

The Most Common Feedback Types Provided by EFL Teachers in Essay Writing Classes

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Abstract

Despite the importance of the perception behind teachers' feedback, it is astonishing to note that there are not many studies regarding how teachers provide feedback. Drawing upon Ellis' (2009) typology of written Corrective Feedback (CF), this study explored the most common feedback types provided by EFL teachers. Moreover, the study aimed at finding out whether teachers' teaching experience and learners' proficiency level had any bearing on the type of feedback the teachers provided. Eleven teachers provided feedback on 301 descriptive essays written by EFL students in English. The findings revealed that teachers mostly tended to employ direct CF to correct their students' linguistic errors. This was followed by indirect CF and metalinguistic CF, respectively. It came to light that focused CF, electronic feedback, and reformulation had no popularity among Iranian EFL teachers. The experienced teachers opted more for indirect feedback while the inexperienced ones preferred direct feedback. Teachers were more inclined to provide intermediate students with direct CF whereas they provided more indirect CF to the upper intermediate students. The results suggest that not all teachers' perceptions about feedback can necessarily be rendered into classroom practices and various factors, including culture, society, learners and teachers themselves impact teachers' beliefs and practices.

Keywords: direct CF, indirect CF, reformulation, teaching experience, teacher feedback

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Introduction

Writing is a language skill which can be regarded as extremely crucial when it comes to EFL/ESL academic success (Bobanović, 2016; Hyland, 2003; Mohammad Hosseinpur, 2015). Language learners might encounter multiple challenges in the process of writing as it is primarily a productive language skill. One of the most pivotal elements in writing is to help learners not to have too many challenges, especially linguistic ones. Accordingly, feedback can play a determining role in guiding students and developing their cognitive abilities in the process of writing (e.g., Hyland & Hyland, 2019; Yu et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2021; Zhang & Cheng, 2021). The information about the students' performance or apprehension with regard to their learning goals can be provided through effective feedback that should be presented to them by their teachers. Therefore, teachers need to provide students with various types of corrective feedback (CF) in order to bring their current linguistic and non-linguistic levels closer to the desired outcome. Nevertheless, it should be noted that providing learners with mere feedback, without considering the type of feedback and its effectiveness, does not necessarily lead to improvement and success on the part of language learners (Lee, 2020; Yu et al., 2020).

Teachers' feedback would most probably affect and scaffold students' cognitive development and inform them about their potential strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, many language instructors and learners maintain that teachers' written corrective feedback can result in language learning in general and writing improvement in particular (Benson & DeKeyser, 2019; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Karim & Nassaji, 2020). However, what type of feedback can lead to learners' language development and writing improvement remains a controversial issue. Hyland and Hyland (2006) note that though feedback can be regarded as a focal facet of the written process in various pedagogic settings, the existing literature points to an inclusiveness and uncertainty regarding its part in L2 progress and instructors typically are of the opinion that its potentialities are not being fully unleashed.

A number of studies (e.g., Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Chen et al., 2016) have investigated the relation between language learners'

proficiency level and their preferences for receiving feedback. Some seminal evidence suggests that the learners' overall proficiency directly influences the extent to which CF can lead to learning (Bagheri Nevisi et al., 2019; Karim & Nassaji, 2020; Sheen, 2004). However, few studies, specifically in the Iranian EFL setting, have investigated the types of feedback provided by teachers in essay writing classes. Therefore, drawing upon the written CF typology of Ellis (2009), the present study probed into feedback types Iranian EFL instructors utilized in their essay writing classes to correct the students' linguistic errors.

Literature Review

Writing in EFL/ESL context is viewed as a purposeful means of communication rather than the accomplishment of an aimless, haphazard, and spontaneous activity. Quality feedback provides crucial information about development and learning with regard to learning objectives and expectations; stirs possible interactions between the educator and pupils and among learners about the indispensable dimensions of the learning process; enables writers to develop a repertoire of alternative strategies; prompts positive motivational values and perceptions; and improves self-esteem (Ferris, 2007; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Wahyuni, 2017).

Despite mounting emphasis on oral teacher and peer feedback, written teacher feedback plays a pivotal part in both ESL and EFL settings. Early studies on native English speakers indicated that the majority of written feedback types were poor and commonly misconceived and misinterpreted by students (Truscott, 1996). It is of paramount importance to pinpoint that feedback research was in its early stages of its development at that time and ideas of providing feedback and planning research to explain it were basic, simple, and unsophisticated. More recent empirical studies indicate that written feedback does result in writing enhancement (e.g., Banaruee, et al., 2018; Hyland & Hyland, 2019).

A significant body of studies on written corrective feedback (WCF) provided by instructors in L2 settings has dealt with correcting learners' errors and whether this could be beneficial to their overall writing progress. Error-

correction researchers have investigated not only its relative effectiveness and the strategies teachers employ to correct students' errors in L2 writing, but also the impacts such feedback leaves on students' short-run and long-run developments as writers (Hyland & Hyland, 2019; Zhang, 2018). According to process theories, feedback on errors is rather disheartening and disappointing and typically falls short of leading to desired outcomes in L2 writing contexts (Fazio, 2001). However, distinct conclusions cannot be drawn from the existing literature as to the genuine efficacy of the error-correction approach to providing written feedback due to varied populations, treatments and research designs. Written feedback should be regarded as more than mere marks on papers and essays since it should be truly representative of the real classroom environment within which it transpires and properly should reflect teacher-student relationships as well (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Goldstein, 2004).

Although teacher feedback alone cannot be considered the sole responsible factor for learners' progress in L2 writing, it should be regarded as one crucial variable. One other important factor is the feedback type (e.g., direct vs. indirect feedback). Results on feedback type have been paradoxical and contentious, primarily because of differing learner populations, various writing types, and the disparate methodologies adopted. Ferris (2006), for example, found that learners utilize direct feedback more consistently and efficiently than indirect feedback, as students merely copy and paste the teachers' recommendations into the following drafts of their written work. Although this might be a disappointing result for many teachers who are on the lookout for evidence that learners are becoming more skilled writers, the significance of instantaneous and swift enhancement of drafts cannot be understated and downplayed (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Another important element is teachers' standpoints and attitudes towards learners' texts and the kind of link they set up with students while providing feedback. Teachers do approach the written works of students differently with various goals in mind and such considerations and attitudes might change with various assignments, learners, and drafts (Gao & Zhang, 2020).

There have also been attempts to discover learners' viewpoints about

teacher written feedback. Investigation of learners' feedback preferences broadly suggest that ESL learners think highly of teacher written feedback and typically consider it more important than the alternatives (Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019; Sakrak-Ekin & Balçikanli, 2019; Wiboolyasarin, 2021). Though most research demonstrates that learners desire teachers to specify their grammar mistakes, some desire to be provided with comments on the content by their instructors. Surveys indicate that learners tend to prefer to be presented with WCF combined with other sources like conferences and are generally receptive to indirect types as well (Esmaeeli & Sadeghi, 2020).

A last crucial issue of pupils' reactions to instructor feedback is that of 'text appropriation', or "the idea that ownership of writing can be 'stolen' from a writer by the teacher's comments" (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 88). Such issues were posed in ESL debates of feedback but were strongly repudiated by Reid who stated that text appropriation was "largely a mythical fear of ESL writing teachers" (Reid, 1994, p. 275). She asserted the peril of mixing up useful and advantageous mediation and interference with appropriation and strongly asked ESL educators to concentrate rather on their parts as informers of culture to create and facilitate the socio-discoursal community in ESL writing classes.

Purpose of the Study

Drawing upon the typology of Ellis (2009), this research intended to probe into the types of feedback Iranian EFL instructors employ in their five-paragraph essay writing classes to correct the students' linguistic errors. Pinpointing the most commonly-applied feedback types used by the Iranian EFL teachers is another objective of this research. Finally, investigating the association between the instructors' experience and the type of the feedback that they present to the students at different proficiency levels is the final goal of conducting this study. To achieve the above-stated objectives, the researchers formulated the following questions:

1. What are the most frequent feedback types used by EFL instructors to correct the learners' linguistic errors?

2. Does the EFL teachers' teaching experience play any role in the type of feedback they provide?
3. Do EFL teachers provide the same feedback types to EFL learners regardless of the learners' proficiency level?

Methodology

Participants

Eleven male and female EFL teachers, teaching essay writing courses at different universities across the country, agreed to cooperate with the researchers of the study. They signed the electronic form sent through email to them to cooperate with the researchers. The teachers then let the researchers have access to the students' commented essays with various feedback types. All in all, 301 descriptive essays written by 301 male and female BA students majoring in English language and literature were collected for the purpose of data analysis. The students had already taken the Solution placement test and had been divided into intermediate and upper intermediate proficiency levels. Then, the participant teachers were kindly asked to specify their essay writing teaching experiences (i.e., the number of years they had been teaching writing-related courses). Based on the answers provided by the teachers, the researchers divided the teachers into two groups of high and low teaching experience based on the mean and median statistics. That is to say, six teachers had teaching experiences equal to or less than 8.91 or 7 years, and five had a teaching experience of higher than 8.91 or 7 years.

Instruments

To account for the questions of the study, the researchers utilized the following instruments: the Solution Placement Test was applied to specify the participants' proficiency levels. Also, Ellis' (2009) typology of teacher choices to amend linguistic errors of learners' writings was employed to identify the type and frequency of the feedback the teachers had provided.

Solution Placement Test. Solution placement test is a widely-used multiple-choice general language proficiency test. This test is used for placement and diagnostic purposes. The placement test included 50 multiple-

choice items which evaluated learners' grammatical and lexical knowledge, a reading comprehension passage with 10 graded items, and a writing test that gauged learners' productive language skill. The 50 multiple-choice items and the reading activity were planned to be answered together within 45 minutes. The writing activity was completed in the following week and took nearly 20 minutes. No negative points were conceived for the wrong responses and each correct answer had one point. According to the obtained answers from the solution placement test, all the students were categorized into two major levels of language proficiency: Intermediate and upper intermediate. Those who scored between 31 and 44 were labeled intermediate and those who scored 45 and higher than 45 were regarded as upper intermediate.

Ellis' (2009) Typology of Written Corrective Feedback. Drawing upon teacher handbooks and experimental research on WCF, Ellis (2009) put forward a classification of teacher choices to amend and rectify learners' errors. His typology includes the following parts:

- A. **Direct Feedback:** In this type of feedback, the learners are presented with the right format by the instructor. Direct feedback is typically provided by instructors when spotting a grammar error, by presenting the proper form or the anticipated reaction close to the language or grammar mistake. Direct feedback can be provided in different shapes like drawing a line through the erroneous or redundant word or phrase; embedding and entering a misplaced, absent or anticipated phrase, word, or morpheme; and via giving the exact and accurate language form above or near the incorrect one (Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 2006).
- B. **Indirect Feedback:** In this type, the teacher presents the learner with indications rather than the correct form of an error. Therefore, instructors can present general information and cues concerning the place and the error type or nature by highlighting, underlining, circling, coding, or marking an error, and the learners are asked to self-correct the error. This type of feedback is further divided into two subcategories: Indicating + locating the error, and Indication only (Lee,

2008; O'Sullivan & Chambers, 2006).

- C. **Metalinguistic Feedback:** Metalinguistic corrective feedback is divided into two subcategories: Application of error code and brief grammatical descriptions. Instructor jots down codes in the margin of a passage in the former, and puts a number for errors in text and describes each numbered error linguistically at the bottom of the text in the latter. The instructor provides metalinguistic indication and hint as to the essence of the error. It entails either commentaries or questions relevant to the accuracy and correctness of the learners' utterance, without precisely giving the accurate and proper form.
- D. **Electronic Feedback:** The existence and availability of corpora of written English can be considered a useful means to present learners with help and guidance in their writings. Through electronic feedback, the learners are guided via software programs while writing.
- E. **Unfocused Feedback:** In this type, teachers select to amend all or almost all errors of the learners.
- F. **Focused Feedback:** In focused CF, the teacher chooses particular errors to be rectified and remedied and disregards the others.
- G. **Reformulation:** This comprises a native speaker's revision and re-rendering of the learners' whole contents and wordings to create a native-like version of the written text to the extent possible while maintaining the originality of the text as well. This type of feedback is further divided into two subcategories: Revision required and No revisions required.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers went through these methodological stages to complete the research process: First, the students in 11 different essay writing classes were given the Solution placement test by their teachers. According to the obtained findings from the test, the researchers could divide all the participants into intermediate ($n = 141$) and upper intermediate ($n = 160$) levels. Next, all the subjects were asked by their teachers to write a five-paragraph descriptive

essay inside the class.

Having collected all the essays, the teachers went through the essays and provided some linguistic feedback for their students. Finally, the teachers let the researchers of this study gain access to their students' essays and the written corrective feedback. Drawing upon content analysis and considering Ellis' (2009) classification of instructor choices to amend linguistic errors, the researchers analyzed the data to pinpoint and categorize the types and frequencies of the feedback types that the teachers had provided.

Two researchers of the present study went through the provided feedback as carefully as they could to do the coding. The researchers embarked upon the coding process with a good command of and a mastery over the above-mentioned WCF typology. To do the coding, the researchers went through the teachers' feedback and comments one by one and decided upon the category each feedback belonged to and specified the feedback type according to the explanations provided by Ellis. It became obvious that the two coders approximately agreed with each other in the majority of cases and the intercoder reliability was .86. Nevertheless, the two coders asked a writing expert for guidelines, directions, and assistances in case of disagreements to make the right decision. The expert enjoyed 30 years of teaching writing in several academic institutions and was an associate professor of Applied Linguistics.

The first feedback type based on Ellis's typology is called direct, in which learners are presented with the right format. For instance, the following teacher feedback was coded as direct by both coders since the teacher had provided the correct form by drawing a line through the erroneous or redundant word and had given the precise and correct form near the incorrect one:

I ~~did~~ the right decision and enjoyed ~~from~~ my travelling experience a lot.

The second feedback type is indirect, in which students are provided with indications rather than the accurate form of an error. This feedback type is subdivided into two subdivisions: *Indicating + locating the error* and *Indication only*. The two coders counted the following example as indirect feedback

of Statistical Package for Social Sciences to analyze the data. Drawing upon Ellis' (2009) typology of written corrective feedback types, the researchers of the study analyzed the instructors' feedback on learners' writings to identify and categorize the types and frequencies of teachers' feedback types. Chi-square test was also employed to approach the data quantitatively.

Results

Exploring the First Research Question

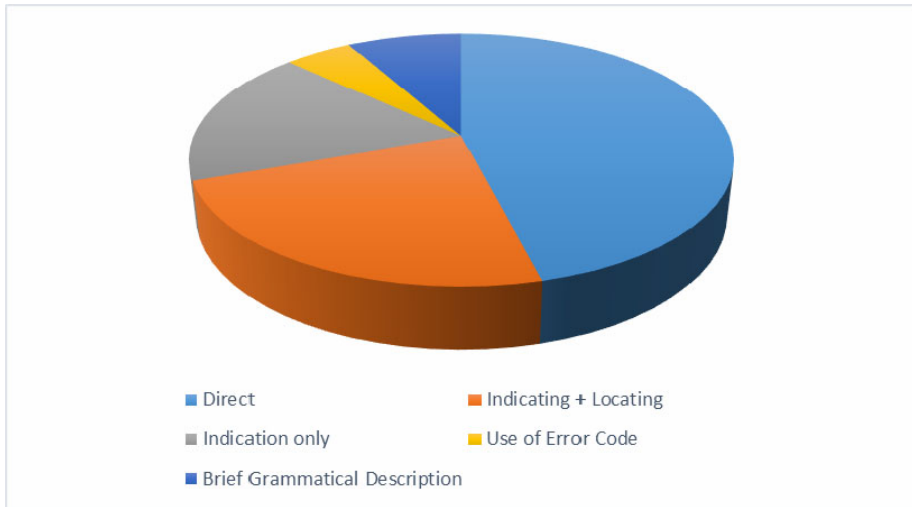
The first research question explored the frequency of the feedback types presented by EFL instructors to correct linguistic errors. Table 1 displays the frequencies and percentages for the feedback types presented by EFL instructors. The results indicated that direct CF (n = 1399, 46 %) was the most frequent feedback type provided by the EFL teachers. This was followed by indirect CF (n = 1248, 41%): "indicating + locating" (n = 713, 23.4 %) + "indication only" (n = 535, 17.6 %), and metalinguistic CF (n = 394, 12.9%): "brief grammatical description" (n = 247, 8.1 %) + "use of error code" (n = 147, 4.8 %).

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of Types of Corrective Feedback (CF)

Feedback Type		Frequency		Percent	
Direct CF		1399		46.0	
Indirect CF	Indicating + Locating the error	713	1248	23.4	41.0
	Indication Only	535		17.6	
Metalinguistic CF	Brief Grammatical Descriptions	247	394	8.1	12.9
	Use of Error Code	147		4.8	
Total		3041		100.0	

Figure 1 displays the percentages illustrated above in Table 1. The findings showed that focused CF, electronic feedback, and reformulation had no popularity among Iranian EFL teachers.

Figure1*Feedback Type Proportions****Exploring the Second Research Question***

The second question intended to find out whether EFL teachers' teaching experience has any significant role in determining the type of feedback they provided. It is noteworthy that eleven EFL teachers participated in this study whose teaching experiences were 1, 3, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 17, and 22 years. Table 2 shows the mean and median for the teachers' years of teaching experience. The mean and median were 8.91 and 7, respectively. The researchers divided the teachers into two groups of high and low teaching experienced based on the mean and median statistics. That is to say, six teachers had teaching experiences equal to or less than 8.91 or 7 years, and five had teaching experience higher than 8.91 or 7 years.

Table 2*Descriptive Statistics of Years of Teaching Experience*

Mean	8.91
Median	7.00
Std. Deviation	6.61
Minimum	1
Maximum	22

Table 3 shows the frequencies, percentages, and standardized residuals (Std. Residual) for the feedback types provided by the high and low experience instructors. If Std. Residuals were higher than 1.96, it could be concluded that the observed frequency was significantly beyond what was expected, and if they were higher than - 1.96, it could be concluded that the observed frequency was significantly below what was expected.

According to the findings demonstrated in Table 3, it can be said that less experienced teachers provided significantly more direct CF (50.4 %, Std. Residual = 2.8 > 1.96) than the more experienced ones (38.9 %, Std. Residual = - 3.6 > -1.96). The high-experience teachers provided significantly more indirect CF [“indicating + locating” CF (27.4 %, Std. Residual = 2.8 > 1.96 and “indication only” CF (25.8 %, Std. Residual = 6.6 > 1.96)] than the low-experience group [“indicating + locating” CF (21 %, Std. Residual = -2.2 > -1.96 and “indication only” CF (12.6 %, Std. Residual = -5.2 > -1.96)]. Although the low-experience teachers provided more “use of error code” CF (5.5 %, Std. Residual = 1.3 < 1.96) than the high-experience group (3.8 %, Std. Residual = -1.6 < -1.96), the difference between the two groups was insignificant because Std. Residuals were lower than +/- 1.96. And finally, “brief grammatical description” was provided significantly more often by the low-experience teachers (10.6 %, Std. Residual = 3.7 > 1.96) than by the high-experience ones (4.1 %, Std. Residual = - 4.8 > -1.96).

Table 3

Frequencies, Percentages and Std. Residuals for the Feedback Types by Teaching Experience

		Direct CF		Indirect CF		Metalinguistic CF		
		Direct	Indicating + Locating	Indication only	Use of Error Code	Brief Grammatical Description	Total	
Low	N	947	395	236	103	199	1880	

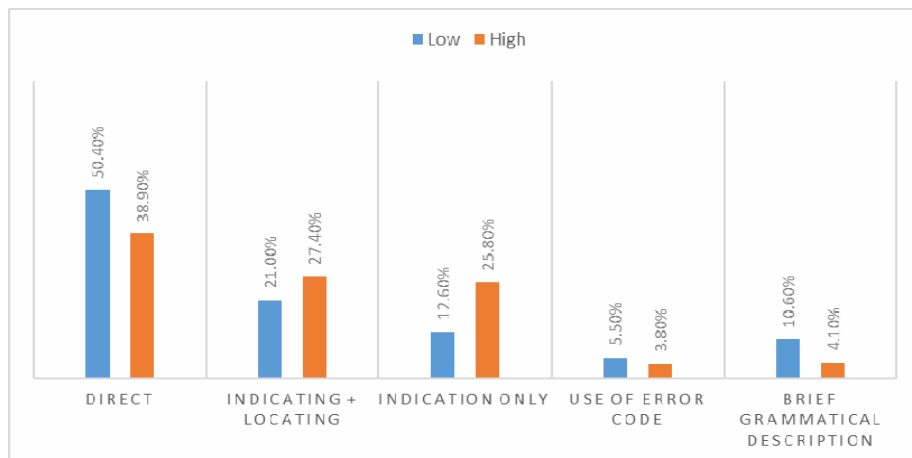
	%	50.4 %	21.0%	12.6%	5.5%	10.6%	100.0 %
	Std. Residual	2.8	-2.2	-5.2	1.3	3.7	
	N	452	318	299	44	48	1161
High	%	38.9 %	27.4%	25.8%	3.8%	4.1%	100.0 %
	Std. Residual	-3.6	2.8	6.6	-1.6	-4.8	
Tota	N	1399	713	535	147	247	3041
l	%	46.0 %	23.4%	17.6%	4.8%	8.1%	100.0 %

Table 4 displays the results of the chi-square test. The results ($\chi^2 (4) = 144.97$, $p = .000$, Cramer's $V = .218$, $p = .000$) revealed that there existed significant disparities between types of CF provided by the high and low-experience teachers.

Table 4

Chi-Square Tests for the Feedback Types by Teaching Experience

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	144.977 ^a	4	.00
Likelihood Ratio	146.652	4	.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	.168	1	.68
N of Valid Cases	3041		
Cramer's V	.218		.00

Figure 2*Percentages of Feedback Types by Teaching Experience****Exploring the Third Research Question***

The third question intended to examine whether the EFL teachers provided the same feedback types to EFL learners considering their proficiency level. Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics for the feedback types EFL instructors presented to intermediate and upper intermediate EFL learners.

Based on the results displayed in Table 5, it can be concluded that EFL teachers provided significantly more “direct” CF to intermediate learners (49.7 %, Std. Residual = 2.1 > 1.96) than the upper intermediate ones (41.7 %, Std. Residual = -2.4 > -1.96). The participant teachers provided significantly more “indirect” CF to the upper intermediate learners [“indicating + locating” CF (27.2 %, Std. Residual = 2.9 > 1.96) and “indication only” CF (20.8 %, Std. Residual = 2.9 > 1.96)] than to the intermediates [“indicating + locating” CF (20.2 %, Std. Residual = -2.7 > -1.96) and “indication only” CF (14.8 %, Std. Residual = -2.7 > -1.96)]. Although the participant teachers provided more “use of error code” CF to the upper intermediate learners (5 %, Std. Residual = .2 < 1.96) than the intermediates (4.7 %, Std. Residual = -.2 < -1.96), the difference was not statistically significant as all Std. Residuals were lower than +/- 1.96. And finally, the teachers provided significantly more “brief grammatical

description” feedback to the intermediate learners (10.6 %, Std. Residual = 3.6 > 1.96) than to the upper intermediates (5.2 %, Std. Residual = -3.9 > -1.96).

Table 5

Frequencies, Percentages and Std. Residuals for the Feedback Types by EFL Students' Proficiency Levels

		Direct CF	Indirect CF	Metalinguistic CF		Total	
		Direct	Indicating + Locating	Indicatio n only	Use Of Error Code	Brief Grammatical Description	
Intermediate	N	812	330	242	77	174	1635
	%	49.7 %	20.2%	14.8%	4.7%	10.6%	100.0%
	Std. Residual	2.2	-2.7	-2.7	-2	3.6	
Upper Intermediate	N	587	383	293	70	73	1406
	%	41.7 %	27.2%	20.8%	5.0%	5.2%	100.0%
	Std. Residual	-2.4	2.9	2.9	.2	-3.9	
Total	N	1399	713	535	147	247	3041
	%	46.0 %	23.4%	17.6%	4.8%	8.1%	100.0 %

Table 6 displays the results of the chi-square test. The results ($\chi^2 (4) = 69.77, p = .00$, Cramer's $V = .115, p = .000$) indicated that there were significant disparities between feedback types EFL instructors presented to intermediate and upper intermediate EFL learners.

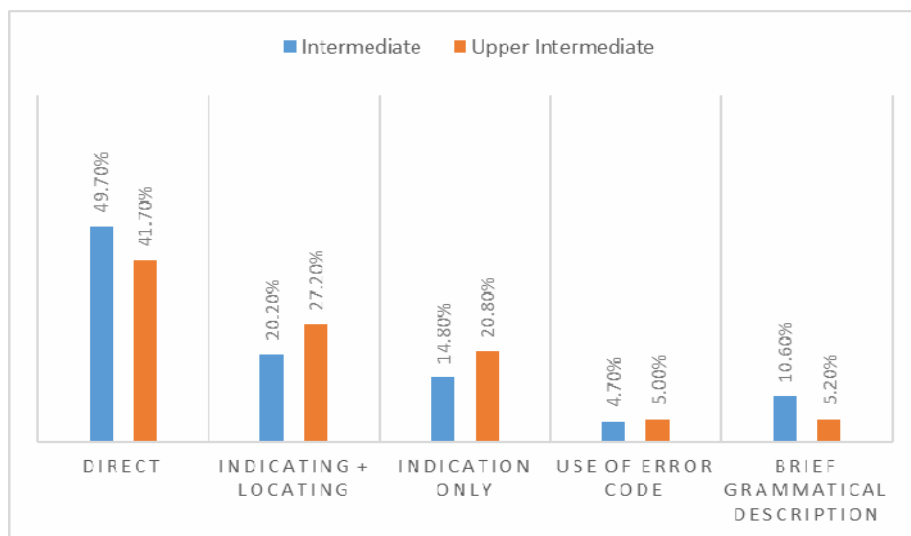
Table 6

Chi-Square Tests for the Feedback Types by EFL Students' Proficiency Levels

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	69.772 ^a	4	.00
Likelihood Ratio	70.764	4	.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	.168	1	.68
N of Valid Cases	3041		
Cramer's V	.151		.00

Figure 3

Percentages of Types of Feedback by EFL Learners' Proficiency Levels



Discussion

The present study, drawing upon Ellis' (2009) typology of WCF types, was an attempt to delve into the most frequent feedback types presented by EFL instructors to correct their students' linguistic errors. In addition, the study aimed at finding out whether teachers' teaching experience and learners' proficiency level had any effects on the feedback type the EFL instructors

provided. Findings demonstrated that EFL instructors were mainly inclined to employ direct CF to correct their students' linguistic errors. This was followed by indirect CF and metalinguistic CF, respectively. It came to light that focused CF, electronic feedback, and reformulation were of no popularity among Iranian EFL teachers.

These findings are similar to those found in Lee's (2008) Hong Kong study where most of the instructors (70%) presented direct feedback to learners. In Lee's study, the instructors maintained that their pupils could not find and rectify errors by themselves. By contrast, this study is different from the ones conducted by Hamouda (2011) and Mao and Crosthwaite (2019), where the instructors opted for the indirect feedback in spite of learners' preference to receive direct feedback.

One probable explanation for the high frequency of direct CF could be the fact that such feedback types are most welcome by students as they are directly and explicitly guided towards where the problem exactly lies and the solution to the problem is also offered by the teacher (Ellis, 2009). When providing direct CF, noticing the gap easily transpires and students' conscious attention to the problem is raised. Yet another reasonable justification for the higher frequency of direct CF in comparison with other feedback types presented by instructors can be presented by the fact that students' cognitive capacity is readily taken up, and no additional mental overload is imposed upon the learners' working memory. The reverse occurs when teachers provide learners with error codes, where the cognitive capacity of the learners cannot be properly utilized and extra cognitive burden will be imposed on learners' short-term memory.

As mentioned by many researchers (e.g., Hyland & Hyland, 2019; Lee, 2008, 2017), culture and teachers' cultural background is a significant factor that should be considered regarding provision of corrective feedback by teachers. The popularity of the direct CF among Iranian EFL teachers could be attributed to the Iranian culture and the fact that explicit and deductive teaching and learning is deeply rooted in the Iranian psyche and such mentality is appreciated by both teachers and learners. Evidence for the ingrained impact

of deductive and explicit teaching and learning can be readily discerned in Iranian national curriculum. At schools, Iranian learners study and go through a specific rule and its explanation and then rehearse certain tasks relevant and pertinent to the structure. Inductive or implicit learning is rarely utilized. Knowledge, then, is largely accepted, in Iran, as knowing “the rules”. The fact that you can bring your own explanations and come up with new hypotheses - would seem rather odd and weird. Moreover, public exams such as the University Entrance Exam play a pivotal part. Deductive and explicit learning is primarily considered the best way to guarantee that learners are sufficiently prepared for this very crucial local examination. Nevertheless, while teachers are familiarized with concepts like indirect education in their professional training, resistance to applying them in the classroom can be observed. The fundamental transition of power from instructors and educators to pupils as suggested by indirect learning can be regarded as one potential reason, which violates and contravenes the conventional influence and social position of a teacher in the classroom. The other argument can be made referring to the fact that many individuals including educators in Iran still maintain that providing well-formed and good explanations proves how skilled and expert the instructor is, and a teacher is commonly complimented and cherished when he or she can “provide good explanations” (Rezaei & Mohammad Hosseinpur, 2011).

The findings showed that focused CF, electronic feedback, and reformulation were not welcome by Iranian EFL teachers. The nature of the essay writing course, which entails tackling a wide variety of students’ errors, justifies the lack of focused CF. Reformulation comprises a native speaker’s reworking of the students’ wordings to create a native-like version of the written text to the extent possible while maintaining the originality of the text as a whole (Ellis, 2009). Lack of reformulation can be attributed to the minimal number of native speakers available in the Iranian EFL context. Finally, the absence of electronic feedback types can be due to not only a lack of conceptual awareness on the part of both teachers and learners about what such feedback types entail and how they can possibly be implemented, but also a lack of

technological consciousness on their part. The technology is seemingly a missing element in many EFL settings which requires more attention and expertise.

Regarding the teachers' teaching experience, it was revealed that, contrary to what was observed by Nourozian (2015), the high teaching experience group provided more indirect CF than other types of WCF, and the low-experience group was inclined more to direct CF. This tendency of experienced teachers, according to Zheng and Yu (2018), to opt for the indirect CF can be looked upon from three possible perspectives. From the affective vantage point, students would be more at ease with the direct feedback type (Chandler, 2003). However, the high teaching experience group tended to indicate where the error lay. This could be explained by the fact that learner autonomy can be boosted and enhanced when indicating and locating the error rather than directly providing the students with direct feedback. Moreover, students can take responsibility for their own learning, develop inner criteria for correctness, and be more involved in a process of discovery learning that is more welcome and desired by more experienced teachers (Sheen, 2011). Leading students down the garden path and offering only a partial picture of how WCF works might be more beneficial to students as they have to develop some degree of independence from the teacher and complete the learning process. From the behavioral perspective, students like to be exposed to direct feedback types more than indirect types. This could be attributed to the fact that the correct forms are observable and can be easily and quickly spotted by the students (Chandler, 2003). Nevertheless, the high teaching experience group might have desired a lower behavioral engagement on students' part and should have demanded that students read between the lines in order to achieve their objectives rather than merely presenting them with the concrete, easily seen, and the observables. Cognitively speaking, processing the indirect feedback types poses a greater challenge to students as such feedback types place a heavy burden on the working memory and may lead to long-term learning (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Rahimi, 2021). Given this, the high teaching experience group might have desired a higher cognitive involvement on

students' part because "pushing learners to stretch their interlanguage engages them in noticing the gap and in hypothesis testing" (Sheen, 2011, p. 48).

On the other hand, the low teaching experience group provided more direct CF. It seems that low-experience teachers were mainly preoccupied with the cultural clichés of being a good teacher in the Iranian EFL context explained earlier. They might have cared less about student autonomy and their developing inner criteria for correctness and merely exposed them to the correct form without engaging them in a process of discovery learning just to prove that they know the rule and can explain things well. The provision of more metalinguistic CF by these teachers might be justified on this ground as well. Another justification could be that they might have been more affectively engaged with the learners as they opted for what the students desired more: The direct CF. Finally, they might have believed more in the concrete and the observable rather than the abstract and unobservable.

The obtained results showed that the participant teachers in this study were more inclined to provide the intermediate students with direct CF followed by indirect and metalinguistic CF, whereas they showed a tendency to provide more indirect CF followed by direct and metalinguistic CF to the upper intermediates.

This could be readily explained by the fact that the overall proficiency of students at lower levels might not allow for a more complicated and intricate feedback type (Rahimi, 2021). Many researchers advocate direct CF for lower-level L2 proficiency writers and suggest that they might not be cognizant of the way linguistic and non-linguistic errors can be rectified and amended (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009, 2010; Chandler, 2003; Ellis, et al., 2008). Processing indirect CF calls for not only higher learner proficiency level, but also higher cognitive involvement on the students' side. Writers at higher levels of L2 proficiency, on the other hand, have a higher tendency to go for the indirect feedback type. This could be ascribed to the fact that they are progressing in terms of proficiency level and may desire a more cognitive engagement with the written tasks. This could help them develop independence from the teacher and analyze the data more profoundly. It can be reasonably argued that the

more students progress in terms of their proficiency level, the more they desire a need for learner autonomy and engagement with the tasks (Sheen, 2011).

Finally, it seems that the paucity of employment of metalinguistic CF by the teachers could be justified on the ground that it is time-consuming and requires a large amount of time on the part of teachers (Al Bakri, 2015; Hamouda, 2011). In addition to being time-consuming, using error codes could cause trouble for both instructors and pupils. Underachievers might experience difficulty applying these codes to rectify and redress their own errors and their immoderate and disproportionate utilization might create bewilderment for learners. Furthermore, instructors may find it challenging to assort and classify the errors according to the marking code system.

Conclusion

The present study was an attempt to explore the most frequent corrective feedback types provided by Iranian EFL teachers in their essay writing classes. The results indicate that not necessarily all teachers' perceptions about feedback can be rendered into their classroom practices. Different factors and variables influence teachers' beliefs and practices; for example, cultural factors such as society and stakeholders' expectations, teacher factors such as teachers' experience, and student factors such as learners' proficiency level have a bearing on teachers' beliefs and practices.

This study can serve as a point of reference for many practitioners in the field who are striving to provide the most appropriate feedback for learners at differing levels of language proficiency. More importantly, both experienced and inexperienced writing teachers can adjust and alter their feedback types to accommodate learners' needs at different proficiency levels. The findings of the study revealed that the experienced teachers opted more for the indirect feedback while less experienced ones preferred direct feedback. This finding suggests that the inexperienced teachers should turn their attentions to indirect feedback in their writing classes as well. Moreover, the results indicated that EFL teachers were more inclined to provide the intermediates with direct CF, whereas they provided more indirect CF to the upper

intermediates. It seems that the teachers should be aware of this, and that they should try to redress this balance.

The study has its own limitations as the number of available teachers who were willing to let the researchers have access to their students' commented essays could be regarded as minimal. This, in turn, might have affected and rather undermined the generalizability of the findings. Future studies with a larger sample are recommended to augment and boost the reliability of findings. Practical workshops can be held to raise both teacher and students' awareness about various feedback types, the way they might best work within classroom settings, and how their assessment can be attained with regard to specific yardsticks and the intended audience. Furthermore, technology-enhanced feedback types and materials have a lot to offer, and they have great potentialities to be unleashed as both teachers and learners become more involved in their activation, processing, and implementation. As a matter of fact, electronic feedback is to be utilized more and more in developing countries like Iran as such feedback can further enhance and expedite the learning and teaching process of L2 writing.

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