

大一外文系學生對師生寫作個別會談的期望

EFL English-Major Freshmen's Expectations of Writing Conferences

by

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大一外文系學生對師生寫作個別會談的期望

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摘要

師生寫作個別會談在英語為母語的寫作課之研究已經被許多學者探討。即便如此，有較少的研究是以英語為非母語的學生為研究對象，亦沒有深入探討這些學生對於寫作個別會談的需求以及期望。因此，本論文之研究目的在於幫助教師了解大一外文系學生對寫作會談的期望。除此之外，研究內容還包括影響學生期望的因素為何。

本論文之研究對象為一班18位台灣中部一所私立大學外國語文學系之大一學生，而他們皆來自大一英文寫作課程。研究的資料來源包含學生們所填寫的問卷調查以及與12位學生進行訪談的錄音檔。問卷評量採五分法來衡量學生對於師生寫作個別會談的期望，統計方法則以SPSS 視窗軟體來分析問卷中之資料。而訪談之目的在於了解學生對師生寫作個別會談期望之理由，並檢視學生們在問卷之回應是否與訪談內容相符，以提供更精確的質化分析。

本研究結果顯示大多數的學生期待文章內容及組織方面的口頭建議，而他們也較期待老師用給予提示的方式來指正他們的錯誤。此研究也發現，學生期望在會談中若不知道如何正確用英文表達問題或回答時可以使用中文，他們也比較期待寫作會談是以個別的方式進行而不是團體進行。另外，研究也發現學生對於寫

作會談的期望似乎和他們經常遭遇的寫作難題有關。

關鍵字：師生寫作個別會談、寫作回饋、教師書面回饋、學生期望



EFL English Major Freshmen's Expectations of Writing Conferences

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ABSTRACT

Although the role of conferencing in L1 writing programs has been documented by many researchers, relatively few studies have focused on second language learners' needs as well as expectations toward writing conferences. Hence, the current study aimed to investigate expectations of writing conferences from the perspectives of 18 EFL English major freshmen in a private university in central Taiwan. With this purpose, the researcher also examined factors that led to their expectations.

Data were mainly gathered from questionnaires as well as recordings of interviews with 12 voluntary participants. Questionnaires were administered to examine students' expectations. The computer software package SPSS15.0 for Windows was adopted to compute quantitative data in order to provide descriptive statistics. Additionally, interviews data helped explain what students expected and why they had such expectations of writing conferences.

Results showed that most students expected oral feedback on global issues and they preferred indirect feedback. It was also found that they expected flexibility in the language use during the conference and that they preferred one-on-one conferencing

to group conferencing. The students' expectations of writing conferences seemed partially relevant to writing difficulties that they tend to encounter.

key words: writing conference, feedback on writing, teacher written feedback, students' expectations



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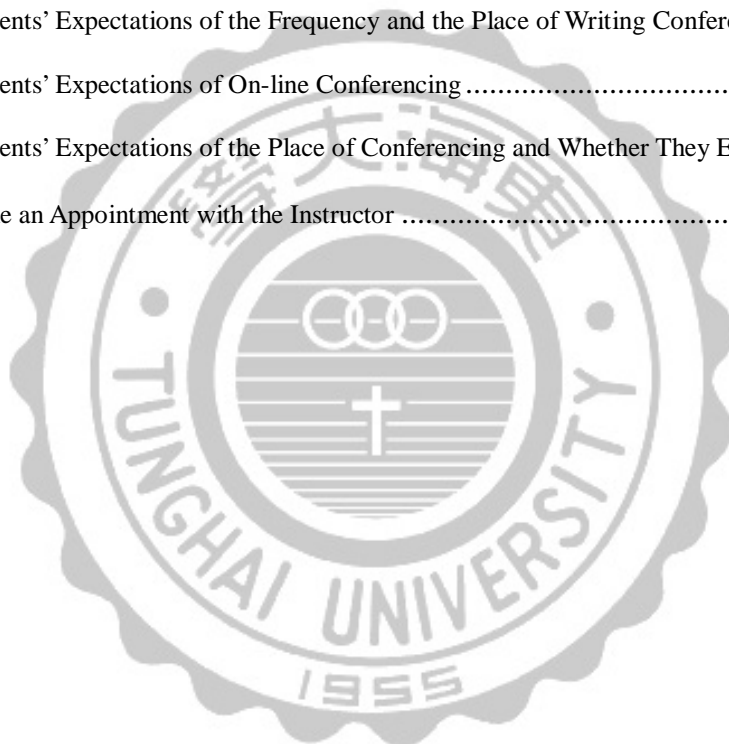
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty years, research in language education has dedicated considerable attention to the provision of feedback on students' writing (Saito, 1994). Writing conferences, one of the most prevailing ways of providing feedback, have become increasingly popular tools for delivering writing instruction in L1 settings (Carnicelli, 1980; Jacobs & Karliner, 1977; Murray, 1979, 1985; Rose, 1982; Simmons, 1984; Sokmen, 1988; Sperling, 1991; Wong, 1988; Zamel, 1985), and recently, this approach has started to become prevalent in the L2 contexts as well (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990).

Generally speaking, a writing conference refers to a one-on-one conference that allows students to manage the interaction of communication, to actively participate in the discussion process, and to clarify teachers' responses in a way that cannot be duplicated in the classroom (Freedman & Sperling, 1985). Writing conferences have been characterized by many scholars (e.g., Black, 1998; DeMott, 2006; Freedman & Katz, 1987; Freedman & Sperling, 1985; Walker & Elias, 1987; Wong, 1988) as a vital element for enhancing students' composition proficiency and they offer interactive channels for providing students with individualized feedback (Rose, 1982).

In other words, conferences in the form of brief meetings with students during their writing process are settings where teachers can give students advice on work in progress (Harris, 1986).

Statement of the Problems

Several researchers have investigated the effectiveness of writing conferences in writing instruction (Fang, 2006; Fritts, 1976; Gitzen, 2002; Huang, 1997; Jacobs & Karliner, 1977; Lai, 2005; Liu, 2009a, 2009b; Storch, 2005; Wang, 2008). Some scholars have examined factors that lead to the successfulness of conferences (Chen, 2005; Gitzen, 2002; Walker & Elias 1987) and others have analyzed the discourse of the interaction during conferences (Freedman & Sperling 1985; Newkirk 1995; Sperling, 1990, 1991; Walker & Elias 1987). More recent studies regarding writing conferences focus more on the dynamics of the teacher-student interaction (Artman, 2005; Demott, 2006), arousing the debated issue of teacher dominance in writing conferences. These studies have either put more emphasis on teacher's comments or have been conducted from the perspectives of teachers; consequently, it is obvious that relatively few studies have focused on second language learners' expectations of oral feedback on writing products in the writing conference. More noteworthy is the fact that the existing research only looks into students' expectations and perceptions of the teacher's comments, without extending the examination to the factors that

influence their expectations.

Many researchers have suggested that there should be an agreement between teachers' and students' expectations so that feedback can be effective (e.g., Brown, 2009; DeMott, 2006; Diab, 2005; Hyland, 1998; Leki, 1991; Raimes, 1991; Saito, 1994; Schulz, 1996, 2001). According to Guo (2002), when there were differences between teachers' and students' expectations on writing conferences, many conflicts would occur (p. 5). Similarly, Diab (2005) pointed out that differences between teachers' and students' expectations and views about feedback may lead to miscommunication and unsuccessful teaching and learning. In line with Diab, Schulz (1996, 2001) also suggested that teachers should attempt to realize their students' beliefs about feedback and to bridge any gap between their own and their students' expectations. Echoing what Diab and Schulz have mentioned, DeMott (2006) claimed that "teachers' understanding of roles and expectations for both themselves and students during writing conferences holds promise as a way of helping students move past the developmental hurdle of understanding what kinds of authority (e.g., eventual evaluation authority) the teacher retains during the conference and what kinds of authority (e.g., choice of genre, topic, or even of foci for evaluation) the teacher is delegating to the student" (p. 46). Siding with the above four scholars, Brown (2009) stated that if teachers' and students' expectations do not correspond, it can lead to

students' discontent, and learning can be impaired.

To conclude, understanding students' expectations plays an essential part in both teaching and learning. Hence, this study set out to thoroughly explore students' expectations of teacher-student conferencing and factors causing such expectations.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The current study aimed to closely investigate second language learners' expectations of writing conferences. With this purpose, the researcher also closely examined factors that may affect their expectations.

This study was designed to address the following research questions:

1. What are EFL English major freshmen's expectations before attending the writing conferences?
2. Why do they have such expectations?
3. What pedagogical implications can be arisen from the findings of the present study?

Definition of Terms

The process approach:

It refers to writing instruction that focuses on the writing process rather than the written product (Arndt, 1993). More often than not, it is a multi-draft process which consists of three stages: pre-writing, writing, and post-writing (Ferris, 2004).

Additionally, teacher feedback is vital in assisting students to move through the stages of the writing process. Namely, teachers support students through multiple drafts by providing feedback and suggestions for students to revise.

Teacher feedback:

Teacher feedback can also be used as substitution for “teacher comment” and “teacher response”. It means giving specific information about the student’s writing performance, which provides a basis for maintaining or improving the student’s writing performance (Saito, 1994). More importantly, it is a fundamental element of a process approach to writing. In the present study, teacher feedback is defined as any input provided by the teacher to students for revision, and it can be delivered either by teacher written feedback or writing conferences. Teacher feedback usually includes both global issues and local issues.

Global issues:

Global issues refer to writing concerns about ideas or content, organization, logic, genre, argument, thesis, development, clarity of purpose, and awareness of audience (Harris & Silva, 1993).

Local issues:

Local issues refer to writing concerns about sentence and word level problems, such as grammar, mechanics, spelling, language use, and punctuation (Harris & Silva,

1993).

Teacher written feedback:

It is also known as “teacher written commentary”. It consists of handwritten commentary that indicates the strengths and weakness of a student’s writing product. More specifically, it can be defines as teachers’ written response to students’ writing performances (Williams, 2004).

Writing conference:

A writing conference is also known as “a writing tutorial” or “a teacher-student conference” (Carnicelli, 1980). In this study, it refers to a one-on-one teacher-student conversation about the student’s written product or writing process. During the conference, the teachers can listen to what students express on the spot, which allows students to convey their concerns about writing (DeMott, 2006). Conferencing also allows teachers to monitor student progress, and it offers specific help with a current draft (Newkirk, 1995).

Direct Feedback:

Direct feedback is also known as “direct error correction” or “overt correction”. It is one of the two strategies utilized by teachers to respond, comment on and to correct grammatical errors to improve students’ accuracy in writing. In direct correction, the instructor provides the correct forms in students’ faulty sentences

(Ferris, 1997). The teacher may also cross out the error and write the correct word over it (Frantzen, 1995).

Indirect Feedback:

Indirect feedback is also known as “indirect error correction”. It is the other strategy for teachers to provide feedback on grammar correction. It refers to prompting students about the location of errors line-per-line (Hyland, 1990). Namely, indirect feedback means that the teacher provides students with some indication that an error exists in their writing (Ferris, 1997), which may involve the teacher underlining or circling errors or putting an error code over the error (Frantzen, 1995). In this respect, students are required both to identify the type of error and to self-correct the error (Lee, 1997).

Expectations of writing conferences:

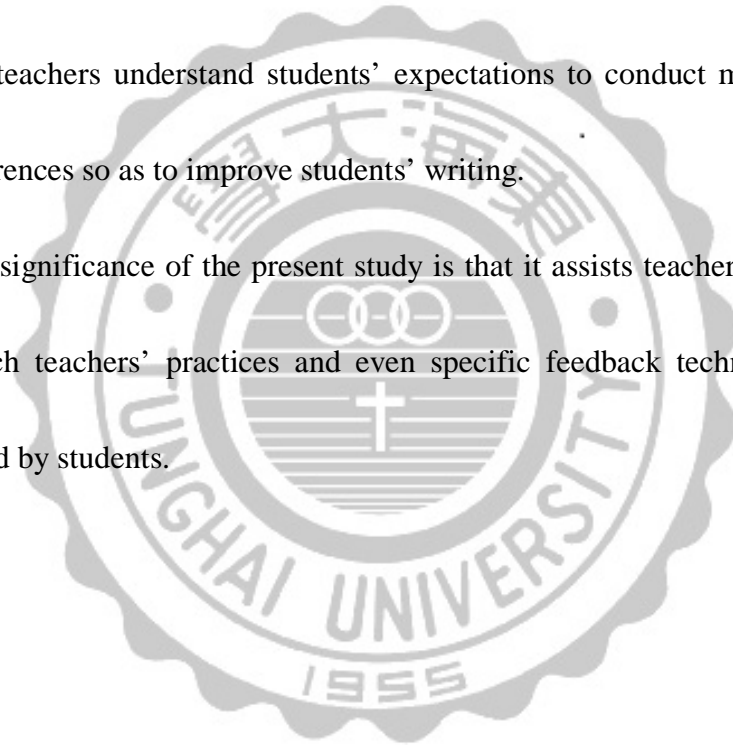
In this study, it refers to students’ expectations of oral feedback in a writing conference and that of the conference format, time, as well as place.

Significance of the Study

It is of paramount importance to note that each student's expectation of teacher feedback differs considerably from others. Although it is uneasy for instructors to cater to all the students' different needs, a full understanding of their expectations and adjusting to them are necessary.

One of the most obvious significances of the current study is that it will help EFL writing teachers understand students' expectations to conduct more successful writing conferences so as to improve students' writing.

Another significance of the present study is that it assists teachers in perceiving ways in which teachers' practices and even specific feedback techniques may be misunderstood by students.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The first section of this review discusses the process approach to teaching writing. After that, the review depicts teacher feedback in the writing process, including written commentary and writing conferences. Then, effects of writing conferences on students' writing performance are described in detail. Next, characteristics of effective writing conferences are elaborated on at length. Finally, studies regarding students' expectations toward teacher feedback, with a particular focus on writing conferences, are thoroughly discussed.

The Process Approach to Teaching Writing

Before the 1960s, teachers were inclined to only focus upon learner's writing products. Nevertheless, since the early 1970s, teachers have begun to intervene in students' writing from the beginning of the writing process, and a trend in the field of second language writing has been the shift from a product-oriented approach to a process-oriented approach in writing instruction (Reid, 1993). Since then, quite a few researchers (e.g., Emig, 1971; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Raimes, 1979; Reid, 1993; Silva, 1990; Zamel, 1976) have begun to explore L2 writing processes and the use of process approach with L2 learners.

The process approach to teaching writing is a multiple-draft process that consists of three stages: pre-writing (generating ideas), writing, and post-writing (revising). Reader feedback on the various drafts is what pushes the writer through the writing process on to the eventual written product. Unlike the product approach whose attention is paid to the final work and which students are asked to produce only one draft, the process approach emphasizes that teachers should help student writers through multiple drafts by offering feedback for revision during the process of writing. The focus throughout the process-oriented approach is on the “production and communication of ideas, which requires that learners focus from the outset on purpose and audience” (Williams, 2005, p. 75). That is to say, in a process-oriented approach, a writer considers audience and purpose before starting to write. In short, the process approach to teaching writing emphasizes generating ideas, writing multiple drafts, providing feedback, and revising (Raimes, 1985).

Moreover, the process approach to teaching writing is student-oriented; therefore, the teacher acts as a facilitator, coach, reader, and evaluator. This approach also inspires students to talk over and share their drafts with peers as well as teachers, and it helps students revise drafts by the means of using previous drafts and by consulting peer and teacher feedback as a basis for improvement (Wang, 2008). In summary, the process approach prevails in writing instruction because the traditional timed

single-draft writing approaches have been criticized as lacking opportunities for writers to reflect, revise, and discuss with others. Of particular concern here is that several researchers (e.g., Diaz, 1985, 1986; Krapels , 1990; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Raimes, 1979; Rorschach, 1986; Urzus, 1987; Zamel, 1976) have discovered that the process approach can be applied to both L1 and L2 writing instruction.

Zamel (1985) is one of the most ardent advocates of allowing the insights of L1 research to guide research and pedagogy in L2 writing, especially concerning the uptake of process-oriented approaches. She calls on L2 writing instructors to notice the complexity of the composing process as it includes several stages such as rehearsing, drafting, and revising. Zamel further suggests that ESL writing teachers should encourage students to write multiple drafts and they should provide constructive feedback between drafts and during the writing process. She also indicates that teachers should also try to utilize teacher-student conferences to maximize teaching effectiveness (Zamel, 1985, p.96-97).

To summarize, this shift from a product-oriented writing instruction to a process-oriented approach in paradigm has inevitably contributed to the shift of focus in teacher feedback and the modes of feedback provided for students.

Teacher Feedback in the Writing Process

Teacher feedback is also known as teacher comment and teacher response, which means giving specific information about the student's writing performance. It provides a basis for maintaining or improving the student's writing performance; more importantly, it is a fundamental element of the process approach to teaching writing. Basically, there are two major ways to provide students with teacher feedback. One is teacher written commentary, and the other one is teacher-student writing conference in verbal form. Additionally, teacher feedback usually includes both global issues and local issues.

In general, teacher feedback helps writers “work out the text's potential and to comprehend the writing context, providing a sense of audience and an understanding of the expectations of the communities they are writing for” (Hyland, 2003, p. 177). It is also widely recognized that teacher feedback on early drafts of a writing product helps improve students' subsequent drafts (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981) and that teacher feedback is positively valued by L2 learners (Hyland, 1998) because the objective of L2 writing, more often than not, is to teach both the conventions of writing in a particular culture as well as L2 grammatical forms (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Paulus, 1999).

Providing feedback has been viewed as one of the ESL and EFL writing teachers'

most crucial tasks, offering individualized attention to students in order to facilitate the development of students' writing. Previous research has suggested that there may be a mismatch between the feedback that students expect and the feedback that is actually provided (Montgomery & Baker, 2007, p. 84). It is of utmost importance that there should be an agreement between teachers and students to make feedback more effective, (e.g., Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Diab, 2005; Hyland, 1998; Jeon & Kang, 2005; Leki, 1991; Plonsky & Mills, 2006; Raimes, 1991; Saito, 1994; Schulz, 1996, 2001).

Teacher Written Feedback

Teacher written feedback means written commentary provided by the teacher to the student for revision. According to Hyland (2003), teacher written feedback consists of handwritten commentary on the student paper itself, and it is treated as responding to a student's writing product (p. 180).

Numerous studies have shown that both teachers and students look upon teacher written feedback as an integral part of the writing process (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Fatham & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1995, 2002; Hyland, 2003; Montgomery & Baker, 2007). Teacher written feedback not merely points out the strengths and weaknesses of the students' writing but also helps students monitor their own progress. Moreover, it provides a permanent record of teacher response to the students' writing. Although

teacher written feedback has been regarded as an effective approach to improving students' writing, there are still some problems.

First of all, teacher written commentary makes it difficult for students to comprehend the feedback and thus they fail to revise effectively (Arndt, 1993; Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 1995, 1997; Freedman, 1987; Goldstein, 2004; Knoblauch & Brannon; 1981; Sommers, 1982 ; Yeh, 2001). According to Knoblauch and Brannon (1981), students often cannot perceive the written commentary, and even when they can, they may fail to understand how to use teachers' comments to improve their writing (p.1). In other words, it has been recognized that students may have trouble perceiving teacher written commentary on account of "the unintelligibility of teachers' handwriting, the unfamiliarity of symbols and grammar terms used by teachers" (Yeh, 2001, p. 165). With an eye to grappling with this kind of problem, Freedman (1987) advises that teacher written commentary should be supplemented by conferencing. Echoing what Freedman has recommended, Conrad and Goldstein (1999) suggested that when revision problems are of a more global, abstract nature, they are best tackled through face-to-face discussions between the teacher and the student instead of through written feedback (p.173).

Another problem identified by Sommers (1982) to explain the inefficacy of written feedback in improving students' writing is the confusion that occurs when

teachers give feedback as if students' drafts are final versions, "embedding any comments about meaning in feedback about form" (Leung, 2008), and "making evaluations rather than making suggestions" (Murray, 1982, p. 151). Because written comments lack any chance for clarification and this kind of approach to providing feedback only deals with "minor points of language or style" (Arndt, 1993), several researchers have suggested that more global revision problem relating to meaning and organization could merely be adequately addressed through discussion and dialogue in face-to-face writing conferences (Arndt, 1993; Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Leung, 2008; Zamel, 1985).

In conclusion, despite the negative evidence of the value of written feedback, the solution is not necessarily to avoid using written commentary, but to adjust the nature of it (Freedman, 1987; Leung, 2008; Sommers, 1982). That is to say, teacher-student writing conferences should not completely take the place of teacher written feedback but be coordinated with it to address both text-specific issues and global issues such as organization and support in students' writing (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994, 1996). As Leung (2008) pinpoints, written commentary should be firmly "located in the context of classroom dialogue, with face-to-face encounters between students and the teacher where there is negotiating of meaning" (Leung, 2008, p. 29). Since teacher written feedback may not provide adequate text-specific and global issues for

students' revision, there is a need to conduct one-on-one writing conferences as supplementary instruction.

Writing Conferences

A writing conference, also known as a writing tutorial or a teacher-student conference, refers to a face-to-face conversation between the instructor and the student in which both of them can discuss a written product and discover strategies to improve it (Harris, 1986; Sperling, 1991). More often than not, it is scheduled after students have received written feedback from the teacher. In a writing conference, the teacher may teach writing skills or strategies specific to a certain student's needs. Moreover, the instructor may ask open-ended questions to guide the student's critical reflection on writing.

A writing conference can also be described as a student-centered learning situation in which students can learn how to express their ideas clearly (Knapp, 1976), in which students can be encouraged or praised (Jacobs & Karliner, 1977; Freedman, 1981), and in which mutual interactions occur between the teacher and the student (DeMott, 2006; Fassler, 1978; Reigstad, 1980). Unlike teachers' written feedback, which may be more authoritative, writing conferences provide an opportunity for students to negotiate with teachers. Negotiation in the writing conference may clarify the need for revision and the strategies for undertaking the revision. Students,

consequently, may understand more clearly what to revise, how to revise, and why they are required to do so.

Overall, teacher-student writing conferences are of mutual benefits to both students and the teacher. Below, three principal advantages of the teacher-student writing conference are illustrated.

First, its individualized instruction in writing is more effective than group instruction (Carnicelli, 1980; Leung, 2008; Weissberg, 2006; Williams, 2005; Yeh, 2001). Actually, a writing conference helps the teacher to respond to students' diverse writing needs (Hyland, 2003; Riley, 1997). Carnicelli (1980) contends that the individual nature of a teacher-student writing conference is able to provide student writers with a deep sense of security. According to Leung (2008), the flexible method in catering for the needs of individual students in writing conferences is profitable. Similarly, as William (2005) suggests, a teacher-student writing conference intends to "personalize and tailor feedback in a way that is not possible in general classroom instruction" (Williams, 2005, p. 114). In line with Leung (2008) and William (2005), Weissberg (2006) suggests that feedback given in a one-to-one setting tailored to a particular student "constitutes an unparalleled opportunity to provide targeted, individualized instruction" (p. 261).

Another advantage that a teacher-student conference brings is that it helps clarify

meanings and clear up ambiguities (Carnicelli, 1980; Fang, 2006; Fritts, 1976; Gitzen, 2002; Huang, 1997; Jacobs & Karliner, 1977; Lai, 2005; Liu, 2009; Storch, 2005; Wang, 2008; Williams, 2005; Yeh, 2001). Feedback sessions have been recommended as avenues for clarification of meaning through the teacher-student interaction in a writing conference. As a writing conference proceeds, the instructor attempts to help the student perceive what he or she has expressed in the writing. To reach this end, the instructor is inclined to resort to clarification. That is to say, the teacher may check the comprehensibility of oral comments made and ask the student questions or provide a means for suggesting other choices of language and structure for the student to consider. The teacher may also assist the student in decision-making during the writing conference. Carnicelli's rationale (1980) in favor of conferencing lies in the fact that both the teacher and the student can be offered opportunities for clarification and negotiation by means of the two-way communication in a teacher-student conference. The teacher can also benefit from the conference in the sense that he or she can gauge the student's understanding of the written comments on the drafts, thereby making himself or herself understood more fully. Furthermore, unclear parts of written commentary on students' essays can be satisfactorily clarified (Yeh, 2001, p. 175). Put another way, negotiation in the writing conference may clarify the need for revision and the strategies for undertaking the revision. Students, consequently, may

understand more clearly what to revise, how to revise, and why they are required to do so.

Finally, a teacher-student writing conference helps shy students to raise questions and convey opinions or worries in a private setting (Williams, 2004). Since students meet one on one with the teacher, they can ask questions that they might have been afraid to ask in the classroom. During the conference, the teacher can listen to what the student expresses on the spot, which allows the student to convey his or her concerns about writing. Additionally, several studies (e.g., Carnicelli, 1980; Jacobs & Karliner, 1977; Walker, 1992) have proved that the dialogue taking place in writing conferences enable students to express their own concerns and thereby get more actively involved in evaluating their writing products.

According to Ferris and Hedgcock (2005), there are two primary reasons why teacher-student conferences have achieved widespread popularity as a teaching technique. One reason is that writing conferences save teachers much time and energy. By probing students' thinking and writing processes during the writing conference, the teacher can spend less time figuring out meaning by reading students' drafts only and writing comments on them. This coincides with Carnicelli's notion (1980) that conferencing is the most efficient use of the teacher's time. The other reason is the immediacy of interaction and negotiation that allows for on-the-spot clarification of

different issues.

To sum up, a writing conference is one of the most effective writing activities for students to revise their drafts, and it has also been generally recognized as an increasingly popular pedagogical setting in which teachers can guide students to evaluate their own writing. Notwithstanding the advantages mentioned above, there are also some potential problems with the practice of teacher-student writing conferences, such as depriving students of creativity, students not knowing how to make the most of the conference, and students being afraid of interacting with the instructor during the conference (Guo, 2002).

To begin with, writing conferences are likely to deter students from developing creativity (Guo, 2002). To illustrate, some students may passively incorporate the teacher's advice into their work without thinking further. In addition, some learners, especially L2 students, may not be able to make the most of the conference since they may lack the experience, interaction skills, or aural comprehension abilities (Ferris, 1997; Hyland, 2003). Lastly, quite a few students "have cultural inhibitions about engaging informally with authority figures, let alone questioning them" (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990). For example, when a teacher explains why there is an error, even if the student does not fully understand, he or she will be apt to backchannel indicating an affirmative. Goldstein and Conrad's study argues that students are significantly more

likely to be successful with their revisions if they feel comfortable expressing that they still do not understand, even after being explained. In short, teachers should pay attention to the individual circumstances that each student brings and should attempt to adjust their style accordingly. After all, conferencing the same way for each student is not able to meet the needs of the individuals.

To conclude, writing conferences have emerged as a useful form of teacher feedback to complement traditional written comments on students' writing. Teacher written feedback has also been found to be effective when it is coupled with student-teacher conferencing (Ferris, 1997; Hyland, 2003). As noted earlier, quite a few students find understanding teacher written feedback problematic. Conferencing allows both students and teachers an opportunity to trace the causes of the problems arising from student writing and feedback, and to develop strategies for improvement. Most importantly, both written feedback and teacher-student conferencing play an indispensable part in improving students' writing; as a result, they demand cautious planning and careful reflection to be utilized effectively and efficiently.

Effects of Writing Conferences on Students' Writing Performance

Teacher-student conferences have been recognized as a positive and effective approach to offer feedback on students' writing products. Almost at all levels of teaching writing, from elementary school to college, teacher-student conferences have been widely conducted by writing instructors.

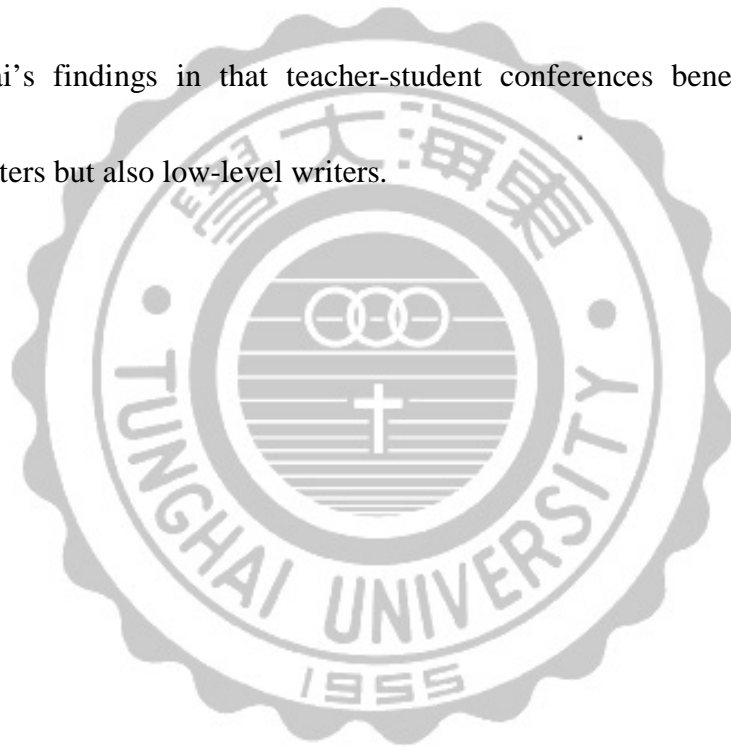
Over the past thirty years, studies have explored the effectiveness of writing conferences at the elementary level (Calkins, 1983; Michaels, 1987; Nickel, 2001), the secondary level (Atwell, 1987; Murray, 1979; Sperling, 1991, 1992), and the college level (Carnicelli, 1980; Carroll, 2002; Freedman & Katz, 1987; Jacobs & Karliner, 1977; Lai, 2005; Sperling & Freedman, 1987). Most of these researchers have found writing conferences to be an effective method for teachers to work individually with students on their writing. Below, studies regarding the effects on writing performance are discussed.

Lai (2005) examined the effectiveness of teacher-student writing conferences in improving coherence in Taiwanese high school students' English composition and explored whether any effect would be observed related to student's proficiency in writing. Lai's study involved 92 third-graders from two classes of approximately equivalent writing proficiency who were required to write four descriptive topics, with the first topic being the pretest and the last topic as the posttest. The major

findings of her study suggested that teacher-student conferences benefited both the students of higher and lower writing proficiency in terms of immediate revisions and the posttest. She further commented that the effectiveness of the written feedback seemed to be contingent on the students' proficiency in writing to some extent. Based on these findings, Lai concluded that using writing conferences was a useful alternative to the common method of written feedback, especially when teachers wanted to deal with writing problems beyond the sentence level.

Like Lai (2005), other researchers (Fang, 2006; Liu, 2009; Wang, 2008) have explored the effects of conferences on college students. The data generated by Fang's study, derived from a five-point Likert scale survey questionnaire filled out by 52 Taiwanese sophomores, was utilized to measure participants' general opinions concerning the writing conferences. Results show that 60% of the participants held positive attitudes towards the writing conference, yet 27% of them dislike conferencing mainly because of "getting no tips from the teacher about how to write" and "not knowing what the teacher says" (Fang, 2006, p. 87). Similar to Fang, Liu (2009b) surveyed 65 American students and 45 ESL students, who were all enrolled in a first-year composition class in a university in the United States, about the effects of teacher-student conferences on students' writing performances. The survey results reveal that all the students expected the writing conference would better help them

revise their drafts. In similar fashion, Wang's qualitative study of a Taiwanese writing teacher and 28 junior English majors revealed that 80% of the participants recognized the effectiveness of the teacher-student conference. Moreover, 79% of the students stated that meeting with their teacher aided them in understanding their strengths and weaknesses of English writing and enhanced their writing proficiency as well. The results of studies conducted by Fang (2006), Liu (2009), and Wang (2008) were similar to Lai's findings in that teacher-student conferences benefit not merely high-level writers but also low-level writers.



Effective Writing Conferences

A successful writing conference has seven main factors: focusing on students' writing process as well as writing products (Bowen, 1993; Chen, 2005; Ferris, 2004; Gitzen, 2002; Hyland, 2000; Murray, 1985; Ulichny & Watson-Gegeo, 1989; Walker & Elias 1987; Walker, 1992), activating the students' participation (Leung, 2008; Newkirk, 1995; Williams, 2005), establishing a peer/peer relationship with the students (Carnicelli, 1980; Newkirk, 1989; Pemberton, 1997; Williams, 2005), offering the students opportunities to raise questions (Bowen, 1993; Newkirk, 1989, 1995; Murray, 1985; Ulichny & Watson-Gegeo, 1989; Wong, 1988), providing the students with a predicable structure (Bowen, 1993; Freedman & Katz, 1987; Williams, 2005), making good use of the teachers' limited instruction time (Harris & Silva, 1993; Williams, 2005), and assisting the teachers' understanding of the students' expectations (Liu, 2009b; Newkirk, 1995; Wang, 2008; Zamel, 1985). Successful writing conferences share the aforementioned characteristics as discussed in details below.

Effective writing conferences, first of all, are characterized by a discussion on both the writing process and product. Bowen (1993) claims that successful teacher-student conference sessions offer the student not merely the chance to discuss both process and product but also the impetus to reflect on his or her writing process.

Specifically, teachers should try to help students discover writing skills on their own, which allows students to maintain ownership of their writing and recognize the importance of the revising and editing steps in the writing process. On a similar note, Walker (1992) argues that “successful conferences focus on criteria and evaluations of students’ work” (p. 79). A teacher ought to encourage students to respond critically to their writing product. A teacher should not merely inspire students to discuss elements beyond only the content of their writing but also guide them to discuss the structure of their work. In a like manner, the results of Walker & Elias’ (1987) study on the teacher-student reflections on writing conferences and their level of satisfaction with their work have shown that the focus of successful conferences was on the students and their work. That is to say, the teacher should help the student to cultivate the habit of reflecting critically on his or her own writing process and to self-evaluate his or her own work. As indicated by Hyland (2003), the teacher has to give more autonomy to students by encouraging them to be more responsible for their own writing. Furthermore, the teacher should avoid giving too many direct instructions to the student; instead, he or she should give more options for the student to think and choose from. This corresponds to what Ferris (2004) comments, the teacher has to reduce directives in the writing conference in order to inspire the student to reflect and express ideas on the writing.

In addition, students' active participation is needed to reach the fullest effectiveness of a writing conference. Students' passive listening to the teacher's criticism and advice does not work as effectively as their active participation. According to Williams (2005), if students prepare questions in advance and bring them to the conference, actively participating in the discussion with the instructor, they will improve their subsequent drafts (p. 114). She additionally suggests that teachers should encourage students to start the conference by asking questions or expressing concerns regarding writing" (Williams, p. 115). Hence, the student should be active in preparing for the conference and in negotiating meaning during the conference. The teacher can also promote active participation by assigning the student some work to do in preparation for the conference, such as an outline or a list of questions to be discussed during the writing conference. During the writing conference, the student should also actively take notes to pave the way for revision.

Another factor, teacher's attitude, also pertains to the successfulness of a teacher-student writing conference. As a matter of fact, the quality of conferences has a lot to do with teachers' attitude. It has always been a dilemma among writing teachers that whether they should adopt a positive, supportive, critical or confrontational attitude (Leung, 2008). Pemberton (1997) suggests that "tutors should try to establish a peer/peer relationship with the students to replace the hierarchical

mode of instruction (high-status teachers passing knowledge down to low-status students) with a collaborative model in which the tutors and students become co-learners” (Pemberton, p.14). By the same token, the teacher should establish rapport with students and provide them with support. To be more specific, the teacher should strike a balance between encouragement and criticism. He or she should be positive but still be willing to tell students their weakness and how to improve it (Williams, 2005, p.115).

Fourthly, there is mutual distribution of knowledge and input in an effective writing conference. Both the teacher and the student should be granted the right to initiate and sustain a cycle of talk. As suggested by Bowen (1993), successful conferences are symbolic of “reversible role relationships” (p.191). That is to say, the teacher should not dominate the talk but offer a chance for students to raise questions or express concerns about their writing. The teacher and the student are like equal authorities in a writing conference. The teacher, a collaborator, works with the student to produce the best piece of work. The findings of Newkirk’s (1995) study also help support the argument that flexibility in the role of teacher and student in the writing conference is crucial to maximum the benefits of the interaction. Newkirk (1995) concluded that “role-shifting” is evident in the process of conferencing (p. 212). The teacher may shift from simply providing oral feedback to asking questions to direct

the conference, and let the student learn the language and expectations of a conference performance. In reality, the teacher and the student share equally in the conversation, even if the teacher may initiate the move most of the time. Likewise, if a student is unwilling to collaborate, the teacher might start by giving direction, and once the student warms up to the conversation, the teacher can then let the student take the lead little by little. In short, both the teacher and the student take up the conversational responsibility during the conference (Murray, 1985; Newkirk, 1989).

In addition to the above four features, a predicable structure also gives rise to a successful conference. An effective writing conference proceeds with a predictable structure in order that students will know what they should prepare for as well as what they can expect. Freedman & Katz (1987) analyzed a number of L1 teacher-student conferences and identified a typical structure, which is composed of five steps: opening, student-initiated comments and questions, teacher-initiated comments and questions, reading of parts of the essay, and closure. They concluded that the teacher-student writing conference is “a structured speech event with a predictable nature” (p. 77). This mirrors what Williams (2005) mentions in her book: there is a need for the teacher to tell students what to expect from a teacher-student conference and make clear what their roles as well as responsibilities are ahead of time. Anderson (2000) also pinpointed that predictable writing conferences make students familiar

with the steps and the procedures that also help teachers save time. Namely, the teacher should let students know the purpose and the structure of a teacher-student writing conference; otherwise, they may end up with attending the conference without any preparation in advance.

Next, an effective teacher-student conference deals with one problem at a time and first attends to the most important one. The teacher spends time helping the student along during the writing process by discussing that process with him or her in relationship to the work underway; more importantly, they deal with one problem and solve it before addressing another. Even though a conference can address various issues such as ideas, content, organization, and sentence structure, the teacher needs to prioritize problems that will impede the reader's understanding (Harris & Silva, 1993). For example, if the student does not have adequate ideas, then the teacher should first concentrate on probing the student to generate more ideas rather than coping with sentence level concerns at this point. Most importantly, the teacher should remind the student that all writing problems cannot be addressed in one sitting. In summary, both the teacher and the student ought to use the limited time wisely (Williams, 2005).

Lastly, understanding students' expectations is indispensable to conduct an effective writing conference. The significance of understanding students' expectations has been widely recognized by several researchers (e.g., Hyland, 1998, 2000; Liu,

2009a, 2009b; Newkirk, 1995; Nickel, 2001; Wang, 2008; Zamel, 1985; Yeh, 2001).

A good illustration that helps shed light the need to explore students' expectations is Nickel's (2001) study. In Nickel's case study of four elementary school students in the first-grade classroom in the U.S., she found that students would prone to retreat from teacher-student writing conferences that they characterized as puzzling. Nickel additionally discovered that confusing conferences were characterized by a mismatch between the teacher's and the student's expectations. As in the above two studies that were conducted in ESL settings, a similar conclusion was reached in Yeh's (2001) research. In her study, conducted in an EFL setting, she argued that conferencing might become less effective when teachers' agendas override students' intentions in writing. If teachers dominate the agenda, students will be less likely to have an opportunity to negotiate meaning and fail to achieve better revision. Hence, she proposed that teachers should strike a balance between their own agendas and students' expectations, stressing the significance of students' voices.

A common theme emerges from the findings of the above studies (e.g., Nickel, 2001; Yeh, 2001) is the need for teachers to understand both students' and their own roles and expectations in teacher-student writing conferences. These studies have demonstrated how conflicting roles and expectations for and during the writing conference have both negative and positive implications for student development in

writing. As pinpointed by DeMott (2006), “teachers’ understanding of roles and expectations for both themselves and students during writing conferences holds promise as a way of helping students move past the developmental hurdle of understanding what kinds of authority (e.g., eventual evaluation authority) the teacher retains during the conference and what kinds of authority (e.g., choice of genre, topic, or even of foci for evaluation) the teacher is delegating to the student” (DeMott, 2006, p. 46). Accordingly, there is a strong need for researchers to investigate students’ expectations.

In conclusion, effective writing conferences are characteristic of discussion on both students’ writing process and their work, students’ willingness to participate, teachers’ positive attitude, teachers’ and students’ equal distribution of talk, proceeding with a predictable structure, making good use of limited time, and teachers’ understanding of students’ expectations.

Students' Expectations of Teacher Feedback

A particular relevant line of research in teacher response to L2 writing has examined students' preferences about and expectations of teacher feedback (Cohen, 1987, 1991; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Ferris, 1995; Hedgcock & Letkowitz, 1994, 1996; Leki, 1991). On the whole, students vary greatly in what they expect from their teacher in the form of feedback (F. Hyland & K. Hyland, 2006). Students often have their own concerns and expectations, and it is imperative that teachers discover these and attempt to address them in students' feedback. More importantly, research has consistently indicated that teachers must tailor their comments to specific students and their expectations, as well as to the teaching context. In other words, a teacher should try to provide students with feedback based on their expectations.

Below, studies regarding students' expectations of written feedback and that of teacher-student writing conferences are respectively discussed.

Expectations of Written Feedback

Researchers have attempted to discover what students expect from the written teacher feedback (Hyland, 1998). Studies on students' expectations of teacher feedback have yielded mixed results (Williams, 2005). Generally speaking, students do expect feedback from their teachers, and they expect it on content (e.g., Ferris, 1995; Semke, 1984; Zamel, 1985; Woroniecka, 1998), form (e.g., Ferris, 1997;

Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996; Schulz, 1996), sentence-level grammatical errors (e.g., Ashwell, 2000; Cohen, 1987; Enginarlar, 1993; Ferris, 1995, 1997; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996; Leki, 1991; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Saito, 1994; Ziv, 1984) and word choice. According to Ferris (1997), many L2 writers expect specific overt feedback from teachers on the form and structure of their writing. As for ESL students, they usually expect teachers to notice and comment their grammatical errors (Hyland, 2003). More often than not, they tend to feel insecure if teachers do not offer feedback on grammar. More deplorable is the fact that some students may even feel resentful if their teachers do not correct grammatical errors. Cohen's (1987) study and Ferris' (1995) study are such cases.

Cohen (1987) surveyed 207 American students from different university language classes in order to explore their expectations of the amount of written feedback. The results of the study demonstrated that students expected to receive more feedback on local issues, such as grammar and mechanics, than on global issues, such as content and organization. Ferris (1995) replicated Cohen's study and found similar results. Results of Ferris' study showed that students paid the most attention to feedback on grammar and that they expected outside sources to assist them in understanding or responding to the teacher's written comments, which echoes what several researchers have noted regarding global and local issues. Furthermore, it has

been discovered by Ferris (2003) and Zamel (1980) that focusing on global issues in early drafts and on local ones in later drafts benefits students (Montgomery & Baker, 2007). On one hand, focusing on global issues prevents students from “having to correct local issues on sentences and paragraphs that may be deleted or changed in later drafts” (Montgomery & Baker, 2007, p.85). On the other hand, students may feel inhibited and limited in their ability to develop the global issues during the writing process if accuracy of local ones is emphasized in early drafts (Campbell, 1998).

In addition, most students expect comments on ideas and organization in earlier drafts and on grammar in later drafts (Hyland, 2003; Schulz, 1996). To be more specific, they would like the teacher to focus on content and organization in order that they can discover meanings, generate ideas, and ensure that they are writing in an organized way. Additionally, almost all the students appreciate positive comments as they can remember specific examples of praise given by the teacher (Enginarlar, 1993; Ferris, 1995; Radecki & Swales, 1988), yet some of them also expect to receive constructive critical feedback from teachers (Connors & Lunsford, 1993; Hyland, 2003; Williams, 2005). One of the most enlightening parts of these studies is the discussion on the impact that teacher comments may have on students.

To sum up, students expect written feedback on both local and global issues. Teachers should be aware of the power of feedback, since it may affect students’

motivation and self-esteem.

Expectations of Writing Conferences

While previous studies regarding teacher-student conferences have focused on the debated issue of teacher dominance (e.g., Demott, 2006; Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Haneda, 2000; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997; Walker & Elias, 1987; Walker, 1992; Weissberg, 2006) or have been centered on either teachers' or students' perceptions of writing conferences (e.g., Harris & Silva, 1993; Williams, 2002, 2004) a few researchers recently have also started to explore expectations of the writing conferences from students' point of view (e.g., Black, 1998; Chen, 2005; Liu, 2009a; Wang, 2008; Yeh, 2011). Previous studies have shown that students would expect writing conferences to help them discover ideas or grammatical errors, receive better grades in the subsequent drafts, pave the way for revision, and improve writing.

Among all the above studies, one of the common issues is students' different expectations of writing conferences. Chen's (2005) study of interactional influences on L2 writing conferences explored ESL students' beliefs as well as expectations for the teacher-student writing conference. Participants of Chen's study include four teachers and eight students in the natural context of a university classroom in Hong Kong. She used an overarching ethnographic approach to examine the setting, background and purpose of the writing conferences as well as students' expectations

of their interactions with teachers during a writing conference. As Chen states, some students were worrying about talking to the teacher in English, while others thought asking questions to sustain the conference was necessary. Chen further explained that students' negative pre-conference feeling resulted from anxiety about "self-image and self-perceived inability to communicate and ask questions in English" (p. 99). In other words, students are afraid to ask questions or discuss writing concerns because they think that they are unable to express themselves clearly in English. More noteworthy is the fact that all the eight participants expected the conferences to be helpful to their assessed assignment. They reported that oral feedback delivered in the writing conference would help them discover what areas need to be worked on. The variations of students' expectations were also shown in Liu's (2009b) and Yeh's (2011) studies. The purpose of Liu's (2009b) study is to investigate the expectations of 65 American students and 45 ESL students enrolled in a freshman English composition class in a southwestern university in America. The main research methods of her study were questionnaires and interviews, and the findings of her study showed that most of the students expected the teacher to tell them the requirements of the essay so as to receive a better grade in the subsequent draft. In addition to the expectation of understanding the requirements, many participants of Liu's study, especially ESL students, also expected the instructor to indicate all the grammar errors in the draft. It

was also found that the majority of the American students expected to tell the teacher their intention and meaning in their essay, yet fewer ESL students did not have this expectation. In a similar fashion, Yeh (2011) carried out an exploratory qualitative study on conferencing in Taiwanese EFL writing classrooms. She used a five-Likert scale questionnaire including 8 statements and interviewed with her students to explore their expectations of the writing conferences. The findings of Yeh's (2011) research reveal that most students expected the teacher to tell them how to revise their essays and how to get good grades. That is to say, the students would like to ensure that their essays live up to the requirements set by the teacher so that they could receive a better grade. Slightly different from students in Liu's study, the participants in Yeh's study expected to discuss their writing with the instructor actively and to ask any possible individual writing problems. What makes Yeh's study different from others' is that she asked students whether they expect the writing conference to be optional. It was found that 50% of the participants remained neutral and 44% of them agreed.

Secondly, one obviously contradictory point among those studies (Black, 1998; Chen, 2005; Liu, 2009) is the issue of social rapport; more specifically, the relationship between teachers and students. In contrast to Chen's study reviewed earlier, which revealed that some students expected the interaction during the

teacher-student conference to be worrying, participants in Liu's (2009) study expressed that they enjoyed talking with the instructor privately and they expected the conference to help enhance a better personal relationship with the instructor. Similar to the findings of Liu's study, Black (1998) indicates that what L1 and L2 college students expect from a conference is a new relationship with the teacher, a relationship in which the forces of gender, authority, race, and culture are minimized.

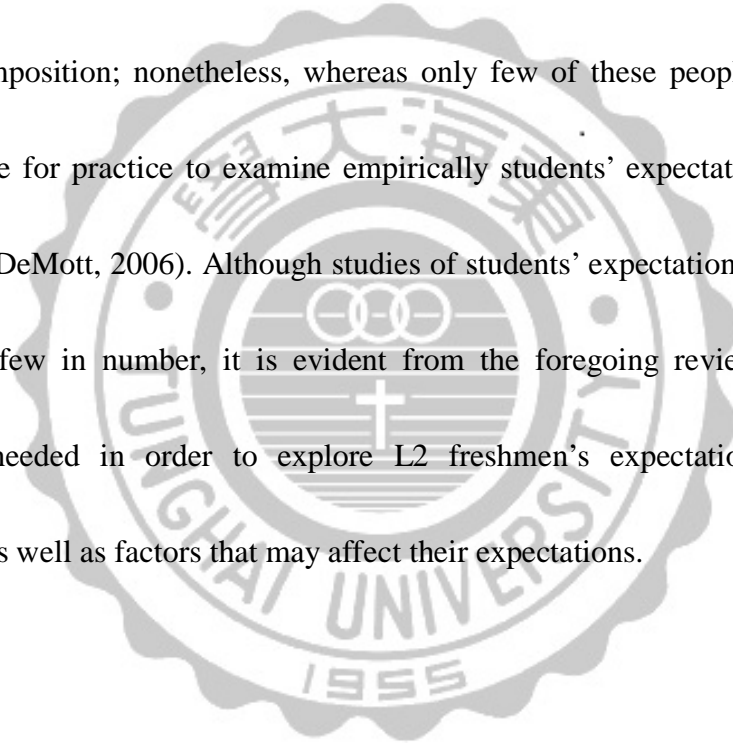
Another similar finding that these studies share is that almost all the students fully expected that writing conferences would facilitate the revision stage. Chen's (2005) research showed that all of the students expected the conferences to be useful, which corresponds with Liu's (2009) study. The survey results and interviews of Liu's study displayed that all the students expected the conference to help them revise drafts.

Based on the reviewed literature above, a reasonable conclusion that can be drawn is that it is vital to understand students' expectations so as to conduct successful writing conferences as well as to avoid the potential mismatch of their expectations. In considering second language learners, Zamel (1985) pointed out the importance of listening to students' voices during writing conferences: "We should set up collaborative sessions and conferences during which important discoveries can be made by both reader and writer" (p. 97). In line with Zamel (1985), quite a few

researchers (e.g., DeGuerrero & Villamil, 2000; Weigle & Nelson, 2004) have claimed that collaborative attitudes and behaviors which increase the affective relationship between the participants can lead to better receptiveness of students' comments and the resolution of identified problems in subsequent drafts. In short, instead of dominating the talk, teachers should try to help students experience writing in English as a collaborative process. In Liu's (2009b) study, she concluded that it is indispensable for teachers to listen to student voices and incorporate students' expectations during conferences even if teachers do not necessarily improve their teaching by accommodating all of their students' needs. In line with Liu's conclusion, Wang's (2008) study helps support the claim that understanding students' needs and expectations of writing conferences is essential. Wang additionally suggested that teachers, as course designers, should always put students' needs and expectations in the first priority. As in Liu's (2009b) and Wang's (2008) studies, a similar conclusion was reached in Reid's (1994) study. Reid (1994) claimed that it is of paramount importance for teachers and researchers to examine students' expectations and to respect them as much as possible. In like manner, a series of articles by Hyland (1998; 2000; 2003) have pointed out that teachers should consider students' needs, preferences, and expectations when providing feedback.

In sum, from the preceding review, it is obvious that the role of conferencing in

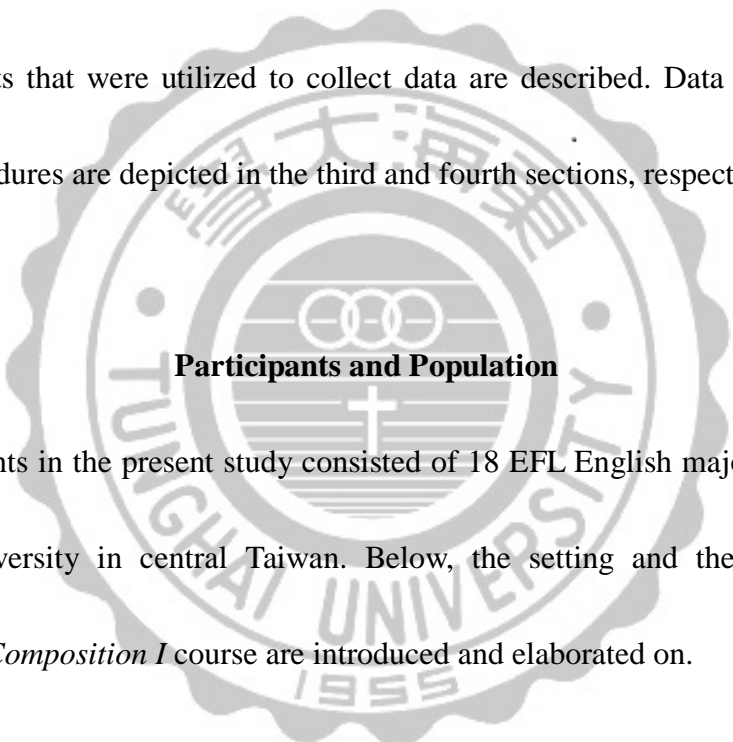
L1 writing programs has been documented by many researchers (e.g., Black, 1998; DeMott, 2006; Harris, 1986; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997), yet relatively few studies have focused on second language learners and students' needs as well as expectations toward writing conferences. Besides, a large number of researchers and scholars (e.g., Black, 1998; Harris, 1986; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997) have suggested that the writing conferences ought to be an essential part of teaching freshman composition; nonetheless, whereas only few of these people have moved beyond advice for practice to examine empirically students' expectations of writing conferences (DeMott, 2006). Although studies of students' expectations in L2 writing contexts are few in number, it is evident from the foregoing review that further research is needed in order to explore L2 freshmen's expectations of writing conferences as well as factors that may affect their expectations.



CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

This chapter can be divided into four sections which overall present the methodology of the current study. Participants and population, including the setting and the rationale for choosing the *Composition I* program, are first introduced. Next, the instruments that were utilized to collect data are described. Data collection and analysis procedures are depicted in the third and fourth sections, respectively.

The watermark is a circular seal for Tuaghai University. It features a central emblem with three interlocking rings and a cross below them. The text 'TUAGHAI UNIVERSITY' is written around the inner circle, and '1955' is at the bottom. The outer ring contains the university's name in Chinese characters.

Participants and Population

Participants in the present study consisted of 18 EFL English major freshmen in a private university in central Taiwan. Below, the setting and the rationale for choosing the *Composition I* course are introduced and elaborated on.

The Setting

On the basis of the literature review described in the previous chapter, this research drew on teacher-student writing conference data gathered in a college English composition classroom for freshmen in a private university in central Taiwan. The purpose of this study was to investigate EFL English major freshmen's

expectations of their one-on-one writing conferences with their composition teacher and to explore the reasons why they had such expectations.

The present study taking place in the second semester mainly focused on all of the one-on-one writing conferences for one writing assignment. The instructor conducted the writing conferences for her students individually after they had received written comments. In the conferences, the instructor commented on the student's draft, allowed the student to raise any possible questions, and offered suggestions on how the student could revise his or her paper for the final version.

The Rationale for Choosing the Composition I Course

Composition I is a first-year required course, which introduces students to the writing process and to the conventions of written English, paragraphs with clear topic sentences and supporting details, and coherent essays in multiple drafts.

According to DeMott (2006), freshman composition courses “persist as a ubiquitous organizational structure for assimilating college students into writing as a prospective member of academic discourse community” (p.13). Moreover, English majors are more likely to practice writing in English than other majors. Since the instructor of the *Composition I* course is also the supervisor of the thesis, the researcher selected a freshman composition course for English majors as the setting

for the present study out of convenience.

The instructor's writing conference was chosen to be observed because she regards writing conferences as an effective revising strategy. The process approach is also adopted in her writing course and characterized by prewriting, drafting, evaluating, getting external feedback and revising.

Instruments

According to Hesse-Biber (2010), a mixed-method approach uses a research design encompassing both quantitative and qualitative data to respond to certain questions. As acknowledged by Cresswell and Clark (2007), mixed methods research can balance the weaknesses of either quantitative or qualitative research. They went on to claim that mixed-method studies could offer "more comprehensive evidence" into investigation than either qualitative or quantitative studies (p.9). Hence, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in the current study.

On the one hand, quantitative data was obtained by means of a written questionnaire consisting of items with Five-Likert scale formats to elicit participants' expectations of their writing conferences. On the other hand, qualitative data was mainly derived from semi-structured interviews consisting of both close-ended questions and open-ended ones, with a view to gaining more in-depth information

about why students had such expectations. The open-ended questions asked in the interviews allowed participants to describe, in their own words, the reasons they expected in that way.

In brief, instruments that were utilized to collect data for the current study included questionnaires and audio recordings of the interviews. In the following section, they are described respectively.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires have both Chinese and English versions (*Appendix A*), yet participants only received the Chinese one. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: The first part was a 10-item background survey, designed by the researcher in order to obtain background information of the participants, the second part including 14 five-point Likert-type items dealt with students' expectations of writing conferences, and the third part was made up of 9 items that required students to tick and 1 open-ended question.

The design of the questionnaire was based on the findings of previous studies and some of the questions were adapted from the ones designed by previous researchers such as Liu (2009a) and Yeh (2011), which enhanced the validity of the research tool. More importantly, the questionnaire was mainly utilized to answer the

first research question.

In summary, the questionnaire was conducted to explore specifically those 18 participants' expectations of their writing conferences. The questionnaire was designed to allow the participants to complete it within ten minutes to fifteen minutes outside the teachers' office before they went to the writing conference.

Interviews

According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989), "In qualitative research the most typical interviews are those which are open, informal, and unstructured. These interviews can take many directions, based on the information being sought by the interviewers and the responses provided by the subjects" (p. 38). Moreover, interviews allow the researcher to test whether her observations and impressions are supported or clarified by the participants.

For more detailed information and to cross-check information found in the questionnaires, conducting interviews with respondents is crucial. A semi-structured interview consists of specific and defined questions determined beforehand, but at the same time it allows some elaborations in the questions and answers (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p.39). To this end, the interviews in this research were designed as semi-structured ones for more in-depth information and questions were adapted from

DeMott's (2006) and Liu's (2009a) studies. They aimed to better understand the students' expectations of writing conferences and were mainly conducted to answer the second research question concerning the reasons for students' expectations of writing conferences. During the interviews, the researcher used an interview guide (*Appendix B*) that contained "outlines of topics to be covered, with suggested questions (Kvale, 1996, p. 129)." The researcher also took handwritten notes during the interviews in order to double-check the interview recordings data.

Audio Recordings

The recording of audio data through devices such as tape recorders has been a significant development within qualitative research (Cresswell & Clark, 2007). Audio-recorders are most frequently used in interviews or for the researcher to dictate his or her own fieldnotes (Cresswell & Clark, 2007; Hesse-Bieber, 2010; Kvale, 1996). With participants' permission, the researcher recorded all the interviews with a digital voice recorder. In short, all the interview data were audiorecorded and converted to MP3 format.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection began in the second semester in 2013. Before the data collection procedure, the classroom site was visited several times by the researcher to make herself familiar with the classroom setting and to make students feel comfortable while being interviewed. Additionally, the researcher briefly explained the purpose of her visits and encouraged the students to behave normally for fear that curiosity or anxiety about the researcher's presence might hinder their productivity and comfort (Graves, 1983). The researcher also told them that she would offer each participant free tutoring for one hour after data collection as a token of appreciation.

After all of the 18 participants scheduled their writing conferences with their writing instructor, questionnaires were administered to examine their expectations of the writing conferences before they met their instructor for the conferences. All of the participating students were required to come 15 minutes earlier than their scheduled conference. Then, questionnaires were distributed to them in person and the 18 participants were asked to fill out the questionnaires outside of the instructor's office.

After questionnaires were all finished, the researcher recruited voluntary students in the *Composition I* course for semi-structured interviews. The researcher then distributed consent forms (*Appendix C*) to them and scheduled the time for each interviewee. Eventually, 12 students were willing to be interviewed by the researcher.

In administering the semi-structured interviews, the researcher used an interview schedule that listed the questions to be asked or the topics to be elicited, and offered space to record the information produced during the interview (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p.40). In the interviews, the researcher also validated students' survey answers by asking why they made that choice in the questionnaire.

To summarize, data were gathered from a freshman composition course and they included questionnaires as well as audio recordings of interviews with student participants.



Data Analysis Procedures

A mixed-method approach was employed in this research owing to the fact that mixed research methods can help researchers to gain mutually supplementary data and to increase the trustworthiness of multiple data sources (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). To put it briefly, data that were analyzed in this research mainly derived from two parts: survey data and interview data.

Formal data analysis would be deferred until all data were collected (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). To begin the data analysis process, the audio recordings of interviews were first transcribed, summarized, and categorized according to common themes. After that, the researcher checked these transcriptions against the notes that she took during the interviews. The researcher transcribed all digital as soon as possible after each interview, and she transcribed all the audio recordings on her own because it allowed her to become intimately familiar with the data. It also allowed her to compare the recorded and transcribed data against her own notes of the interviews. Of paramount importance is the fact that this provided a crosscheck before and during data analysis.

With respect to the quantitative data, the questionnaire responses were recorded in an excel spreadsheet and then imported to SPSS 15.0 for statistical analysis. Frequencies, means, and standard deviations of responses on the questionnaire items

were calculated and compared. Descriptive statistics from the SPSS15.0 software provided the researcher with basic insights and an initial impression of the data, information that would be useful for subsequent analysis phases of the research (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p.41).



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter reports and discusses the findings of the present study. The results of questionnaires and interviews are drawn to answer the two research questions: (1) EFL English-major freshmen's expectations before attending the writing conference, and (2) the reasons why they have such expectations. The participants' background information is first presented in the following section. Then, individual item's descriptive statistics and the interpretation of survey results are thoroughly discussed. The interview findings are further integrated into specific exploration of survey items in order to cross validate the survey results.

Participants' Background Information

According to the data collected from the questionnaire, the participating students' (3 males and 15 females) background information can be summarized as follows. All of the 18 students but one have taken English writing classes before college. Ten of the participants had English writing classes during senior high school; five of them started taking English writing courses in junior high; two of them learned English writing in elementary school. Among them, only 4 students had attended

English writing conferences in senior high school.

All of the participants said that they would expect to meet with the instructor in the writing conference; two of them strongly looked forward to the writing conference. Nevertheless, more than half of the participants showed that they would feel nervous to meet with the instructor in the one-on-one writing conference. Only 8 of the 18 participants would not feel nervous to go to the writing conference.

Considering the oral feedback given in the writing conference with their *Composition I* teacher, six students most expected oral feedback on content (33.3%); six, on organization (33.3%); four, on grammar (22.2%). Only two students chose oral feedback on language use and word choice (11.1%). For a clear view, the result is displayed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Students' Expectations of the Oral Feedback Given in the Writing Conference (N=18)

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
Content	6	33.3
Organization	6	33.3
Grammar	4	22.2
Language Use / Word Choice	2	11.1

As can be seen in the table, the majority of students expected more oral feedback on content and organization. The results reveal that the freshmen valued teacher feedback on global issues more than that on local issues.

In addition, a little more than half of the students expected to receive indirect feedback that guided them to think and decide on what to revise; fewer than half of the students expected direct instruction and suggestion for revision. The results are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Students' Expectations of Feedback Types in the Writing Conference (N=18)

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
Direct Feedback	8	44.4
Indirect Feedback	10	55.6

Finally, in terms of self-rated levels of English writing ability, none of the 18 freshmen regarded their writing ability as good or excellent. Twelve of them reported their writing at a mediate level. These students also reported writing problems identified in teacher written comments, as displayed in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Writing Difficulty that Students Tend to Encounter

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	Rank
Unclear thesis statement/topic sentence	12	24.5	1
Imprecise language use	9	18.1	2
Lacking concrete supporting details	7	14.3	3
Many grammatical errors	6	12.2	4
Lacking main points	6	12.2	4
Weak organization	6	12.2	4
Lacking transitional words	3	6.1	7

As can be seen in the table, students listed unclear thesis statements / topic

sentences as the writing difficulty that they most frequently encountered. This is probably due to the fact that expressing the main idea of a paragraph or an essay clearly in thesis statements or topic sentences is a course objective of *Composition I*. The freshmen in the present study might not have such kind of writing instruction before entering college.



English-major Freshmen's Overall Expectations of the Writing Conference

The second section of the questionnaire aimed to investigate freshmen's expectations of the teacher-student writing conference. Response frequencies (Number), standard deviations (SD), means (M), and rank (R) for all the 14 items in the questionnaire addressing students' expectations of the writing conference are demonstrated in Table 4.4 on next page.

As shown in Table 4.4, the students expected the conference to help them understand their writing strength and weakness (M=4.5), receive good grades (M=4.3), develop better interaction with the instructor (M=4.3), receive more suggestions that guide them to think and revise (M=4.3), comments on content (M=4.3) and organization (M=4.3). The results are consistent with the students' expectation of oral feedback reported in the previous section. The participants expected feedback at the global level, such as content and organization.

Table 4.4 Overview of Students' Expectations of the Writing Conference (N=18)

Items	1	2	3	4	5	SD	M	R
I expect the conference to discover my strengths / weakness of writing.	0	0	0	9	9	0.274	4.5	1
I expect the conference to help me get good grades on the course.	0	1	1	7	9	0.228	4.3	2
I expect to receive selective feedback including more options for me to think and choose from.	0	0	1	11	6	0.268	4.3	2
I expect the instructor to offer concrete suggestions on how to improve contents.	0	0	0	13	5	0.298	4.3	2
I expect the instructor to offer feedback on the aspect of organization.	0	0	0	12	6	0.298	4.3	2
I expect the conference to help develop a better personal relationship with the instructor.	0	0	1	11	6	0.268	4.3	2
I understand the purpose of the writing conference.	0	0	1	12	5	0.285	4.2	7
I expect to tell the instructor the difficulty I encounter during the writing process.	0	0	1	12	5	0.285	4.2	7
I expect the instructor to offer feedback on language use / word choice.	0	0	2	10	6	0.241	4.2	7
I expect the instructor to help me resolve my writing concerns.	0	1	2	9	6	0.210	4.1	10
I expect the instructor to directly correct grammatical errors.	0	1	2	10	5	0.224	4.1	10
I expect the instructor to tell me the requirements of the essay in order to get good grades.	0	2	2	9	5	0.195	3.9	12
I understand the structure of the writing conference.	0	1	3	12	2	0.268	3.8	13
I expect the conference to be conducted in Chinese.	1	5	7	4	1	0.145	2.9	14
Mean							4.1	

Note: 1 = fully untrue of me 2 = untrue of me 3 =slightly true of me 4 = true of me 5 = fully true of me

To know more about student's expectations on oral feedback given at the writing conferences, twelve students were interviewed. The interview results mirrored questionnaire results in terms of students' preferences for oral feedback on global issues.

Five of the students interviewed for this study reported that they preferred oral feedback on content. One student mentioned:

I always spend a lot of time coming up with examples as supporting details, yet I am not very sure whether they are appropriate or not. Sometimes, I even tend to write down too many irrelevant examples. Therefore, I expect the instructor to provide me with advice on content. (S₆ in Q5)¹

In like manner, another stated:

Because I occasionally find it hard to figure out an interesting topic sentence or to write a specific thesis statement, I expect the teacher to pay more attention to my content. (S₅ in Q5)

Four of the interviewed explained their preference for oral feedback on organization. Their explanations are worth considering in some depth. One of them remarked:

I think feedback on organization is really necessary, because my English teacher in senior high school did not teach how to write a well-organized essay. (S₁₆ in Q5)

Likewise, another student emphasized the importance of feedback on organization by claiming that writing appealing introduction and conclusion paragraphs will become

¹The researcher numbered the participants from 0 to 17. S₆ refers to the student who was numbered 6; Q5 refers to the fifth interview question. The quotes are the researcher's translation of the original text in Chinese.

harder without the instructor's advice. (S₃ in Q5)

Echoing what the aforementioned two students, a student added:

At times, I know what I want to write, but I am liable to have difficulty translating the ideas into a series related paragraphs. So, I expect the instructor to help me perceive order in a chaos of supporting details for my writing to become more organized. (S₉ in Q5)

To summarize, results of the present study confirmed that students expected to receive feedback on both content and organization. Such findings demonstrate students' strong preference for feedback on global issues. More importantly, this finding is remarkably similar to that of previous research assessing student reactions to or preferences toward teacher feedback (Arndt, 1993; Ferris, 2011; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994, 1996; Jacobs, Curtis, Braine, & Huang, 1998; Mangelsdorf, 1992; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Semke, 1984; Woroniecka, 1998; Zamel, 1985; Zhang, 1995, 1999). To be more specific, these studies have found clear evidence demonstrating that students prefer teacher feedback in the form of comments on content and organization rather than on grammatical, structural and surface errors.

Nevertheless, the aforementioned finding seems to differ from Cohen's (1987), Ferris' (1995), and Leki's (1991) studies. Cohen (1987) examined 217 students in different university language classes who were required to complete surveys on the amount and the effectiveness of teacher written feedback. The results of Cohen's study indicated that students expected their instructors to focus feedback on local

writing issues more than on global ones. Ferris (1995) replicated Cohen's study in a context where 155 students were asked to complete only a draft of an essay and she found similar results to Cohen. Likewise, Leki (1991) surveyed ESL college students in order to discover their preferences for teacher feedback. She found that most of the participants expected to have their grammatical errors corrected by their teachers and that having an error-free written product seemed to be a major concern for those students. In short, the results mentioned above echo what previous studies have shown: L2 students seem to attach a great deal of importance to writing accuracy and are eager to receive the teacher's comments on their grammatical errors. Some students may even be disappointed if the teacher does not provide feedback on grammar (Leki, 1991; Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

Although most of the participants in the current study referred oral feedback on global issues, interview data reveal that they still considered feedback on grammar to be essential. Asked whether they expected the instructor to correct grammatical errors during writing conferences, almost all of them gave a positive answer.

Several students mentioned that they would feel a deep sense of insecurity if the teacher did not help them correct grammar mistakes. For example, one student commented:

I expect the instructor to correct all the grammatical errors and explain to me during the conference. If she did not do so, I would feel a strong sense of

insecurity and that she might not have read my essay carefully. (S₁₆ in Q7)

Another student described:

I hope that the instructor can at least help me correct serious grammatical errors if she doesn't have time to correct all. I think it's all right for her to ignore some of the minor errors in grammar. (S₁ in Q7)

Such statements highlight EFL students' need for error and grammar correction.

As a matter of fact, previous studies on students' views toward teacher feedback (e.g., Diab, 2005; Ferris, 1995; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Komura, 1999; Leki, 1991; Roberts, 1999) have consistently reported that second language learners expect and value feedback on their grammatical errors.

Another significant finding is students' preferences for indirect error correction. Asked about specific types of error feedback, some of the interviewees appeared open to the idea of indirect error correction instead of maintaining that only the instructor could correct errors. Specifically, they felt that they would learn more by means of self-correction if they could collaborate with the teacher in the revision and correction processes. For instance, one student stated:

I expect the teacher to locate errors and give me clues about how to correct them. (S₆ in Q7)

Another student said:

Because I may not be able to detect all the grammatical errors on my own, I expect the instructor to help me underline my errors in grammar. (S₅ in Q7)

Still another reported:

I expect the teacher to circle my grammatical errors and provide me with an opportunity to correct them by myself. (S₇ in Q7)

In line with earlier findings (Arndt, 1993; Diab, 2005; Leki, 1991; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Saito, 1994), the students participating in this study seem to corroborate previous findings that students expected grammar correction and that indirect error correction was greatly preferable to them. That is to say, they expected the teacher to indicate in some way that an error exists but does not provide correction, letting them know there is a problem but leaving it for them to solve it.

In brief, bearing some resemblances to previous findings in L2 contexts (e.g., Diab, 2005; Enginarlar, 1993; Ferris, 1995; Leki, 1991; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Saito, 1994; Schulz, 1996, 2001), the EFL students in the present study revealed a deep concern with written accuracy and error-free writing. It is also worth mentioning that findings in this study revealed strikingly similar responses to those provided by the 39 ESL students in Saito's (1994) study. Both Saito's study and the current study showed that students expected error correction in an indirect way. Even though these two groups of L2 students were in very different instructional and cultural settings, it seemed that they held generally similar views regarding grammar correction.

What is noteworthy is that the participants did not expect the writing conference to be conducted in Chinese ($M= 2.9$). Surprisingly, only 5 of the participants reported that they expected to speak Chinese rather than English in the writing conference. As

far as the language used in writing conferences is concerned, the majority of the interviewees preferred English, which validates the questionnaire results. However, more than half of them expected to be allowed to use Chinese in certain cases. To be more specific, they would appreciate the availability of mother tongue if they did not know how to express clearly.

One of the students who appreciated the use of Chinese said:

Sometimes I can't use English to express exactly what I originally would like to say. (S₃ in Q10)

The student further talked about another merit of speaking in Chinese, commenting:

It takes time for me to think about how to ask questions in English. Also, since the conference length is short, I am afraid that I may not have time to discuss my writing with the teacher if I have to speak English. (S₃ in Q10)

In like manner, another student remarked:

I think a fear will provoke if I am asked to speak English in public or in front of my teacher. That may be related to social embarrassment, because I do not think I have a sufficient social skill. Besides, if I do not know how to use English to ask questions, the writing conference will not help me so much. (S₉ in Q10)

Nonetheless, some students seemed adamant about speaking in English and insisted that Chinese be prohibited, as revealed in the following passage:

I expect the conference to be conducted in English, because I think I am an English major. Besides, conversing in English is also a learning opportunity. So, I can learn how to express my ideas or writing concerns in English by means of writing conferences. (S₁ in Q10)

Another illustration of insistence on using English is below. The student stated:

As an English major, speaking English is not a big problem. Furthermore, I can also learn to think in English if the conference is conducted in English. (S₆ in Q10)

Still another student claimed:

I think using English in the conference provides me with an opportunity to learn to speak English fluently. Even if I do not know how to express, the instructor may teach me so that I can learn more. Also, I can learn native-like pronunciation or intonation from my teacher. (S5 in Q10)

The important point to make here is that students expected a need for flexibility in language use during writing conferences. Namely, Chinese should be accepted under certain circumstances as a last resort.

The result regarding students' preference for English is in contrast with that of Chen's (2005) study. Most of her participants, the sophomores in Hong Kong Polytechnic University, felt nervous about talking with the instructor in English. Resembling Chen's study in findings, another study conducted in Japan by Takaesu, Sudo, and Christianson (2010) disclosed 81 college students' anxiety about writing tutorials which originated from a perceived lack of their communicative abilities. In their study, several participants expressed their diffidence in speaking English. They concluded that those students' frustration over inadequate English speaking abilities might affect the effectiveness of writing conferences.

Despite previous research evidence pointing to L2 learners' fear of interacting with the instructor in English during the conference, the results of the current study indicated that most of the students still expected to use English to communicate with the teacher, to raise any possible questions, and to clarify meanings. For one reason,

they regarded speaking English as normal due to their identities as English majors.

For another, they treated communicating in English as an learning opportunity.



Students' Expectations of the Conference Types, Time, and Place

The third part of the questionnaire (items 15-24) aims to understand students' expectations of the conference format, time, and place. Table 4.5 presents students' responses to question 15 about students' expectations of the conference types and reasons why they expect the one-on-one or group conferences.

Table 4.5 Students' Expectations of the Way of Conferencing (N=18)

15-1 Students' Expectations of the Way of Conferencing		
Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
One-on-one writing conferences	16	88.9
Group writing conferences	2	11.1
15-2 Reasons for preferring one-on-one conferencing		
Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
I have more chances to raise questions	15	37.5
I have more chances to learn from the instructor	12	30
I do not want others to hear the dialogue with the instructor	6	15
I can enhance better relationship with the instructor	5	12.5
I feel less nervous	2	5
15.3 Reasons for preferring group conferencing		
Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
I can enhance better relationship with the instructor and peers	3	30
I can learn from peers	2	20
I feel less nervous	2	20
I would like peers to accompany me	2	20
Peers may help me raise questions	1	10

As shown in the table, 16 of 18 respondents indicated that they expected the writing conference to be conducted individually mainly because they would have more opportunities to ask questions (37.5 %), and learn from the instructor (30%).

Only 2 students (11.1 %) expected group-conferences because they could enhance harmonious relationships with their teacher and peer (30%). They also felt in the company of their peers, they could learn the strength of their peers (20%) and feel less nervous (20%).

Regarding the preference for solo or group writing conferences, all the interviewees stated that they would expect individual conferencing rather than group conferencing. Reasons mentioned by them during the interviews are summarized below.

Firstly, students would have more opportunities and courage to raise questions in one-on-one writing conferences. Some of the interviewees claimed that they would not have sufficient time to ask questions or discuss their writing with the instructor in a group writing conference. The others declared that they would dare not to bring up any questions if their peers were beside them during the conference. For instance, one student said:

In a group conference, I have to listen to others ask questions, but sometimes they may ask questions that are unrelated to my writing difficulty, so I feel it wastes my time and I may not have time to ask my own questions. (S4 in Q11)

Another student commented:

I feel that group conferencing limits the instructor's attention to each individual student and deprives me of the chance to ask particular questions and discuss the points that I am interested in" (S0 in Q11).

Still another pointed out the potential problem of domination by one student in group

conferences, saying:

Some dominant individuals may take over the sessions and other students will be inclined to remain silent. Like me, I tend to keep silent if there are others speaking for me. (S₈ in Q11)

Secondly, students will feel less nervous and more comfortable if they are conferred with the instructor respectively. Interview data reflects that students are likely to feel nervous and uncomfortable on account of peer pressure stemming from small-group conferences. One student stated:

I don't want others to hear the dialogue between the instructor and me. If there are other classmates with me during the conference, I will feel ill at ease. (S₁ in Q11)

That feeling was echoed by several others. Another student commented:

My classmates may be ashamed of me if they see my weaknesses in writing during group conferences. (S₁₁ in Q11)

Likewise, one student pointed out:

I will feel under pressure during group conferences, because I am afraid that my classmates will know my English writing proficiency is not as good as theirs. (S₅ in Q11)

In summary, writing conferences that are held individually may reduce students' anxiety, discomfort, and even stress.

Lastly, students are able to build rapport with the instructor and to learn more by means of individualized instruction delivered in one-on-one writing conferences. The following students are such cases. One student said:

One-on-one writing conferences are more effective in that the instructor can deal with my own writing concerns and that I can become closer to her. I also have more time to clarify confusing passages on my work. (S₈ in Q11)

Similarly, another student commented:

I don't have to care about how my peers feel about my questions in individual conferences. Compared with general writing courses, the instructor can tell me exactly where to improve and we can discuss my writing together in individual conferences. So, I think I can learn more from her. (S₁₆ in Q11)

Still another student reported:

One-on-one writing conferences provide the teacher with opportunities to address concerns specific to my own written product. (S₃ in Q11)

In conclusion, students in the current study expected writing conferences to be conducted individually. For one thing, one-on-one writing conferences provide an instructor with an opportunity to instruct individual students as well as to address their particular writing concerns. For another, individual writing conferences offer shy students valuable chances to raise questions and they also help deter students from peer pressure that may result from group conferences. More importantly, findings mentioned above are consistent with the results obtained in Yeh's (2011) study in the sense that students expected to receive individualized attention during writing conferences, which is rarely possible under normal classroom conditions.

As for when, where, how long the conferences are expected to be conducted (items 17-22), 17 students expected to go to the writing conference after having received teacher written feedback; 12 students regarded the ten minutes of the conferences as appropriate time length; 10 students expected the instructor to conduct the writing conference twice within one semester. Majority of the students expected

the writing conference to be conducted during the class meeting time (83%) and in the teacher's office (89%). However, most students (72%) reported that they would not take initiatives to make an appointment for a writing conference. For a clear view, the results are displayed in Table 4.6, Table 4.7, and Table 4.9 in *Appendix E*.

Most of the students preferred writing conferences to be conducted in class hours mainly because they would not have to arrange another time. Just as one of the interviewees asserted:

It is hard to spare some other time to go to the conference because I have many courses to take. Besides, the teacher may not be able to meet with us even if we have arranged a convenient time. (S₁ in Q14)

Even though questionnaire results indicate that 12 of the 18 participants viewed ten minutes for the conference length as acceptable, 5 of the 12 interviewees mentioned the problem of inadequate time for writing conferences. One of them explained:

Sometimes other questions will occur continuously during the discussion on my writing, and I also have prepared some questions in advance to ask the instructor. So, 10 minutes for me is not enough. I really think that there is a need for flexibility in time allocation, and 20 or 30 minutes are reasonable alternatives. (S₄ in Q14)

Another student highlighted the need for longer conferences by saying:

If the conference can be at least 20 minutes, I will have sufficient time to raise questions, to discuss my writing difficulty with the teacher, and to clarify any possible misunderstandings. (S₉ in Q14)

In this respect, students seemed to desire longer writing conferences if possible.

Students' Reasons for Their Expectations of Writing Conferences

In general, interview data confirmed further that students did expect to participate in writing conferences. In this respect, the results corroborate the findings of Liu's (2009b) and Yeh's (2011) studies. These studies have convincingly demonstrated that students look forward to the writing conference and find it valuable.

To explore the reasons for students' expectations of the writing conference, the researcher interviewed twelve volunteers of the participants. According to their responses to interview questions, three reasons are listed and elaborated in the following paragraphs.

One of the three reasons, as six of the interviewed expressed in the interview, is that one-on-one writing conferences provide students an educational opportunity to learn beyond textbooks as well as to get answers to their questions immediately.

One of the interviewees stated:

In class, the teacher tends to point out some common writing mistakes or problems that most students make, but I may not have those mistakes or problems. On the contrary, in an individual writing conference, I can learn something different and I can raise my own questions. (S₃ in Q1)

Similarly, another student said:

I really look forward to the writing conference, because I can bring up my writing concerns and questions which may not be addressed in a big classroom setting. A writing conference is a learning opportunity for me to receive immediate teaching from the teacher. (S₆ in Q1)

Still another student expressed a similar reason:

Compared with a normal classroom setting, the teacher can teach skills and strategies specific to a certain student's needs in one-on-one writing conferences, and that is why I expect writing conferences. (S₉ in Q1)

The second reason for students' expectations is that writing conferences help students understand their own writing weaknesses. Five of the interviewees explained why in the interview. One student commented:

I expect writing conferences, because I can privately talk to the teacher about my writing difficulty and she can also tell me the drawbacks of my writing for me to improve. (S₂ in Q1)

Another student asserted:

During the conference, I can discuss my writing concerns as well as weaknesses with the instructor, and she will also instruct me how to improve my writing. (S₃ in Q1)

In a similar way, one more student contended:

I expect the writing conference, because the teacher can tell me directly where to improve, point out recurring issues and even model solutions for me. (S₁₆ in Q1)

In addition to aforementioned reasons, four of the interviewees unanimously mentioned that a writing conference also facilitates students' revision stage. For example, one student suggested:

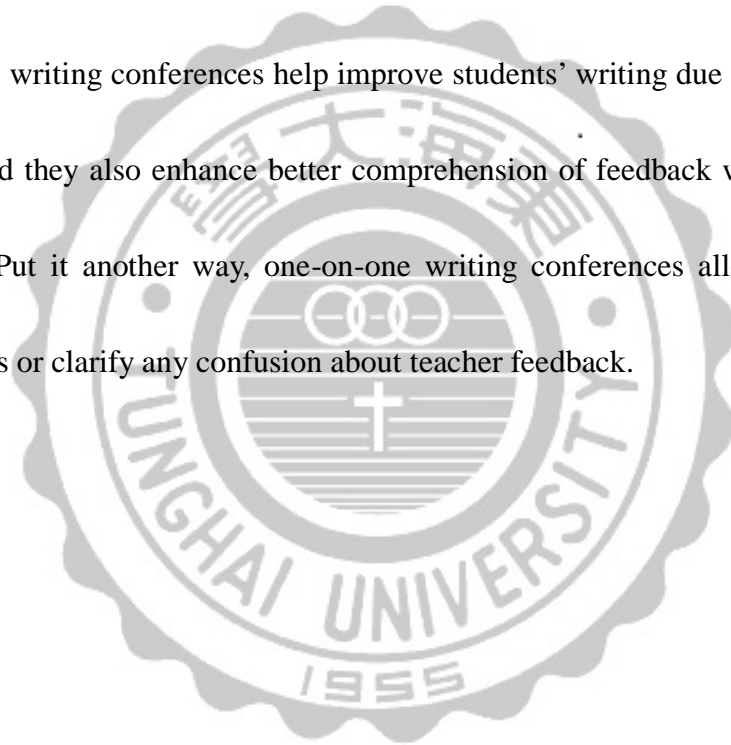
During the conference, the teacher will give personalized advice to me, and I will have a clearer picture of how and what to revise. What's more, I expect the instructor not to directly how to revise but to give me hints so that I can have an opportunity to think critically and I will also have general idea about how to self-edit my writing. (S₁ in Q1)

In like manner, another student pinpointed:

I expect the writing conference, because I can ask the teacher about how to

revise when I am confused. I also expect her to take a deeper look at my writing and instruct me how to revise topic sentences as well as thesis statement. It will be better for the teacher to show us how to revise, edit, or proofread our papers than to do it for us. (S5 in Q1)

To sum up, the fact that students highly expected writing conferences arises from the invaluable opportunity to learn beyond textbooks as well as to promptly get answers to their questions, the understanding of their weaknesses in writing, and the educational chance to receive individualized instruction for their revision. As noted by Harris (1986), writing conferences help improve students' writing due to personalized instruction and they also enhance better comprehension of feedback when explained face-to-face. Put it another way, one-on-one writing conferences allow students to raise questions or clarify any confusion about teacher feedback.



CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter is divided into four sections. First, the major findings in the present study are neatly summarized. Next, pedagogical implications are discussed at length for instructors to conduct effective writing conferences. Then, the limitations of the current study are described. Finally, suggestions for future research are offered.

Summary of the Major Findings

In this study, the researcher closely examined first-year EFL English majors' expectations of writing conferences, with an eye especially to describing why they had such expectations. From analyses of survey responses and interview data, the major findings of the current study are summarized as follows.

The majority of the students interviewed for this study showed positive expectations of writing conferences. Three main reasons were uncovered during the interviews. The most frequently mentioned reason was that students could learn beyond textbooks and asked more questions compared to a normal class setting, followed by the reason that they could get a better understanding of their weaknesses in writing so as to improve. The last reason was that writing conferences could

facilitate their revision process. In a word, as Liu (2009a, 2009b) and Yeh (2011) have convincingly demonstrated, the present study showed that students highly expected writing conferences.

The findings of the study show that that most students expected to receive more oral feedback at the global levels than local ones. This can be observed from qualitative data and quantitative data alike. On the basis of data collected from the questionnaire regarding students' expectations of oral feedback, 12 of the 18 respondents reported their preferences on global issues. Likewise, 9 of the 12 interviewees preferred oral feedback on content and organization. It is also plausible that students' expectations of oral feedback delivered in the writing conference seem partly related to the writing difficulties that they tend to encounter. As reported in the participants' background information, most students had problem writing clear thesis statements or topic sentences and providing concrete supporting details. The majority of the interviewees also expressed these kinds of writing concerns that contributed to their expectations of feedback on global issues.

Another key finding is that 10 of the 18 participants (56%) expected to obtain indirect feedback rather than direct feedback. In other words, they expected their instructor to offer clues only rather than directly correct any written errors for them. The majority of students emphasized the importance of creativity and they desired

opportunities to critically think about how to revise on their own. Put it succinctly, they would not like their instructor to directly tell them how and what to revise but to offer them selective feedback for them to consider. The aforementioned results mirrored earlier findings (e.g., Arndt, 1993; Diab, 2005; Saito, 1994) in the sense that students expected to receive indirect feedback from their instructors.

In addition, most of the participants expected English to be the dominant language used in the conference on account of the fact that they could have a chance to learn how to convey their ideas in English; however, several interviewees expected a remarkable degree of flexibility in the language use of Chinese. To be more specific, they wished to be allowed to use their native language when they did not understand how to express clearly in English. It was also notable that the result is contrary to Chen's (2005) study and a Japanese study conducted by Takaesu, Sudo, and Christianson (2010) in that participants from those studies would feel nervous about talking to their instructors in English due to their inadequate communicative abilities and English speaking skills.

Results from this study also showed that students seemed to expect longer writing conferences. Despite the report of 12 out of the 18 respondents that they regarded ten minutes as an appropriate conference length, 5 out of the 12 interviewees still held the position that ten minutes might not be a sufficient time for them to

discuss with the instructor on their written drafts, not to mention raising questions.

Accordingly, they suggested that the teacher increase the conference length up to twenty or thirty minutes.

Finally, and most significantly, most of the participants preferred one-on-one writing conferences to group conferences. Sixteen of the respondents demonstrated strong preference for individual writing conferences. Similar to the results achieved in Yeh's (2011) study, students expected to receive personalized instruction during one-on-one writing conferences. With regard to their reasons for preferring one-on-one writing conferences, the most three obvious ones were listed below: (1) having more chances to raise questions, (2) having more chances to learn from the instructor, and (3) expecting a private talk with the instructor. To summarize, the survey results in the present study were exactly echoed in the interview data in light of the fact that one-on-one setting allowed the teacher to instruct individual students as well as to grapple with their particular writing concerns and that it offered shy students invaluable opportunities to bring up questions.

To bring this section to an end, it is hoped that the findings above can, to at least a small degree, inform the areas of research related to EFL English majors' expectations of individual writing conferences.

Pedagogical Implications

Several pedagogical implications arising from the study are discussed for facilitating EFL students' learning at writing conferences.

First of all, findings in this study suggest the need to deliver oral feedback on content and organization. Most of the students expected feedback on global issues; more importantly, several researchers (e.g., Diab, 2005; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Huntley, 1992; Kepner, 1991; Sheppard, 1992) have advocated feedback on content as well as organization by maintaining that such feedback is crucial and that it does contribute to improvement in students' writing.

In addition to offering students feedback on global issues, providing grammar correction is also essential. Based on the results of the present study, it can be inferred that second language learners do pay attention to writing accuracy and that they expect instructors to comment on their written errors. Ferris and Roberts (2001) reached the same conclusion by giving an exact description as to how much students expect feedback on grammar, claiming that students may feel discouraged if teachers do not correct any grammar mistakes. In spite of the fact that grammar correction seems of great importance to L2 students, it is vital that teachers attend to global issues before working on local issues while offering feedback, as proposed by several researchers (e.g., Diab, 2005; Ferris, 1995; Schulz, 2000). Moreover, it may be

indispensable for teachers to prioritize the errors that their students need to focus on most (Lee, 1997) even if some students do expect all of their errors to be corrected (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Leki, 1991; Saito, 1994).

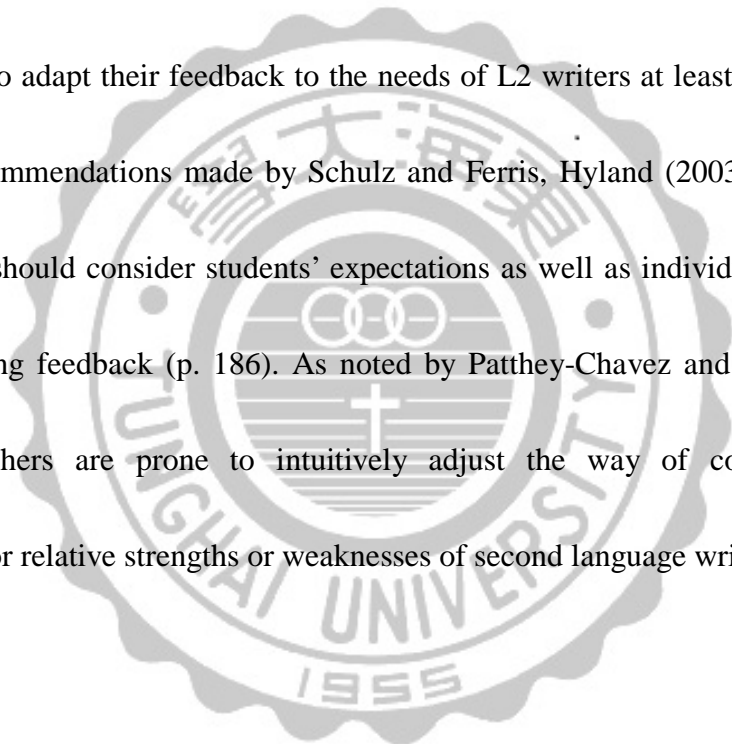
It is also worth mentioning that teachers could offer more indirect feedback than direct feedback. A majority of participants in the current study expressed their expectations of indirect feedback mainly because they were desirous of a chance to think critically by themselves. Although both techniques of correcting students' error can improve students' writing, indirect feedback has been recognized as more appropriate and effective for advanced learners compared to direct feedback (Ferris & Helt, 2000; Ferris, 2002; Frantzen, 1995; Frodesen, 2001; Hyland, 2003; Lalande, 1982; Miceli, 2006). For one thing, indirect feedback can guide learning and help students to grapple with problems on their own (Lalande, 1982). For another, students find indirect feedback useful to inspire them to reflect on aspects of their own writing and to develop improvements (Miceli, 2006). Furthermore, students are offered opportunities to express their ideas more clearly and to get clarification on any comments that teachers have made during writing conferences (Frodesen, 2001). A large number of researchers (e.g., Ferris & Helt, 2000; Ferris, 2002; Frantzen, 1995; Hyland, 2003; Lalande, 1982) have also asserted that indirect feedback brings more benefits to students' long term editing and proofreading skills. By the same token,

indirect feedback helps students to make progress in accuracy over time (Ferris & Helt, 2000) and helps reduce their error frequency ratios more substantially compared to direct feedback (Ferris, 2002, as cited in Bitchener et al., 2005). Therefore, it is essential for teachers not to locate all errors but to offer alternatives. Stated briefly, they could help students figure out how to revise and make their own choices. One suggestion can be put forward is that teachers could try using leading questions to help students formulate their own plan for effective revision. Another recommendation is that teachers could attempt to combine direct feedback with indirect feedback for students in large mixed ability classes.

On the basis of the research findings, it is also highly recommended that teachers promote the flexibility of the language used in the conference and that of the conference length. For example, teachers could allow students to speak Chinese if needed during the conference in order to prevent the potential problem of language barriers from occurring. In addition to promoting the flexibility in the language use during the conference, teachers could further consider adjusting conference lengths in that several interviewees in this study expected more time to discuss their written products with their instructor.

Above all, since students' preferences for teacher feedback are likely to influence the extent of effectiveness of such feedback (Schulz, 1996), teachers have to be aware

of students' expectations of writing conferences. Namely, in order to give students effective feedback for them to improve writing, their expectations and preferences need to be taken into consideration. As recommended by Schulz (1996, 2001), teachers should be aware of their students' expectations and attempt to incorporate them into teaching. Similarly, Ferris (1995) proposed that teachers should be encouraged to consider students' preferences or expectations while conferring with students and to adapt their feedback to the needs of L2 writers at least sometimes. In line with recommendations made by Schulz and Ferris, Hyland (2003) also advised that teachers should consider students' expectations as well as individual differences while providing feedback (p. 186). As noted by Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997), effective teachers are prone to intuitively adjust the way of conferencing to compensate for relative strengths or weaknesses of second language writers.



Limitations

While the present study may provide insight into EFL English majors' expectations of writing conferences, several limitations can still be identified below.

One of the most obvious drawbacks of the current study is that it is small-scale research. As described in the earlier chapter, only one writing class consisting of 18 EFL English majors was involved in this study. Moreover, all the participants were recruited from the same university. As a consequence, the findings might be tentative and not generalizable to accurately represent all EFL students' expectations of writing conferences.

Another important limitation is the length of time for data collection. To be more specific, this study was conducted for only one semester long, which may not be sufficient time to gauge students' expectations of writing conferences. To address this issue fairly, a longitudinal study is needed to extensively look into their expectations.

The final limitation is the restricted methods for data collection. Conducting questionnaires and student interviews to compile the data may be inadequate to fully investigating students' expectations. In other words, the present study lacks triangulation.

In summary, the present study has the limitations of a small sample size of participants, short duration of data collection, and simple research methods. Though

this study obviously has its limits, it nevertheless provides specific evidence that can help teachers understand what students expect from writing conferences and why they have such expectations.



Suggestions for Future Research

In light of the aforementioned limitations confronted in this study, a number of constructive suggestions are put forward. It is hoped that the following suggestions can serve as basis for further research pertinent to EFL students' expectations of writing conferences.

One direction for future research on EFL English majors' expectations would be to study groups of various writers, including those recruited from *Composition I* courses and those in *Composition II* courses, to assess not merely how their expectations do or do not differ from one another but also reasons that affect their expectations. Accordingly, this type of research could contain quantitative comparisons across groups.

A second direction for follow-up research might involve more participants from schools in a wide variety of districts, as well as students with different levels of English writing proficiency. Namely, researchers could explore the relationship between English writing proficiency and students' expectations of writing conferences, which has been largely unexplored.

Furthermore, multiple methods could be employed to collect data with a view to more thoroughly scrutinizing EFL English majors' expectations of writing conferences. For example, researchers could include conference observation in

addition to questionnaires as well as interviews. Specifically, researchers could examine the questions and the issues that are brought up during writing conferences with an eye to understanding students' writing concerns as well as their expectations of oral feedback delivered in writing conferences. To put it briefly, a triangulation of methods that helps researchers convey the ideas or establish the facts based on more than one source of information (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) could be included in the research design.

More noteworthy is the fact that although a significant amount of research has been done on student preferences for teacher feedback (e.g., Diab, 2005; Enginarlar, 1993; Ferris, 1995; Leki, 1991; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Saito, 1994; Schulz, 1996, 2001), few studies have explored the connection between students' expectations of various types of verbal feedback delivered in writing conferences and the improvement of their writing proficiency. Hence, investigations of this area are indispensable before any valid conclusions can be reached about what expectations should be met by teachers.

The final point to stress here is that the above mentioned suggestions are still awaited to reinforce the research quality of this type of study. To bring this chapter to a close, it is hoped that researchers will continue to carry out investigations on the topic concerning students' expectations toward writing conferences for the benefit of

both teachers and learners.



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Appendix A

Teacher-Student Writing Conferences Questionnaire (Chinese Version)

親愛的外文系大一學弟、學妹：

感謝您參與此研究，此研究之目的在於了解您對師生寫作個別會談的期望。此研究將作為未來寫作老師使用師生寫作會談改善學生英文寫作品質的參考。煩請您填寫以下問卷，提供您個人寶貴的經驗和意見。

此研究僅供學術參考使用，答案選項並無對錯之分，而問卷調查結果對您的大一英文寫作成績將不會有任何影響。同時，問卷中填寫的所有資料皆將嚴加保密，故請您在詳細閱讀完問卷每一題的敘述之後，依照您個人對師生寫作個別會談的期望及看法，安心地誠實作答。再次感謝您的熱心參與協助！

東海大學外國語文學系碩士班英語教學組

研究生：邱劉恩

請填寫你的學號：_____

一. 個人基本背景資料

說明：請勾選與您個人基本資料符合的敘述。

1. 性別： 男 女
2. 就讀大學之前是否上過英文寫作課？
 無
 有 何時接觸英文寫作課？ 國小前 國小 國中 高中（職）
3. 就讀大學之前是否參與師生寫作個別會談（與老師一對一討論英文作文）？
 無
 有 第一次參與師生寫作個別會談是 國小前 國小 國中 高中（職）
4. 就讀大學一年級時是否曾參與師生寫作個別會談（Writing conference）？
 無
 有 第一次參與師生寫作個別會談是何時？ 大一上學期 大一下學期
5. 你是否期待與大學老師有寫作個別會談？
 非常不期待 不期待 有些期待 期待 非常期待
6. 你跟大學老師有寫作個別會談，你會緊張嗎？
 完全不緊張 不緊張 有些緊張 緊張 非常緊張
7. 你跟大學老師有寫作個別會談，你最期盼得到哪一方面的口頭建議？
 文章內容 文章結構 文法 文章遣詞用字
8. 你最期盼大學老師給你的口頭建議是：
 直接的指示或建議，教導我修正英文作文
 有選擇性的建議，引導我思考，自己決定修正方向
9. 你覺得你的英文寫作能力好嗎？
 非常不好 不好 還好 好 非常好
10. 依據大學老師給你的評語或建議，選你常有的英文寫作困難【可複選】
 文章內容缺乏重點 文章結構缺乏組織 缺乏轉折語
 thesis statement/topic sentence 不清楚 缺乏具體的細節支持論點
 文法錯誤多 文字表達不明確

第二部分：學生對師生寫作個別會談的期望

說明：請您在閱讀完每題的敘述後，無須考慮太久，依照個人的直覺判斷來作答。

作答方式：每題皆有五個程度等級選項，分別是

1-非常不符合，2-不符合，3-略為符合，4-符合，5-非常符合。

請在閱讀完各題的敘述之後，圈選出最適當的數字選項。

例如：您覺得某一題的敘述非常符合您個人對師生寫作個別會談的期望，就請您在該題的五個數字選項中，圈選數字5，其他選項依此類推。

	非 常 不 符 合	不 符 合	略 為 符 合	符 合	非 常 符 合
1. 我明白寫作會談的目的為何。	1	2	3	4	5
2. 我明白寫作會談的進行模式為何。	1	2	3	4	5
3. 我期待寫作會談幫助我瞭解自己英文寫作的優缺點。	1	2	3	4	5
4. 我期待寫作會談幫助我在寫作課取得好成績。	1	2	3	4	5
5. 我期待寫作會談中能夠和老師培養出良好的互動關係。	1	2	3	4	5
6. 我期望寫作會談能以中文進行。	1	2	3	4	5
7. 我期望自己可以告訴老師我在寫作過程中遇到的問題。	1	2	3	4	5
8. 我期待老師可以協助我解決在 <u>寫作過程</u> 中遇到的問題。	1	2	3	4	5
9. 我期待老師給多一點 <u>建議</u> 讓我自己思考並做選擇如何修改。	1	2	3	4	5
10. 我期待老師在會談中可以 <u>直接糾正</u> 我作文中 <u>文法上的錯誤</u> 。	1	2	3	4	5
11. 我期待老師在寫作會談中給我 <u>作文內容</u> 的建議。	1	2	3	4	5
12. 我期待老師在寫作會談中給我 <u>作文的架構</u> 的建議。	1	2	3	4	5
13. 我期待老師在寫作會談中給我 <u>作文的用字遣詞</u> 之建議。	1	2	3	4	5
14. 我期待老師在會談中告訴我 <u>對文章的要求</u> ，讓我得到高分。	1	2	3	4	5

第三部分：學生對於寫作會談方式、時間、地點的期望

15. 關於寫作會談的方式，您比較期望是個別會談或是團體會談？

一對一個別會談

比較期望一對一個別會談的理由為：【可複選】

比較有機會可以發問

可跟老師增進合諧關係

我比較有機會跟老師學習

我不希望同學聽到老師跟我的對話

我比較不緊張

其他：_____

團體會談

比較期望團體會談的理由為：【可複選】

同學可以幫忙我發問

跟同學、老師增進合諧關係

我可以學習其他同學優點

我希望有同學作伴

我比較不緊張

其他：_____

16. 關於寫作會談的方式，您會期望以網路線上會談的方式進行嗎？

非常不期待

不期待

有些期待

期待

非常期待

17. 關於老師所安排的寫作會談時間長度(10分鐘)，會覺得太長或者太短嗎？

時間長度太長

時間長度合適

時間長度太短

18. 您認為理想的會談時間長度是：

5分鐘

10分鐘

15分鐘

20分鐘

其他：_____

19. 您期待一個學期內老師能夠舉辦幾次寫作會談？

1次

2次

3次

4次

其他：_____ (例如 依據每學期作業繳交次數)

20. 您認為最理想的寫作個別會談時間為何？

在收到老師的寫作回饋之前

在收到老師的寫作回饋之後

其他：_____

21. 您認為寫作個別會談時間最好安排在何時進行？

作文課時間

作文課以外時間

22. 您認為最理想的寫作個別會談地點為何？

上課教室

老師辦公室

系辦公室

其他：_____

23. 您會主動跟老師預約寫作個別會談嗎？

會

不會

24. 對於寫作會談有無其他的期盼或建議？

Appendix A

Teacher-Student Writing Conferences Questionnaire (English Version)

Your Student Number: _____

Part I. Background Information

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Have you ever taken English writing classes before college?
 No
 Yes
When? before elementary school in elementary school in junior high school
 in senior high school
3. Have you ever attended any one-one-one writing conferences before college?
 No
 Yes
When? before elementary school in elementary school in junior high school
 in senior high school
4. Have you ever attended any one-one-one writing conferences in the first year of college?
 No
 Yes
When? the first semester the second semester
5. Do you expect to meet with your *Composition I* teacher in the writing conference?
 do not expect at all do not expect
 not really expect expect fully expect
6. Do you feel nervous to meet with your *Composition I* teacher in the writing conference?
 not nervous at all not nervous
 not really nervous nervous very nervous
7. What is your favorite oral feedback given in the writing conference?
 content organization grammar language use / word choice
8. What type of feedback do you prefer?
 direct feedback
 indirect feedback
9. What do you think about your English writing proficiency?
 very bad bad mediate good excellent
10. Based on feedback from your *Composition I* teacher, please choose your frequent writing difficulties (you can choose more than one).
 Lacking main points Weak organization
 Lacking transitional words
 Unclear thesis statement/topic sentence
 Lacking concrete supporting details
 Many grammatical errors Imprecise language use

Part II. Students' Expectations of the Writing Conference

1- fully untrue of me	
2- untrue of me	
3- slightly true of me	
4- true of me	
5- fully true of me	
1. I understand the purpose of the writing conference.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I understand the structure of the writing conference.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I expect the conference to discover my strengths / weakness of writing.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I expect the conference to help me get good grades on the course.	1 2 3 4 5
5. I expect the conference to help develop a better personal relationship with the instructor.	1 2 3 4 5
6. I expect the conference to be conducted in Chinese.	1 2 3 4 5
7. I expect to tell the instructor the difficulty I encounter during the writing process.	1 2 3 4 5
8. I expect the instructor to help me resolve my writing concerns.	1 2 3 4 5
9. I expect to receive selective feedback including more options for me to think and choose from.	1 2 3 4 5
10. I expect the instructor to directly correct grammatical errors.	1 2 3 4 5
11. I expect the instructor to offer concrete suggestions on how to improve contents.	1 2 3 4 5
12. I expect the instructor to offer feedback on the aspect of organization.	1 2 3 4 5
13. I expect the instructor to offer feedback on language use / word choice.	1 2 3 4 5
14. I expect the instructor to tell me the requirements of the essay in order to get good grades.	1 2 3 4 5

Part III. Students' Expectations of the Conference Types, Time, and Place

15. Do you prefer one-on-one writing conferences or group conferences?

one-on-one writing conferences

Reasons: (you can choose more than one)

I have more chances to raise questions

I can enhance better relationship with the instructor

I have more chances to learn from the instructor

I do not want others to hear the dialogue with the instructor

I feel less nervous Others : _____

group conferences

Reasons: (you can choose more than one)

Peers may help me raise questions

I can enhance better relationship with the instructor and peers

I can learn from peers

I would like peers to accompany me

I feel less nervous

Others : _____

16. Do you expect on-line writing conferences?

Do not expect at all Do not expect Not really expect

Expect Fully expect

17. What do you think about the time allocation? (10 minutes)

Too long Appropriate Too short

18. What is your expectation of ideal length of a writing conference?

5 minutes 10 minutes 15 minutes 20 minutes

Others : _____

19. How many writing conferences do you expect the instructor to conduct within one semester?

One Two Three Four

Others: _____

20. When do you think is the most ideal time to hold writing conferences?

Before receiving teacher written feedback After receiving teacher written feedback

Others : _____

21. Do you prefer to join writing conferences in writing class hours or outside writing class hours?

In writing class hours

Outside writing class hours

22. What ideal place do you expect the instructor to have conferences with you?

Classroom

Teacher's office

Department office

Others: _____

23. Do you take the initiative to make an appointment for a writing conference?

Yes

No

24. Do you have any other expectations regarding writing conferences?

Appendix B

Interview Guide (Chinese Version)

1. 你會期待跟老師進行寫作個別會談嗎？為什麼？
那你對於寫作個別會談的期待是什麼？
2. 你知道寫作個別會談的目的嗎？可否請你簡單說明你認為其目的為何？
3. 在與老師進行寫作個別會談之前，你清楚寫作會談會以何種方式進行嗎？
4. 要跟老師進行寫作個別會談，會讓你感到緊張嗎？為什麼？
5. 在寫作會談中，最期待得到哪方面的口頭建議？
【文章內容/文章結構/文法/文章遣詞用字】為什麼呢？
6. 你比較期待老師給你選擇性的建議或者直接的指示？為什麼呢？
7. 你會期待老師在會談中直接糾正你作文中文法上的錯誤嗎？為什麼？
如果老師沒有幫你改文法錯誤，你會有何看法呢？
8. 你會期待寫作個別會談幫助你瞭解自己英文寫作的優缺點嗎？為什麼呢？
9. 你會期待老師在會談中告訴你對文章的要求，幫助你得到高分嗎？為什麼？
10. 你比較期望寫作會談能以中文進行或者以英文進行？為什麼呢？
11. 你比較期望寫作會談能個別進行或者以團體方式進行？為什麼呢？
12. 你比較期待寫作個別會談在收到老師的寫作回饋之前進行還是收到老師的寫作回饋之後呢？為什麼呢？
13. 如果老師沒有主動安排寫作個別會談，你會主動跟老師預約寫作個別會談嗎？為什麼？
14. 對於寫作會談有無任何期盼或建議？

Appendix B
Interview Guide (English Version)

1. Do you expect the instructor to conduct writing conferences? Why?
What are your expectations of writing conferences?
2. Do you know the purpose of a writing conference?
Could you please briefly talk about it?
3. Before the conference is held, do you know the structure of it?
4. Do you feel nervous about going to the writing conference? Why?
5. What is your favorite oral feedback during the conference?
(content / organization / grammar / language use) Why?
6. Do you prefer direct feedback or indirect feedback? Why?
7. Do you expect grammar correction in the conference? Why?
What will you think about if the instructor does not provide oral feedback on grammar?
8. Do you expect the conference to help you understand your strengths and weaknesses in writing? Why?
9. During the conference, do you expect the instructor to tell you the requirements of the essay in order to receive a good grade? Why?
10. Do you expect the conference to be conducted in Chinese or in English? Why?
11. Do you expect the conference to be conducted individually or in small group?
Why?
12. Do you expect to receive teacher written feedback before or after attending the writing conference? Why?
13. If the instructor does not arrange any writing conferences, will you make an appointment with her? Why?
14. Do you have any other expectations about writing conferences?

Appendix C
Consent Form (Chinese Version)

訪談同意書

親愛的外文系學弟妹：

此訪談的用意在於瞭解您對師生寫作個別會談的期望，而訪談將會以**中文進行**，時間約三十分鐘。訪談進行地點為碩士班學生所使用的研究室 (LAN006)。

訪談的內容只用於研究，因此不會將訪談內容的私人資訊外流。除此之外，**此次的訪談也不會影響到您寫作課程的學期成績**。因此，請您無須擔心。

若您願意參與此次訪談的話，我將會在訪談過後另外安排時間提供**免費一小時的英文寫作諮詢**。若您願意協助此研究參與本次訪談的話，請您填寫以下資料，謝謝您。

受訪人英文名字：_____

受訪人手機聯絡方式：_____

受訪人簽名：_____

東海大學外文系碩士班英語教學組

研究生：邱劉恩

指導教授：吳凱琳老師

Appendix C
Consent Form (English Version)

Dear participant,

First of all, I'd like to appreciate your cooperation for this interview. The purpose of this interview is to understand your expectations of writing conferences.

Your participation and the information you are going to provide are essential and invaluable for being kept confidential strictly. Without your permission, this information will not spread out. Furthermore, your participation in this interview will not influence your grades in the writing course and it will be used merely for academic purposes.

As a token of appreciation, I will offer each participant free tutoring for one hour after data collection. Again, thanks for being willing to take part in the study.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

Tunghai University

M.A. in TESOL, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature

Advisor: Dr. Kai-Lin Wu _____

Researcher: Liu-en Chiu _____

Appendix D
Interview Schedule

Place: MA study room (LAN 006)

Date	Time	Name	Cell Phone Number
4/29 (Monday)	13:30-14:00		
4/29 (Monday)	14:00-14:30		
4/29 (Monday))	14:30-15:00		
4/29 (Monday)	15:00-15:30		
4/29 (Monday)	15:30-16:00		
4/29 (Monday)	16:00-16:30		

Date	Time	Name	Cell Phone Number
4/30 (Tuesday)	13:30-14:00		
4/30 (Tuesday)	14:00-14:30		
4/30 (Tuesday)	14:30-15:00		
4/30 (Tuesday)	15:00-15:30		
4/30 (Tuesday)	15:30-16:00		
4/30 (Tuesday)	16:00-16:30		

Date	Time	Name	Cell Phone Number
5/1 (Wednesday)	13:30-14:00		
5/1 (Wednesday)	14:00-14:30		
5/1 (Wednesday)	14:30-15:00		
5/1 (Wednesday)	15:00-15:30		
5/1 (Wednesday)	15:30-16:00		
5/1 (Wednesday)	16:00-16:30		

Date	Time	Name	Cell Phone Number
5/2 (Thursday)	10:30-11:00		
5/2 (Thursday)	11:30-12:00		

Lunch Break

5/2 (Thursday)	13:30-14:00		
5/2 (Thursday)	14:00-14:30		
5/2 (Thursday)	14:30-15:00		
5/2 (Thursday)	15:00-15:30		
5/2 (Thursday)	16:00-16:30		

Appendix E
Survey Results Table

Table 4.5 Students' Expectations of the Way of Conferencing (N=18)

15-1 Students' Expectations of the Way of Conferencing			
Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	
One-on-one writing conferences	16	88.9	
Group writing conferences	2	11.1	
15-2 Reasons for preferring one-on-one conferencing			
Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	
I have more chances to raise questions	15	37.5	
I have more chances to learn from the instructor	12	30	
I do not want others to hear the dialogue with the instructor	6	15	
I can enhance better relationship with the instructor	5	12.5	
I feel less nervous	2	5	
15.3 Reasons for preferring group conferencing			
Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	
I can enhance better relationship with the instructor and peers	3	30	
I can learn from peers	2	20	
I feel less nervous	2	20	
I would like peers to accompany me	2	20	
Peers may help me raise questions	1	10	

Table 4.6 Students' Expectations of Time Allocation of the Writing Conference (N=18)

17. What do you think about the time allocation? (10 minutes)			
Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	Rank
Appropriate	12	61.1	1
Too short	5	27.8	2
Too long	1	11.1	3
18. What is your expectation of ideal length of a writing conference?			
Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	Rank
10 minutes	12	66.7	1
15 minutes	3	16.9	2
20 minutes	2	11.1	3
5 minutes	1	5.6	4
Others	0	0	5

Table 4.7 Students' Expectations of the Frequency and the Place of Writing Conferences (N=18)

19. How many writing conferences do you expect the instructor to conduct?			
Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	Rank
Two	10	55.6	1
Three	4	22.2	2
One	3	16.7	3
Four	1	5.6	4

20. When do you think is the most ideal time to hold writing conferences?			
Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	
Before receiving teacher written feedback	1	5.6	
After receiving teacher written feedback	17	94.4	

21. Do you prefer to join writing conferences in writing class hours or outside writing class hours?			
Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	
In writing class hours	15	83.3	
Outside writing class hours	3	16.7	

Table 4.8 Students' Expectations of On-line Conferencing (N=18)

16. Do you expect on-line writing conferences?			
Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	Rank
Do not expect	11	61.1	1
Not really expect	5	27.8	2
Do not expect at all	2	11.1	3
Expect	0	0.0	4
Fully expect	0	0.0	5

Table 4.9 Students' Expectations of the Place of Conferencing and Whether They Expect to Actively Make an Appointment with the Instructor (N=18)

22. What ideal place do you expect the instructor to have conferences with you?			
Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	Rank
Teacher's office	16	88.9	1
Classroom	2	11.1	2
Department office	0	0.0	3
Others	0	0.0	4

23. Do you take the initiative to make an appointment for a writing conference?			
Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	
Yes	5	27.8	
No	13	72.2	