STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON TEACHERS' WRITTEN FEEDBACK

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Education

In Partial Fulfillment for the Master of Education in English

Submitted by

Puspa Raj Joshi

Faculty of Education

Tribhuvan University

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge this thesis is original; no part of it was earlier submitted for the candidature of research degree to any university.

Date: 2067-12-08   **Puspa Raj Joshi**

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCEPTANCE

This is to certify that **Puspa Raj Joshi** has prepared this thesis entitled **Students' Perceptions on Teachers' Written Feedback** under my guidance and supervision.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to

My parents **Chandra Dev Joshi** and **Jalu Devi Joshi** who devoted their lives

making me what I am today.

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ABSTRACT

The present study entitled 'Students' Perceptions on Teachers' Written Feedback' was an attempt to analyze students' perceptions towards their teachers' written feedback. This study was carried out using both the primary and secondary sources of data. For primary data, sixty students were randomly selected from two higher secondary schools of Doti district namely; Shree Janta Janardan and Shree Bhawani Higher Secondary Schools which were selected through purposive/ judgemental non-random sampling procedure. I used both close and open-ended questionnaire to elicit the required data. It was found that most of the students would like to get positive feedback from their teachers. About forty three per cent (43.33) of them perceived teachers' written feedback is extremely important as the main improvement tool of learning writing as well as whole learning.

This thesis consists four chapters along with references and appendices at the end. The first chapter deals with the introduction part which mainly includes general background, language skills, factors affecting the language learning, feedback and perception along with the review of related literature, objectives and significance of the study. The second chapter deals with the methodology used in the study. The sources of data, sample and sampling procedures, tools for data collection, data collection procedures and limitations of the study are included in this chapter. Chapter three includes analysis and interpretation of the data. The final chapter encompasses with the findings and recommendations made after the analysis of the data.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Dr.	–	Doctor
Ed.	_	Education
ELT	–	English Language Teaching
et al.	–	and others
etc.	–	etcetera
Exam	–	Examination
i.e.	–	id est (that is to say)
M. Ed.	–	Masters in Education
Mr.	_	Mister
No.	_	Numbers
Prof.	_	Professor
S.N.	–	Serial Number
SLA	_	Second Language Acquisition
T.U.	_	Tribhuvan University
Viz.	_	Vide Licet (namely)

CHAPTER – ONE
INTRODUCTION

The present study is an attempt to investigate the students' perceptions on teachers' written feedback. This is a descriptive and analytical study. This chapter includes general background, the review of related literature, and objectives and significance of the study.

1.1   General Background

Feedback itself is always viewed as an important aspect in teaching, learning and writing. In recent years, the use of written feedback in English as second language (ESL) classrooms has received great importance due to its social, cognitive, affective and methodological benefits. In language teaching and learning, feedback can be provided either orally or in written form. In most of the cases, oral feedback is used and provided to the learners. But, in the present day written feedback is also an important measure for the betterment of language learning.

Feedback is one of the key factors in language learning which may encourage or discourage the learners in order to overcome mistakes and errors. In the case of positive feedback, the learners are encouraged to do better in their written or oral work. Mere positive feedback is not enough. The teachers should not just encourage but say which aspects are good and why, successes as well as failures should be reported and diagnosed. Isaacs (1999) says "good feedback tells what was right, what was wrong and how to right wrongs without wronging the right" (p. 68). Giving feedback is not simply correcting learners' errors but it is the way of encouraging learners to come up. To be very specific, the term feedback is the response given to learners' mistakes and the response given to them after the evaluation of their work. Moreover, feedback is related to correction and assessment i.e. feedback has two main distinguishable components: assessment and correction (Isaacs, 1999). In assessment, the learner is simply informed how well or badly he

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or she has performed, whereas in correction, some specific information is provided on various aspects of learners' performance through explanation or alternatives or elicitation.

1.1.1 Language Skills

Language is basically used in real life situation in order to receive and share information. To grasp information, we need to listen to someone or something, or read a written text. So, language is used to express our thoughts, feelings, emotions etc. It is expressed through oral or written mode. There are four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. These four skills are related to each other by two parameters.

- The mode of communication - oral or written
- The direction of the communication - receptive and productive

The four language skills are briefly described below:

a) Listening skill

Listening is the first language skill which is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. Underwoood (1989) defines "listening is the activity of paying great attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear" (p.117). Listening skill involves understanding or speakers' accent or pronunciation, his grammar, vocabulary and grasping his meaning. It is the source or input of language learning since language learning starts from listening to others or hearing something.

b) Speaking skill

Speaking skill is one of the important skills in language learning which involves thinking of what is to be said. It is the production of speech sound in an audible and

a meaningful form. Harmer (2008) says "speaking activities are those tasks in which students try to use any or all of the languages they know provide feedback for both teacher and students" (p.123). Teaching speaking means making the learners able to express fluently in a foreign language. The main purpose of teaching speaking is to make students learn some of the features of spoken English which includes rhythm, pronunciation, stress, intonation etc.

c) Reading skill

Reading is an important aspect of teaching or learning a foreign language which involves the process of decoding, i.e. converting language into message. It refers to perceiving a written text in order to understand its contents. According to Grellet (1982) "reading as understanding involves extracting the required information from the text as efficiently as possible" (p.1). Reading is an active and a receptive skill. It is the combination of visual and non-visual experience or behavior as well. It helps to recognize and comprehend the knowledge and information contained in a text. Reading involves recognition of printed letters, words, phrases, clauses and sentences with meaning.

d) Writing skill

Among the four language skills, writing is advance and most difficult skill of language learning which involves the encoding of a message of some kind, that is, we translate our thoughts into language. Harmer (2008) says "writing is used as an aidememoire or practice tool to help students practice and work with language they have been studying" (p.112). Writing skill includes creation, modifying, summarizing and so on. It is a skill associated with the productive aspect of language. It is immensely important because it is the permanent and powerful medium of expression. So, it is very much essential part of language learning.

While teaching writing, the learner must be familiar with different skills of writing so that they can compose or create a concrete and good writing. According to Munby (1979) the sub-skills of writing are:

- manipulating the script of a language

- expressing information implicitly

- expressing information explicitly

- expressing the communicative value of sentences and utterances

- expressing relations within a sentence use

- expressing relations between parts of a text through lexical cohesion devices.

While writing, we need to arrange the words, sentences, and paragraphs to develop a strong and impressive product. In order to compose a text, conscious mental effort of the writer is essential. The students, as the learners of writing, make various mistakes and errors in their writing. So the teachers need to correct them very often with appropriate feedback.

Traditionally, researchers focused mainly on the final product of writing, while contemporary researchers emphasize on the composing process and the strategies which are utilized by the writers to attend the final product. Writing, firstly, can be seen as an "act of forming graphic symbol", that is, letters or the combination of letters (Byrne, 1991, p. 1).

1.1.2 Stages of Writing Process

Writing skill is a more complicated skill than the rest of the other skills because it involves recursive mental effort. Regarding stages in the writing skills, there exist a number of conflicting theories of planning and teaching a course in writing. We are to be sure which theoretical stands, we are going to adopt.

On the basis of the process approach to teaching writing, there are mainly four basic stages: planning, making an outline, preparing the first draft, and revising,

editing and producing the final draft. These stages are neither sequential nor ordered. In fact, as research has suggested "many good writers employ a recursive, non-linear approach - writing of a draft may be interrupted by more planning and revision may lead to reformulation with a great deal of recycling to earlier stages" (Krashen, 1984, p. 17).

In Hedge's (1990) view, the process contains a lot of stages which can be illustrated in the following way:

Being motivated to write $\rightarrow$ getting ideas together $\rightarrow$ planning and outlining making notes $\rightarrow$ making a first draft $\rightarrow$ revising, $\rightarrow$ re-planning, redrafting editing and getting ready for publication.

However, Reid (1993) offered a more complete description. Process writing as a classroom activity incorporates the four basic writing stages: planning, drafting, revising, and editing – and three other stages are given by the teachers, namely, responding, evaluating, and post-writing. These stages as mentioned by Dung (2004, p.10) are briefly presented in the following sub- sections.

a. Pre-writing

Pre-writing is any activity in the classroom that encourages the students to write. It stimulates thoughts for getting started. It moves the students away from having to face a blank page or what researchers often call the "writer's block" and transit them smoothly onto another stage (Nudelman and Troyka, 1994). It includes understanding the purpose of writing, discovering the topic, and thinking about the audience, gathering information or inventing possible content. Once the possible content for writing has been explored, the writers feel more confident to move to the second stage, which is called the planning stage.

b. Planning

In the planning stage, the students organize the ideas they have generated. The most efficient way to do this is to make an outline. An outline is a plan in which the writers write down the main points and sub-points in the order in which they plan to write about them. Outline can be either simple or detailed. However, even when quite elaborate outlines are prepared, good writers change their ideas as they write and reshape their plans. Hedge (1990) noted this tendency by saying, "in writing one so frequently arrives at a destination not originally envisaged, by a route not yet planned for in the original itinerary"(p.22).

c. Drafting

Once sufficient ideas have been gathered and plan already drawn, the first attempt at writing – drafting may proceed quickly. At the drafting stage, the writers focus on the fluency of writing and are not preoccupied with grammatical accuracy or the neatness of the draft but a conscious visualization of audience is vital here since it can influence the choice of organization and language to be used.

d. Responding

Responding to students' writing has a central role to play in the successful implementation of process writing. It is a kind of oral or written intervention by teachers or peers or other possible readers after the writers have finished drafting. This activity is intended to provide the students with useful information to improve the content of their writing. However, in doing this job, the teachers may encounter many problems. Some problems are practical: the class size is too large, there is not enough time, or the syllabus is too rigid to implement other responding techniques such as conferencing or peer reviewing. Other problems may reflect the teaching climate or culture, for example, in Vietnam a lot of red marks on students' paper are

associated with working hard, but just carry a lot of face value since it produces little or no effects on student rewriting (Nudelman and Troyka, 1994).

These problems are relevant to the context of Nepal and cannot be dismissed lightly. Therefore, a movement towards the process orientation must require teachers, among other things, knowledge and commitment to teaching to help the students to make actual progress in their writing skills.

e. Revising

When the students revise, they review their texts on the basis of the feedback given in the responding stage. They re-examine what was written to see how effectively they have communicated their meanings to the reader. Revising is not merely checking for language errors. It is done to improve the global content and the organization of ideas so that the writers' intent is made clearer to the readers.

f. Editing

At this stage, the students are engaged in tidying up their texts as they prepared the final draft for evaluation by the teachers. This activity is very important in that no matter how interesting or original the students' ideas are, an excess of linguistic errors may distract and frustrate the readers, which may result in negative evaluation of their overall writing abilities. In addition, editing within process writing is vital because it is not done for its own sake but as a part of the process of making communication as clear and unambiguous as possible to the reader. Ferris (1995) recommends that teachers should teach the students to edit their own writing because they "will not succeed outside of the sheltered world of the class unless they can learn how to reduce their errors" (p.41).

In short, although revising and editing concentrate on different aspects of the student writing, they share a common purpose of improving the overall quality of

the students' texts. Learning how to revise and edit is thus central to the process of learning how to write in a foreign language (Nudelman and Troyka, 1994).

g. Evaluating

Very often, teachers under the pretext of time restraint, compress responding, editing and evaluating into one. This would, in practice, deprive the students of a vital link between drafting and revision, that is, responding will often make a big difference to a kind of writing that the students finally produce (Nudelman and Troyka, 1994).

 In evaluating the students' writing, teachers normally assign scores, which may be analytical (based on specific aspects of writing ability), or holistic (based on a global interpretation of the effectiveness of that writing). In order to be effective, the criteria for evaluation need to be made known to the students in advance. Students, once they have become a skillful independent editor, may be encouraged to evaluate their own and other's tests. In this way, they are made to be more responsible for their writing.

h. Post-writing

Post writing constitutes any classroom activity that the teachers and the students can do with the finished products. It may be publishing, sharing, reading aloud, and transforming the texts for stage performances. The post – writing stage is a platform for recognizing students' works as important and worthwhile. It may be used as a motivation for the coming assignment or as a termination of the student's finding excuse for not writing next time. The students must be made to feel that they are writing for a very real purpose.

1.1.2 Factors Affecting Language Learning

Teaching and learning the English language takes place in a formal academic setting in Nepal. As learning of English takes place in formal situations within limited time. It is affected by different environmental and psychological factors. Brown (1987) mentions "second language learning is not just learning the language rather than learning its culture and society where the language exists" (p.130). So, it is very important to understand the culture of the society in which we are learning language. The language is highly interrelated with the living style, beliefs, ideas and customs of the related society. Therefore, if one is learning a language indirectly he is learning the culture of that society to get acculturate with that language.

On the other hand, personality factors within a person contribute to some way for the successful language learning. Understanding how human beings feel and respond to and believe in the values is exceeding important aspect of theory of a second language learning. Brown (1987, p.134) records that self- esteem, inhibition, risk – taking, anxiety, empathy, extroversion and motivation are important factors for affecting language learning. Among these factors, Brown (1987) considers motivation as the most important factor.

Motivation refers to a person's desire to do something in language learning. It is some kind of internal derives that encourages somebody to pursue a course of action. If we "perceive a goal (that is something we wish to achieve) and if that goal is sufficiently attractive, we will be strongly motivated to do whether is necessary to reach that goal" (Harmer, 1991, p.3). So, we can say that the more and better the motivation better the learning.

Gardener and Lambert (1995) divide motivation into two types: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The first is concerned with factors outside the classroom and the second which takes place inside the classroom. Intrinsic motivation which is related to inside the classroom happenings can have an important effort on learners

who are already extrinsically motivated. The factors that affect it are physical condition, methods, teacher's role and success of students.

1.1.4   Feedback

Feedback has emerged in the literature as a means to facilitate both the learning process and teaching performance. The term feedback is, though common to all, very difficult to define. It is the information or statement of opinion about something, such as a new product that provides an idea of whether it is successful or liked. Keh (1989) defines feedback as "any input for revision" (p.18). In language teaching, feedback is supposed to show learners what is wrong or right for better learning in future.Guentee (2007) concludes,

> Any type of feedback that does not take the crucial variable of motivation to consideration is perhaps doomed to fail. If the students are not committed to improving their writing skills, they will not improve, no matter what type of corrective feedback is provided (p.12).

Likewise, Deheram (1995) defines "feedback is interestingly linked to the two bullocks. In order for the cart to move in the right direction, its two bullocks need to understand not only the purpose of their efforts but also each other" (p.160). This means teachers and students should adopt a collaborative approach to the mentoring and processing of feedback in order for the teachers' feedback to become an effective tool for student's revision. According to Ramaprasad (1983) feedback as "information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way" (p.4). This definition gives primacy in filling gap between reference and actual level.

Similarly, Richards et al. (1999, p. 137) define feedback as "any information which provides a report on the result of behavior" (p.137). This shows that feedback is any

comments given by listener, reader or viewer for the improvement and betterment of the writers' or speakers' output. Feedback helps to improve the writing. Especially, when feedback is combined with instruction in the writing process, the dialogue between students and teachers is strengthened. Giving and receiving feedback also helps students to develop readers sensitizing and their own writing style.

In the same way, Sadler (1989) argues that formative assessment is "specifically intended to prove feedback on performance to improve and accelerate learning" (p.77). Feedback is an essential part of the educational process but one which cannot be approached in a random manner. The important role of feedback in improving student performance has long been recognized by educational researchers and has viewed the issue of feedback from cognitive perspective, mastery of learning and assessment. Feedback comes to be understood by students according to their individual learning objectives. It describes the nature of outcomes and the qualities of cognitive processing that led to those states. The effectiveness of feedback is determined by anticipated outcome. The qualities of cognitive processing required to achieve these outcomes are further defined as a set of criteria generated by the learner which assist them to monitor their own performance as they work toward the desired outcome.

Butler and Winne (1995) divide feedback into two types: internal and external. Internal feedback is performed by the students themselves whereas external feedback is generated by the teachers or other than students. While teacher may give feedback on student work regularly; this feedback can only be incorporated into student learning when it is sort by them and related specifically to their individual learning goals and objectives. But if the learner does not possess or has not developed the goals or objective with respect to desired learning outcome then feedback can do little to assist them in learning process. It is necessary that learners

need to define their own objective and understand the feedback provided by teachers.

i. Types of feedback

Feedback plays a vital role in language learning. It is feedback that produces effective second language communicators by planting in them the seeds of self confidence (Dung 2004). It has a great intuitive appeal and makes sense that an individual who is provided feedback makes sense that individuals who are provided feedback will learn a language faster and to a greater degree.

Gattullo (2000) and Harmer (2001) (as cited in Al-Fahdi, 2006) divided feedback into corrective, evaluative and strategic. Corrective feedback is one which focuses on helping learners notice and correct responses which are wrong. In language learning, corrective feedback is primarily concerned with accuracy aspect. It aims to provide a judgment on the learners' performance. But on the other hand, evaluation feedback is related with the performance of the learners which is dominant in second and foreign language classroom. The teachers use different words or phrases in giving evaluative feedback. Finally, strategic feedback aims to offer learners an advice on what to do to improve their performance. In other words, the teachers try to suggest ways of helping learners to overcome their mistakes by themselves. It can help learners to become self – reliant. Roger (1996) divides feedback into the following five types:

a. Evaluative feedback

Evaluative feedback makes a judgment about other person, evaluating worth or goodness. There is a great difference between judging person and their actions. A personal evaluation judges the whole person and implies that this is a personal and unchangeable attribute. Negative personal evaluation can be very uncomfortable for the other person. Positive personal evaluation, on the other hand, is very flattering.

For example, when you say "you are not a very nice person", people will be offended but when you say "you are a lovely person", people will be happier.

b. Interpretive evaluation

In interpretive evaluation, we seek to test our understanding of what has been said by interpreting and paraphrasing back to other person what we think has been said. This is typically followed by a question to allow other person to agree with our interpretation or after a correction.

c. Supportive evaluation

In supportive evaluation, we seek to support other person in some way. In flattery, we support other person's ego by telling them, they are good in some way (whether or not this is true). For example, that was truly awesome! Can you sing it again, please? You look wonderful! On the basis of this example one is encouraged to do better in future.

d. Probing feedback

In probing feedback, we seek to find more information by asking deeper question that seek specific information. For example, could you tell me more about what happened? What happened next? What size was it? Why do you think that happened? This example shows that one is asked about any particular content until getting its ultimate information.

e. Understanding feedback

At the understanding level, we are seeking to understand not just what was said, but the whole person underneath. In understanding feedback, we ask questions not only shows that we are listening to the inner person, but also that we truly understand.

ii. Importance of feedback

Feedback is a key factor which plays a pivotal role in learning the English language. According to Ur (1996), "feedback is information that is given to the learners about his or her performance" (p.242). So, it has such a power which modifies learners, teachers, reviewers or writers in order to move them in right direction. As with the help of compass, ship moves, so is the case with feedback in learning.

Feedback is not only a key element in learning language but also for all individuals who want to attempt any work successfully. Highlighting the importance of feedback, Nicol and Farlace (2006, pp. 207-214) provide the following points.

- Helps clarity what good performance is , (goals, criteria, expected, standards)
- Facilitates the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning; when well organized, self-assessment can lead to significant improvement in learning, especially if integrated with staff feedback.
- Encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning.
- It can encourage students to persist and it is sometimes easier to accept critique from peers.
- Encourages positive motivational belief and self-esteem.
- Provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance.
- Provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape teaching.

1.1.5 Written Feedback in Writing

Feedback in written work can be given through writing as well as through speech. The way to give feedback on written work depends on writing task. According to Harmer (2001), "written feedback techniques are responding and coding" (p.109). The teacher may respond how their texts appear, how successful they are and how

they could improve their writing. Such responses help students to improve their writing regarding grammar, handwriting, style and so on. Another technique of written feedback is coding. Different symbols are used to correct their writing, through coding, learners can identify the mistakes they have made and they correct them. But the teacher should be careful that the given feedback should have positive outcome. Teachers' written comments not only indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the learners' writing but they may also assist learners in monitoring their own writing skill and specific language areas to develop further.

1.1.6 Feedback Timing

Feedback is given to the learners through correction and assessment during oral work or on written work. The teacher should take care of time while giving feedback, whether correction facilitates the language learning or disturbs it. There should be considerable time to give feedback to the students. On the basis of feedback timing, there are immediate feedback and delayed feedback. Depending upon the learning task these types of feedback are beneficial. In typical classroom setting, immediate feedback is more effective, for example in accuracy work, so that the learner remembers what should be there instead (Draper, 2005). Where as if the learner is given feedback after the event then there is more chance to forget what the learners have said. As we know, feedback timing depends on the type of feedback, type of knowledge, type of errors and present learners' skill level, for example, delayed feedback is more effective under the condition of procedural knowledge, elaborative feedback, non-critical errors and learners' low skill level.

1.1.7 Approaches to Feedback

Approaches refer to the correlative assumptions and way of doing to get something. Here the approaches to feedback refer to the way of providing feedback to the students' mistakes in their writings. There are various approaches to give feedback

to the students' writings. The two basic approaches are used for providing feedback to the students which are briefly discussed below.

i. Single-draft approach

This approach was quite popular before the advent of the process orientation. At that time, teachers' responding to the students writing was fairly straightforward. The students would write a paper; the teachers would return it with a few notes on students performance; and then they switched to a new lesson, the students would write a new paper and repeat the process. The question is "if we, composition teachers, choose to respond to the students writing in this way, can we really help them write better?" A great deal of research done into this area suggested that such practice does little or nothing to improve the student writing, either in the short or long term.

Some strategies show the opposite of what is discussed above. According to Sommers (1982), "feedback fails to prioritize suggestions in terms of their relative importance and that it can be interchanged, rubber stamped from text to text" (p. 152). She criticizes that those responses as too general, too insensitive, confusing, arbitrary, and idiosyncratic. Similarly, Chenoweth (1987) points out that this commentary only cracks the surface of the student writing, but does not "directly address the writers' main problems, which are more related to the way in which they accomplish a given writing task" (p. 25). Keh (1989) is also critical in his opinion. He expresses that such one-shot commentary provides little information for students to improve their papers in terms of coherence or content.

In short, the traditional practice of one-shot commenting on the students writing proves to be ineffective to the students' revision. Therefore, a new approach-the process approach to feedback giving seems to be a better alternative (Dung, 2004, p. 13).

ii. The multiple-draft approach

In much the same way as the process approach to teaching writing encourages students to write multiple drafts, the process approach to responding requires teachers as part of their instructional role to respond to students' writing as a process, to lead students through several revision cycles before asking them to submit the final piece for evaluation. One advantage of this method is that it gives the writers more chance to develop and present their ideas effectively. Another is that it helps avoid turning each paper into a miniature test on which teachers simultaneously comment and evaluate. It thus, shows the students that writing is the process of improving through revision based on teacher feedback, rather than a single act of providing one and also the final draft for teacher evaluation. To sum up, the introduction of the process approach to teaching writing has changed the teachers' responding method from a single-act to a process for the benefit of the student writer (Dung, 2004, p. 14).

1.1.8 Defining Perception

The word perception is derived from Latin word 'perceptio' which was in turn derived from the Latin word 'percepere' meaning observation. Literally, it means deeper or natural understanding of something or the way of understanding or interpreting something. According to Hochberg (1964) 'it refers to both to the experience of gaining sensory information about the world of people, things and events and to the psychological process by which this is accomplished' (p.660).

Similarly, Sanford and Capaldi (1964) define it as 'the awareness or the process of becoming aware, of extra, of the extra-organic or intra-organic objects or relations or qualities by means of sensory process and under the influence of set and of prior experiences'(p.175).

On the basis of these definitions, we can say that perception refers to awareness, understanding, interpretation and the process involved in it. Normally, it is considered difficult to measure. Regarding the measurability of perception, the perceptual process is indirectly observable but the relation can be found between the various types of stimulation and their associated experiences and the percepts.' In this study, I tried to find out the perception of 11th Graders on teachers' written feedback on their writing on the basis of survey questionnaire.

1.2   Review of Related Literature

Though a great number of studies have been carried out on various aspects or factors related to English language teaching and learning, there are negligible researches carried out on the area of perceptions on written feedback. So, this research is the first venture in this area in the Department of English Education TU. In order to gather some ideas and information, I have gone through some of the related previous researches and reviewed them as follows:

Al-Mandhari (2006) conducted a research on 'Learners' Response to Different Types of Feedback on Writing'. The purpose of the study was to investigate which approach to giving feedback is the most suitable for Omani learners' writing. The data were collected through sample of texts on which feedback had been given and through a questionnaire. The four approaches to giving feedback: peer correction, teacher correction, using a coding system and using guiding lines are conducted in the study and each approach is done in the three phases. His study has shown that peer correction in all phases showed the highest score reaching to hundred percent in phase three. It seems to have been the approach which best allowed learners to remember the errors which were corrected.

Mackey et al. (2007) also conducted research on 'Teachers Intension and Learners Perception about Corrective Feedback in the L_2 Classroom'. In the study, it was found out that learner's perception and teachers' intension about the linguistic target

of the corrective feedback overlapped the most when the feedback concerned lexis and was provided explicitly. Also, the linguistic targets of the feedback were perceived more accurately when feedback was directed at the learners themselves rather than at their classmates.

Similarly, Bhandari (2008) carried out a research on 'Role of Feedback in Teaching English Language'. Her objective was to explore the way of giving feedback in teaching English at secondary level by the English teacher. She applied simple random sampling to conduct semi-structure interview and non-participant observation in this study. The study found out that most of the secondary level English teachers take feedback as a support for the teaching and learning process and take it as a means of motivating the learners, encouraging them in learning, giving advices and suggesting them.

In the same way, Singh (2008) conducted a research on 'Role of Motivation in the English Language Proficiency'. The objective of the study was to find out the role of motivation in language teaching and learning. He has used random sampling to conduct interview and questionnaire as research tool in the study. The result of his study showed that the motivation status has some sort of positive and directive role in language proficiency. The strongly instrumentally motivated students have higher proficiency in reading and writing.

Finally, Lamichhane (2009) conducted research on 'Teachers Written Feedback on the Writing of Grade - 9 Students'. He aimed to investigate the teachers' feedback giving practice in the 9th grade students. In this study, simple random sampling was used to administer the questionnaire as research tool. The result of his study showed that most of the teachers are found giving feedback to the students' writing more frequently and most of the students wanted to get feedback at the end of exercise rather than on the margin. They thought all the forms of feedback have a role to devise their draft.

While reviewing the related literature I found that no research work has been conducted in the area of how students perceive the role of feedback provided by teachers.

1.3   Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study were as follows:

(i)   To analyze students' perceptions towards teachers' written feedback on their writing.

(ii)   To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4   Significance of the Study

This study will be useful for those who are interested in ELT and learning language, language teachers and students because the study provides the information about feedback and the students' perceptions on teachers' written feedback in their writing. Written feedback has such a power which modifies learners, reviewers or writers in order to move them in right direction. So, it is necessary for them to be familiar with how feedback has been perceived by the students.

Written feedback is the tendency or overall characteristic of the factor of teaching and learning employed by the teachers and the students. The teachers cannot get their students' positive responses unless they use proper written feedback on their writing. Likewise, the students cannot get mastery over good writing skill unless they get constructive feedback from the teachers. Getting feedback is the way of improving skills to learn language. This study will also be significant for the prospective researchers in the field of approach, method and technique of giving feedback. Especially, English teachers who teach writing skills can take help from the findings of this research.

CHAPTER – TWO
METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following methodology was adopted:

2.1   Sources of Data

The researcher had used both primary and secondary sources of data which have been discussed as follows:

2.1.1   Primary Sources of Data

The primary sources of data for proposed study were the responses provided by 60 students from two Higher Secondary Schools of Doti district who were studying at Grade - XI.

2.1.2   Secondary Sources of Data

The researcher studied books, theses, articles and journals to facilitate the present study. Some of them were Celce-Murcia (1991), Ur (1996), Harmer (2001), Richards and Rodgers (2005) and Borg (2006).

2.2   Sampling Procedure

Two higher secondary schools namely Shree Janta Janardan Higher Secondary School and Shree Bhawani Higher Secondary Schools were selected using judgmental non-random sampling procedure from Doti district. Thirty students of Grade-XI from each higher secondary school were randomly selected as the primary sources of data. Altogether, there were 60 students having equal representation of girls and boys.

2.3 Tools for Data Collection

The researcher designed a set of questionnaire for the students to elicit the required data. The framework of questionnaire was both open-ended and close-ended. The questionnaire was designed to get the perceptions of the students on teachers' written feedback in their writing .Therefore, most of the questions were students oriented.

2.4 Process of Data Collection

I collected the data from the primary source by forming a set of open-ended and close-ended questionnaire. For this purpose, I adopted the following steps:

- At first, I went to the concerned schools and talked to the authority to get permission and explained them the purpose and process of the research.
- After getting permission from the authority, I consulted the students of Grade - XI and requested them to take part in the study.
- After that, I distributed the questionnaires and requested them to fill them within half an hour.
- Then, I collected the questionnaire distributed to the students.

2.5 Limitations of the Study

The study had the following limitations:

i. The study was limited to only the two schools of Doti district.
ii. Only the 11th graders were included as the sample of the study.
iii. The study was limited to only the students' responses on written feedback.
iv. Only questionnaire was the tool of data collection.
v. The study included only 60 students represented from two schools.

CHAPRER - THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from primary as well as secondary sources. The main focus of the study was to explore the students' perceptions on teachers' written feedback at higher secondary level. For this purpose, the researcher collected 60 informants from two different higher secondary schools of Doti district. The analysis of the collected data is carried out in subsequent sub-units below:

3.1   Analysis of the Students' Perceptions

This section mainly deals with the 11th grade students' perceptions on teachers' written feedback they receive on their writing. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I distributed a set of questionnaire with 16 different questions for the data collection.

3.1.1 Importance of Written Feedback

The students were asked how important teachers' written feedback was to improve their writing. The perceptions of the students are given in the table below.

Table No. 1

Importance of Written Feedback

S.N.	Perception	Frequency	Per cent
1	Not important	-	
2	Important	16	26.67
3	Very important	18	30
4	Extremely important	26	43.33

From the table, it is clear that 43.33 per cent of the participants said that written feedback is extremely important whereas 30 per cent responded that it is very important. Likewise, 26.67 per cent of them replied that it is important. This shows

that almost all of the students perceive that teachers' written feedback is important to their writing.

3.1.2 Frequency of Teachers' Response to Students' Writings

The table below shows that half of the informants (i.e. 50 per cent) said that their teachers asked them to revise their writing two times whereas 18.33 per cent and 31.67 per cent of the students were asked once and three times respectively.

Table No. 2

Teachers' Response to Students Writing

S.N.	Responses	Frequency	Per cent
1	Once	11	18.33
2	Twice	30	50
3	Thrice	19	31.67

From the table it is clear that the majority of the teachers wanted to revise their students' writing more than once. It seems that the revision of writing feedback based on teachers' writing is needed for better writing.

3.1.3 Focus of written Feedback

The following table shows the focus of teachers' written feedback:

Table No. 3

Focus of Feedback

S.N	Responses	Frequency	Per cent
1	Paragraph construction	8	13.33
2	Grammar	25	41.67
3	Vocabulary	11	18.33
4	Content	5	8.33
5	Mechanism(spelling & pronunciation)	12	20
6	Organization of ideas	13	21.67
7	All of them	27	45

24

The above table shows that forty-five per cent of the students thought that all the listed aspects were focused by teachers while giving feedback whereas 41.67 per cent of them focused on grammar. Similarly, 21.67 per cent of students said that the feedback was focused on organization of the ideas. Mechanics, vocabulary, paragraph construction and content were also given importance by 20, 18.33, 13.33 and 8. 33 per cent respectively. This shows that students want the teachers' written feedback to be focused on almost all aspects of writing.

3.1.4 Kinds of Written Feedback

In this section, the researcher tried to find out whether the students desired negative or positive or both types of feedback by their teachers. From the responses, it is clear that no student desired to get only negative feedback. The majority of the respondents i.e. 63.33 per cent replied that they wanted positive whereas 36.67 per cent of them preferred both types of feedback according to the seriousness of mistakes. The table below gives the clear concept on it.

Table No. 4

Kinds of Feedback

S.N	Responses	Frequency	Per cent
1	Negative Feedback	-	
2	Positive Feedback	38	63.33
3	Both of them	22	36.67

3.1.5 Location to Write Feedback

Students' responses in the table below show that they like to receive feedback at the end than in the margin. But 36.67 per cent of them said that they preferred both according to the error they made.

Table No. 5

Location of the Feedback

S.N.	Responses	Frequency	Per cent
1	In the margin	12	20
2	At the end	26	43.33
3	Both of them	22	36.67

3.1.6 Types of Feedback

Students were also asked what type of feedback they would like to receive. The table below depicts that 40 per cent of them like both general and specific whereas 35 and 25 per cent of them like specific and general type of feedback respectively.

Table No. 6

Types of Feedback

S.N	Responses	Frequency	Per cent
1	Specific	21	35
2	General	15	25
3	Both of them	24	40

3.1.7 The Forms of Feedback

I had also asked the students about how helpful are the each form of the teachers' feedback to revise the draft.

Table No. 7

Forms of Feedback

S.N	Forms of feedback	Not at all	Helpful	Very helpful
1	Question	3 (5)	25 (41.64)	32 (53.33)
2	Statement	5 (8.33)	25 (41.64)	29 (48.33)
3	Imperative	8 (13.33)	27 (45)	25 (41.67)
4	Exclamation	20 (33.33)	22 (36.67)	18 (30)
5	Marking the error but not correcting them	25 (41.64)	20 (33.33)	15 (25)

The above table shows that most of the students supported that questioning is useful form of feedback to revise their draft. Among the respondents, 53.33 per cent of them thought it was very helpful but 41.64 per cent of them thought it was helpful only and 5 per cent of them thought it was not helpful at all. Similarly, 48.33, 41.64, and 8.33 per cent of them thought that the statement is very helpful, helpful and not helpful at all respectively. Marking errors but not correcting them is the least preferred by a great number of respondents. Out of total respondents, 41.64 per cent thought it was not helpful whereas 33.33 per cent of them replied that it was helpful and only 25 per cent of respondents took it very helpful.

3.1.8   Understanding of Feedback

The following table presents students' perceptions on whether the teachers' feedback was easy to understand.

Table No. 8

Understanding of Feedback

S.N.	Perception	Frequency	Responses
1	Understanding	30	50
2	Do not understanding	30	50

Fifty per cent of the students replied that they understood the feedback given by their teachers easily whereas the same per cent of them said that they did not understand it easily.

Regarding the reason as to why the students do not understand the teachers' feedback, the table below shows the 60 per cent of them supported that teachers use new feedback strategies time and again whereas other 30 per cent of them agreed the teachers' use new vocabulary and structure in the feedback. Similarly, 10 per cent of them opined that feedback is too general to understand.

Table No. 9

Reasons of not Understanding Feedback

S.N.	Reasons	Frequency	Per cent
1	Feedback is too general to understand	3	10
2	Teachers use new vocabulary and structure	9	30
3	Teachers use new feedback strategy	18	60

3.1.9 Strategies in Solving the Problems

Here, the respondents were asked what strategies they use to solve their problems. Most of them opined that they asked the teacher or peer for help.

Table No. 10

Strategies in Solving the Problems

S.N.	Strategies	Frequency	Per cent
1	Asking the teacher or peer for help	42	70
2	Consulting a grammar book or dictionary	14	23.33
3	Doing nothing	2	3.33
4	Others	2	3.33

The table displays the strategies used by the students to solve their problems. Seventy per cent of them replied that they ask the teacher or peer if they faced any problems whereas 23.33 per cent of them liked to consult the grammar book or dictionary. Some of the students do nothing whereas some of them suggested some new strategies for solving their problems. They suggested the following:

- Study harder
- Look at the previous model

3.1.10 Teachers' Role in Giving Feedback

I also tried to know whether the teacher must correct the students' written work. The table below presents the detail.

Table No. 11

Teachers' Role in Giving Feedback

S.N.	Perceptions	Frequency	Per cent
1	Strongly like it	41	68.33
2	Like it	13	21.67
3	Do not know	4	6.67
4	Dislike it	1	1.67
5	Strongly dislike it	1	1.67

The table clarifies that most of the students were in favor of the idea that teacher should correct their mistakes. Most of them i.e. 68.33 per cent said that they strongly like the idea. Similarly, 21.67 per cent of them simply like it. On the other hand, 6.67 per cent replied they did not know. The minority of them (i.e. 1.67 per cent) and the same per cent of them dislike it and strongly dislike the idea respectively. The result showed that most of the students want their teacher to correct their written work.

3.1.11 Teachers' Feedback to Improve English

Students were also asked whether the teachers' correction help them to improve their English or not. The table below shows that the teachers' correction is must to improve English.

<div align="center">

Table No. 12

Teachers' Feedback to improve English

</div>

S.N.	Perceptions	Frequency	Per cent
1	Strongly like it	49	81.67
2	Like it	11	18.33
3	Do not know	-	-
4	Dislike it	-	-
5	Strongly dislike it	-	-

The table shows that 81.67 per cent of the respondents strongly like the idea whereas 81.33 per cent of them just like it. It means almost all of them think that teachers' correction is very helpful to improve their English.

3.1.12 Instruction in Feedback.

The following table shows students' perception on whether they need clear instructions or correction technique from their teachers.

<div align="center">

Table No. 13

Instruction in feedback

</div>

S.N.	Perceptions	Frequency	Per cent
1	Strongly like it	28	46.67
2	Like it	28	46.67
3	Do not know	2	3.33
4	Dislike it	2	3.33
5	Strongly dislike it	-	-

The table above shows that 46.67 per cent of students strongly like and just like idea that they need clear instruction but not correction technique. But 3.33 per cent of them said that they do not have any idea. Similarly, a minority of the students i.e. 3.33 per cent show their disagreement towards the idea. It is found that students

want clear and direct instruction before doing the mistakes rather than the correction technique after the errors.

3.1.13 Attention to Teachers' Feedback

Students should pay attention to teachers' feedback if they want to improve themselves. Students were asked to give their opinion on whether they like to pay attention to the teachers' feedback on their writing not to repeat the mistakes. The table displays the detail information on it.

Table No. 14

Attention to Teachers' Feedback

S.N.	Perceptions	Frequency	Per cent
1	Strongly like it	34	56.66
2	Like it	19	31.67
3	Do not know	5	8.33
4	Dislike it	2	3.33
5	Strongly dislike it	-	-

The table depicts that 56.66 percent of students strongly support the idea of paying attention to teachers' feedback. Similarly, 31.67 per cent of them simply like it. On the other hand, 8.33 per cent of them said that they did not have any idea. Similarly, 3.33 per cent of them totally disagree towards the idea. In general, it is found that the most of the students are in the favor of paying attention to teachers' feedback.

3.1.14 Forms of Providing Feedback

Students were asked what forms their teachers use while giving written feedback. The table below shows the responses of the students.

Table No. 15

Forms of Providing Feedback

S.N.	Forms	Never	Sometimes	Frequently
1	Question	1 (1.67%)	47 (78.33%)	12 (20%)
2	Statement	4 (6.67%)	45 (75%)	11 (18%)
3	Imperative	1 (1.67%)	20 (33.33%)	39 (65%)
4	Exclamation	10 (16.67%)	27 (45%)	29 (48%)
5	Marking the errors	28 (46.67%)	26 (43.33%)	6 (10%)

The table illustrates that there is the variation in the use of forms according to the question and the purpose they are used for. Questions, imperatives and the statements are found to be used more frequently than other forms.

3.1.15 Students' Suggestion

At the end, the researcher tried to collect students' suggestion on what they want their teachers to do to help them revise their writing more successfully. The perceptions of the students are listed below:

- Give more ideas from the lesson.
- Explain it again and give some questions to practice.
- Give more questions on the related chapters and explain them.
- Do not correct directly, give students a chance to think about the mistakes.
- Share his ideas with the colleagues.
- Revise difficult words, spelling and meaning.
- Help in grammar.
- Help revise the lesson.
- Focus on meaning.
- Revise question answer.
- Be friendlier to the students.
- Take tests time to time.

-         Encourage the creativity of the students.

Though the students suggested some solutions, these did not seem very useful for the purpose. It may be because of the lack of the students' knowledge on it.

CHAPTER - FOUR
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes findings and recommendations or pedagogical implications of the study.

4.1   Findings

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of the data, the following findings have been derived.

i.   Teachers' written feedback is important to improve the students' writing. So most of the students (50 per cent) wanted to revise the task more than once following the teachers' feedback.

ii.   Forty five per cent of the students wanted to focus on all the aspect of language in teachers' written   feedback. They liked to be informed about their mistakes rather than readymade answers by the teachers.

iii.   None of the students wanted to get negative feedback. They wanted positive feedback and sometimes both simultaneously to improve themselves.

iv.   About forty three per cent (43.33) of the students wanted to get feedback at the end of each page rather than on the margin. They thought all the forms of feedback have a role to revise their draft.

v.   Fifty per cent of the students did not understand the feedback given by the teachers because of new strategies used by them and the lack of explanation about them.

vi.   Seventy per cent of the students ask their teachers or peers whenever they have problems. They suggested studying harder and looking at the previous model as some of the good strategies for this.

vii.   Majority of the students were (56.66 per cent) found paying attention to the teachers' feedback. They also suggested some tips for helping them to revise more successfully.

4.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings, some recommendations or pedagogical implications have been suggested as follows:

i. Teachers should explain their feedback strategies before applying them because many students may have problem in understanding what teachers actually say.

ii. It is better to ask the student how they are feeling about the feedback strategies which are used to comment on their written works. They help the teachers to change their responding strategies according to feeling of the students.

iii. Teachers should provide their students an opportunity to revise their task at least two times so that they can improve themselves.

iv. Students liked to be informed about their mistakes to get a chance to correct themselves. So, the teachers should not give them the readymade answer. Give them a chance to correct themselves.

v. Teachers should focus on all the aspects of language (grammar, vocabulary, etc) while providing feedback on students' written work.

vi. Teachers should be friendlier with the students and they should not use any new strategies while giving feedback before explaining them to the students.

vii. Teachers should encourage the students providing positive feedback to improve their written work.

viii. Students take teachers' feedback as a way to success. Therefore, the English language teachers should frequently give feedback to the students.

ix. Teachers should praise and encourage peer correction so that the students can correct each others' mistakes and can do better in learning the English language.

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APPENDIX I

Survey Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been prepared to have the authentic data to achieve the objectives of the study entitled **'Students' Perceptions on Teachers' Written Feedback'** which is conducted under the supervision of **Mr.Prem Bahadur Phyak**, Teaching Assistant, Department of English Education, Faculty of Education , T .U., Kirtipur, Kathmandu. The researcher hopes that your invaluable co-operation will be a great contribution in the accomplishment of this work for M.ED dissertation.

Instructions

The questionnaire is in two parts, please put a tick in the appropriate or give short answer in the space provided.

I   Personal information

Your gender: male   female

Name :

Age :

Class :

School's name :

II. Your perceptions on the teachers' written feedback you received

1.   How important is teachers' written feedback to your writing?

  a. Not important   b. important

  c. Very important   d. extremely important

2.   How many times do you want your teacher to respond to each of your
      writing   assignment?
      a. once/assignment   b. twice/assignment   c. three times/assignment

3.   Which aspect(s) in the writing would you prefer teacher written feedback to
      focus on? (You can tick more than one answer)
       a. paragraph construction   b. grammar   c. vocabulary
       d. content   e. mechanics (spelling and punctuation)
       f. organization of ideas   g. all of   them

4.   Teachers' written feedback: locating the error by underlying it and spelling.
      a. strongly like it   b. like it   c. do not know
      d. dislike it   e.   strongly dislike it.

5.   What kind of feedback would you prefer to receive?
       a. negative   b. Positive   c. both of them

6.   Where would you prefer your teacher to put the feedback in your paper?
      a. In the margin   b. at the end   c. both of them

7.   Would you like your teachers' written feedback to be………….
      a. specific?   b. general?   c. both of them?

8.   How helpful is the teacher written feedback in the following forms to your
      revision?
      a. question   b. statement   c. imperative   d. exclamation
      e. making the errors, but not actually correcting them.
      I) Forms of feedback not helpful at all   II) helpful   III) very helpful

9.   Do you find it easy to understand your teacher feedback?
      a. Yes   b. No

If No, can you give the reason why?

- Feedback is too general to understand

- Teachers use new vocabulary and structure in feedback

- Teachers use new feedback strategies

- Others (please specify)…

10. What strategies do you use to solve your problem?

a. asking the teacher or peers for help

b. consulting a grammar book or dictionary

c. others (please specify):……………………..

d. doing nothing

11. Teacher must correct students' written errors.

a. strongly like it   b. like it   c. do not know

d. dislike it   e. strongly dislike it.

12. Teachers' corrections help me learn and improve my English.

a. strongly like it   b. like it   c. do not know

d. dislike it   e. strongly dislike it

13. It is more helpful to give clear, direct instruction on my writing errors than suggesting a correction technique.

a. strongly like it   b. like it   c. do not know

d. dislike it   e. strongly dislike it

14. I always pay attention to my teachers' written feedback on my writing and I do not make the same error once the teacher corrects it.

a. strongly like it   b. like it   c. do not know

d. dislike it   e. strongly dislike it

15.   How often does your teacher use the following forms to provide written feedback to your writing?

Forms of feedback

a. never   b. Sometimes

c. Frequently, please write any of these types against the following alternative

- Question (why don't you use capital letters at the beginning of a sentence?)
- Statement (I really like your ideas and organization)
- Imperative (change the preposition; correct the spelling)
- Exclamation (excellent! Nonsense!)
- Marking the errors, but not actually correcting them

16. What do you want your teacher to do to help you revise more successfully?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you very much for your cooperation!