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Current Scenario of Teacher Feedback in EFL Writing: A Study in the Primary Schools in Dhaka City

Aysha Siddique

Senior Lecturer, Department of English, The University of Comilla (UNIC), Uttara, Dhaka,
E-mail: aysha.diu@gmail.com

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Abstract

Despite the perceived importance of formative feedback, there is a lack of empirical research on how EFL writing feedback is actually understood and practiced by teachers in Bangladeshi primary schools. It is unclear what types of feedback, such as direct correction, indirect cues, or comments on content and organization, are most commonly used, how teachers choose their feedback strategies, and how learners perceive and use this feedback. Therefore, the study aimed to examine and analyze current practices and perceptions regarding teacher feedback on EFL writing in primary schools across Dhaka City. Without a clear understanding of the current situation, designing targeted interventions to improve feedback effectiveness and, in turn, enhance primary-level EFL writing outcomes in Dhaka is impossible. To conduct the study, a stratified random sample of 30 primary schools from Dhaka City was selected, representing two strata: Government Primary Schools (GPS) and Registered Non-Government Primary Schools (RNGPS). From each school, 2 EFL teachers (total n=60) were randomly chosen to complete the questionnaire. The survey explored teachers' current feedback practices related to EFL writing in primary schools. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The results revealed a predominant focus on error correction, particularly in grammar and vocabulary. The findings also identified significant constraints, such as large class sizes, time pressures, and the perceived need to prepare students for summative exams, which influenced their feedback practices. The study concludes that teacher feedback in this context remains predominantly product-oriented and summative, shaped by systemic constraints and exam-centered cultures. It recommends shifting toward balanced, process-oriented feedback practices through targeted professional development for teachers and systemic support.

Keywords: EFL writing, teacher feedback, written corrective feedback, primary education, Bangladesh.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education in Bangladesh, improving writing skills remains a significant challenge for students. Effective teacher feedback is crucial for teaching and learning writing (Alkhateeb & Waleed Daweli, 2024), serving as an essential educational tool that guides learners, promotes improvement, and enhances linguistic accuracy and communicative competence (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). In elementary school, students learn the basics of writing; therefore, the type and quality of feedback they receive at this stage are very important (Imam & Al-Mahmud, 2024). Dhaka, a densely populated city, has a unique educational system that includes government-run elementary schools, registered non-government primary schools, and several private English-medium schools. National policies, including the National Education Policy 2010 and the English Language Teaching (ELT) reforms, emphasize communicative language teaching (CLT) in Bangladesh (Akter, 2024). However, the implementation of CLTA, especially regarding formative assessment methods like written feedback, is often inconsistent and lacks sufficient research at the primary level. Preliminary observations and my own experience suggest that feedback techniques mainly focus on errors, are summative in nature (Listyani, 2021), and are often delivered in ways that fail to promote student engagement or adaptation (Mafulah, & Cahyono, 2023). This study aims to thoroughly analyze the current state of teacher feedback on EFL writing in primary schools in Dhaka, filling an important gap in the local literature.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Feedback is recognized as a crucial element in second language learning, motivating and supporting students in acquiring English (Almutairi, 2023). However, its implementation in EFL contexts often deviates from optimal strategies (Gonzalez-Torres, & Sarango, 2023), resulting in notable gaps in efficacy and learner engagement (Darmanto et al., 2023). One significant aspect of the current EFL writing scenario is the prevalent reliance on teacher-centered (Rahimi et al., 2024), summative (Pu, 2023), and error-focused feedback (Sulistyo et al., 2024). This approach typically involves teachers directly correcting grammatical and mechanical errors, such as those related to subject-verb agreement, article usage, and spelling (Zaber, 2023). Research indicates that while written comments are considered effective for enhancing writing ability (Baura, 2022), the focus often remains on lower-order concerns, with limited attention to higher-order writing aspects like content development, organization, coherence, and rhetorical awareness (Tian, & Zhou, 2020). This aligns with findings from studies on composition instructors' written feedback practices, where instructors often provide direct corrective feedback across various problematic areas (Zeevy-Solovey, 2024). The effectiveness of written corrective feedback (WCF) in EFL classrooms for improving student writing is well-established (Sari & Han, 2024). In primary EFL contexts, feedback must balance linguistic accuracy with affective support to nurture young learners' motivation (Cameron, 2001). However, in exam-driven systems like Bangladesh's, feedback often becomes summative, which is a final judgment rather than a step in a process (Ali et al., 2020). Systemic challenges, including large classes and limited teacher training (Listyani, 2021), further complicate the implementation of best practices (Pu, 2023). Moreover, there is a notable disparity between policy-level aspirations for communicative competence in English Language Teaching (ELT) and the actual classroom implementation of formative, responsive, and learner-oriented feedback (Baura, 2022). This disjuncture is evident across various educational tiers (Alkhateeb & Waleed Daweli, 2024), including primary, secondary, and tertiary levels (Sulistyo et al., 2024). The effectiveness of teacher feedback is maximized when it is timely (Almutairi, 2023), specific, constructive, and when it encourages student reflection (Ali et al., 2020) and revision, integrated within a supportive learning environment (Tian, & Zhou, 2020). The literatures show that a rigorous investigation of the practices of teacher feedback on

the students' writing is essential in order to develop ideal English writing practices at the primary level of education in Bangladesh (Hossain, 2021). However, there exists a lack of systematic research work that investigates the current teacher feedback in EFL writing at the primary. This study situates itself within this tension between ideal feedback models and contextual realities.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study is expected to provide the first systematic, empirical account of EFL writing feedback practices in Dhaka's diverse primary schools. To investigate the research problem, the researcher developed a survey questionnaire for the EFL teachers teaching the English language at the primary level of education in Bangladesh. 60 English language teachers were selected randomly from 15 government and 15 non-government primary schools located in Dhaka city. Among the selected teachers, 30 teachers were from the government schools, and another 30 were from the non-government schools. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part explored the demographic information of the teachers, and the second part surveyed the current feedback practices of the EFL teachers on English writing. The third part of the questionnaire covered the beliefs and challenges of the EFL teachers regarding feedback on EFL writing. Elicited data from the questionnaire survey were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics covered analyzing mean, maximum range, minimum range, and Std. Deviation of the response, and on the other hand, inferential statistics included the Independent Sample t-test and One-Way ANOVA. The t-test investigated whether there exists any significant difference between the teachers of the government schools and non-government schools regarding the beliefs and challenges of teacher feedback on EFL writing. One-Way ANOVA was conducted to determine the significant difference among opinions of the teachers with different levels of teaching experiences about the beliefs and challenges of teacher feedback on EFL writing. Permission was sought from the relevant education authorities and school heads before data collection. Informed consent was obtained from teachers so that they become fully aware of the study. Anonymity and confidentiality of all participants and institutions were strictly maintained. Data has been stored securely.

IV. FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY

The researcher conducted a questionnaire survey to explore the current scenario of teacher feedback in EFL writing in the primary schools in Dhaka city. The questionnaire had three parts: Part I included the demographic information of the participants, the second part explored the current practice of the teacher regarding writing feedback, and the third part explored the beliefs and challenges of writing feedback. The results of the questionnaire data analysis are given below:

A. Demographic Information

		Column N %
Type of school you currently teach at	Government	50.0%
	Registered Non-Government	50.0%
Years of teaching experience	1-5 years	18.3%
	6-10 Years	48.3%
	More than 10 years	33.3%

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Participants

This data depicts the profile of teachers who participated in a study on teacher feedback in EFL writing at elementary schools in Dhaka. Half of the participants are from government schools,

and the other half are from registered non-government institutions. A key strength of this study is its balanced sample, split 50/50, which helps ensure that the findings on "Current Scenario of Teacher Feedback in EFL Writing" are not biased by teachers from a specific type of institution. Regarding teaching experience, the largest group, accounting for 48.3%, has been teaching for 6 to 10 years. A significant portion (33.3%) are veterans with more than ten years of experience, offering a wealth of real-world insights gained over years of witnessing changes in educational policy, student demographics, and possibly teaching methods. The smallest group, making up 18.3%, consists of teachers with 1-5 years of experience. Despite their smaller size, including them is important, as these are likely recent graduates more familiar with modern ELT theories and technologies related to feedback; however, they may also find it more challenging to teach writing in practical settings.

B. General Feedback Practices on EFL Writing

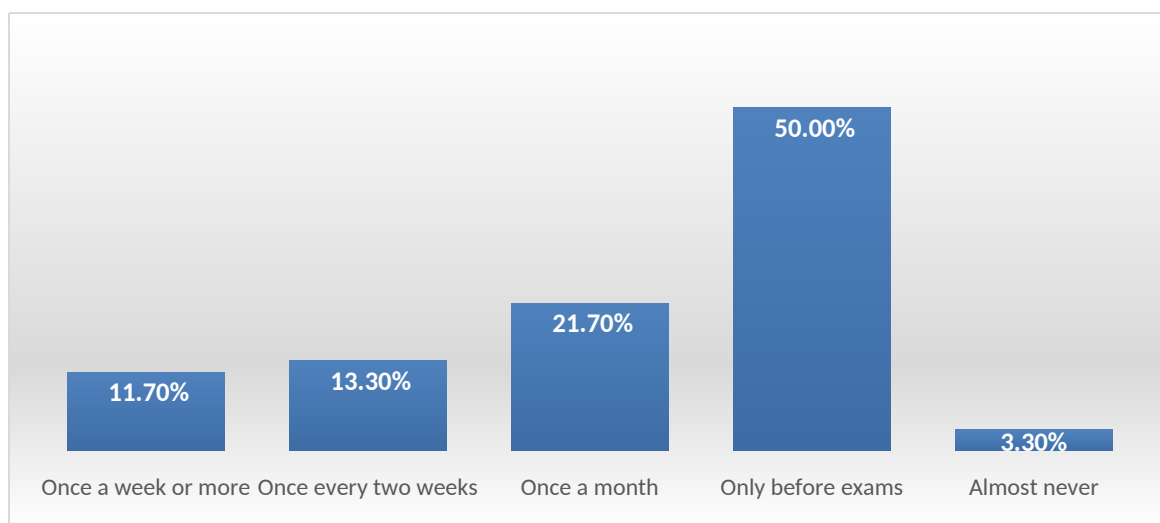


Chart 1: Frequency of Writing Tasks

The data shows that there is a clear tendency among teachers in the primary schools in Dhaka city toward giving students writing projects only before exams. Fifty percent of the teachers (50.0%) give their students writing assignments only before tests. This indicates that the majority of students view writing mostly as an assessment tool rather than as a skill to be developed via practice. It appears that the focus of the EFL teachers is on getting students ready for particular types of tests, such as paragraphs and compositions for the final exam, rather than on the writing process itself. Less than 25% of teachers arrange extensive writing practice opportunities every other week or every week. In EFL contexts, where language production is intrinsically challenging, the lack of frequent practice substantially hinders the development of writing fluency, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary use. A sizable portion of teachers (21.7%) give writing tasks every month. Only 3.3% said they seldom provide writing tasks. This shows that teachers know that the curriculum needs students to be good at writing. The issue is not a complete lack of interest in writing, but rather the frequency and purpose of the assignments.

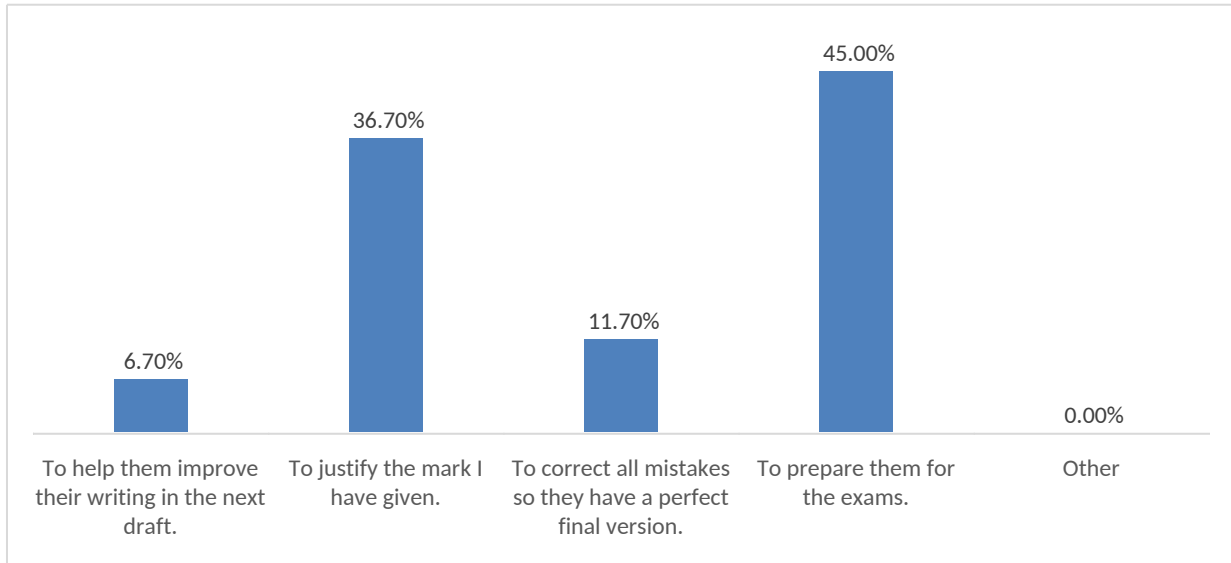


Chart 2: Goal of Feedback

The chart shows that most teachers see feedback as a way to evaluate rather than a way to teach. Forty-five percent of teachers said that their main goal of giving feedback is to get students ready for tests. This aligns with the previous finding that writing tasks are mostly assigned before exams. In this situation, feedback is not about how well the student is doing right now, but rather how well they are meeting an expected external standard. A large number of teachers (36.7%) use feedback to back up the marks they give. This shows that teachers see feedback as a "receipt" for the grade, which explains why marks were taken away or given, rather than as a way to improve in the future. A total of 81.7% of teachers (45% + 36.7%) see feedback mostly as a way to grade and test students. This indicates feedback as a "product-oriented" approach that focuses on the final score. This confirms that feedback is mostly summative, since it assesses and validates an outcome.

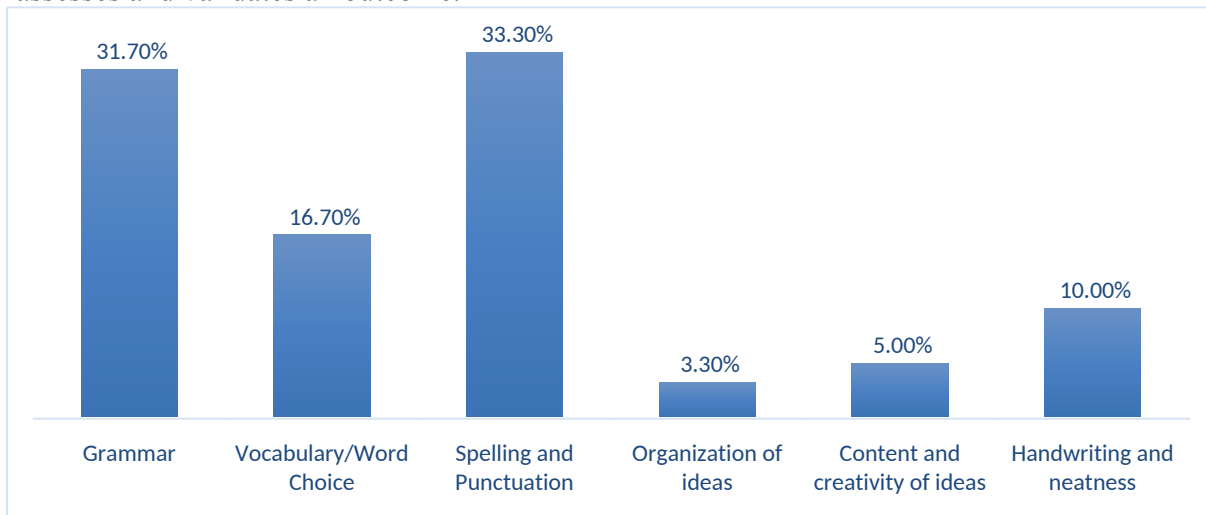


Chart 3: Focus Areas While Giving Feedback

The figure shows that most teachers care more about the technical accuracy of writing than its purpose or organization. 33.3% of people said that spelling and punctuation were the most important things to work on. Most of the time, teachers work as copy editors, checking that the technical rules of writing are followed. Grammar (31.7%) is a close second. This is in line with traditional language teaching methods that stress grammatical accuracy as the main measure of success. Teacher grading almost completely ignores the most important parts of writing, structure (3.3%), and originality (5.0%). This shows that EFL writing is not being taught in

primary schools in Dhaka as a way to communicate or express oneself. Instead, it is viewed as a set of separate technical skills that need to be improved for a test. Students are told to write perfectly, but they don't get much help on how to analyze critically, organize their thoughts, and articulate their views clearly. This fake form of feedback will eventually make it harder to improve real writing skills.

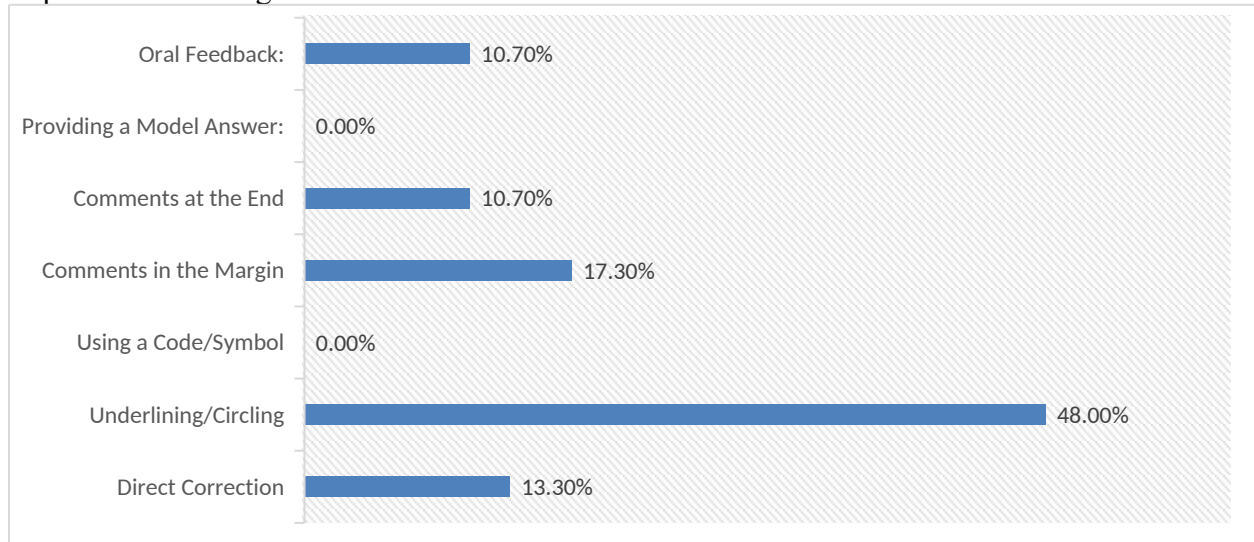


Chart 4: Method of Giving Feedback

This section finishes the exploration by illustrating how instructors give feedback. It shows that they rely on ambiguous descriptions of mistakes instead of clear, helpful advice. Almost half of all teachers (48%) use the underlining/circling approach while giving feedback. When a teacher underlines or circles an error, they are saying, "Something is wrong here," but they don't say what the issue is or how to repair it. Only 13.3% of instructors write the right form, and only 10.7% of teachers offer spoken comments. 17.3% of the teachers put comments in the margins, while 10.7% of the respondents put remarks at the conclusion when they were offering feedback on students' papers. This gives a general rating, although it's frequently too broad to be useful for young students.

C. Beliefs and Challenges Regarding Feedback

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Correcting every grammatical error is essential for my students' learning.	60	1	5	3.72	1.236
Giving positive comments (e.g., "good idea," "well done") is as important as pointing out errors.	60	1	5	3.03	1.089
Students in my class carefully read and try to understand all the written feedback I provide.	60	1	5	2.78	1.136
My training has adequately prepared me to give useful feedback on writing.	60	1	4	2.93	1.133
Large class sizes are the biggest barrier to providing detailed individual feedback.	60	1	5	3.70	1.280
The pressure to complete the syllabus and prepare	60	1	5	4.05	.946

for exams limits the time I can spend on feedback.	60	1	5	2.95	.928
Parents expect to see detailed error correction on their child's written work.	60	1	4	2.78	.904
Feedback should guide students to correct their own mistakes, not just show them the answers.	60	2	5	3.98	.854
I would like to receive more training on different methods of giving writing feedback.	60				
Valid N (listwise)	60				

Table 2: Findings Regarding Beliefs and Challenges

Based on the descriptive statistics provided, we get a clear idea concerning teachers' beliefs, practices, and challenges regarding feedback in EFL writing. Syllabus and exam pressure got the highest mean (Mean = 4.05, SD = 0.946) in the entire dataset. Teachers overwhelmingly agree that the pressure to complete the syllabus and prepare for exams is the primary factor limiting the time they can dedicate to feedback. The relatively low standard deviation suggests this is a near-universal experience among the participants. Large class sizes as a barrier (Mean = 3.70, SD = 1.280) got the second-highest mean, indicating strong agreement that large classes are the biggest obstacle to providing detailed, individualized feedback. The higher standard deviation here, compared to the syllabus pressure, suggests that while it's a major issue for most, the experience might vary somewhat depending on the specific school or class size. However, there is a strong belief among the teachers in the importance of correcting every grammatical error (Mean = 3.72, SD = 1.236). It should be mentioned here that there is a striking finding, as most of the teachers remained neutral (Mean = 3.03, SD = 1.089) while thinking of the importance of positive comments for feedback. While teachers strongly agree on the need for error correction (3.72), they are, on average, ambivalent about the equal importance of positive feedback. On the other hand, teachers slightly disagree (Mean = 2.78, SD = 0.904) that feedback should guide students to self-correct rather than just giving answers. In a similar vein, teachers slightly disagree (Mean = 2.78, SD = 1.136) that students carefully read and try to understand all the feedback provided. Teachers are essentially neutral (Mean = 2.93, SD = 1.133) about whether their training adequately prepared them to give useful feedback. This suggests a lack of confidence in their pre-service or in-service training regarding this specific skill. This is the second-highest mean score, and it directly complements the previous point. There is a very strong and consistent agreement (Mean = 3.98, SD = 0.854) that teachers want more training on different feedback methods. This is a clear and actionable finding: teachers feel under-prepared and are actively seeking professional development in this area.

D. Inferential Statistics

Independent sample T-test and One-Way ANOVA were used to explore whether there were significant differences regarding the beliefs and challenges of teacher feedback on writing assignments of the students. The t-test determined the significance level between the teachers of the government schools and the non-government schools. On the other hand, ANOVA tried to determine the difference among the groups based on the teaching experiences. The results of the inferential statistics have been described below:

Independent Sample t-test Results

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances
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		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Correcting every grammatical error is essential for my students' learning.	Equal variances assumed	1.325	.254	1.152	58	.254	.367	.318
	Equal variances not assumed			1.152	57.148	.254	.367	.318
Giving positive comments (e.g., "good idea," "well done") is as important as pointing out errors.	Equal variances assumed	.570	.453	-1.686	58	.097	-.467	.277
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.686	56.481	.097	-.467	.277
Students in my class carefully read and try to understand all the written feedback I provide.	Equal variances assumed	15.237	.000	1.492	58	.141	.433	.290
	Equal variances not assumed			1.492	48.060	.142	.433	.290
My training has adequately prepared me to give useful feedback on writing.	Equal variances assumed	.001	.974	1.861	58	.068	.533	.287
	Equal variances not assumed			1.861	57.948	.068	.533	.287
Large class sizes are the biggest barrier to providing detailed individual feedback.	Equal variances assumed	.283	.597	-2.074	58	.043	-.667	.322
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.074	57.885	.043	-.667	.322
The pressure to complete the syllabus and prepare for exams limits the time I can spend on feedback.	Equal variances assumed	10.156	.002	.679	58	.500	.167	.245
	Equal variances not assumed			.679	41.187	.501	.167	.245
Parents expect to see detailed error correction on their child's written work.	Equal variances assumed	6.237	.015	-.138	58	.891	-.033	.242
	Equal variances not assumed			-.138	50.825	.891	-.033	.242
Feedback should guide students to correct their own mistakes, not just show them the answers.	Equal variances assumed	2.358	.130	-.426	58	.672	-.100	.235
	Equal variances not assumed			-.426	54.752	.672	-.100	.235
I would like to receive more training on different methods of giving writing feedback.	Equal variances assumed	4.987	.029	.753	58	.454	.167	.221
	Equal variances not assumed			.753	51.720	.455	.167	.221

Table 3: The T-test Results

The results of the Independent Samples T-Test provide a thorough examination of the differences in beliefs and challenges encountered by educators from Government schools in

contrast to those from Registered Non-Government schools. This study used a T-Test to determine the statistical significance of the differences in the mean scores between the two groups (Government and Non-Government teachers). The most important figures to look at are the Sig. (2-tailed) value, which tells you if the difference is statistically significant, usually at a level of $p < 0.05$. The most important thing we get from this dataset is that for 8 of the 9 statements, there is no statistically significant difference between how Government and Non-Government school teachers think and feel. This suggests that the attitude and challenges regarding feedback while teaching EFL writing in primary schools in Dhaka are largely similar across both sectors. The only point of disagreement is the perception that large class sizes are a problem ($p=0.043$), which is both important and reasonable. It emphasizes a practical reality in which Non-Government instructors may face increasingly crowded classes, complicating the already challenging task of providing personalized feedback.

One-Way ANOVA results

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Correcting every grammatical error is essential for my students' learning.	Between Groups	23.788	2	11.894	10.211	.000
	Within Groups	66.395	57	1.165		
	Total	90.183	59			
Giving positive comments (e.g., "good idea," "well done") is as important as pointing out errors.	Between Groups	18.942	2	9.471	10.587	.000
	Within Groups	50.991	57	.895		
	Total	69.933	59			
Students in my class carefully read and try to understand all the written feedback I provide.	Between Groups	45.336	2	22.668	41.887	.000
	Within Groups	30.847	57	.541		
	Total	76.183	59			
My training has adequately prepared me to give useful feedback on writing.	Between Groups	23.829	2	11.915	13.084	.000
	Within Groups	51.904	57	.911		
	Total	75.733	59			
Large class sizes are the biggest barrier to providing detailed individual feedback.	Between Groups	4.627	2	2.313	1.434	.247
	Within Groups	91.973	57	1.614		
	Total	96.600	59			
The pressure to complete the syllabus and prepare for exams limits the time I can spend on feedback.	Between Groups	9.818	2	4.909	6.503	.003
	Within Groups	43.032	57	.755		
	Total	52.850	59			
Parents expect to see detailed error correction on their child's written work.	Between Groups	1.253	2	.626	.720	.491
	Within Groups	49.597	57	.870		
	Total	50.850	59			
Feedback should guide students to correct their own mistakes, not just show them the answers.	Between Groups	.329	2	.165	.196	.822
	Within Groups	47.854	57	.840		
	Total	48.183	59			
I would like to receive more training on different methods of giving writing feedback.	Between Groups	3.016	2	1.508	2.151	.126
	Within Groups	39.967	57	.701		
	Total	42.983	59			

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA results

The One-Way ANOVA results indicate a complex interpretation of the variances in instructors' attitudes and problems with feedback in EFL writing, contingent upon their years of teaching experience. This research used ANOVA to ascertain if statistically significant variations exist in the mean scores across the three experience categories: "1-5 years," "6-10 years," and "More than 10 years." The critical value to identify is 'Sig.' (p-value). A number below 0.05 signifies a substantial difference exists among the three groups. The ANOVA findings indicate that years of teaching experience significantly influence instructors' perceptions of feedback. Six of the nine claims exhibit a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) among at least two of the experience groups. This sharply contrasts with the prior T-Test inquiry (by school type), which predominantly revealed commonalities. A teacher's professional tenure significantly impacts their feedback philosophy more than the sort of institution in which they are employed. The study indicated statistically significant disparities among the three experience groups on six of the nine evaluated items. Significant effects were observed regarding the belief in the necessity of correcting every grammatical error, $F(2, 57) = 10.21, p < .001$; the significance of providing positive feedback, $F(2, 57) = 10.59, p < .001$; perceptions of students thoroughly reviewing feedback, $F(2, 57) = 41.89, p < .001$; the sufficiency of training for delivering feedback, $F(2, 57) = 13.08, p < .001$; and the constraints imposed by syllabi and examinations on feedback time, $F(2, 57) = 6.50, p = .003$. The findings demonstrate that educators' educational views and perceptions of systemic pressures undergo substantial evolution with experience. No significant differences were noted regarding perceptions of large class sizes as a barrier ($p = .247$), parental expectations for error correction ($p = .491$), beliefs about feedback fostering student autonomy ($p = .822$), or the desire for additional training ($p = .126$), indicating that these perspectives remain relatively consistent across career stages. The pervasive demand for enhanced training in feedback methodologies, irrespective of expertise, signifies a critical domain for professional development initiatives.

V. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The typical participant in this research is an experienced teacher with over six years in the field, working in either a government or a registered non-government primary school in Dhaka. The combination of a balanced institutional representation and a highly experienced workforce suggests that the study's findings will be rooted in the perspectives of seasoned practitioners who possess a deep, practical understanding of the realities involved in teaching EFL writing in primary schools across Dhaka. The findings paint a picture of teachers caught in a system that pressures them toward a narrow, product-focused approach to writing, which may conflict with their deeper pedagogical instincts or knowledge of best practices. The overwhelming pressures of the syllabus, exams, and large class sizes push teachers into a model where feedback is likely rushed (Ahasan et al., 2024), error-focused (He & Wang, 2024), and viewed as a final judgment rather than a step in the learning process (Ashikuzzaman, 2025). Teachers' beliefs align with this pressured system. They strongly value comprehensive error correction and are less convinced of the need for feedback that fosters learner autonomy or positive reinforcement (Hossain, 2021). This suggests that systemic pressures have shaped their core beliefs about what constitutes "good" feedback. Additionally, teachers feel under-prepared to give feedback and perceive that students do not fully engage with the feedback they provide. This creates a frustrating and inefficient cycle. They invest significant effort into a task for which they feel untrained, with a perceived lack of student response, all under immense time constraints. Therefore, the most promising and actionable finding is the strong, unified call for more training. Teachers are not complacent; they recognize a gap in their skills and are eager to address it (Ellis, 2009). This desire for professional development is the key takeaway. Any intervention aimed at improving the feedback environment in the primary schools Dhaka must address systemic pressures such as syllabus requirements and large class sizes while also providing practical, context-sensitive training that equips teachers with strategies for delivering effective, efficient feedback that

students will actually use (Sultana, 2018). This indicates that, for most students, writing is viewed primarily as a tool for assessing learning rather than a skill to be developed through practice. The emphasis appears to be on preparing students for test formats (e.g., paragraphs, compositions for the final exam) rather than focusing on the process of writing itself (Alkhateeb & Waleed Daweli, 2024). This suggests that teachers are aware of the curriculum's demand for writing skills (Sultana, 2018). The issue is not neglect of writing but rather the frequency and purpose of assignments (Hyland, 2013). This encapsulates the essence of formative feedback, fostering a dialogue where students learn from mistakes and implement corrections immediately (Ellis, 2009). The near absence of such practice suggests that concepts like "drafting" and "revision based on feedback" are largely missing from these primary classrooms (Ferris, 2006).

VI. CONCLUSION

This study finds that most of the feedback teachers give on EFL writing in primary schools in Dhaka is summative, form-focused, and direct. This is mainly due to how schools' policies regarding English language teaching are developed and how teachers typically behave while teaching Writing. Teachers believe they need to correct mistakes, but they are not habituated to using feedback to help students improve their writing or boost their confidence. To improve this condition, teachers should receive pre-service and in-service training on how to provide more effective feedback on EFL writing. Such training could teach useful skills like how to correct mistakes selectively or specifically, how to give indirect feedback using simple symbols, and how to include positive comments. Besides, teachers need to learn how to develop a writing assessment rubric that could guide the teachers to evaluate EFL writing properly, and guide the students about the focus areas of writing.

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