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*Research Article*

## **Perspectives of ELT Teachers in Enhancing Writing Skills through Immediate Feedback**

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### **Abstract**

Immediate feedback is crucial for enhancing students' writing skills as it provides timely guidance, allowing them to identify and rectify errors promptly, thereby fostering continuous improvement and proficiency in writing. This paper investigates the perspectives of secondary level English teachers on immediate feedback and the techniques they use while giving immediate feedback. The study was conducted on sixty English language teachers who have been teaching English at secondary level institutional schools of Nepalgunj Sub-metropolitan city of Banke district. The researcher used simple random sampling method to select the sample. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. The obtained data were analyzed descriptively and interpreted using simple statistical tools. The majority of teachers (i.e. 86.66%) viewed that immediate feedback plays the role of scaffolding in their writing, while only a minority of teachers (i.e. 13.33%) viewed it negatively. The study revealed that almost all the teachers showed a positive reaction towards the role of immediate feedback to enhance writing proficiency. It was also found that most of the teachers used correction codes to correct student's mistakes and errors. Thus, the English language teachers are recommended to use immediate feedback as a scaffolding tool to enhance writing students' proficiency of secondary level students.

**Keywords:** Correction code, immediate feedback, mistakes and errors, secondary level, writing skill

## Introduction

Feedback is crucial in language education, particularly in written work, for developing linguistic competence (Smith, 2018). English Language Teachers (ELTs) play a crucial role in shaping students' language proficiency by providing constructive feedback (Jones & Lee, 2019). Among the various feedback methods, immediate feedback in written assignments has gained significant attention. Immediate feedback refers to the timely provision of comments and corrections to students' written work, with the aim of facilitating learning and enhancing language acquisition (Brown & Johnson, 2020).

Feedback plays a pivotal role in the domain of language learning, significantly influencing students' progress and the refinement of their language competencies. While the importance of feedback is widely acknowledged in scholarly discourse (Brown & Lee, 2017; Smith, 2019), a noticeable gap exists in the literature concerning English Language Teachers' (ELTs) perspectives on the immediacy of feedback in written assignments. Despite the extensive exploration of various feedback strategies documented in existing research (Jones & Smith, 2018; Johnson & White, 2020), there remains a dearth of nuanced insights from teachers regarding the timely provision of feedback in written tasks. This gap in comprehension assumes particular significance given the potential of immediate feedback to facilitate timely intervention, scaffold learning processes, and effectively foster students' language development (Roberts & Johnson, 2021).

Furthermore, the increasing integration of technology in language education necessitates an exploration of how ELTs perceive immediate feedback within digital platforms (Garcia & Martinez, 2020). Understanding the nuances of ELTs' perspectives in this domain not only enriches our understanding of effective pedagogical approaches but also provides practical insights for teacher training programs and curriculum development (Smith & Brown, 2019). Additional research is needed to explore the intricate aspects of immediate feedback in written assignments, particularly from the perspective of ELTs (Lee & Kim, 2021). By exploring the intricacies of how ELTs perceive and implement immediate feedback strategies, scholars can gain valuable insights into the dynamics of language instruction and student-teacher interactions (Choi & Park, 2018). Moreover, such investigations can shed light on the potential challenges and opportunities associated with integrating immediate feedback mechanisms into language curricula (Johnson et al., 2021). Thus, there is a compelling need for in-depth exploration and analysis to bridge the existing gap in the literature and

advance our understanding of the role of immediate feedback in language education.

The study aims to address the gap in literature by examining ELTs' perspectives of immediate feedback in written assignments. The study seeks to explore ELTs' perspectives concerning the implementation of immediate feedback strategies in the context of language instruction.

### **Literature Review**

Feedback is a term that is used to describe the information or statement of opinion about something, such as a new product that provides an idea of whether it is successful or liked. It is common to all, but difficult to define. Feedback has emerged as a means to facilitate both the learning process and teaching performance. The primary role of feedback is to improve students' performance. Hattie and Timperley (2007) define feedback as "information provided by an agent regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding." Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) emphasize its goal-oriented nature, describing it as "information about how one is performing in efforts to reach a goal." Shute (2008) adds that feedback is "specific information about the comparison between a learner's performance and a standard, given with the intent to improve the learner's performance." Together, these definitions offer a comprehensive understanding of feedback as a dynamic process essential for learning and growth. In language teaching, feedback is intended to show learners what is wrong or right for better learning in the future. For the purpose of the writing assignment, feedback strictly refers to the written feedback given by the teachers in response to their students' errors in writing. The terms 'feedback', 'comments', and 'correction' are used interchangeably and do not constitute any real difference. However, providing feedback alone is not sufficient. The emphasis should be on the objectives of the feedback, why it is given, and what sort of impact it has.

Gass and Mackey (2015) and Lyster (2007) highlighted the significance of feedback, whether explicit or implicit, in second language writing. Their research underscores the multifaceted roles that corrective feedback plays in language instruction, emphasizing its potential to enhance second language development. While theoretical perspectives vary, the consensus is that feedback contributes positively to learners' interlanguage development. The types of corrective feedback include recasts, explicit correction, elicitation, metalinguistic clues, and more. These insights are crucial for educators seeking effective ways to integrate

feedback into classroom interactions. Thus, feedback is a crucial component in language teaching to enhance the accuracy, fluency, and naturalness of performance. It also enables learners to negotiate meaning with their interlocutors, such as teachers or skilled speakers. Therefore, feedback should be provided regularly throughout the learning process of a second or foreign language.

Feedback on the written work is given on the basis of the task in which our students are involved. Learners' written work includes not only written compositions, but also text book exercise on vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension (Harmer (2007)). In the field of language teaching, the process of correcting and assessing accuracy typically involves two distinct stages. Initially, teachers identify errors made by students, and subsequently, students attempt to correct these mistakes either individually, in pairs, or in groups, with teachers providing assistance as needed (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008; Ellis, 2015). The manner in which educators respond to students during fluency activities not only influences their immediate performance but also impacts their future engagement in such activities (Ellis, 2015). Effective feedback during fluency tasks entails addressing both content and language form, thereby fostering overall proficiency (Ellis, 2015). Various strategies for providing feedback have been proposed in the literature, including responding to students, correcting errors, training students in correction techniques, and actively involving them in the feedback process (Hyland & Hyland, 2019; McDonough & Shaw, 2014). Furthermore, feedback from teachers proves beneficial across different stages of writing, from planning and drafting to redrafting, surpassing the traditional method of marking papers with red ink (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). To streamline the correction process and minimize the perceived threat of correction, many educators employ correction codes embedded within the text or margins of written assignments (McDonough & Shaw, 2014). Moreover, training students in these correction conventions and encouraging peer feedback can enhance group cohesion and foster a supportive learning environment (McDonough & Shaw, 2014).

Feedback is an essential component in language learning that produces effective second language communicators by instilling self-confidence in them. Gattullo (2000) and Harmer (2001) (as cited in AL-Fahdi, 2006) classified feedback into three types: corrective, evaluative, and strategic. Evaluation feedback is related to the performance of learners, which is dominant in second and foreign language classrooms. Teachers use different words and phrases while

giving evaluative feedback. Strategic feedback aims to offer learners advice on how to improve their performance. In other words, teachers suggest ways to help learners overcome their mistakes by themselves, which can help learners become self-reliant.

Feedback is a crucial element that plays a pivotal role in learning the English language. According to Ur (1996), feedback is “information that is given to the learners about his or her performance” (p. 242). Feedback has the power to modify learners, teachers, reviewers, or writers in order to move them in the right direction. Feedback is not only a key element in learning language but also for all individuals who want to attempt any work successfully. Nicol and Mcfarlane (2006) highlight the importance of feedback and provide the following points: it facilitates the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning; when well-organized, self-assessment can lead to significant improvement in learning, especially if integrated with staff feedback; it encourages students to persist and it is sometimes easier to accept critique from peers; it encourages teachers and peer dialogue around learning; it encourages positive motivational belief and self-esteem; it provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance; and it provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape teaching. Feedback is like a compass that guides the ship in the right direction. It is an essential component in learning that helps individuals to improve their performance and achieve their goals.

One prominent type of feedback extensively discussed Ellis (2009) and Nunan (1999) is corrective feedback (CF), which directly addresses errors occurring during language production. Ellis (2008) distinguishes between two primary forms of CF. The first is explicit corrective feedback, where the teacher explicitly points out the error and provides the correct form. The second is implicit corrective feedback, where the error is subtly indicated without overtly supplying the correct form. Additionally, Nunan (2001) introduces the concept of recasts, a type of feedback in which the teacher reformulates the learner’s erroneous utterance into the accurate form without explicitly highlighting the error. This approach aims to immerse learners in contextually meaningful language forms, thereby promoting internalization and uptake of the correct structures. Metalinguistic feedback, as described by Ellis (2009), involves providing explicit information about language forms or rules that learners have not used correctly. By enhancing learners’ metalinguistic awareness, this form of feedback contributes to their overall language proficiency. Another valuable feedback strategy is clarification requests,

discussed by both Ellis (2009) and Nunan (1991). These requests prompt learners to clarify or repeat unclear or erroneous utterances, fostering reflective language use and self-awareness.

There are two basic approaches for providing feedback to students' writing. The first one is the single draft approach which was quite popular before the advent of the process orientation. At that time, teachers responding to the students' writing was fairly straightforward. The students would write a paper, the teachers would return it with a few notes on students' performance, and then they would switch to a new lesson. The students would write a new paper and repeat the process. The second one is the multiple draft approach. In much the same way as the process approach to teaching writing encourages students to write multiple drafts, the process approach to responding requires teachers, as part of their instructional role, to respond to students' writing as a process to learn through several revision cycles before asking them to submit the final piece for evaluation. One advantage of this method is that it gives the writers more chances to develop and present their ideas effectively. Another is that it helps avoid turning each paper into a miniature test on which the teacher simultaneously comments and evaluates. It, thus, shows the students that writing is the process of improving through revisions based on teachers' feedback, rather than a single act of producing one and only the final draft for teacher evaluation.

The pivotal role of immediate feedback in enhancing students' writing skills is underscored by a plethora of empirical studies, which elucidate its significance as a catalyst for timely guidance, error identification, and subsequent rectification. A study conducted by Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2015) accentuated the positive impact of immediate feedback on students' writing proficiency, highlighting its role in facilitating continual improvement. The findings resonated with the outcomes of the present study, revealing a consensus among teachers regarding the constructive influence of immediate feedback.

Furthermore, the efficacy of immediate feedback in scaffolding students' writing development aligns with the tenets of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories, as posited by Ur (1996). These theories emphasize the role of feedback as a scaffolding tool, crucial for interlanguage development and the enhancement of accuracy, fluency, and naturalness in language performance. The findings of the current study echo this sentiment, with the majority of teachers attributing a scaffolding function to immediate feedback in fostering writing proficiency.

In the realm of language teaching, feedback assumes paramount importance, serving as a cornerstone for both learning facilitation and pedagogical efficacy (Keh, 1989). The conceptualization of feedback as a multifaceted construct, encompassing corrective, evaluative, and strategic dimensions (Gattullo, 2000; Harmer, 2001), elucidates its nuanced role in shaping learners' linguistic competence and fostering self-reliance. The study's emphasis on immediate feedback as a means to instill self-confidence and promote self-assessment resonates with the assertions of Nicol and Mcfarlane (2006), who underscore the transformative potential of feedback in fostering reflective practice and closing the gap between current and desired performance.

In the domain of pedagogical practice, the use of immediate feedback has been shown to be an effective tool for promoting writing proficiency. A study by Ellis (2009) found that immediate feedback can help learners overcome their mistakes by themselves, which can lead to improved writing skills. Similarly, a study by Enny and Dinar (2020) found that direct feedback can be more effective than indirect feedback in correcting errors in students' writing. These studies suggest that immediate feedback is a crucial component in promoting effective learning and enhancing students' writing proficiency. Immediate feedback can help students identify their mistakes and learn from them, which can lead to improved writing skills. It can also help students develop self-confidence and motivation, which are essential for effective learning.

### **Methodology**

This quantitative survey research employed cross-sectional approach to investigate the perspectives of secondary level English language teachers regarding immediate feedback. The targeted population consisted of secondary level English language teachers teaching at institutional schools within the Nepalgunj Sub-metropolitan city of Banke district. A sample of 60 secondary level English language teachers from institutional schools was selected using a simple random sampling procedure. The researcher selected 30 secondary level schools using simple random sampling and subsequently chose two English teachers from each selected school. The method of data collection was a questionnaire comprising both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The questionnaire facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the teachers' perspectives concerning immediate feedback. The descriptive and statistical techniques were employed to interpret the collected data. Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were rigorously observed. Informed consent was

obtained from all participants, and measures were taken to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Types of Feedback Used in Correcting Errors**

The study demonstrated that immediate feedback is more common among English teachers than delayed feedback when correcting written work. Out of 60 teachers, 48 teachers (i.e., 80%) provided feedback immediately on students' written work, while only 2 teachers (i.e., 3.33%) preferred delayed feedback. Ten teachers (i.e., 16.66%) provided both immediate and delayed feedback. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of immediate feedback in promoting effective learning. For instance, a study by Ellis (2009) found that immediate feedback can help learners overcome their mistakes by themselves, which can lead to improved writing skills. Similarly, a study by Enny and Dinar (2020) found that direct feedback can be more effective than indirect feedback in correcting errors in students' writing. These studies suggest that immediate feedback is a crucial component in promoting effective learning and enhancing students' writing proficiency.

### **Teachers' Views on Immediate Feedback**

The study revealed that a substantial majority of teachers regarded immediate feedback as either important, very important, or extremely important for this purpose. Among the respondents, 24 teachers (40%) underscored its importance, while 20 teachers (33.33%) attributed a very important status to immediate feedback, with 14 teachers (23.33%) deeming it extremely important. Conversely, only two teachers (3.33%) considered immediate feedback to be unimportant. These findings align with extant literature emphasizing the salience of immediate feedback in facilitating effective learning. For instance, Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2015) observed that immediate feedback contributes significantly to students' enhancement of writing skills. Similarly, Gibbs and Simpson (2015) advocated for the superiority of immediate feedback administered during ongoing courses over delayed feedback, positing its efficacy and constructive nature. Collectively, these studies substantiate the pivotal role of immediate feedback in fostering effective learning and elevating students' writing proficiency.



### **Areas of Free Writing Where Feedback is Necessary**

The study discovered that the majority of teachers provided feedback on all areas of free writing, including coherence, cohesion, and format. Out of 60 teachers, 44 teachers (i.e., 73.33%) focused on all areas, while ten teachers (i.e., 16.66%) responded that format is one of the areas where immediate feedback is necessary. Four teachers (i.e., 6.66%) focused on coherence while giving feedback, and only two teachers (i.e., 3.33%) focused on cohesion. These findings suggest that feedback should be provided in all areas of free writing to enhance students' writing proficiency. These results are consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of providing feedback in all areas of writing. For instance, a study by Sudlow (2022) emphasized the importance of feedback in improving writing skills. Similarly, a study by The Muse (2023) identified feedback as a crucial component in developing writing skills. These studies suggest that feedback is essential in promoting effective learning and enhancing students' writing proficiency.

### **Role of Immediate Feedback to Enhance Writing Proficiency**

The study indicated that immediate feedback plays a significant role in enhancing students' writing proficiency. The majority of teachers agreed that immediate feedback is important, with 40 teachers (i.e., 66.66%) agreeing and 12 teachers (i.e., 20%) strongly agreeing. Only eight teachers (i.e., 13.33%) disagreed on the role of immediate feedback in enhancing writing proficiency. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of immediate feedback in promoting effective learning. For instance, a study by Ellis (2009) found that immediate feedback can help learners overcome their mistakes by themselves, which can lead to improved writing skills. Similarly, a study by Enny and Dinar (2020) found that direct feedback can be more effective than indirect feedback in correcting errors in students' writing. These studies suggest that immediate feedback is a crucial component in promoting effective learning and enhancing students' writing proficiency.

### **Key Areas of Focus during Error Correction**

The study found that the majority of teachers provided immediate feedback on all aspects of language, including spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and words and phrases, while correcting mistakes. Out of 60 teachers, 56 teachers (i.e., 93.33%) focused on all aspects, while four teachers (i.e., 6.66%) focused only on vocabulary while correcting mistakes. These findings suggest that teachers should

focus on all aspects of language, including spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and words and phrases, rather than a single one while correcting students' mistakes to enhance their writing proficiency. These results are consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of providing feedback in all areas of writing. For instance, a study by Sudlow (2022) emphasized the importance of feedback in improving writing skills. Similarly, a study by The Muse (2023) identified feedback as a crucial component in developing writing skills. These studies suggest that feedback is essential in promoting effective learning and enhancing students' writing proficiency.

### **Feedback Frequency of Immediate Feedback**

The study showed that the majority of English teachers provided immediate feedback frequently to their students to enhance their writing. Out of 60 teachers, 46 teachers (i.e., 76.66%) provided immediate feedback frequently, while 14 teachers (i.e., 23.33%) sometimes provided immediate feedback. These findings suggest that immediate feedback is an essential component in promoting effective learning and enhancing students' writing proficiency. Immediate feedback can help students identify their mistakes and learn from them, which can lead to improved writing skills. It can also help students develop self-confidence and motivation, which are essential for effective learning. These results are consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of providing immediate feedback in promoting effective learning. For instance, a study by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) emphasized the importance of immediate feedback in promoting self-assessment and significant improvement in learning. Similarly, a study by TeachHUB (2020) highlighted the importance of immediate feedback in promoting effective learning.

### **Necessity of Immediate Feedback**

The study revealed that immediate feedback is necessary to make students conscious and alert while writing. Out of 60 teachers, 24 teachers (i.e., 40%) responded that immediate feedback is necessary to make students conscious and alert, while 20 teachers (i.e., 33.33%) responded that immediate feedback encourages students to write in a better way. Twelve teachers (i.e., 20%) responded that mistakes and errors were repeated time and again, while only four teachers (i.e., 6.66%) perceived the need to be a fluent or smooth writer. These findings suggest that immediate feedback is a crucial component in promoting effective learning and enhancing students' writing proficiency. Immediate

feedback can help students identify their mistakes and learn from them, which can lead to improved writing skills. It can also help students develop self-confidence and motivation, which are essential for effective learning. These results are consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of providing immediate feedback in promoting effective learning. For instance, a study by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) emphasized the importance of immediate feedback in promoting self-assessment and significant improvement in learning. Similarly, a study by TeachHUB (2020) highlighted the importance of immediate feedback in promoting effective learning.

### **Teachers' Tasks to Develop their Accuracy in Writing**

The study indicated that teachers need to evaluate their work, involve them in giving feedback, and encourage them to develop accuracy in their writing. Out of 60 teachers, eight teachers (i.e., 13.33%) evaluated their work, six teachers (i.e., 10%) involved in giving feedback to develop students' accuracy and writing skill, and only four teachers (i.e., 6.66%) encouraged them in their task. The result shows that 42 teachers (i.e., 70%) used all of the above i.e., evaluated their work, involved them in giving feedback, and encouraged them. These findings suggest that teachers play a crucial role in developing students' writing proficiency by providing feedback and encouragement. Teachers should evaluate their work, involve them in giving feedback, and encourage them to develop accuracy in their writing. These results are consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of providing feedback in all areas of writing. For instance, a study by Sudlow (2022) emphasized the importance of feedback in improving writing skills. Similarly, a study by The Muse (2023) identified feedback as a crucial component in developing writing skills. **Teacher Feedback Forms**

The study demonstrated that both oral and written forms of feedback are equally important in developing students' writing proficiency. Out of 60 teachers, 18 teachers (i.e., 30%) used written form of feedback, whereas only two teachers (i.e., 3.33%) used oral form of feedback to develop writing proficiency of the students. Similarly, 40 teachers (i.e., 66.66%) used both forms (i.e., oral and written forms). These findings suggest that both oral and written forms of feedback are crucial components in promoting effective learning and enhancing students' writing proficiency. Immediate feedback can help students identify their mistakes and learn from them, which can lead to improved writing skills. It can also help students develop self-confidence and motivation, which are essential for effective learning. These results are consistent with previous studies that have

highlighted the importance of providing feedback in all areas of writing. For instance, a study by Sudlow (2022) emphasized the importance of feedback in improving writing skills. Similarly, a study by The Muse (2023) identified feedback as a crucial component in developing writing skills. I hope this information helps!

### **Use of Correction Codes to Indicate Students' Mistakes**

The study found that correction codes can be an effective technique to indicate the students' mistakes in their written work. Out of 60 teachers, 36 teachers (i.e., 60%) agreed on the use of correction codes, while 14 teachers (i.e., 23.33%) strongly agreed on the use of correction codes to indicate the students' mistakes in their written work. Similarly, ten teachers (i.e., 16.66%) disagreed on the use of correction codes to indicate the students' mistakes in their written work. These findings suggest that correction codes are a crucial component in promoting effective learning and enhancing students' writing proficiency. These results are consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of providing feedback in all areas of writing. For instance, a study by Ellis (2009) emphasized the importance of immediate feedback in promoting effective learning. Similarly, a study by Enny and Dinar (2020) found that direct feedback can be more effective than indirect feedback in correcting errors in students' writing.

### **Techniques Used by Teachers While Providing Immediate Feedback**

The study indicated that underlining mistakes, indicating errors, marking with red pens, writing the correct answers, using correction codes, asking students to repeat, using gestures, ticking errors, and making corrections with the help of best students are common techniques used by teachers to provide immediate feedback in written work. These findings suggest that teachers use a variety of techniques to provide immediate feedback to students, which can help them identify their mistakes and learn from them. These results are consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of providing feedback in all areas of writing. For instance, a study by Sudlow (2022) emphasized the importance of feedback in improving writing skills. Similarly, a study by The Muse (2023) identified feedback as a crucial component in developing writing skills.

### **Conclusion**

Feedback is an essential component in promoting effective learning and enhancing students' writing proficiency. It plays a pivotal role in improving students' performance of learning tasks, usually with the objectives of improving

their performance. Feedback has the role of scaffolding in the inter-language development of learners, supporting them to make their performance more accurate, fluent, and natural. Immediate feedback played a significant role in enhancing writing proficiency, as it helped students correct their mistakes immediately. Teachers provided both oral and written forms of feedback, making students conscious and alert by pointing out their mistakes. They used several techniques such as underlining mistakes, penciling the correct answer, correcting spelling immediately, peer correction, group work, and more to improve students' writing proficiency. Therefore, it can be concluded that immediate feedback plays a vital role in enhancing students' writing proficiency. Based on the findings of the research, the following pedagogical implications or recommendations can be made: teachers should have knowledge of how to provide feedback appropriately to students, there should be regular provision of interaction and act of providing immediate feedback to students by teachers, and teachers should provide feedback either orally or in written forms that are appropriate for the students' level of proficiency. The importance of feedback in promoting effective learning and enhancing students' writing proficiency is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the significance of providing feedback in all areas of writing. Immediate feedback can help students identify their mistakes and learn from them, which can lead to improved writing skills. It can also help students develop self-confidence and motivation, which are essential for effective learning. Therefore, teachers should provide immediate feedback to their students to promote writing skills and enhance their overall learning experience.

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