that selective feedback is useful for students to achieve their learning outcomes. This is in contrast to comprehensive feedback which the participant claimed is stressful and makes students panic and overwhelmed. The participant identified detailed feedback on language as the sole area of improvement.

Discussion

For writing instructors to experience and utilize the interactive approach to feedback generation in their online learning, there has to be extended conferences to bridge the gap of the absence of human connection so as to build an online writing community. Thus, the interactive oriented online learning pedagogy such as recorded audio and videos should be made available in online instruction. Similarly, there should be flipped classrooms in which the teacher records the lesson while still maintaining the interactive ambience of the usual face-to-face instruction. Furthermore 'listening behaviours' should be exhibited by the teacher in virtual classes especially during one-to-one conferences. These 'listening behaviours' according to Van Quaquebeke & Felps (2018) include eye contacts, nods, and appropriate facial expressions. These "nonverbal attentive listening behavior" communicate to students' teachers' care, understanding, and support which brings ambience and rapport to the environment. This could to some extent mimic real-life classroom situations and scenarios.

In addition to engaging practices by writing instructors, feedback strategies should involve following the higher-order thinking and probing skills of Bloom's taxonomy to spur reflection that would lead to content development. Also, while closed-ended questions are useful, open-ended question probes imagination and make students more self-regulating. Han, Whip, Gander & Quaquebeke(2018) avers that the verbal behavior of open ended questions in feedback is perceived positively by students as instructors' tendencies to listen to them. Another argument was made by Nurmukhamedov & Kim (2010) who opine that questions should be used for ideas clarifications, while imperative should be used for revising grammatical errors, and feedback should be tailored to the specific learners' needs. This strategy could also be adapted in the local realities of each teacher's writing situations.

From the interview conducted, there seems to be some divergent position regarding the strategy of giving corrective feedback. Some teachers prefer the asset-based approach to feedback generation that celebrates the strengths of students while some prefer the deficit approach that itemizes students' weaknesses and claim that their writing is always deficient and constantly needs corrections and revisions. One way to reconcile this divide is adhering to the viewpoint that feedback has to be "specific, informative, directive, goal oriented" and disseminated in a non-

judgmental manner hinged primarily on boosting learners' self-esteem and providing extrinsic motivation (Duijnhower, 2010) thus, justifying the assertion that the endpoint of feedback is to make learners self-regulating beings and increase their learning outcomes. Also, is the argument regarding selective and comprehensive feedback. One argument in favour of comprehensive is that in academic English programs nativelike or near nativelike proficiency is emphasized thus, one way to reach this is through comprehensive feedback. Also, detailed feedback is required for specific grammatical points such as sentence types, concord and use of active and passive constructions. To reconcile these differences might mean adapting Truscott (1996) theorizing that local issues mastery takes a longer period of assimilation and internalization which cannot be fully comprehend from the written feedback of the teachers. Thus, students should be celebrated on attainment of small milestones with the teacher having in mind that writing is an evolving skill whose mastery takes time. However, for teachers that still argued for relatively detailed feedback, the middle ground might be reached as recommended by Bitchener & Ferris (2012) who advocate for a middle approach which combines focused and comprehensive written corrective feedback. With regards to uptake, there is the consensus among the interviewed teachers that uptake is hinged on manageable feedback and prompt use of feedback by the learners. This viewpoint aligns with Bitchener & Ferris (2012) recommendation of selective feedback because learning is seen as an incremental attainment of milestones which is progressive and not immediate. Although they cautioned that stigmatizing errors that border on high frequency words must be corrected regardless of the teacher's position to feedback correction. (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). However, all the interviewed teachers seem to arrive at a consensus that unified outcome is the way to reconcile the conflict between teaching philosophy and institutional mandates with regards to the different view of giving feedback.

Similarly, student learning styles is a determinant in feedback comprehension. Students who are tech savvy and auditory learners find the online written corrective feedback beneficiary. With regards to the use of technology enhanced feedback, teachers mainly use prior feedback strategy they utilized in regular face-to-face learning. These include the use of turnitin and its affordances like audio, bubble comments etc. The only addition was zoom and google classroom. However, teachers need to familiarize themselves with other technology enhanced tools like digital storytelling, blog based writing and collaborative writing (which is believed to be more authentic and socially integrative) to spur an interactive approach to learning and feedback generation. This technology enhanced tools aid the practice of integrated language skills (such as students' self and peer correcting one another's grammar, vocabulary), help promote a sense of community for learners to inculcate the practices of exchange of ideas, and reflective learning (Lee, 2007). Also, screencast feedback (Lee, 2007) can also be introduced for students to constantly make referrals to what is expected to achieve specific learning outcomes.

Also, with regards to vague feedback received from teachers, feedback has to clarify goals, criteria, and standards of learning outcomes (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) which would engender learners' self-assessment and reflective abilities. Also, to eliminate vague responses, writing teachers should use more of peer group conferences where students can query and ask questions on issues that are not mutually incomprehensible. Also, group and collective feedback help achieve the interactive and engaging dimension of feedback in which the teacher with the learners is collaboratively involved in the realizations of specific learning outcomes (Price, Handley, & Millar, 2011). Similarly, through group feedback, a dialogic system is established where students

feel capable, engaged, and have a sense of agency in their ability to evaluate their work and become self-driven learners (Han, Whip, Gander & Quaquebeke 2018). Also, dialogic feedback according to Han, Whip, Gander & Quaquebeke (2018) spur clarity in “task requirements, independent repair of learning gaps, and self-regulated cognitive abilities.”

Conclusion, recommendations, and limitations.

Lee, Leong & Song (2017) note from their study that teachers should give feedback based on the proficiency level of their students as giving feedback above their proficiency level(s) could be demoralizing to the students. They cautioned that feedback would only be beneficiary if the teachers know what the students want to learn (intentional/deliberate feedback). Hence, this strategy can be applied to the online learning space where students are given manageable feedback they can interact with, understand, and apply positively.

Also, writing teachers need to familiarize themselves with other technology enhanced feedback such as Flipgrade, Edupuzzle, loom and other technology enhanced feedback applications and platforms. Furthermore, teachers should genuinely praise every positive in student's essays and not focus only on the negatives. The negatives in students' essays should come in the form of suggestions and use of curiosity and (probing) questions. Also, teachers should constantly request students to clarify on feedback they might not understand by stating such intention in their written corrective feedback. Reflective writing is another way teachers' can assess students' perception of their feedback strategies which could be done continuously in their respective online classroom. Similarly, students need to be taught to engage interactively with comments they receive from their online feedback platforms (especially Google classroom) as few students responded to the teachers' feedback in the data used and the few students' comments has no semblance of engagement.

As we return to face-to-face instruction, the experimented-yet-successful online techniques to written corrective feedback can be adapted to meet specific needs with the intention of virtualizing our physical learning spaces. Integrating these virtual realities in our traditional classroom will be of huge benefit to all learners including special needs students.

Turn-it-in written corrective feedback remains relevant in both online and offline learning. So is feedback on google documents. These feedback platforms help achieve document permanence so learners can constantly refer to them even after the end of their ESL learning. Online group conferences for verbal feedback can still be retained so as to foster a learning community where learners learn from one another. Also, face-to-face instruction can still incorporate individual online conferences which allows for flexibility between instructors and learners schedules.

Also, there should be flipped feedback to facilitate seamless transition to online learning. This can occur in two forms. One, the instructor gives a written feedback and students respond in an online conference. The other, the instructor gives an oral online feedback and the students respond with a written draft. This allows for multiple channels of dialogue among learning stakeholders.

Further studies can conduct a longitudinal study of the feedback received from students and their uptake in subsequent drafts. Also, further studies can use surveys, questionnaires to generate a quantitative result of students and teachers' perception of feedback. Similarly, more interviews can

be gathered from students and teachers from different disciplines and fields to derive more data representation and richer analysis.

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CLAIM

Take an arguable position on the scientific topic and develop the essay around that stance.

ADVANCED	The essay introduces a precise, qualitative and/or quantitative claim based on the scientific topic or text(s), regarding the relationship between dependent and independent variables. The essay develops the claim and counterclaim fairly, distinguishing the claim from alternate or opposing claims.
PROFICIENT	The essay introduces a clear, qualitative and/or quantitative claim based on the scientific topic or text(s), regarding the relationship between dependent and independent variables. The essay effectively acknowledges and distinguishes the claim from alternate or opposing claims.
DEVELOPING	The essay attempts to introduce a qualitative and/or quantitative claim, based on the scientific topic or text(s), but it may be somewhat unclear or not maintained throughout the essay. The essay may not clearly acknowledge or distinguish the claim from alternate or opposing claims.
EMERGING	The essay does not clearly make a claim based on the scientific topic or text(s), or the claim is overly simplistic or vague. The essay does not acknowledge or distinguish counterclaims.

EVIDENCE

Include relevant facts, definitions, and examples to back up the claim.

ADVANCED	The essay supplies sufficient relevant, accurate qualitative and/or quantitative data and evidence related to the scientific topic or text(s) to support its claim and counterclaim.
PROFICIENT	The essay supplies relevant, accurate qualitative and/or quantitative data and evidence related to the scientific topic or text(s) to support its claim and counterclaim.
DEVELOPING	The essay supplies some qualitative and/or quantitative data and evidence, but it may not be closely related to the scientific topic or text(s), or the support that is offered relies mostly on summary of the source(s), thereby not effectively supporting the essay's claim and counterclaim.
EMERGING	The essay supplies very little or no data and evidence to support its claim and counterclaim, or the evidence that is provided is not clear or relevant.

REASONING

Explain how or why each piece of evidence supports the claim.

ADVANCED	The essay effectively applies scientific ideas and principles in order to explain how or why the cited evidence supports the claim. The essay demonstrates consistently logical reasoning and understanding of the scientific topic and/or text(s). The essay's explanations anticipate the audience's knowledge level and concerns about this scientific topic.
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PROFICIENT	The essay applies scientific reasoning in order to explain how or why the cited evidence supports the claim. The essay demonstrates logical reasoning and understanding of the scientific topic and/or text(s). The essay's explanations attempt to anticipate the audience's knowledge level and concerns about this scientific topic.
DEVELOPING	The essay includes some reasoning and understanding of the scientific topic and/or text(s), but it does not effectively apply scientific ideas or principles to explain how or why the evidence supports the claim.
EMERGING	The essay does not demonstrate clear or relevant reasoning to support the claim or to demonstrate an understanding of the scientific topic and/or text(s).

FOCUS

Focus your writing on the prompt and task.

ADVANCED	The essay maintains strong focus on the purpose and task, using the whole essay to support and develop the claim and counterclaims evenly while thoroughly addressing the demands of the prompt.
PROFICIENT	The essay addresses the demands of the prompt and is mostly focused on the purpose and task. The essay may not acknowledge the claim and counterclaims evenly throughout.
DEVELOPING	The essay may not fully address the demands of the prompt or stay focused on the purpose and task. The writing may stray significantly off topic at times, and introduce the writer's bias occasionally, making it difficult to follow the central claim at times.
EMERGING	The essay does not maintain focus on purpose or task.

ORGANIZATION

Organize your writing in a logical sequence.

ADVANCED	The essay incorporates an organizational structure throughout that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. Effective transitional words and phrases are included to clarify the relationships between and among ideas (i.e. claim and reasons, reasons and evidence, claim and counterclaim) in a way that strengthens the argument. The essay includes an introduction and conclusion that effectively follows from and supports the argument presented.
PROFICIENT	The essay incorporates an organizational structure with clear transitional words and phrases that show the relationship between and among ideas. The essay includes a progression of ideas from beginning to end, including an introduction and concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
DEVELOPING	The essay uses a basic organizational structure and minimal transitional words and phrases, though relationships between and among ideas are not consistently

clear. The essay moves from beginning to end; however, an introduction and/or conclusion may not be clearly evident.

EMERGING

The essay does not have an organizational structure and may simply offer a series of ideas without any clear transitions or connections. An introduction and conclusion are not evident.

LANGUAGE

Pay close attention to your tone, style, word choice, and sentence structure when writing.

ADVANCED

The essay effectively establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone and incorporates language that anticipates the reader's knowledge level and concerns. The essay consistently demonstrates a clear command of conventions, while also employing discipline-specific word choices and varied sentence structure.

PROFICIENT

The essay generally establishes and maintains a formal style with few possible exceptions and incorporates language that anticipates the reader's knowledge level and concerns. The essay demonstrates a general command of conventions, while also employing discipline-specific word choices and some variety in sentence structure.

DEVELOPING

The essay does not maintain a formal style consistently and incorporates language that may not show an awareness of the reader's knowledge or concerns. The essay may contain errors in conventions that interfere with meaning. Some attempts at discipline-specific word choices are made, and sentence structure may not vary often.

EMERGING

The essay employs language that is inappropriate for the audience and is not formal in style. The essay may contain pervasive errors in conventions that interfere with meaning, word choice is not discipline-specific, and sentence structures are simplistic and unvaried.