

Abstract

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EAP Teacher Expectations vs. EFL Student Interpretation of Written Teacher Feedback: Authority and Attitude Issues

Conflicting results concerning the issues of authority and attitude were found in much of the research on written teacher feedback. Moreover, very few studies addressed the perspectives of each of the ends of the interaction as a sub-issue. Therefore, the present exploratory study aimed at investigating whether the manner EAP teachers intended their written feedback to be perceived matched how EFL college students actually perceived it in terms of authority and attitude in a process-oriented, multiple-draft writing class. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis procedures were implemented to simultaneously explore the perceptions of 13 teachers and their 160 students at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport in Egypt. The results of the questionnaires demonstrated that teachers' expectations of their written feedback were in line with students' interpretations of it regarding the issue of authority whereas both divergence as well as convergence were evident within and across teachers' expectations and students' interpretations regarding the issue of attitude. The interviews of the three teacher-student pairs, which adopted metaphors to probe more deeply in participants' perceptions, confirmed the above results and revealed a number of variables which helped interpreting them, including teachers' personas and approaches to teaching, students' motivational orientation, self-confidence, and competence, among others. Pedagogical implications of the findings for academic writing classes were discussed.