

A Review of Teacher Feedback Strategies on Student's Writing Performance in EFL Contexts

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a comprehensive synthesis of recent empirical research on teacher feedback strategies and their contributions to improving English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' writing performance. Writing is a cognitively demanding skill that requires learners to coordinate vocabulary, grammar, organization, and genre conventions. Although previous studies have demonstrated that teacher feedback can improve writing performance, the existing literature remains fragmented regarding which feedback strategies are most effective, under what conditions they produce positive outcomes, and how learner characteristics influence their effectiveness. Previous research has often examined individual feedback techniques or specific instructional contexts, making it difficult to establish broader patterns across different EFL settings. This gap highlights the need for a systematic synthesis of recent empirical evidence. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a systematic literature review design to examine peer-reviewed, open-access articles published between 2021 and 2026 from ScienceDirect, Springer Open, Frontiers, and MDPI. Twelve studies were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns in feedback types, implementation, and learning outcomes. The findings indicate that direct corrective, indirect facilitative, and metalinguistic feedback serve different pedagogical functions. Overall, feedback is most effective when it is timely, specific, adaptive, and encourages active learner engagement and self-regulated revision. The review contributes a broader synthesis of recent evidence and highlights the importance of differentiated feedback practices in EFL writing instruction.

Keywords: Teacher Feedback, Writing Performance, EFL Context, Feedback Strategies, Student Engagement, Systematic Literature Review

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INTRODUCTION

English proficiency has emerged as an indispensable competency in contemporary academic and professional landscapes, functioning as the predominant medium for cross-cultural communication, scholarly dissemination, and international collaboration in an increasingly globalized world. As the most widely adopted lingua franca across diverse geographical and disciplinary boundaries, English enables individuals to access knowledge resources, participate in academic discourse communities, and establish professional networks that transcend national borders. Among the four fundamental language skills, writing is frequently regarded as the most cognitively demanding and pedagogically challenging domain because it requires learners to orchestrate multiple simultaneous processes, including lexical retrieval, grammatical encoding, rhetorical organization, and audience awareness, while maintaining coherence and cohesion throughout extended text production. For learners of English as a Foreign Language, the acquisition of proficient writing abilities presents distinctive obstacles that stem from limited exposure to authentic language use, restricted opportunities for meaningful communicative practice, and the absence of immersive linguistic environments that naturally facilitate implicit learning mechanisms. These learners often struggle with restricted vocabulary repertoires, insufficient grammatical

knowledge, and difficulties in generating, organizing, and refining ideas within the constraints of target language conventions, which collectively impede their capacity to produce effective and coherent written texts. Unlike receptive skills such as reading and listening, which allow learners to rely on contextual cues and existing linguistic knowledge for comprehension, writing necessitates active construction of meaning through precise linguistic choices, making it substantially more difficult to master without systematic instructional guidance and sustained practice opportunities.

One of the most influential and extensively researched elements in the teaching of writing is the provision of teacher feedback, which functions not merely as an evaluative instrument but as a formative mechanism that guides learners toward recognizing weaknesses, understanding errors, and implementing meaningful revisions in subsequent drafts. In the domain of second language acquisition research, written corrective feedback has long been acknowledged as a powerful pedagogical practice capable of enhancing various dimensions of writing competence, including grammatical accuracy, syntactic complexity, lexical diversity, and overall text quality. It enables students to identify specific errors in their productions, refine their drafts through iterative revision cycles, and develop metacognitive strategies for monitoring and self-correcting their writing in future tasks. Recent empirical investigations have further emphasized the multifaceted impact of teacher feedback on writing quality, demonstrating that well-designed feedback interventions can produce measurable improvements across multiple performance dimensions such as lexical diversity, syntactic fluency, and discourse organization. For instance, Ajabshir & Ebadi (2023) demonstrated that teacher-centered feedback significantly improves writing performance across multiple dimensions, while Yu & Yang (2021) confirmed that learners respond positively to clear, constructive feedback when it is delivered in a supportive and comprehensible manner. These findings collectively highlight that the effectiveness of feedback depends not only on its frequency or volume but also on the specific strategies employed in delivering it and the contextual factors that mediate its reception and implementation.

Feedback strategies in EFL writing instruction vary considerably across educational contexts, ranging from direct and indirect written corrective feedback to metalinguistic explanations and process-oriented comments. Written corrective feedback (WCF) may be provided directly by supplying the correct form or indirectly by indicating an error and requiring learners to identify and correct it themselves. Research has shown that these different approaches can influence students' writing development, although their effectiveness is not uniform across learners, tasks, and learning conditions (Brown et al., 2023; Kang & Han, 2015). In particular, Cheng & Zhang (2021) demonstrated that teachers' feedback practices differed according to their linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds. Their comparison of native English-speaking and non-native English-speaking teachers showed differences in the amount, focus, and realization of written feedback, including attention to both local linguistic errors and global writing issues.

The diversity of feedback practices suggests that effective EFL writing instruction requires teachers to employ a flexible repertoire of feedback strategies rather than relying on a single corrective approach. Teacher feedback can address not only grammatical and lexical accuracy but also content, organization, and other higher-level dimensions of writing. Ajabshir & Ebadi (2023), for example, compared teacher-focused feedback with automated writing evaluation (AWE) and found that both approaches improved aspects of EFL writing, although their effects differed across syntactic complexity, accuracy, lexical diversity, and fluency. The teacher-feedback group showed stronger performance in fluency, whereas AWE produced advantages in lexical diversity and syntactic complexity. These findings suggest that automated and teacher feedback may serve complementary rather than mutually exclusive functions.

The rapid development of automated writing evaluation and other digital feedback technologies has therefore expanded the range of feedback available to EFL learners. AWE systems can provide immediate and individualized feedback, particularly on micro-level

features such as grammar, spelling, and other surface-level linguistic characteristics. At the same time, teacher feedback can address broader aspects of writing, including organization, content, rhetorical purpose, and contextual appropriateness (Ajabshir & Ebadi, 2023). Consequently, rather than assuming that technology should replace teacher feedback, recent research increasingly supports examining how human and automated feedback can be combined according to the specific learning objectives and needs of students.

Another important consideration is that students do not respond to feedback in the same way. Feedback effectiveness is strongly influenced by how learners interpret, process, and act upon the information they receive. Afifi et al. (2023), for instance, examined students' behavioral, cognitive, and affective engagement with teacher and automated WCF and found substantial variation in students' engagement levels. Some learners demonstrated active behavioral and cognitive engagement, whereas others showed more limited responses to the feedback. The study further indicated that students' beliefs and attitudes toward feedback and its source influenced their engagement, while proficiency did not consistently explain differences in engagement.

Similarly, Pan et al. (2023) found that students' engagement with WCF should be understood as a multidimensional process involving affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions. Their findings demonstrate that learners with different proficiency levels may engage with written feedback differently, reinforcing the view that the provision of feedback alone does not automatically result in improved writing. More broadly, research on student engagement with feedback has shown that students' emotional responses, observable revision behavior, and cognitive processing of feedback may interact in complex ways (Yang & Zhang, 2023).

Feedback should therefore be conceptualized not merely as correction of a completed writing product but as a process that supports drafting, revising, monitoring, and subsequent writing development. Evidence from Yang & Zhang (2023) demonstrates that process- and self-regulation-oriented teacher feedback can contribute to the development of students' metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and social-behavioral writing strategies. Their findings indicate that students who engaged with process-oriented feedback developed stronger goal-oriented planning and monitoring strategies during writing and revision. Thus, feedback can play a broader developmental role by supporting learners' capacity to regulate their own writing rather than simply helping them eliminate errors in a single draft.

Despite the extensive body of research examining different feedback types and their effects on writing accuracy, important gaps remain concerning the conditions under which particular feedback strategies are most effective. Existing research has demonstrated that feedback outcomes can vary according to feedback source, feedback type, learner engagement, writing genre, and other contextual conditions (Afifi et al., 2023; Ajabshir & Ebadi, 2023; Cheng & Zhang, 2021). However, studies do not always examine these dimensions simultaneously. Many investigations continue to focus on whether a particular feedback strategy improves writing accuracy, while comparatively less attention is given to how feedback is implemented, how learners interpret it, and how engagement mediates its effects on subsequent writing performance.

Another gap concerns the interaction between learner-related and contextual factors. Students' motivation, prior language proficiency, beliefs about feedback, self-regulatory capacity, and attitudes toward feedback may influence whether they actively process and apply teachers' comments. At the same time, teacher behavior and the nature of the feedback interaction can shape students' engagement. Luo (2023), for example, found that teacher behaviors played an important role in shaping students' engagement with feedback and that the effects of particular teacher behaviors were highly contextual rather than universally positive or negative. These findings suggest that feedback effectiveness cannot be adequately explained by feedback type alone.

The emergence of digital and automated feedback further complicates this research landscape. Although automated systems offer advantages such as immediacy, consistency, and individualized responses, they may be more effective for certain linguistic features than

for higher-level dimensions of writing. Ajabshir & Ebadi (2023) found that AWE and teacher feedback produced different patterns of improvement across CALF measures, while comparative research has also shown that students may engage differently with teacher-generated and automated feedback (Afifi et al., 2023). Therefore, the relevant research question is not simply whether teacher feedback is superior to technological feedback, but rather how different feedback sources can be integrated and under what conditions each approach provides the greatest pedagogical value.

The synthesis of previous studies consequently reveals a need for an integrative framework that considers feedback strategies, implementation conditions, learner engagement, and contextual moderators together. Such a framework is particularly important because feedback provision does not automatically produce learning gains. Rather, its effectiveness depends on whether learners understand the feedback, perceive it as useful, engage cognitively and behaviorally with it, and apply it during revision and subsequent writing tasks (Afifi et al., 2023; Yang & Zhang, 2023).

To address these gaps, this study formulates four specific research questions that guide the systematic synthesis of recent empirical literature on teacher feedback in EFL writing contexts. The first research question investigates what types of feedback strategies are most frequently employed by teachers in EFL writing instruction and how these strategies are conceptualized and operationalized across different educational contexts and proficiency levels. The second research question examines the effectiveness of various feedback approaches in improving students' writing performance, specifically considering how different strategies contribute to gains in accuracy, complexity, fluency, and overall text quality. This focus is consistent with recent research demonstrating that feedback effects may differ across multiple dimensions of writing performance rather than producing a uniform improvement.

The third research question explores the nature and extent of student engagement with teacher feedback by examining cognitive processing, affective responses, and behavioral revision actions. This question is supported by evidence that learner engagement is multidimensional and that students may respond differently to teacher and automated feedback (Afifi et al., 2023; Pan, 2023). The fourth research question identifies the internal and external factors that influence feedback success, including learner characteristics such as motivation, proficiency, beliefs, and self-regulation, as well as contextual variables such as teacher behavior, feedback characteristics, writing genre, and technological mediation. By systematically addressing these four interrelated questions, this study seeks to construct an integrated framework explaining the conditions under which teacher feedback strategies are most effective in enhancing EFL students' writing performance.

Therefore, this study aims to explore and synthesize teacher feedback strategies and examine how they are reported to contribute to students' writing performance across diverse EFL contexts, with particular attention to the mechanisms through which different feedback approaches facilitate learning and the conditions under which they achieve meaningful effects. A systematic literature review methodology is employed to enable the comprehensive examination of patterns, trends, and contextual variations across independent empirical studies. Through this synthesis, the study seeks to move beyond a simple classification of feedback types and instead provide an integrated understanding of what feedback is provided, how it is implemented, how students engage with it, and under what conditions it contributes to EFL writing development.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a systematic literature review design to examine teacher feedback strategies in EFL writing contexts and their reported effects on student writing performance. A qualitative descriptive approach was selected because it enables the researcher to identify, categorize, and interpret patterns across existing studies while preserving the contextual complexity of feedback practices. Rather than

reducing feedback processes to predetermined quantitative measures, this approach allows findings from different research contexts to be examined in their original conceptual and pedagogical contexts. A systematic literature review was considered appropriate because research on teacher feedback in EFL writing has been conducted across diverse educational settings, methodological approaches, and theoretical perspectives. Through systematic synthesis, the study can identify recurring patterns, emerging trends, and gaps within the existing literature. As Snyder (2019) explains, systematic literature reviews provide a structured approach to integrating findings from multiple studies and developing a coherent understanding of a research field. Similarly, Kitchenham (2004) emphasizes the importance of explicit procedures for searching, selecting, extracting, and synthesizing studies to enhance methodological rigor and reduce potential selection bias.

The theoretical foundation for this systematic review draws upon Cooper's (1998) research synthesis framework, which conceptualizes literature review as a distinct research methodology involving five interdependent stages: problem formulation, data collection, data evaluation, analysis and interpretation, and public presentation. This framework provides the epistemological grounding for treating the review process as a systematic inquiry rather than an ad hoc summary of existing studies, thereby ensuring that the synthesis meets standards of scholarly rigor comparable to primary empirical research. Additionally, the analytical procedures employed in this study are informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis methodology, which offers a flexible yet systematic approach for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data. The six-phase thematic analysis process, comprising familiarization with data, initial coding, theme searching, theme reviewing, theme defining, and report production, was adapted for application to the synthesized findings of the reviewed studies, enabling the identification of recurrent categories related to feedback types, focus areas, and reported impacts on writing performance. The combination of Cooper's (1998) synthesis framework and Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis procedures ensures that the review maintains both structural coherence and analytical depth in its treatment of the secondary literature.

Data sources for this review consisted exclusively of peer-reviewed, open access scholarly articles retrieved from reputable academic databases including Science Direct, Springer Open, Frontiers, and MDPI, which were selected for their established reputation for rigorous peer review processes and broad coverage of applied linguistics and language education research. The search strategy employed combinations of the following keywords: teacher feedback strategies, written corrective feedback, EFL writing performance, feedback effectiveness, and student writing improvement, with Boolean operators used to maximize retrieval precision while maintaining adequate sensitivity. Articles were selected based on explicit relevance to teacher-provided feedback in EFL writing contexts, methodological clarity and transparency in reporting research procedures, and full text accessibility for comprehensive content analysis. Studies that lacked clear methodological descriptions, focused exclusively on automated feedback systems without teacher involvement, or were unrelated to writing instruction in EFL settings were systematically excluded from the synthesis. The final corpus comprised twelve studies published between 2021 and 2026, representing diverse geographical contexts, educational levels, and methodological approaches, which collectively provide a robust foundation for identifying patterns and drawing evidence based conclusions about feedback strategies and their effects on writing development.

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the review findings, several methodological safeguards were implemented throughout the research process. Credibility was maintained by selecting only peer-reviewed sources from established academic databases and by conducting source triangulation to compare findings across studies employing different methodological approaches and contextual settings. Dependability was established through systematic documentation of the entire research process, including detailed records of search terms, selection criteria, coding decisions, and analytical memos that enable auditability and replication. Confirmability was addressed by minimizing researcher bias

through the use of explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria, dual coding procedures for initial theme identification, and regular consultation of the primary study data to ensure that emergent themes remained grounded in the reported findings rather than reflecting preconceived theoretical preferences. Furthermore, the analytical process involved iterative comparison of coded segments across studies to identify convergent evidence, divergent findings, and contextual factors that might explain variations in reported outcomes, thereby producing a nuanced synthesis that acknowledges both the general patterns and the contextual specificity of feedback effectiveness in EFL writing instruction.

Data Analysis

The data analysis procedures in this systematic review were structured to ensure methodological rigor, transparency, and replicability in synthesizing findings from the twelve selected primary studies. The analytical process commenced with comprehensive content analysis, which involved careful reading and re-reading of each article to identify key concepts, variables, and reported outcomes related to teacher feedback in EFL writing contexts. During this initial phase, detailed analytical memos were constructed for each study, documenting information about research design, participant characteristics, feedback types examined, outcome measures employed, and principal findings reported by the original authors. This familiarization process enabled the researcher to develop a thorough understanding of the individual study contributions while simultaneously identifying potential connections and contrasts across the corpus of reviewed literature. The content analysis focused specifically on extracting data related to four core dimensions aligned with the research questions: the types of feedback strategies employed by teachers, the reported effectiveness of these strategies in improving writing performance, the nature and extent of student engagement with feedback, and the internal and external factors that appeared to influence feedback success across different educational contexts.

Following the initial content analysis, thematic analysis procedures derived from Braun & Clarke (2006) were systematically applied to identify, analyze, and report patterns within the synthesized data. The coding process involved generating initial codes that captured discrete elements of meaning related to feedback practices and outcomes, which were then organized into preliminary categories based on semantic and conceptual similarities. These preliminary categories underwent iterative refinement through constant comparison procedures, wherein coded segments were repeatedly examined against one another and against the broader context of each study to ensure accurate representation of the primary authors' intended meanings. The theme development process resulted in the identification of four major thematic categories that directly correspond to the research questions and structure the findings and discussion section: types of feedback strategies, effectiveness of feedback implementation, student engagement processes, and factors influencing feedback success. Each theme was subsequently reviewed for internal coherence and external distinctiveness, ensuring that the thematic structure accurately reflected the patterns present in the data while maintaining clear boundaries between related but conceptually separate phenomena.

The final phase of data analysis involved interpretive synthesis, wherein the identified themes were examined in relation to one another and to the broader theoretical landscape of second language writing pedagogy. This interpretive process sought to move beyond mere description of individual study findings toward the development of an integrated framework that explains how different feedback strategies function under varying conditions and for different learner populations. Particular attention was devoted to identifying similarities and divergences across studies, with convergent findings treated as evidence of robust patterns and divergent findings examined for potential explanatory factors such as participant proficiency levels, instructional contexts, or methodological differences. The analysis also incorporated cross-referencing with established theoretical perspectives on feedback processing, including cognitive processing theories, sociocultural learning frameworks, and self-regulated learning models, to ensure that the synthesized findings were grounded in

relevant theoretical traditions. Throughout this process, care was taken to preserve the contextual specificity of individual study findings while identifying higher-order patterns that transcend particular research settings, thereby producing a synthesis that balances generalizability with appropriate acknowledgment of contextual variation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The systematic synthesis of twelve recent open access studies published between 2021 and 2026 provides compelling evidence that teacher feedback strategies play a decisive and multifaceted role in enhancing students' writing performance across diverse EFL instructional contexts. The thematic analysis reveals substantial convergence across studies regarding the classification of feedback approaches, with direct corrective feedback, indirect facilitative feedback, and metalinguistic explanatory feedback emerging as the three dominant strategy types employed by teachers. Direct feedback, which involves the explicit provision of correct forms or structures, was consistently reported as particularly effective for addressing grammatical errors and surface-level accuracy issues, especially among learners with lower proficiency levels who may lack the linguistic knowledge necessary for successful self-correction. Wondim et al. (2024) found that direct feedback yielded higher accuracy gains than indirect feedback in their experimental study with Ethiopian university students, while Dewi (2025) reported that structured and continuous direct feedback led to measurable improvements in writing accuracy and student confidence during classroom action research cycles. However, the analysis also reveals that over-reliance on direct correction may foster learner dependency and inhibit the development of autonomous editing skills, suggesting that teachers must balance explicit correction with opportunities for independent problem solving.

Indirect feedback strategies, which signal errors through underlining, circling, or error coding without providing the correct form, were found to encourage deeper cognitive processing and self-correction behaviors among students with sufficient linguistic proficiency and metalinguistic awareness. The studies by Yu & Yang (2021) and Nguyen & Nguyen (2023) indicate that learners respond positively to clear, constructive feedback when they possess adequate knowledge to interpret the indirect cues and implement appropriate revisions. Furthermore, metalinguistic feedback, which provides explicit explanations of language rules and error patterns, was shown to deepen learners' understanding of their mistakes and promote transfer of knowledge to new writing tasks, as evidenced in the typological analysis conducted by Wesenberg (2026). Musyarofah et al. (2021), in their investigation of supervisor and supervisee attitudes toward written feedback in EFL thesis writing, found that comments and metalinguistic explanations were highly valued by students because they facilitated comprehension of underlying language rules rather than merely correcting isolated errors. The synthesis indicates that no single strategy possesses universal superiority; rather, effectiveness depends on the dynamic interplay between feedback type, learner characteristics, and instructional objectives, with adaptive teachers strategically combining approaches to meet diverse student needs.

The effectiveness of feedback implementation emerges as a critical theme that transcends the specific type of feedback employed, with studies consistently demonstrating that feedback achieves maximal impact when it is timely, specific, and embedded within process-oriented instructional frameworks. Iterative feedback cycles, wherein students receive multiple rounds of targeted guidance followed by structured revision opportunities, were shown to produce substantial improvements in writing accuracy, organizational coherence, and syntactic complexity across multiple studies. Dewi (2025) found that structured and continuous feedback leads to measurable improvement when integrated into recursive writing processes, while Baz & Hasırcı Aksoy (2025) demonstrated that teacher feedback outperformed artificial intelligence feedback in improving coherence and overall text quality in informative writing tasks. The comparative analysis reveals that one-time correction events, in contrast, frequently fail to produce lasting improvement because they do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to internalize feedback, practice revision strategies, and

consolidate learning through repeated application. Hyland (2020) emphasized that the impact of feedback depends critically on how students process and apply it, which suggests that feedback should be conceptualized as an ongoing dialogic process rather than a unidirectional transmission of corrective information from teacher to student.

The integration of digital technologies into feedback processes represents a significant development in recent EFL writing pedagogy, with studies by Muspiroh (2025), Zenouzagh et al. (2025), and Criado et al. (2026) demonstrating that digital and collaborative feedback environments can enhance writing outcomes when they are designed to promote active learner engagement. However, the synthesis reveals a consistent pattern wherein purely automated or technology mediated feedback, while efficient in addressing surface level errors, fails to match the effectiveness of teacher provided feedback in addressing higher order concerns related to content development, argumentation quality, and rhetorical appropriateness. Weber et al. (2025) found that hybrid teacher AI feedback improved legal writing precision and structure, suggesting that technology functions most effectively as a complement to rather than replacement for teacher judgment and contextual sensitivity. Ajabshir & Ebadi (2023) similarly concluded that teacher feedback improved accuracy and fluency more consistently than automated feedback across different genres, reinforcing the irreplaceable role of human teachers in providing personalized, contextually grounded guidance that responds to the specific needs and developmental trajectories of individual learners.

Student engagement emerges from the synthesis as perhaps the most critical mediating factor in determining feedback success, with engaged students consistently demonstrating superior revision outcomes and long term writing improvement compared to their less engaged counterparts. Engagement in feedback processes involves multiple interconnected dimensions, including cognitive engagement, which entails deep processing and understanding of feedback content; affective engagement, which encompasses attitudes, beliefs, and emotional responses toward feedback; and behavioral engagement, which manifests in concrete revision actions and sustained effort during the writing process. Zenouzagh et al. (2025) demonstrated through mixed methods research that learner autonomy and motivation strongly influence digital feedback effectiveness, while Snyder (2019) emphasized that students who actively engage across cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions show substantially greater progress than those who approach feedback passively or superficially. The analysis reveals that feedback effectiveness is not determined solely by the technical quality of the feedback provided but by the extent to which students understand, value, and act upon the guidance they receive, which underscores the necessity for teachers to attend to motivational and emotional factors alongside informational content.

The synthesis also identifies several factors that consistently influence the success of feedback interventions across diverse educational contexts, which can be categorized into internal learner factors and external contextual factors. Internal factors include language proficiency, which determines students' capacity to understand and implement feedback; motivation, which influences willingness to invest effort in revision; and self-regulatory capacity, which enables students to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own writing progress. Hulu (2022) found that self-regulated learning strategies mediate the relationship between feedback and writing performance, enabling students to use feedback more effectively by setting specific goals, selecting appropriate strategies, and monitoring their own progress toward desired outcomes. External factors encompass teacher competence in providing clear, specific, and constructive guidance; the clarity and accessibility of feedback language; and the broader learning environment, including institutional support for writing instruction and opportunities for meaningful teacher student interaction. Yu & Yang (2021) highlighted that motivated students are more responsive to feedback, while teachers who provide specific and constructive guidance achieve better outcomes, suggesting that feedback effectiveness emerges from the dynamic interaction between learner readiness and instructional quality.

The cross study analysis reveals notable similarities in how feedback functions across different educational levels and cultural contexts, suggesting certain universal principles that

transcend specific instructional settings. Across all twelve studies, feedback was most effective when it was integrated into recursive writing processes that allowed for multiple drafts and revision cycles, when it balanced attention to form and content rather than focusing exclusively on either dimension, and when it fostered active student participation rather than passive reception. The studies by Cheng & Zhang (2021) and Musyarofah et al. (2021) similarly found that both native and non-native English speaking teachers provided effective feedback, though with different emphases, and that students valued feedback most highly when it was delivered in a supportive manner that respected their developmental stage and cultural background. These convergent findings suggest that while specific feedback techniques may require adaptation to local contexts, the underlying principles of timely delivery, specificity, and learner engagement appear to hold broadly across EFL settings.

The synthesized findings carry significant implications for writing pedagogy and teacher professional development in EFL contexts. First, teachers should develop comprehensive feedback literacy that enables them to select, adapt, and combine different feedback strategies based on formative assessment of individual learner needs rather than applying uniform approaches to entire classes. Second, instructional designs should incorporate structured opportunities for recursive revision, peer interaction, and self reflection to maximize the developmental potential of feedback events. Third, teacher education programs should prioritize the development of feedback skills, including the ability to provide clear, specific, and emotionally supportive guidance that fosters rather than undermines learner motivation. Sari et al. (2023), in their study of project-based learning in ELT essay writing, found that when teachers scaffolded the writing process through structured feedback integrated with project milestones, students demonstrated improved engagement and better learning outcomes, suggesting that feedback effectiveness is enhanced when embedded within meaningful, goal oriented instructional activities. Finally, while digital tools offer valuable affordances for efficiency and accessibility, the synthesis consistently affirms that teacher provided feedback remains irreplaceable due to its capacity for contextual interpretation, personalized adaptation, and responsive interaction that automated systems cannot replicate.

CONCLUSIONS

This systematic review concludes that teacher feedback is an essential component of EFL writing instruction, although its effectiveness depends on feedback type, learner characteristics, and implementation. Direct feedback is useful for improving surface-level accuracy, while indirect and metalinguistic feedback can promote self-correction and learner autonomy. Feedback is most effective when it is timely, specific, contextualized, and integrated into the writing process. Learner engagement is also crucial because students need to understand and apply feedback during revision. Although digital tools can complement teacher feedback, teacher guidance remains important for addressing contextual and higher-order aspects of writing. Overall, effective feedback should be differentiated, interactive, and process-oriented to support sustained improvement in EFL writing.

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