# Saudi Undergraduate Students' Perceptions on Applying Self-Directed Feedback in Writing and Preferences for Feedback

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*Abstract*—**Self-directed feedback has become a viable alternative to traditional feedback (teacher feedback and peer feedback), which has a significant impact on students' writing skills. This study aimed to examine female Saudi undergraduate students' perceptions of applying self-directed feedback in writing and their preferred method of feedback. Study participants were 94 Saudi undergraduate students who were supposed to share almost a similar academic writing background of English writing. This study employed a mixed methodology approach, in which qualitative and quantitative tools were used to collect students' perceptions. The data was collected via a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. In the light of the findings, the study revealed that the majority of students held positive perceptions towards self-directed feedback in writing based on a guideline sheet. However, teacher feedback was significantly the best method of giving feedback than self-directed feedback, while peer feedback was the least preferred method. Based on these results, some implications were suggested that could be taken into consideration. Students must be provided with guideline sheets in writing classes to increase their motivation and confidence and improve their writing output. Instructors should encourage students to work independently in writing classes to improve their academic performance, increase students' awareness of their limitations and their ability to handle them, and prepare them for lifelong learning.**

*Index Terms*—**self-directed feedback, traditional feedback, peer feedback, academic writing, Saudi Arabia**

## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most fundamental issues in higher education is promoting feedback in the second language (L2) writing classes. Feedback on student work is an essential tool for enhancing learning in higher education. Feedback provides an opportunity for learners to progress by informing them about their current performance and how it can be improved (Ende, 1983). Providing feedback is common in education, but there is no general agreement on what type of feedback is most effective and why. There are various types of feedback, including peer feedback, teacher feedback, student feedback, meaning-focused feedback, positive feedback, and form-focused feedback (Zaru et al., 2014).

Moreover, feedback can be given to students in various ways (explicit or implicit, focused or unfocused). Despite its importance, its effectiveness varies greatly. A review of feedback across a wide range of disciplines has revealed that four components are essential: self, task, process, and self-regulated learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Self-directed learning (SDL) and self-regulated learning (SRL) are similar in that they both focus on developing independent learners. However, SDL is a broader concept that emphasizes the importance of freedom of choice, whereas SRL focuses on the individual learner's approach to completing a task (Loyens et al., 2008). Self-directed feedback (SDF) is considered a central theme in adult education. Engaging with feedback is an important part of students' learning experiences in higher education, not only as part of their university experience but also as a lifelong learning skill (ElShaer et al., 2020). SDF is feedback discovered by students with guidance from the teacher. Thus, students who have a high level of awareness will detect mistakes and correct them (Amelia, 2020). It is expressed in terms of the learners' readiness to assume increasing responsibility for identifying and correcting their errors.

The perceptions about SDF among Saudi undergraduate students have never been studied. Thus, this study aims to fill a gap in the literature on SDF in L2 writing classes. It also emphasizes the need to determine which type of feedback is preferred among Saudi undergraduate students from their perceptions.

This study will examine learners' perceptions rather than awareness because perceptions, according to Landauer and Rowland (2001), are created based on learners' knowledge and backgrounds. Awareness, on the other hand, is based on the facts and information a person has about a particular topic. Therefore, according to Alhojailan (2015), perception comes first and influences what comes after that.

Research on students' perceptions of the use of SDF is needed to identify how they feel and their point of view on its implementation. As a result, this study aims to expound Saudi undergraduate English Department students' perceptions of SDF use in writing. Moreover, this study aims to determine the most effective method of providing feedback in L2 writing classes from the students' points of view.

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

Q1: What are the Saudi undergraduate students' perceptions towards applying self-directed feedback in their second language writing?

Q2: Which type of feedback is preferred among Saudi undergraduate students?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have found that feedback on writing helps EFL students improve the quality of their essays (e.g., Liu, 2008; Boughey, 1997; Dheram, 1995). Liu's (2008) study confirmed that feedback enabled EFL students to reduce errors and improve accuracy in the new piece of writing. According to other research studies, students used feedback as a reference for adding, deleting, and rearranging ideas in their essays (e.g., Liu, 2008; Boughey, 1997; Dheram, 1995).

Students are responsible for their own academic success (Sutiono et al., 2017). Furthermore, students preferred to revise their own work (Harran, 2011). Therefore, teachers were advised to give students the opportunity to do self-directed feedback (Ellis, 2009) as it is more effective than the other methods (i.e., teacher feedback and peer feedback) (Brinko, 1993; as cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2006). SDF is a method of appreciating students' intellect and capacity and providing them with responsibility and initiative (Eksi, 2010). It is also known as self-feedback (see Saito, 1994; Zhang, 1995; Hattie & Timperley, 2007, Wakabayashi, 2013), self-revision (Srichanyachon, 2014), self-correction (Hajimohammadi & Mukundan, 2011), or self-provided feedback (Lamberg, 1980), all of which refer to the same thing: feedback provided by students themselves.

The goal of self-directed feedback, according to Lin (2009), is "to raise awareness of the important elements and conventions in the process of composing essays and helps students to acquire them in order to become independent and competent writers" (p. 61). SDF can also help students make substantive changes and improve their writing quality, even when reviewing and rewriting without the involvement of a peer or teacher (Ferris, 2003). Ganji (2009) claimed that the students' self-feedback could have a long-term influence on their memory since they are directly and actively involved in the process, which can activate the operations required for long-term retention. Moreover, "students may be able to use such techniques to develop their communicative competence, skills to criticize their own writing by themselves, and to cope with errors without depending on a teacher" (Saito, 1994, p. 65). It was proved that advanced students could correct 95% of their errors, according to Krashen and Pan (1975, as cited in Walz, 1982, p. 56).

Ferris (1999) claimed that more attention should be paid to determining which methods, techniques, or approaches to error correction lead to short-term or long-term improvement and whether students advance more quickly in monitoring specific errors than others. There has been a debate about which types of feedback – teacher feedback, peer feedback, and self-correction – contribute the most to the development of students' EFL writing ability (Cahyono & Rosyida, 2016).

Peer feedback is a method for involving students in the teaching and learning process. It was found that peer feedback will be essential if the class is so large, but the teacher must ensure that the students understand exactly what they are supposed to do (Cahyono & Amrina, 2016). This deficiency could be addressed by engaging students in training sessions (Cresswell, 2000) or providing a guideline sheet (Hirayanagi, 1998). This way can be useful, according to Ganji (2009), "because it comes from someone who had the same experience. It's also less threatening because there's no scoring involved" (p. 120). Furthermore, other studies have found that peer feedback is more preferred than teacher feedback (e.g., Jacobs et al., 1998) because they believed that peers could provide more ideas and identify problems that they had missed.

It is a widespread belief that most students prefer to be corrected by their teachers since the teacher is considered the authority and source of knowledge in the classroom (Ganji, 2009). Teachers' feedback was found to be more "professional," "experienced," and "trustworthy" than peer feedback (Yang et al., 2006). However, there are a few counterarguments. For instance, giving students the correct answers, according to Walz (1982), did not develop a pattern for long-term memory.

Some research studies have highlighted the importance of self-directed feedback. Brinko (1993, as cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2006) found that self-directed feedback is more effective for students. Suzuki (2009) examined L2 learners' assessments of self-and peer revisions of writing, focusing on linguistic features. It was revealed that peer revision could be used to improve the content, while self-revision is used to improve language form. The other study was conducted by Hajimohammadi and Mukundan (2011), which aimed to compare the effectiveness of SDF as an alternative to the traditional teacher-correction method. The SDF method was found to be significantly more effective than the teacher-correction method. Cahyono and Amrina's (2016) research is one of the studies worth mentioning. Cahyono and Amrina (2016) investigated peer and self-correction using guideline sheets in one of their studies. The results showed that students who received self-correction had better writing ability than those who received the traditional editing process of writing. Allwright (1995, as referenced in Erfanian, 2002) claimed that if students cannot correct their own errors, they should be corrected by teachers and that teachers require effective guidelines and clear classroom strategies to avoid misunderstanding in their students.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### A. Participants

This study focused on the perceptions of English Department students on applying SDF in their writing in English as a foreign language. In total, 94 female Saudi undergraduate students of the academic year 2022 served as the participants in this study. These students were from different levels. The participants were supposed to share almost a similar academic writing background in the English language because they had completed studying the same writing courses for three semesters. Participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous.

*B. Questionnaire*

In order to fulfill the aforementioned objectives and answer the two stated questions of the study, a questionnaire (see Appendix A) was adopted, developed, and employed by the researcher in consultation with an expert from the Faculty of Education. An electronic questionnaire (Google forms) was set up to collect data for the study. The questionnaire consisted of 11 questions and the questions were, in fact, different in terms of purpose. The former five questions were about students' attitudes towards applying SDF. The following five questions were designed to gauge the students' perceptions of SDF on a Likert scale of 4 choices to agree/disagree with the statements. The last question was designed to gauge the students' preferred mode of feedback. The Arabic language was used to get precise responses from the students. Prior to collecting data, a pilot study was conducted on one selected student, whose response confirmed that no questions were misinterpreted.

Moreover, advanced statistical techniques were used to determine questionnaire validity. The simple correlation coefficient was used to test the internal consistency validity of scales, as shown in Table 1. The results indicate a statistically significant correlation between each of the scale's statements and the total score of each scale. Thus, the scales have high degrees of internal consistency.

TABLE 1
INTERNAL CONSISTENCY VALIDITY

| Phrases | simple correlation coefficient |
|---|---|
| I am generally satisfied with the level and quality of the self-feedback on my duties | .515[**] |
| Feedback from others affects me emotionally | .524[**] |
| Self-directed feedback is more efficient than teacher feedback | .692[**] |
| Self-directed feedback is more efficient than peer feedback | .685[**] |
| I see that self-feedback enhances and motivates my learning | .516[**] |
| In general, I am confident in my ability to set and interpret the criteria for each paragraph | .642[**] |
| *sig. at the 0.05 probability level          **sig. at 0.01 | |

The instrument's reliability is the extent to which the scales produce the same results on repeated trials. Advanced statistical techniques were also used to determine questionnaire reliability. To determine and verify the internal consistency reliability of the scales, a Cronbach's alpha was computed. Table 2 shows that the Alpha Cronbach coefficient for the survey scales was found to be 0.78, which is greater than 0.7, indicating that the scales have a high degree of stability.

TABLE 2
ALPHA CRONBACH COEFFICIENT TO DETERMINE THE RELIABILITY OF THE SCALE

| Axis | number of items | Cronbach's alpha coefficient |
|---|---|---|
| students' impression about self-correction | 6 | .78 |

*C. Interviews*

To support the questionnaire, the researcher used semi-structured interviews with five Saudi undergraduate students (see Appendix B). The Arabic language was used to get the students' precise responses and ensure their understanding. Each interview took 10-15 minutes, depending on the student's involvement.

*D. Data Collection Procedures*

This study employed a mixed methods design by selecting both quantitative and qualitative data to investigate the perceptions of Saudi undergraduate students in applying SDF in writing and determine the most effective method of providing feedback in L2 writing classes from students' perceptions.

First, the researcher adapted a questionnaire from Amelia (2020), but to fulfill the aforementioned objectives and answer the two stated questions of the study, the researcher added and modified some questions. From Amelia (2020), for example, the researcher adapted Questions 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, and 11. Question 4 was adopted from Amelia (2020). Questions 1, 7, and 8 were designed by the researcher (See Appendix A).

Second, the researcher set up the questionnaire on Google Forms and sent the link to the target participants to collect the data. Then the researcher analyzed the data in terms of numbers using SPSS software. The study relied on the statistical program SPSS in analyzing the data, and a set of statistical methods were used appropriately to the nature of the data, namely: frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and Pearson's simple correlation coefficient. Excel was used to analyze the data graphically, too. After that, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with five randomly chosen students to validate the instrument. The researcher explained the

purpose of the study to them and guaranteed them that their responses would be kept. The researcher then analyzed the transcripts to discern the students' perceptions. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the available data and supporting data of this study.

## IV. RESULTS

This section presents the results of the study. The questionnaire inquires the target students about their perceptions toward applying SDF in writing. It also investigates the students' preferred mode of feedback. To answer the research questions, the students were asked to respond to 11 Likert-scale items. Then the researcher statistically analyzed all data using SPSS. This can be seen in the following tables and figures. Collecting different perceptions via interviews provided additional richness to the findings that were not always clear through the questionnaire.

### A. Students' Attitudes Towards Applying Self-Directed Feedback

Most of the students apply SDF in their writing, as shown in Figure 1. When the researcher asked the interviewees whether they used SDF and when they first applied it, they reported the necessity of SDF. They thought SDF was essential from their first semester in college; the following quotations show their reasons: "I think SDF has become essential in writing from the Intensive Course" (interviewee #5). Another participant said: "SDF is essential in college because we don't depend on teachers as in schools, and it prepares us for lifelong learning" (interviewee #2).
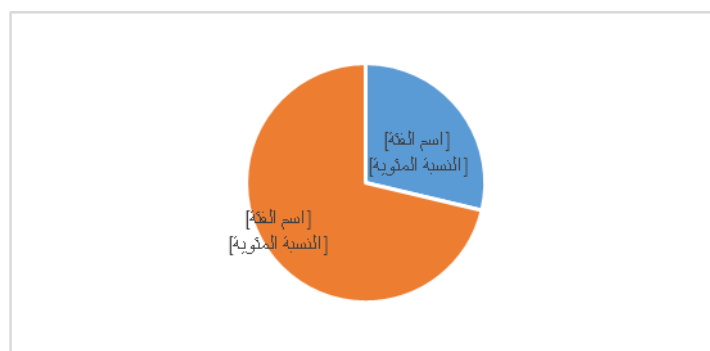


Figure 1 The Percentage of Applying SDF in Writing

However, the students vary in their attitudes toward a text after completing it. Through a close look at Table 3 and Figure 2 below, it was apparent that most of the students read the entire text after writing, reviewing, and making the correction. The interviewees' responses also showed that all of them agreed on rereading the whole text. The following quotations show some of their sayings: "I always reread the whole text every time I revise for correction" (Interviewee #3). "It is necessary to read it all to edit because every time you read, you will find shortcomings" (Interviewee #1).

TABLE 3
PARTICIPANTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS A TEXT AFTER COMPLETING IT

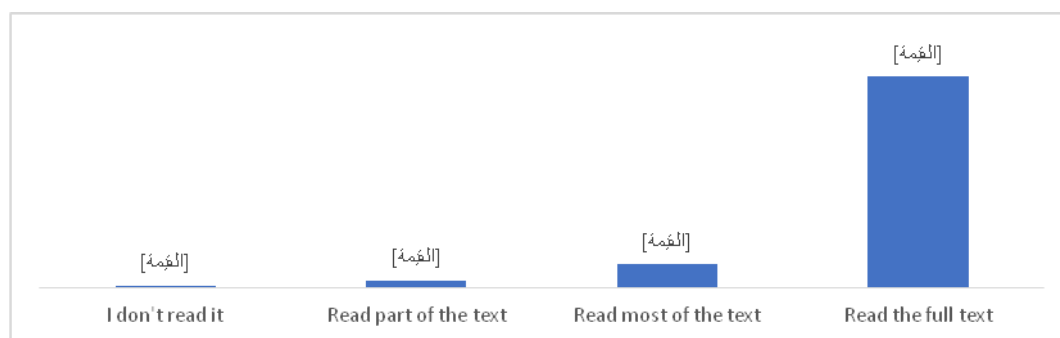|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Decision | Read the full text | 81 | 86.2 | 86.2 | 86.2 |
|  | Read most of the text | 9 | 9.6 | 9.6 | 95.7 |
|  | Read part of the text | 3 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 98.9 |
|  | I don't read it | 1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 94 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |



Figure 2 Participants' Attitudes Toward a Text After Completing it

The students also vary in their decisions about applying their own comments and corrections they write in the margins. The results, shown in Table 4, indicate that about 54.3% of the students apply all the corrections after writing and reading a text.

TABLE 4
THE PARTICIPANTS' DECISIONS ABOUT APPLYING THE CORRECTIONS

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Decision | Make all corrections | 51 | 54.3 | 54.3 | 54.3 |
|  | Make the most corrections | 18 | 19.1 | 19.1 | 73.4 |
|  | Make some corrections | 21 | 22.3 | 22.3 | 95.7 |
|  | I don't make any corrections | 4 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 94 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

Examining the results, shown in Table 5 and Figure 3, indicate that the students' major comments and corrections were on writing mechanics (spelling - punctuation - abbreviations - capitalization). Table 5 shows the rest of the results, and Figure 3 clarifies them.

The researcher then tried to figure out why students focused on writing mechanics and then grammar. They said: "In classes, teachers used to focus on them" (Interviewee #4). "I usually focus on writing mechanics and grammar in academic writing, while on content in unacademic writing" (Interviewee #5). Additionally, they highlighted the importance of the guideline sheet in writing classes before starting self-feedback. The following quotations show their reasons: "I believe that guideline sheet is necessary because it leads the students to success" (Interviewee #5). "We need it to understand the criteria behind assessing us" (Interviewee #2). "It provides us with an essential foundation for more advanced courses in the future" (Interviewee #1).

TABLE 5
THE PARTICIPANTS' MAJOR COMMENTS AND CORRECTIONS IN SDF

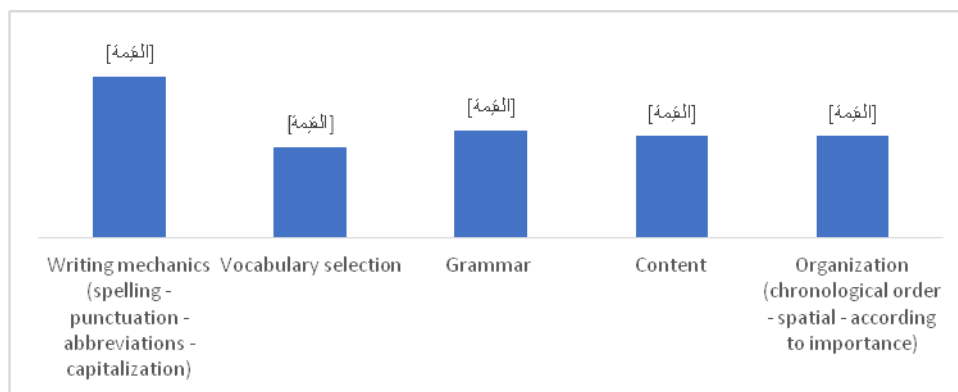|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Response | Organization (chronological order - spatial - according to importance) | 17 | 18.1 | 18.1 | 18.1 |
|  | Content | 17 | 18.1 | 18.1 | 36.2 |
|  | Grammar | 18 | 19.1 | 19.1 | 55.3 |
|  | Vocabulary selection | 15 | 16.0 | 16.0 | 71.3 |
|  | Writing mechanics (spelling - punctuation - abbreviations - capitalization) | 27 | 28.7 | 28.7 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 94 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |



Figure 3 The Participants' Major Comments and Corrections in SDF

*B. Students' Perspectives on Applying SDF*

The second section of the questionnaire focuses on students' reflections. The results of descriptive analysis (percentages, means, and standard deviations) of the students' reflections on the SDF are summarized in Table 6. It is obvious that the general mean of the students' perceptions towards SDF was 2.85 degrees, illustrating that students had positive attitudes toward SDF. Some interviewees thought that SDF was the primary reason behind their writing skill improvement; the following quotations show their reasons: "I think that depending on myself in correction helps me improve the quality of my writing" (Interviewee #3). "I think that self-feedback helps me overcome the weaknesses via reading from different recourses, such as Google" (Interviewee #5).

TABLE 6
STUDENTS' REFLECTION ON THE SELF-DIRECTED FEEDBACK

| | Items | | Responses | | | | Mean | Stander deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Strongly disagree | Disagree | agree | Strongly agree | | | |
| 1 | I am generally satisfied with the level and quality of the self-feedback on my duties | N | 3 | 10 | 60 | 21 | 3.0532 | .67787 | 3 |
| | | % | 3.2% | 10.6% | 63.8% | 22.3% | | | |
| 2 | Feedback from others affects me emotionally | N | 14 | 45 | 26 | 9 | 2.3191 | .84513 | 6 |
| | | % | 14.9% | 47.9% | 27.7% | 9.6% | | | |
| 3 | Self-directed feedback is more efficient than teacher feedback | N | 8 | 50 | 23 | 13 | 2.4362 | .83677 | 5 |
| | | % | 8.5% | 53.2% | 24.5% | 13.8% | | | |
| 4 | Self-directed feedback is more efficient than peer feedback | N | 3 | 39 | 38 | 14 | 2.6702 | .76746 | 4 |
| | | % | 3.2% | 41.5% | 40.4% | 14.9% | | | |
| 5 | I see that self-feedback enhances and motivates my learning | N | | 5 | 42 | 47 | 3.4468 | .59779 | 1 |
| | | % | | 5.3% | 44.7% | 50.0% | | | |
| 6 | In general, I am confident in my ability to set and interpret the criteria for each paragraph | N | 2 | 11 | 49 | 32 | 3.1809 | .71786 | 2 |
| | | % | 2.1% | 11.7% | 52.1% | 34.0% | | | |
| General mean = 2.85 | | | | | | | | | |

Overall, the results of SDF show that the students' preferred modes of feedback are diverse. The students were asked to choose the preferred mode of feedback, and the results can be seen in Table 7. Interviewees were asked to support their choices with reasons. One of them said: "All types of feedback are helpful, but I still believe that teacher feedback is the most helpful because they are more expert" (Interviewee #1). Another interviewee stated, "When teachers provide me feedback, I psychologically feel that someone is concerned about developing my skills" (Interviewee #5). One said, "I don't prefer peer feedback because classmates usually have the same educational level" (Interviewee #4).

TABLE 7
THE PARTICIPANTS' PREFERRED MODE OF FEEDBACK

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| types | From the professor of the course | 61 | 64.9 | 64.9 | 64.9 |
| | From his classmate/ classmate | 8 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 73.4 |
| | Subjective | 25 | 26.6 | 26.6 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 94 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

## V. DISCUSSION

### A. The Perceptions of Applying SDF in Writing

The first section of the discussion was formed to answer the first research question, which aims to investigate the perceptions of applying SDF in writing. As can be seen from the above results, most students apply SDF in their writing. They thought that SDF would have a positive effect on improving their writing skills. In general, the findings show that 94.7% of students believe that SDF enhances and motivates their learning. In addition, interviewees thought that SDF had made a big revolution in improving their writing. In other words, the findings proved that the majority of students had positive attitudes towards SDF. This was evident from students' responses to the questionnaire and was supported by their responses to the follow-up interviews.

The positive emotion on SDF is apparent as 86.1% of the students were satisfied with the level and quality of their duties and agreed on their abilities to interpret the criteria for each task. The results of a study by Amelia (2020) supported a similar finding as she noted that the students thought their own feedback was good and they were confident in their ability to interpret criteria for each task. The finding of this study is aligned with Wakabayashi (2013) and Hajimohammadi and Mukundan's (2011); they found that students can enhance their writing skills and increase the quality of their writing output through self-directed feedback. This finding is also consistent with other research findings that imply that feedback or correction, whether delivered directly (Zaman et al., 2012) or indirectly (e.g., Hyland, 2001; Liu, 2008), successfully enhances the quality of students' essays.

It is a widespread belief that various amounts of SDF occur during the revision process. The quantitative analysis in this study revealed that the majority of students apply all the corrections and comments they thought of or wrote in the margins. This result infers that SDF is beneficial for the students as they correct the errors themselves every time they read or revise. Therefore, they become more independent of the teacher. This finding is aligned with Ramírez Balderas and Guillén Cuamatzi's (2018) finding.

In terms of writing components, students' major comments and corrections are on writing mechanics (28.7%), grammar (19.1%), organization and content (both at 18.1%), and vocabulary selection (16%). Data from the follow-up interview supported this statement by including additional details. Some interviewees, in their academic writing assignments, assert that their teachers evaluated them more on mechanics and grammar, which was the reason behind their decision. During the interview, the majority of students claimed that the guideline sheet greatly assists them in their writing. They thought that the guideline sheet led them to success. This finding is also consistent with the findings of Brookhart (2008), who suggests that one of the recommendations for valuable feedback is to provide criteria for good

work (criterion-referenced). This finding was also in agreement with Amelia's (2020) findings when she highlighted the importance of the feedback sheet as it assists students in double-checking their work.

Another interesting finding is that most of the students in the questionnaire had positive emotional reactions to feedback from others (teachers, peers). All participants interviewed in the study expressed their acceptance of feedback from others, whether on their strengths or weaknesses. They also highlighted the importance of providing positive feedback. These results are consistent with the claim that positive comments on what is adequately done should be used in feedback (Brookhart, 2008). In fact, this advice was also supported by the finding of Amelia (2020), who claimed that most feedback given so far has focused on students' weaknesses in order to inform them of what they need to revise. However, the use of valence, both positive and negative, is preferred.

*B. The Students' Preferred Mode of Feedback*

The second section of the discussion was formed to answer the second research question, which aims to investigate the students' preferred mode of feedback. In general, the findings show that feedback provided in an EFL writing course, regardless of its type, is likely to increase students' ability to write efficiently.

Whereas past researchers have found that self-feedback is less effective than peer feedback (e.g., Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Ganji, 2009), the present study has shown that 55.3% of the students believe that SDF is more effective than peer feedback. While teachers' feedback was the most efficient as students could get useful, detailed, and constructive feedback (61.7%). In addition, interviewees supported this finding. They stated that teacher feedback is the most helpful as they could highlight the weaknesses, enhance the strengths, and provide additional solutions and instructions. The results of a study by Crooks (1988) supported similar findings; he noted the need to identify strengths and weaknesses in feedback given to students in order to help them improve their performance and progress.

Upon asking participants to select their preferred method of feedback, teacher feedback was the most frequently selected option with 64.9% of all participants. This was followed by SDF (26.6%), while peer feedback (8.5%) was the least preferred method of feedback. Data from the follow-up interview supported these findings. They believed that teachers are the most experts. This pattern of findings is consistent with previous research, which indicates that teacher feedback has long been the preferred method of correction for foreign and second language students (Leki, 1991; Lee, 1997; Zhang, 1995). Similarly, Leki (1991) noted that peers are the least beneficial in providing feedback because they are the least helpful in correcting errors, unlike teachers who are considered experts. This is consistent with previous research's finding, which indicates that students' rejection of peer feedback was because it was "incorrect" (Yang, 2006). However, these findings are contrary to studies conducted by Mendonca and Johnson (1994) and Ganj (2009), who found that peer feedback was more beneficial than other types of feedback.

Interestingly, the findings of this study show that SDF cannot be the alternative to teacher feedback. This finding is contrary to some previous studies; for instance, Cahyono and Amrina's (2016) study that found peer feedback and SDF are beneficial for students, unlike the traditional way of feedback (teacher feedback) as well as Amelia's (2020) study that found teacher feedback can be substituted for SDF.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The present study set out to determine the Saudi undergraduate students' perceptions of self-directed feedback and explored their preferred method of feedback in writing. After analyzing the responses of the target participants, it was apparent that students' perceptions of the use of SDF tended to be positive. They thought that SDF has become necessary in higher education for numerous reasons. From students' points of view, one of the more significant findings from this study was that SDF enhanced and improved the quality of their writing. It was also shown that self-feedback improved the students' awareness of their errors and helped them become more independent of the teacher. However, a significant proportion of students chose teacher feedback as their preferred method of feedback because of their lack of knowledge, and teachers are more experts.

The current findings contribute to the discussion concerning SDF from undergraduate students' perceptions. It examined students' perceptions, which gives a broader and more complete view of the topic regarding such context of written feedback.

To some extent, the findings enhance students to become more independent of teachers and more aware of their errors and how to deal with them. Additionally, instructors should provide their students with guideline sheets that help them double-check their work. Moreover, instructors should encourage their students to apply self-feedback and consider their individual differences for effective and productive writing feedback.

An expansion of this study can investigate the students' perceptions of the impact of SDF on other EFL skills, such as speaking skill, as this study focused entirely on perceptions of writing skills. The study was conducted with undergraduate EFL students; the majority of students were females. Different results may be achieved if the study is conducted with merely male students. Additionally, different results may be achieved with students at other educational levels. Lastly, further research can investigate how teacher and student factors such as teachers' prior learning and teaching knowledge, experience, and students' motivation, background knowledge, and attitudes toward feedback can be appropriate research topics. More research is required to improve students' understanding of SDF in writing, what techniques they apply, and how they apply it.

APPENDIX. A STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear students,

This questionnaire is for research purposes only. The data which will be collected will not be used to evaluate you. This questionnaire is a part of a study that investigates Students' perceptions of applying self-directed feedback in writing and your preferred method of feedback. SDF refers to students' ability to criticize their own writing and deal with errors without depending on a teacher.

You are kindly requested to answer the following questions by ticking the appropriate box.

Thank you for your collaboration.

*A. Students' Attitudes of SDF*

1. Do you apply SDF in your writing?
a) Yes
b) No
2. After you have finished writing a text and working on the SDF, do you?
a) Read the whole text
b) Read most of the text
c) Read part of the text
d) I don't read it
3. After writing a text, you reread it and write some corrections in the margins, do you?
a) Make all the corrections
b) Make most of the corrections
c) Make some the corrections
d) I don't make any corrections
4. Most of my comments and corrections are on:
a) Organization (chronological order - spatial - according to importance)
b) Content
c) Grammar
d) Vocabulary selection
e) Writing mechanics (spelling - punctuation - abbreviations - capitalization)
5. The best type of feedback is:
a) Teacher feedback
b) SDF
c) Peer feedback

*B. Students' Perceptions of SDF*

TABLE 1

|  | Items | Responses | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | I am generally satisfied with the level and quality of the self-feedback on my duties |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Feedback from others affects me emotionally |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Self-directed feedback is more efficient than instructor feedback |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Self-directed feedback is more efficient than peer feedback |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | I believe that self-directed feedback enhances and motivates my learning |  |  |  |  |
| 6) | In general, I am confident in my ability to set and interpret the criteria for each paragraph |  |  |  |  |

APPENDIX B. INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS

Typically, a wide variety of questions are used to gain information from the research samples about SDF. The researcher used these questions as a guide to develop the interviews:

1. Do you know the meaning of SDF in writing?
2. When was the first time you started depending on yourself for revising any paragraph/ essay?
3. Why is SDF so important?
4. Do you focus more on content, grammar, or writing mechanics in doing SDF? Why?
5. Do you prefer to have a guideline sheet available before writing a paragraph or essay? Support your answer with reasons?
6. How does feedback make you feel? Positively or negatively?
7. Which type of feedback do you prefer? Why?

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