Effect of Teachers' Written Corrective Feedback on Saudi EFL University Students' Writing Achievements

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Abstract

The current study aims to examine the effect of teachers' written corrective feedback (CF) on male Saudi EFL university students' writing achievements. It also attempts to explore how these Saudi EFL students perceive their teachers' CF. The sample of the current study comprised of 50 student participants chosen at random from the Department of English Language and Translation (DELT) in the College of Languages and Translation (COLT) at King Saud University (KSU). The students were distributed into two groups: experimental group (n=25) and control group (n=25). Data were gathered over a 10-week period through a pre-/posttest design for comparable groups. The results indicated that the students in the experiment group achieved better than the students in the control group on the measure, indicating that teachers' written CF had a significant positive effect on participants' writing achievements. The results also indicated that the participants revealed a positive attitude toward teachers' written CF. The study concludes with the limitations and implications of the findings as well as recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Writing skill, Teachers' written feedback, Writing achievement, Saudi EFL university students, King Saud University

1. Introduction and Background

Writing is one of the important skills in students' English learning (e.g., Rintaro, 2012). However, teaching writing is one of the most demanding jobs for English as a foreign/second language (EFL/ESL) teachers as it includes several practices that require writing teachers to dedicate much time to assisting students to write better (Salem & Abu Al Dyiar, 2014). The help that other people give to someone in the process of writing is called *feedback*, and feedback given by a teacher is called *teacher feedback*. The general aim of a teacher's task in giving feedback is to direct and aid students to produce a written work of good quality (Al-Sawalha, 2016; Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2013). Teacher's feedback is usually the most traditional method for responding to students' writings and is often used in many English writing classes (Hyland & Hyland, 2006); this feedback is also one of the most helpful means among the various options available to students to improve their writing ability while trying to revise a written assignment and produce subsequent drafts (Williams & Jasmine, 2003). Indeed, students prefer this feedback most probably because of the teacher's level of proficiency (Hong, 2006; Nugrahenny, 2007). Furthermore, in an EFL context where most students are of low proficiency, it is only natural that feedback from the more proficient teacher be considered suitable. Research (e.g., Hyland, 1998; Liu, 2008) has shown that teacher feedback can improve the quality of students' writing. Hyland (1998), for instance, conducted a study on six student writers' responses to feedback and the uses of a teacher's written feedback for revision in an English proficiency program course. Hyland's results indicated that the students employed the teacher's feedback to make some revisions to increase the quality of their writing.

At the same time, writing teachers should consider various important factors before making any effort to give feedback. One such factor is learners' attitudes about comments. Writing teachers should know their learners' attitudes toward the kinds of the comments teachers give because learners' preferences can affect the usefulness of the provided comments (Amrehin & Nassaji, 2010) and may increase their engagement and motivation (Hamouda, 2011). In addition, writing teachers should not only know what learners perceive to be the most helpful types of comments and the most preferred, but also try to match the two in order to improve learners' motivation, learning, and behavior in class (Ferris, 2003). Hyland (2003) found that the percentage of a teacher's feedback that students incorporated in their revisions varied according to the individual's personal beliefs and preferences toward the teacher's feedback. Therefore, in order to focus the learners' maximum attention on the feedback, it is essential to know their attitude according to which we should match our comment type.

In Saudi Arabia, writing is taught as one of the language skill courses in the English language departments of universities. At King Saud University, a leading university in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, writing is offered as a series of three courses: Writing I (*paragraph writing*), Writing II (*revision of paragraph writing and introduction to essay writing*), and Writing III (*essay writing and summary*). The current study deals with the impact of a teacher's feedback in the Writing III course depending on the idea that the teacher's written CF on students' writing might assist students to develop the quality of their writing and, consequently, improve their writing achievement. From the researcher's personal experience (as a writing teacher) and

observation (as the head of the English department), many university writing teachers as well as professors complain about EFL students' inability to write well-organized essays, reports, and short research papers. They are even unable to organize their ideas logically, which make most of them obtain low grades on their writing exams. Thus, there is a pressing need to explore this problem that encounter both professors and English language teachers in order to find a solution. Furthermore, one of the appropriate ways to assess the effectiveness of a teacher's CF is via the exploration of students' attitudes. Lasagabaster and Sierra (2003) asserted that researchers should consider learners' views and attitudes when any teaching/learning issue is assessed because students are possible providers of the improvement of the teaching materials and experts in their learning. Therefore, this study also attempts to investigate Saudi learners' attitudes toward the teacher's corrective written feedback.

2. Review of Related Literature

A number studies have been carried out to ascertain the effectiveness of a teacher's written CF strategy, and these studies generally fall into three categories: (i) studies examining the effectiveness of teachers' feedback (e.g., Alamis, 2010; Binglan & Jia, 2010; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Ellis et al., 2008; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hyland, 1998; Ismail et al., 2008; Ji, 2015; John et al., 2005; Lounis, 2010; Mahfoodh & Pandian, 2011; Purnawarman, 2013); (ii) studies exploring students' preferences, reactions, and attitudes toward teachers' feedback (e.g., Al-Sawalha, 2016; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Diab, 2005; Hamouda, 2011; Karim & Ivy, 2011; Ken, 2004; Korte, 2015; Salteh & Sadeghi, 2015; Sotoudehnama & Molavi, 2014; Srichanyachon, 2012; Zacharias, 2007); and (iii) studies investigating the usefulness of teachers' feedback through a comparison of peer feedback (e.g., Akiah & Ghazali, 2015; Jalalifarahani & Azizi, 2012; Miaoa et al., 2006; Paulus, 1999; Yang et. al, 2006; Zhang, 1995; Zhao, 2010).

The existing body of research has indicated that students valued and used teachers' written CF which aided them to develop the quality of their writing (Hyland, 1998). Furthermore, students not only incorporated a considerable proportion of their teacher's comments in the subsequent drafts of their written texts, but they also committed fewer errors with the help of this feedback (Lounis, 2010). Also, explicit teacher's CF not only had significant influence on the accuracy of writing produced by ESL student writers (John et al., 2005) but it also helped students receiving this feedback to outperform those who do not receive any feedback at all (Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Purnawarman, 2013). Where specific grammatical aspects of writing are concerned (e.g., English articles), teacher's written CF was found to be effective since the experiment group outperformed the control group, where the latter group was not given any kind of feedback on the second posttest (Ellis et al., 2008). Therefore, the improvement of student writing with regard to grammatical accuracy and writing quality reinforces the idea that writing teachers should supply their students with written CF.

Relevant literature has also indicated that most EFL/ESL students believed that indicating the location of the errors in written texts and that providing suggestions to correct these errors are

the preferable teachers' written CF techniques for use in response to a first draft. Concerning a final draft, most students chose deleting the wrong words and providing the correct ones as the best teacher's feedback technique (Diab, 2005). Also, the majority of university EFL/ESL students revealed that teacher's feedback was a more efficient and preferable correction means compared to peer feedback (e.g., Srichanyachon, 2012). There are however some noticeable differences in the preferences and attitudes of teachers and students toward issues related, for instance, to marking writing papers and the most appropriate error correction techniques (e.g., Salteh and Sadeghi, 2015). EFL university students in the Arab world perceived teachers' written CF to be useful for them in their writing. In addition, teachers' written CF, according the students, was shown to have twin effects: (1) improving and orientating students' revision skills and (2) enhancing EFL students' overall writing quality (Al-Sawalha, 2016).

In addition, several studies have indicated that most EFL/ESL students showed preference to teachers' feedback. In two universities in the United States, for example, findings indicated that 94% of students revealed that teacher's written CF is more helpful than peer feedback (Zhang, 1995). Also, 11 ESL students studying in a university in the United Stated employed 87% of their teachers' feedback to make some revisions in their writing while those students only used 51% of their peer feedback (Paulus, 1999). In another context, Chinese students made more revisions in their writing in response to their teachers' feedback (74%) compared to their peer feedback (46%) in their revisions. The preference of teacher's feedback may be due to the fact that it has a positive effect on the quality of writing than peer feedback. Students also expressed that the comments by provided by their teachers on their writing were more incorporated in the subsequent drafts compared those comments by their peers because the former helped to increase the quality of their writing. Peer feedback was essential in enhancing student writers' autonomy since it assisted students to depend on themselves to correct their errors especially when they are not sure of the correctness of their peer feedback (Yang et al., 2006). Peer feedback did not have any impact to improve the grammatical errors committed by both high- and low-proficiency students, but teacher's feedback was fundamental for grammatical accuracy, especially for low-proficiency students (Jalalifarahani and Azizi, 2012).

In sum, the related literature has shown that there is a strong relationship between teachers' written CF and students' improvement in writing performance. Yet, very few studies have been conducted in the Arab world to examine the influence of teachers' written CF in enhancing students' writing achievement (Al-Sawalha, 2016) compared to other contexts (e.g., Western universities). Further, in the existing body of research little is known about the impact of teachers' written CF on Saudi EFL university students. Therefore, the current study seeks to examine the effect of a teacher's written CF on the writing achievement of Saudi EFL university students. In particular, the current study tries to answer the following questions:

(1) Does a statistically significant difference exist between the writing achievement of the students in the experiment group and the students in the control group due to the treatment?

(2) How do Saudi EFL university students perceive their teachers' written corrective feedback on their written texts?

The variables of the current study include the following:

(1) The independent variable is the method of teaching, which has two levels: the written corrective feedback technique and the traditional method.

(2) The dependent variables are students' achievement in writing and their attitudes toward the teacher's written corrective feedback.

3. Methodology and Procedures

3.1 Participants

The population of the current study comprised all Saudi EFL undergraduate students. The sample of the study consisted of two randomly selected groups of fifty 18- to 24-year-old male Saudi students (an experiment group and a control group, with 25 students in each) enrolled in the Writing III course as a part of their bachelor's degree requirements at the Department of English Language and Translation (DELT) in the College of Languages and Translation (COLT) at King Saud University (KSU) in the second semester of the 2015–2016 academic year. Students are required to pass Writing I and Writing II courses before enrolling in Writing III. All participants were Arabic native speakers. The participants were informed that their responses would remain confidential and would be used for research purposes only.

3.2 Instruments of the Study

To gather the data for the current study, the researcher employed two instruments: a writing test and an attitude questionnaire.

3.2.1 The Writing Test

The writing test was given to the students in the control group and to those in the experiment group before and after the treatment. Students were required to write a well-developed essay on a given topic (i.e., *making lifelong friends, learning life skills, college education prepares you for a successful future*). Following Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2014), the current study, in order to rate students' writing, employed the following checklist to evaluate the students' writing performance: (a) thesis statement, (b) relevance, (c) coherence, (d) cohesion, (e) exposition, (f) quantity, (g) unity, (h) wording, and (i) grammaticality. The total possible score was 90, with up to 10 points awarded for each skill. Two English language instructors rated the students' writings. Three raters from DELT were asked to evaluate each of the nine writing skills separately, and then the overall marks were calculated. As for the reliability measures of the scoring the writing tests, the three raters scored 10 essays and the interrater correlation was calculated (see Table 1).

Table 1. Writing Test Interrater Reliability

Interrater Correlation	Correlation	Significance
Between first and second raters	0.96	0.01
Between first and third raters	0.95	0.01
Between second and third raters	0.96	0.01

Table 1 shows that the writing test interrater reliability was statistically significant (0.92) at 0.01.

3.2.2 The Attitude Questionnaire

The attitude questionnaire, developed based on the related literature, consisted of 34 items about the general attitude toward the effectiveness of the teacher's written CF in developing students' writing achievement. The items of the attitude questionnaire were set on a five-point Likert scale (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = undecided, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree). The means were classified as follows: "strongly disagree" between 1 and 1.49, "disagree" between 1.5 and 2.49, "undecided" between 2.5 and 3.49, "agree" between 3.5 and 4.49, and "strongly agree" between 4.5 and 5. In addition, the respondents were supplied with a space to add any attitudes or reactions they had other than those included on the questionnaire. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was given to a jury of eight professors (two English language university professors, two EFL experts, two specialists in evaluation and assessment, and two educational psychologists at KSU) to obtain their opinions as to the accuracy, clarity, and appropriateness of the instrument (i.e., questionnaire). The instrument was then modified according to their suggestions. Furthermore, 15 student participants were piloted to establish the reliability of the instrument using Cronbach's alpha, which was found to be 0.88.

3.3 Data Collection and Statistical Analysis

The current study was carried out with students from the Department of English Language and Translation (DELT) in the College of Languages and Translation (COLT) at King Saud University (KSU). The study followed a randomized control group pretest/posttest design. The students were randomly divided into two groups, and each group was then divided at random into either the control group or the experimental group. Each group took one of the two treatment forms: (1) using written CF alongside the traditional method and (2) using the traditional method alone. The experimental group was taught using the first level of the treatment, and the control group, on the other hand, with the second level. The experimental group was exposed to treatment for three 50-minute periods a week for the two months of the experiment. Both groups were subjected to a pretest immediately before starting the experiment, and the same test was administered as a posttest immediately after it. The time period between the pretest and the posttest was two months, which was enough to reduce the possible impact of the pretest on the findings and the conclusions of the experiment. The researcher taught both the control group and the experimental group. An independent sample *t*-test was used to measure the gain scores of both groups on the pretest and again on the posttest. A one-way analysis of covariance (ANCONA) was used to measure participants'

increase in scores in order to remove any possible variations between the two groups on the pretest.

As for the second instrument (i.e., the attitude questionnaire), the researcher personally distributed the questionnaire, offered explanations, answered questions, and collected the completed questionnaires in the course of one 2-hour class session. The participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire according to their perception of the effectiveness of their teacher's written CF in improving the quality of their writings. They were asked to fill out the questionnaire individually and independently in order to give them a space to identify their own choices without any influence from other participants. After that, the data were processed and statistically computed and analyzed using the statistical package SPSS, then the outcomes were compared.

4. Findings and Discussion

The current study aims at investigating the impact of a teacher's written CF on Saudi EFL students' writing achievement. It also attempts to investigate Saudi EFL undergraduates' attitudes toward the effectiveness of their teacher's written CF in improving their writing achievement. This section presents the findings as guided by the questions of the current study and provides some explanations for the findings.

4.1 First Question

The first question of the study examined the influence of the teacher's written CF on Saudi EFL learners' writing achievement. It compares employing the teacher's written CF with using the traditional method. The data were collected via a pretest-treatment-posttest design for comparable groups. The data were then analyzed through the statistical package SPSS. An independent sample t-test was conducted to decide whether any statistically significant differences existed between the writing performance of the experiment group and the control group on the pretest (see Table 2).

Table 2. Results of the t-Test of the Means of the Achievement of the Two Groups on the Pretest

	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	Sig.
PRETEST	Control Group	25	78.94	16.91	-0.163	0.875
	Experimental Group	25	79.44	14.66		

Table 2 indicates that the difference on the pretest is not statistically significant at α = 0.05 between the writing performance of the students in the experiment group and the students in the control group; thus, the both groups were supposed to be comparable. Another independent sample t-test was carried out to check whether or not a statistically significant difference existed between the two groups' writing performance on the posttest (see Table 3).

Table 3. Results of the t-Test of the Means of the Achievement of the Two Groups on the Posttest

POSTTEST	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	*t*	Sig.
	Control Group	25	79.98	16.41	-2.059	0.047
	Experimental Group	25	89.33	10.84		

Table 3 shows a statistically significant difference at α = 0.05 between the writing achievement of the groups on the posttest in favor of the experimental group. This indicates that the teacher's written CF in writing has a positive impact on students' writing achievement. As Table 3 shows, the mean score on the posttest was 89.33 and 79.98 for the experiment group and the control group, respectively.

Despite the fact that the difference between the achievement of the experimental group and the control group on the pretest was not statistically significant, to exclude initial differences, a one-way ANCOVA was conducted. Table 4 presents the results.

Table 4. Results of the Test of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Means of Squares	F	Sig.
Pretest	8149.454	1	8149.454	349.352	0.000
Group	700.591	1	700.591	30.033	0.000
Error	1096.386	47	23.327		
Corrected Total	10061.920	49			

Table 4 shows that a statistically significant difference on the posttest exists between the two groups. Measured by the variation between the pretest and the posttest, the writing achievement of the experiment group was significantly better than that of the control group.

The finding of this part, which investigates the effect of a teacher's written CF on Saudi EFL university students' achievement in writing, indicate that the students in the experimental group outperformed the students in the control group (the mean score is 89.33 and 79.98, respectively). This finding is consistent with those of a number of studies showing that using teachers' written CF in English language teaching has useful influences that assisted students develop their writing performance (e.g., Alamis, 2010; Binglan & Jia, 2010; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Ellis et al., 2008; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hyland, 1998; Ismail et al., 2008; Ji, 2015; John et al., 2005; Lounis, 2010; Mahfoodh & Pandian, 2011; Purnawarman, 2013). The variation in the writing achievement of the two groups of students may be due the fact that the teacher's written CF was provided in a clearer way than in the traditional method, where the aided means are very limited. Therefore, this may have encouraged the students in the experimental group to deal with their writing assignments enthusiastically, resulting in better achievement. Furthermore, those students could possibly consult their teachers' comments whenever they need to understand them, which may also enhance learning as the students feel that they are in control of the whole learning process. Furthermore, using the teacher's written CF in

writing instruction makes the students less shy about making errors, which helps them to understand better and subsequently develop their performances. Teachers' written CF might also offer many other positive characteristics, such as being precise, concise, accurate, useful, helpful, clear, not vague, of good quality, and motivating, thereby explaining why it outperforms the traditional method. Generally, the participants benefited a lot from their teacher's written CF; therefore, it is vital that they receive written CF on a regular basis.

4.2 Second Question

The second question aims at investigating Saudi EFL university students' attitudes toward the effectiveness of the teacher's written CF in developing their writing achievement. Table 5 presents the means and standard deviations of each item based on the students' responses to the attitude questionnaire.

Table 5. Means and Standard Deviations of the Attitude Questionnaire Items

Item No.	Rank	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
7	1	Teacher's written CF (TWCF) is a fundamental element to writing and students' improvement.	4.88	1.1
1	2	TWCF helps me improve the quality of my writing.	4.84	1.1
2	3	TWCF helps me write effectively.	4.81	1.2
14	4	TWCF makes writing more meaningful and enjoyable.	4.77	1.2
9	5	TWCF motivates me to achieve a suitable level of writing proficiency.	4.75	1.1
15	6	TWCF raises my awareness of my own strengths and weaknesses.	4.73	1.3
8	7	TWCF guides me on how to identify and correct my errors.	4. 70	1.21
21	8	TWCF motivates me to continuously revise my draft, which in turn helps me improve my writing.	4.68	1.08
20	9	TWCF assists me to produce better writing in EFL contexts.	4.67	0.93
18	10	TWCF makes me feel less embarrassed when negative comments are given.	4.65	1.2
26	11	TWCF increases my self-confidence when performing writing tasks.	4.63	1.3
29	12	TWCF helps me clarify and simplify my ideas and avoid future mistakes.	6.62	1.1
16	13	TWCF helps me develop strategies for generating ideas, revising, and editing.	4.59	1.1
25	14	TWCF increases my self-confidence when performing writing tasks.	4.58	1.2
33	15	TWCF motivates me to write more and better.	4.55	1.3
3	16	TWCF is given on my written assignments in an appropriate way.	4.48	1.1
5	17	TWCF is concise and precise.	4.46	1.2

30	18	TWCF helps me improve my content and organization.	4.45	1.2
31	19	TWCF enhances my grammar and vocabulary development.	4.43	1.2
34	20	TWCF helps me write good thesis statements and supporting ideas.	4.42	1.1
10	21	TWCF helps me develop the necessary critical thinking skills to effectively revise and examine my own writing.	4.41	0.91
11	22	TWCF provides me with critical comments that change my incorrect existing knowledge and beliefs.	3.59	1.1
12	23	TWCF helps me become cognitively engaged in the content under study as well as the context of learning.	3.58	1.3
17	24	TWCF helps me develop the mechanics of writing.	3.57	1.3
19	25	TWCF is less forgettable as I can access it whenever I want.	3.55	1. 4
13	26	TWCF helps me identify the problems I encountered.	3.53	1.3
23	27	TWCF concentrates on the surface level of writing and error identification as well as the discourse features.	3.51	1.2
4	28	TWCF is incomprehensible or not specific.	2.25	1.4
6	29	TWCF is not useful/beneficial at all because I cannot understand it.	2.18	1.4
28	30	TWCF makes me feel disappointed.	2.12	1.5
24	31	TWCF does not help me learn from my mistakes.	1.49	1.3
32	32	TWCF includes a great deal of discouraging critical comments.	1.47	1.5
27	33	TWCF is random and includes confusing criteria for evaluation.	1.45	1.4
22	34	TWCF is not a considerable source to improve my writing.	1.44	1.5

Table 5 shows that the means ranged between 1.44 and 4.88, with standard deviations that ranged between 0.91 and 1.5. Table 5 also indicates that items 7, 1, 2, 14, 9, 15, 8, 21, 20, 18, 26, 29, 16, 25, and 33 gained mean scores ranging between 4.55 and 4.88. All these items fall within the "strongly agree" category and constitute 44.13% of the total number of items. Moreover, Table 5 shows that items 3, 5, 30, 31, 34, 10, 11, 12, 17, 19, 13, and 23 gained mean scores ranging between 4.48 and 3.51. These items fall within the "agree" category and constitute 35.29% of the total items. Table 5 also indicates that items 4, 6, 28, and 24 gained mean scores ranging between 2.25 and 1.49. These items fall within the "disagree" category and constitute 11.76% of the total items. Finally, Table 5 shows that items 32, 27, and 22 gained mean scores ranging between 1.47 and 1.44. These items fall within the "strongly disagree" category and constitute 8.82% of the total number of items.

The findings of this part, which examines Saudi EFL university students' attitudes toward the effectiveness of teachers' written CF in improving their writing achievement, show that the students strongly agree that the teacher's written CF is a fundamental element to writing and students' improvement. Such CF helps them improve the quality of their writing, write effectively, clarify and simplify their ideas, avoid future mistakes, and devise methods for producing ideas, revising, and editing. It makes writing more meaningful and enjoyable and

motivates students to achieve a suitable level of writing proficiency by continuously revising their drafts, which in turn helps them improve their writing and write more and better. CF also raises their awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses, guides them on how to detect and amend their errors, assists them in producing better writing in EFL contexts, makes them feel less embarrassed when negative comments are given, and increases their self-confidence when performing writing tasks.

The findings also showed that the students agree that the teacher's written CF is concise and precise, less forgettable as they can access it whenever they want, and given on their written assignments in an appropriate way. It helps them improve their content and organization, write good thesis statements and supporting ideas, develop the necessary critical thinking skills to effectively revise and examine their own writing, become cognitively engaged in the content under study as well as the context of learning, develop the mechanics of writing, and identify the problems they encountered. In addition, it enhances their grammar and vocabulary development, provides them with critical comments that change their incorrect existing knowledge and beliefs, and concentrates on the surface level of writing and error identification as well as the discourse features. Moreover, the findings reveal that the students disagreed that the teacher's written CF was incomprehensible or not specific, was not useful/beneficial at all because they could not understand it, made them feel disappointed, and did not help them learn from their mistakes. Thus, they did not face any problems while being exposed to the teacher's written CF. Finally, the students strongly disagreed that the teacher's written CF included a great deal of discouraging critical comments, was random and included confusing criteria for evaluation, and was not a considerable source to improve their writing. These findings indicate that the Saudi EFL university students maintained a positive attitude toward the teacher's written CF, which positively affected their attitudes toward enhancing their writing skills. In other words, it seems that the positive attitudes that the students have toward the teacher's written CF is due to its effectiveness in improving their writing achievement, which is consistent with the finding of other studies indicating that students have a positive attitude toward teachers' written CF (e.g., Al-Sawalha, 2016; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Diab, 2005; Hamouda, 2011; Karim & Ivy, 2011; Ken, 2004; Korte, 2015; Salteh & Sadeghi, 2015; Sotoudehnama & Molavi, 2014; Srichanyachon, 2012; Zacharias, 2007).

5. Conclusion

The current study examined the effect of a teacher's written CF on male Saudi EFL university students' writing achievement as well as how those students perceived their teacher's written CF. The findings showed that the teacher's written CF had a significant positive effect on students' writing achievement and that students showed a positive attitude toward their teacher's written CF. Although these findings may be important to the field of writing skills in general and written CF in particular, this study has some limitations. One obvious limitation of the study is the limited sample size. Another limitation is that the data of the current study were collected from one university in Saudi Arabia, namely, KSU; other universities were not involved in the study. Therefore, generalizations of the findings must remain tentative. A third limitation is the lack of female participants. If female students had

participated, the results might be different. Thus, future research could be directed to compare the effect of teachers' written CF on the writing achievement on different genders and across levels of proficiency.

It is essential for writing teachers to be cognizant of the effect of their written CF practices on students' expectations and attitudes. Teachers should be also aware that supplying their students with helpful feedback on their writing is crucial as it assists students in amending their errors and becoming more autonomous writers, which will consequently prepare them to produce pieces of writing of good quality. In conclusion, the findings of the current study have added to the growing body of studies that have investigated the impact of teachers' written CF in improving EFL learners' writing performance and creating a positive attitude toward it.

Acknowledgement

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