



## The Efficacy of Direct, Indirect and Peer Feedback Error Correction Techniques in EFL Writing

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### Abstract

This study investigates the efficacy of direct, indirect, and peer feedback techniques in improving EFL students' writing at Mizan Tepi University. A total of 100 first- and second-year undergraduate students were selected through availability sampling, along with nine experienced EFL instructors chosen based on their expertise in teaching writing. Data were gathered using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations to examine perceptions, preferences, and the impact of each feedback method. The findings reveal that both students and teachers consider direct feedback the most beneficial, as it offers clear corrections, allowing learners to quickly identify and fix grammatical and structural errors. Indirect feedback, while requiring more effort from students, promotes independent learning by encouraging self-correction and deeper engagement with writing. In contrast, peer feedback is seen as less reliable due to students' difficulties in providing accurate and constructive evaluations, as well as their hesitation in assessing peers' work. The study highlights the importance of aligning feedback approaches with students' skill levels and writing objectives. Additionally, it highlights the need for structured peer feedback training to enhance students' ability to critically review and improve their writing.



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### Introduction

The ability to write effectively in English is a crucial skill for EFL learners, as it facilitates academic success, professional development, and global communication (Jamalinesari *et al.*, 2015). However, mastering English writing presents numerous challenges for EFL students due to grammatical,

lexical, and structural complexities. Among the various pedagogical strategies aimed at enhancing EFL students' writing proficiency, error correction plays a fundamental role in addressing linguistic deficiencies and fostering improvement (Beuningen *et al.*, 2008). While error correction has been widely studied in second language acquisition (SLA)

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research, the effectiveness of different feedback techniques direct, indirect, and peer feedback remains a topic of ongoing debate (Van Beuningen *et al.*, 2012). This study aims to investigate the efficacy of these three feedback techniques in improving EFL students' writing accuracy and overall writing proficiency.

Error correction in EFL writing is grounded in theoretical perspectives on feedback and language learning (Alisoy, 2024). The cognitive and sociocultural theories of SLA highlight the importance of corrective feedback in facilitating language development (Loewen *et al.*, 2009). According to the noticing hypothesis, learners must consciously recognize errors and corrections to internalize linguistic rules (Van Beuningen *et al.*, 2012). Similarly, the sociocultural theory emphasizes the role of interaction in learning, suggesting that feedback from teachers and peers serves as scaffolding that aids learners in progressing toward linguistic competence (Shahab & Saeed, 2024). These theoretical foundations support the argument that different feedback techniques may offer distinct benefits to EFL learners, depending on their level of proficiency, learning style, and cognitive processing abilities. Direct feedback, in which teachers explicitly indicate and correct errors, is one of the most widely used methods in EFL classrooms (Cui *et al.*, 2021). Research suggests that direct feedback is particularly beneficial for beginner and intermediate learners, as it provides explicit corrective information that reduces ambiguity and accelerates learning (Nelson & Schunn, 2009). However, some scholars argue that extreme reliance on direct feedback may lead to passive learning, as students may not engage in active problem-solving or error analysis (DeWaelsche, 2015). Despite these concerns, direct feedback remains a preferred method among teachers who aim to provide clear and immediate corrections to students' written work (Tsao *et al.*, 2017). In contrast, indirect feedback involves highlighting errors without providing explicit corrections, prompting learners to self-correct (Wondim *et al.*, 2024). This technique aligns with constructivist learning principles, as it encourages students to analyze their mistakes and develop autonomous writing skills (Mohammed, 2018). Research indicates that indirect feedback is particularly effective in fostering long-term writing development, as it enhances learners' metacognitive

awareness and self-editing abilities (Al-Sawalha, 2016).

However, the efficacy of indirect feedback largely hinges on students' ability to identify and correct their own errors, which presents a considerable challenge, particularly for lower-proficiency learners (Cahyono & Rosyida, 2016). These learners often struggle with metalinguistic awareness and may not possess the skills required to interpret the feedback correctly, leading to minimal improvement in their writing. Without adequate training and scaffolding, indirect feedback may result in confusion or miscorrection, thereby reducing its intended impact. Moreover, the effectiveness of indirect feedback is not uniform across all types of writing errors. Research indicates that indirect feedback tends to be more beneficial for surface-level issues such as grammatical and lexical errors. In contrast, it is often less effective in addressing content-related problems, such as organization, coherence, and argument development (Duijnhouwer *et al.*, 2012). This limitation suggests that indirect feedback should be used selectively and possibly in conjunction with other forms of feedback to address the broader spectrum of writing challenges encountered by EFL students.

Peer feedback, which involves learners reviewing and commenting on each other's written work, has received growing attention as a complementary approach in EFL writing instruction. Advocates of peer feedback emphasize its role in fostering collaborative learning environments where students actively participate in the writing and revision process. It has been shown to enhance learners' critical thinking skills, promote deeper engagement with content, and reduce the teacher's workload in providing individualized feedback (Farrokhi & Sattarpour, 2012). In addition to its cognitive benefits, peer feedback contributes to the development of learner autonomy. When students are involved in giving and receiving feedback, they become more reflective and responsible for their own learning. This active participation in the revision process helps them internalize writing standards and develop self-editing skills (Henderson *et al.*, 2019). Several studies have found that, when implemented with clear guidelines and adequate training, peer feedback can be as effective as teacher feedback in enhancing writing performance (Hosseiny, 2014).

Nevertheless, implementing peer feedback is not without its challenges. Some students may feel uncomfortable critiquing their peers, fearing interpersonal conflict or lacking the confidence to provide constructive feedback. Inaccuracies in peer assessments and varying levels of language proficiency may also lead to inconsistencies in feedback quality, raising concerns about its reliability (Javaid *et al.*, 2024). These issues underscore the importance of equipping students with the necessary skills and support to engage meaningfully in the peer review process. Creating a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere is also crucial for encouraging open and respectful peer interactions (Martin, 2008). Despite the breadth of research on feedback strategies, there remains no clear consensus on which method yields the most significant improvement in EFL writing. The effectiveness of feedback techniques is influenced by various learner-related factors, including language proficiency, prior learning experiences, and individual preferences (Nowbakht & Shahnazari, 2015). These variables make it difficult to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach, suggesting the need for flexibility and responsiveness in feedback practices.

To address this complexity, scholars have proposed integrating multiple feedback methods in a blended or hybrid approach. Combining direct, indirect, and peer feedback can offer learners a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of their writing strengths and weaknesses (Simard *et al.*, 2015). Such an approach allows instructors to tailor feedback to the needs of individual students while encouraging collaborative and independent learning. This study aims to contribute to the ongoing scholarly dialogue by examining the comparative effects of direct, indirect, and peer feedback on EFL students' writing development. By assessing students' improvement in writing performance and analyzing their perceptions of the different feedback types, the research seeks to provide empirical insights that can inform more effective pedagogical strategies in EFL contexts. Given the growing emphasis on writing proficiency in academic and professional domains worldwide, understanding how various feedback strategies impact learners is critical for optimizing language instruction. The findings from this study will offer practical implications for EFL teachers, curriculum

developers, and educational policymakers aiming to refine writing instruction. Furthermore, by exploring students' engagement with feedback and their evolving writing competencies, this research will illuminate how corrective feedback contributes to long-term language development. As the demand for effective EFL writing instruction continues to rise, investigating the impact of various error correction strategies remains a vital endeavor in applied linguistics and language education research (Wei & Liu, 2024). This study seeks to evaluate the efficacy of direct, indirect and peer feedback error correction techniques in EFL writing classes by addressing the following research question:

1. How do direct, indirect, and peer feedback techniques impact the writing accuracy and improvement of EFL undergraduate students?

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to investigate the effectiveness of direct, indirect, and peer feedback error correction techniques in EFL writing. A descriptive survey design was chosen because it allows for the systematic collection of data on participants' experiences, preferences, and perceptions regarding various feedback methods. The research design combined both quantitative and qualitative methods to offer a comprehensive analysis of how these techniques affect students' writing development, providing a broader understanding of how students and instructors engage with feedback strategies in the classroom.

### **Participants of the Study**

The study involved 100 first- and second-year undergraduate EFL students from Mizan Tepi University, selected through availability sampling. These students were enrolled in writing courses and represented various proficiency levels in English, making them ideal participants for the research. Additionally, nine experienced EFL instructors were purposively selected based on their expertise in teaching writing courses. These instructors had significant experience in providing feedback and were selected to offer valuable insights into the practical application and effectiveness of direct, indirect, and peer feedback techniques. The diversity

of both student and instructor participants ensured that the findings would reflect a range of experiences and perspectives on feedback in EFL writing.

### **Data Gathering Tools**

The study utilized three primary tools for data collection: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. Each tool was carefully selected to capture different aspects of the research question. A structured questionnaire was distributed to the 100 undergraduate students to gather their views on the effectiveness of direct, indirect, and peer feedback. The questionnaire included both closed-ended questions, which allowed for statistical analysis, and open-ended questions, which gave students the opportunity to express their personal experiences and preferences in more detail. This tool helped capture students' perceptions of the feedback techniques they had encountered in their writing courses. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the nine EFL instructors to explore their perspectives on the effectiveness of the different feedback methods. These interviews were designed to provide in-depth insights into instructors' experiences with providing feedback, the challenges they encountered, and their observations on students' responses to various feedback techniques. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility, enabling instructors to share personal experiences while still addressing the key research themes. Classroom observations were conducted in the writing classes of the nine instructors who participated in the interviews. These observations allowed the researcher to document how feedback was implemented in real classroom settings, focusing on the interactions between instructors and students. Special attention was given to how students responded to corrections and how they engaged with the feedback, providing an authentic view of how each feedback method functioned in practice.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The data collection process was carried out in three distinct phases: The first step was distributing the questionnaire to the 100 undergraduate students during their regular writing classes. Before distributing the questionnaire, the study's purpose was explained to the students, and they were encouraged to answer honestly. Students were given adequate time to complete the questionnaire,

and their responses were collected for analysis. After the questionnaire data were collected, the semi-structured interviews with the nine instructors took place. These interviews were scheduled at convenient times for the instructors and were conducted in quiet settings to ensure focused and uninterrupted discussions. Each interview lasted between 30 to 45 minutes, and the topics discussed included the advantages and disadvantages of each feedback method, how students engaged with the feedback, and the instructors' personal preferences. In the final phase, classroom observations were carried out during the writing classes of the nine instructors who had participated in the interviews. The researcher observed how feedback was delivered, focusing on whether it was direct, indirect, or peer feedback. Observations also documented how students reacted to the feedback, whether they made revisions, and how effectively they applied the corrections in their writing tasks.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the results. The data obtained from the student questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. This helped identify trends in students' feedback preferences and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of different feedback techniques. The data from semi-structured instructor interviews and classroom observations were analyzed thematically. The researcher looked for recurring themes and patterns in the responses, focusing on how feedback was delivered, students' engagement with it, and the perceived benefits and challenges of each feedback technique. This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the practical applications and implications of the feedback techniques in the classroom.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to throughout the research process to ensure the rights and confidentiality of all participants. Prior to their participation, all participants, including both students and instructors, were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time. Informed consent was obtained, ensuring that all participants willingly agreed to participate in

the study. The study ensured that all collected data remained confidential. Participants' identities were anonymized, and their responses were kept private. The data were used solely for research purposes, and no identifying information was included in the final analysis or report. The research was conducted in a respectful manner, ensuring that all participants'

views were valued. Participants were assured that their responses would be used responsibly and fairly. The study maintained academic integrity by accurately reporting the research findings. All data were analyzed and presented without bias, and the results were faithfully represented in the final report.

**Table 1: Students' opinions and preferences on efficacy of direct, indirect and peerfeedback error correction techniques in their writing classes**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Direct feedback helps me understand and correct my writing errors effectively.	2 (2%)	5 (5%)	10 (10%)	32 (32%)	51 (51%)
Indirect feedback encourages me to think critically and self-correct my errors.	3 (3%)	6 (6%)	15 (15%)	40 (40%)	36 (36%)
Peer feedback is useful in improving my writing skills.	4 (4%)	8 (8%)	12 (12%)	30 (30%)	46 (46%)
I prefer direct feedback over indirect feedback for correcting my writing mistakes.	2 (2%)	4 (4%)	8 (8%)	34 (34%)	52 (52%)
Indirect feedback helps me remember and apply corrections better than direct feedback.	5 (5%)	7 (7%)	14 (14%)	38 (38%)	36 (36%)
Receiving peer feedback makes me more confident in my writing.	6 (6%)	9 (9%)	15 (15%)	28 (28%)	42 (42%)
Immediate feedback (direct or indirect) is more effective than delayed feedback.	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	11 (11%)	35 (35%)	49 (49%)
Written feedback (direct or indirect) is more helpful than verbal feedback in improving my writing.	5 (5%)	10 (10%)	17 (17%)	33 (33%)	35 (35%)

**Results**

As indicated in Table 1 above, the analysis highlights that a significant majority of students, 51(51%), strongly agree that direct feedback helps them understand and correct their writing errors effectively, while 32(32%) agree. This indicates that most students value direct feedback as essential for their academic development. Only a small percentage, 2(2%) strongly disagree and 5(5%) disagree, suggesting that the effectiveness of direct feedback is widely recognized among learners. This finding aligns with (Tsao *et al.*, 2017) research emphasizing the importance of corrective feedback in improving writing proficiency. Teachers should therefore consider incorporating structured direct feedback methods into their teaching practices to enhance students' writing abilities.

For indirect feedback, 36(36%) of students strongly agree that it encourages them to think critically and self-correct their errors, while 40(40%) agree. This suggests that indirect feedback is also valued for fostering critical thinking skills. Only a small minority, 3(3%) strongly disagree and 6(6%) disagree, indicating that indirect feedback is generally well-received. This preference underscores the role of indirect feedback in promoting self-directed learning. Indirect feedback allows students to engage more actively with their writing, encouraging them to identify and correct errors independently, which is crucial for developing autonomy in writing. Regarding peer feedback, 46 (46%) of students agree that it is useful in improving their writing skills, while 30(30%) somewhat agree. This indicates that more than half of the respondents recognize

the benefits of collaborative learning through peer interaction. Only a small fraction, 4 (4%) strongly disagree and 8(8%) disagree, suggesting that peer feedback is generally well-received in writing classes. Peer feedback fosters critical thinking and enhances writing quality through mutual learning and shared perspectives. By integrating peer feedback into writing instruction, educators can encourage active participation and cultivate essential skills such as collaboration and constructive criticism, which are vital in both academic and professional settings.

Over half of the respondents, 52(52%), strongly agree that they prefer direct feedback over indirect feedback for correcting their writing mistakes, while 34(34%) agree. This strong inclination toward direct feedback suggests that students appreciate explicit guidance that identifies errors and provides solutions. Only a small minority, 2(2%) strongly disagree and 4(4%) disagree, highlighting the importance of clarity in communication between teachers and students. This preference underscores the role of direct feedback in eliminating ambiguity, allowing students to focus on correcting their mistakes without confusion. Direct feedback not only aids in immediate error correction but also fosters a supportive learning environment where students feel guided and empowered. For the statement that indirect feedback helps students remember and apply corrections better than direct feedback, 36(36%) strongly agree and 38(38%) agree. This suggests that indirect feedback is valued for its potential to enhance long-term retention and application of corrections. However, a notable proportion, 5(5%) strongly disagree and 7(7%) disagree, indicating some variability in how students perceive the effectiveness of indirect feedback. Despite this variability, indirect feedback remains important for promoting self-directed learning and encouraging students to internalize corrections over time. Regarding the impact of peer feedback on confidence, 42(42%) of students strongly agree that receiving peer feedback makes them more confident in their writing, while 28(28%) agree. This demonstrates the positive role peer feedback plays in improving students' self-confidence. Only a small percentage, 6(6%) strongly disagree and 9(9%) disagree, indicating that peer feedback is widely perceived as beneficial for building confidence. Peer feedback provides students with diverse

perspectives and constructive criticism, which helps them, develop a more positive self-image as writers. This confidence boost is crucial for encouraging students to take risks and engage more deeply with their writing.

For the preference for immediate feedback over delayed feedback, 49(49%) of students strongly agree and 35(35%) agree. This indicates that timely responses to student work are highly valued as they allow learners to make adjustments while the material is still fresh in their minds. Only a small percentage, 2(2%) strongly disagree and 3(3%) disagree, highlighting the effectiveness of immediate feedback in fostering learning retention and application. Immediate feedback enhances learning outcomes by providing real-time opportunities for improvement, making it an essential component of effective teaching strategies. It allows students to correct their mistakes promptly and understand how to improve their writing promptly. Finally, regarding the preference for written feedback over verbal feedback, 35(35%) of students agree that written feedback is more helpful, while 33(33%) somewhat agree. This suggests that written feedback is perceived as more accessible and easier to review compared to verbal discussions. A smaller proportion of respondents, 5(5%) strongly disagree and 10(10%) disagree; indicating some variability in how students perceive different feedback formats based on their learning styles or needs. Written comments allow students to reflect on their mistakes at their own pace, making them a valuable tool for self-directed learning. This flexibility in reviewing feedback is particularly beneficial for students who prefer to learn independently or need additional time to process feedback.

As depicted in Table 2 above, regarding the effectiveness of error correction techniques in writing classes, several key insights emerge. For the first question, 55(55%) of students strongly agree that direct feedback effectively addresses the types of errors relevant to their writing needs, while 30(30%) agree. This indicates that a majority of students find direct feedback to be highly effective in targeting specific errors. Only a small percentage, 2(2%) strongly disagree and 3 (3%) disagree, suggesting that most learners feel that direct feedback is tailored to their individual needs. This finding aligns with

research emphasizing the importance of targeted error correction in enhancing writing skills. The remaining 10(10%) are neutral, indicating some variability in perceptions.

**Table 2: Students' attitude on the efficacy of direct, indirect and peer feedback in writing classes**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Direct feedback effectively addresses the types of errors relevant to my writing needs.	2(2%)	3(3%)	10(10%)	30(30%)	55(55%)
Indirect feedback encourages me to think critically and self-correct my errors.	3(3%)	6(6%)	15(15%)	40(40%)	36(36%)
Peer feedback is useful in improving my writing skills.	4(4%)	8(8%)	12(12%)	30(30%)	46(46%)
I prefer direct feedback over indirect feedback for correcting my writing mistakes.	2(2%)	4(4%)	8(8%)	34(34%)	52(52%)
Indirect feedback helps me remember and apply corrections better than direct feedback.	5(5%)	7(7%)	14(14%)	38(38%)	36(36%)
Receiving peer feedback makes me more confident in my writing.	6(6%)	9(9%)	15(15%)	28(28%)	42(42%)
Immediate feedback (direct or indirect) is more effective than delayed feedback.	2(2%)	3(3%)	11(11%)	35(35%)	49(49%)
Written feedback (direct or indirect) is more helpful than verbal feedback in improving my writing.	5(5%)	10(10%)	17(17%)	33(33%)	35(35%)

Regarding indirect feedback, 36(36%) of students strongly agree that it encourages them to think critically and self-correct their errors, while 40(40%) agree. This suggests that indirect feedback is valued for fostering critical thinking skills. Only a small minority, 3(3%) strongly disagree and 6(6%) disagree, indicating that indirect feedback is generally well-received. The remaining 15 (15%) are neutral, reflecting some uncertainty about its effectiveness. For peer feedback, 46 (46%) of students strongly agree that it is useful in improving their writing skills, while 30(30%) agree. This indicates that more than half of the respondents recognize the benefits of collaborative learning through peer interaction. Only a small fraction, 4(4%) strongly disagree and 8(8%) disagree, suggesting that peer feedback is generally well-received in writing classes. The remaining 12(12%) are neutral, indicating some variability in perceptions.

Over half of the respondents, 52 (52%) strongly agree that they prefer direct feedback over indirect feedback for correcting their writing mistakes, while

34 (34%) agree. This strong inclination toward direct feedback suggests that students appreciate explicit guidance that identifies errors and provides solutions. Only a small minority, 2(2%) strongly disagree and 4 (4%) disagree, highlighting the importance of clarity in communication between teachers and students. The remaining 8(8%) are neutral, reflecting some indecision. For the statement that indirect feedback helps students remember and apply corrections better than direct feedback, 36 (36%) strongly agree and 38(38%) agree. This suggests that indirect feedback is valued for its potential to enhance long-term retention and application of corrections. However, a notable proportion, 5(5%) strongly disagree and 7(7%) disagree, indicating some variability in how students perceive the effectiveness of indirect feedback. The remaining 14(14%) are neutral, reflecting uncertainty about its long-term benefits.

Regarding the impact of peer feedback on confidence, 42(42%) of students strongly agree that receiving peer feedback makes them more confident in their

writing, while 28(28%) agree. This demonstrates the positive role peer feedback plays in boosting students' self-assurance. Only a small percentage, 6(6%) strongly disagree and 9(9%) disagree, indicating that peer feedback is widely perceived as beneficial for building confidence. The remaining 15(15%) are neutral, suggesting some variability in how peer feedback affects confidence. For the preference for immediate feedback over delayed feedback, 49(49%) of students strongly agree and 35(35%) agree. This indicates that timely responses to student work are highly valued as they allow learners to make adjustments while the material is still fresh in their minds. Only a small percentage, 2(2%) strongly disagree and 3(3%) disagree, highlighting the effectiveness of immediate feedback in fostering learning retention and application. The remaining 11(11%) are neutral, reflecting some uncertainty about the timing of feedback. Finally, regarding the preference for written feedback over verbal feedback, 35(35%) of students strongly agree that written feedback is more helpful, while 33(33%) agree. This suggests that written feedback is perceived as more accessible and easier to review compared to verbal discussions. A smaller proportion of respondents, 5(5%) strongly disagree and 10(10%) disagree; indicating some variability in how students perceive different feedback formats based on their learning styles or needs. The remaining 17(17%) are neutral, reflecting some indecision about the format of feedback.

Thus, the analysis highlights the importance of both direct and indirect feedback, as well as peer feedback, in improving writing skills. Students generally prefer direct feedback for its clarity and effectiveness in immediate error correction, while indirect feedback is valued for promoting critical thinking and long-term learning. Peer feedback is recognized for its role in enhancing confidence and fostering collaborative learning environments. Immediate feedback is preferred for its ability to facilitate timely adjustments, and written feedback is seen as more accessible for self-directed learning. These findings underline the need for educators to tailor their feedback strategies to meet the diverse needs and preferences of their students.

### **Results from Teachers' Interview**

The results from the nine teachers (categorized T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, and T9) revealed

consistent viewpoints regarding feedback techniques in EFL settings. The teachers considered direct feedback to be the most effective for quick error correction and clarity, especially for grammatical and syntactical issues. Indirect feedback was preferred for encouraging critical thinking and self-correction abilities, while peer feedback was viewed as less effective due to students' lack of confidence and expertise in providing constructive feedback. When discussing the effectiveness of error correction strategies, all nine teachers agreed that direct feedback is the most effective approach for addressing immediate errors in students' writing. T1 emphasized that direct correction provides clarity and ensures students recognize their mistakes right away, particularly for grammar and vocabulary errors. This analysis finding aligns with Fitriyah *et al.* (2024) who highlighted the importance of direct feedback in enhancing accuracy in language learning. Similarly, T2 noted that direct feedback is especially useful for beginner-level learners who may struggle to identify their errors. This analysis finding aligns with Beuningen *et al.* (2008), who found that direct feedback is particularly beneficial for novice learners. T3 added that direct feedback is essential for time-sensitive corrections during writing activities. However, T4 and T5 advocated for combining direct feedback with indirect feedback to encourage students to think critically about their errors. T6 highlighted the importance of indirect feedback in promoting self-directed learning. This analysis finding aligns with Jamalinesari *et al.* (2015), who argued that indirect feedback fosters critical thinking and autonomy in learners. T7 pointed out that while direct feedback is effective for accuracy, it should be balanced with opportunities for self-correction to promote independence. T8 emphasized the role of feedback in enhancing student motivation, suggesting that corrections should be delivered in a way that encourages rather than discourages students. T9 noted that creating a supportive classroom environment is crucial for maintaining student engagement and motivation when receiving feedback. These responses align with research findings that direct feedback enhances accuracy while indirect feedback builds critical thinking skills (Bekele *et al.*, 2022). The teachers unanimously stressed the importance of delivering corrections in a way that motivates students rather than discouraging them. When asked about adapting feedback techniques to accommodate different learning styles

or proficiency levels, all nine teachers highlighted the importance of tailoring their approaches based on individual student needs. T1 explained how they provide direct corrections for lower-level students who need explicit guidance but use indirect prompts for advanced learners to encourage self-discovery. Similarly, T2 shared how they use different feedback formats for visual and auditory learners. This analysis finding aligns with Cai *et al.* (2019), who emphasized the need for differentiated feedback strategies. T3 emphasized adapting the tone and depth of feedback based on students' confidence levels. The responses regarding peer feedback were mixed but insightful when discussing its role in EFL classrooms. While all teachers acknowledged its potential benefits, most expressed concerns about its limitations. For example, T1 noted that peer feedback can be useful for fostering collaboration but often lacks accuracy due to limited student expertise.

Similarly, T2 observed that many students lack confidence in providing constructive criticism to their peers. This analysis finding aligns with Yu and Hu (2017), who highlighted the challenges of peer feedback in EFL contexts. Both T3 and T4 emphasized the need for training students on how to give effective peer feedback before implementing it in class activities. On the other hand, T5 shared a positive experience where structured peer review sessions led to improved writing outcomes among advanced learners. However, both T6 and T7 argued that peer feedback works best as a supplementary tool rather than a primary method of error correction due to its variability in quality. T8 suggested that peer feedback can be more effective when combined with teacher guidance to ensure accuracy and relevance. T9 noted that peer feedback can help build a sense of community in the classroom, encouraging students to support each other in their learning journey. Thus, these interviews reveal a nuanced understanding among EFL teachers regarding error correction techniques. While direct feedback was consistently favored for its clarity and immediacy, indirect feedback was valued for promoting critical thinking skills. The teachers also highlighted the importance of adapting feedback methods based on individual student needs while maintaining a supportive classroom environment. Although peer feedback was recognized as a potentially valuable tool, its effectiveness was seen as limited without proper guidance or training. These findings

highlight the teachers' perspectives on feedback techniques. The emphasis on direct feedback for accuracy and indirect feedback for critical thinking, as well as the cautious approach to peer feedback, reflects a balanced understanding of error correction strategies in EFL contexts.

### **Results from Classroom Observation**

The researcher observed nine teachers in EFL writing classes to assess the effectiveness of direct feedback, indirect feedback, and peer feedback error correction techniques. The observations focused on how these methods were applied, the clarity and constructiveness of feedback, and student engagement. The researcher observed that nine teachers consistently applied direct feedback, which was effective for immediate error correction and clarity, particularly for grammar and syntax errors. This approach allowed students to quickly understand and address their mistakes, enhancing their writing accuracy. Direct feedback was particularly beneficial for beginner-level students who may struggle to identify their errors independently. However, two teachers faced challenges in consistently applying direct feedback due to time constraints and varying lesson objectives, highlighting the need for better time management or lesson planning to ensure that error correction remains a key focus in every writing session.

Indirect feedback was used by six teachers to foster critical thinking and self-editing skills. This method encouraged students to reflect on their writing and identify errors independently, promoting deeper learning and autonomy in writing. Indirect feedback was effective in encouraging students to think critically about their mistakes and develop strategies for improvement. However, some teachers noted that indirect feedback required more time and effort from students, which could be challenging for those with limited self-editing skills. Only four teachers regularly incorporated peer feedback into their lessons, which was underutilized by most teachers due to time constraints or concerns about students' ability to give constructive critiques. Teachers who used peer feedback noted that some students lacked the confidence or expertise to provide meaningful input. Despite these challenges, peer feedback had the potential to enhance collaborative learning and provide diverse perspectives on writing. To improve this practice, structured peer review sessions with

clear guidelines and teacher support could be introduced to help students develop their critical evaluation skills.

The researcher observed that eight teachers provided clear and constructive feedback on students' writing errors, which is critical for helping students understand their mistakes and how to correct them. Clear feedback was particularly effective in addressing grammar and syntax issues. However, one teacher occasionally struggled with providing specific and actionable feedback, which limited its effectiveness. This underlines the importance of detailed and targeted feedback that not only identifies errors but also offers guidance on how to improve. The researcher observed high levels of student engagement in seven classes when feedback was clear, constructive, and actionable. Students appeared motivated to improve their writing when they understood the corrections made by their teachers. However, two teachers noted variability in motivation levels among students, particularly those who struggled with self-correction or found it difficult to apply feedback effectively. This highlights the need for differentiated instruction tailored to meet diverse student needs while fostering intrinsic motivation through personalized goals and progress tracking. These observations highlight a generally positive implementation of direct and indirect feedback techniques. However, challenges remain in encouraging self-correction and implementing peer feedback effectively. Addressing these issues through professional development for teachers and strategies to build student confidence will be crucial for improving outcomes in writing instruction.

### **Discussion**

The findings from student surveys and teacher interviews offer rich insights into the practical implementation and perceived effectiveness of direct, indirect, and peer feedback in EFL writing classrooms. These insights highlight the importance of adapting feedback approaches to the diverse needs, learning styles, and proficiency levels of students to optimize their writing development. Feedback, when used thoughtfully, becomes not just a corrective tool, but a formative process that empowers learners to become more confident, autonomous, and proficient writers.

A recurring theme in both student and teacher responses is the strong preference for direct feedback. Students reported that they found direct feedback the most beneficial because of its clarity and straightforwardness. This type of feedback explicitly identifies errors and often provides immediate corrections, making it especially useful for learners who are still developing their language foundation. Such preferences align with Hattie and Timperley's (2007) assertion that direct feedback enhances both accuracy and immediacy in the correction process. Furthermore, Beuningen *et al.* (2008) affirm that direct feedback is particularly helpful for lower-level learners who may not yet possess the metalinguistic awareness required to identify and address their own errors. Teachers echoed this sentiment, noting that direct feedback is effective for addressing grammatical and syntactical errors that impede comprehension. It provides students with a clear understanding of their mistakes and helps them quickly adjust their writing. Fitriyah *et al.* (2024) support this view, emphasizing that direct feedback accelerates the error correction process and supports clarity, particularly in structured academic writing tasks.

However, while direct feedback offers clarity and immediate guidance, relying solely on it may limit opportunities for deeper learning. For students to become independent writers, they must also learn how to identify and correct their own mistakes. Thus, educators argue for a balanced approach one that integrates direct correction with opportunities for reflection and self-repair. This is where indirect feedback becomes crucial. Unlike direct feedback, indirect feedback encourages students to think critically about their writing. It signals that an error exists often by underlining or marking the problematic area—without providing the exact correction. This method supports the development of self-editing skills and learner autonomy, as students are required to diagnose and revise their own work. According to Jamalinesari *et al.* (2015), such engagement with one's own errors promotes deeper cognitive processing and retention, which are key to long-term improvement.

Teachers in this study valued indirect feedback for its ability to foster self-directed learning.

It encourages students to engage more thoughtfully with their writing and develop strategies to overcome recurring issues. Bekele *et al.* (2022) also highlight that indirect feedback nurtures a growth mindset, empowering students to take ownership of their learning journey. However, this method is not without its challenges. Students with limited language proficiency or underdeveloped editing skills may find indirect feedback frustrating or confusing. To mitigate this, teachers suggested integrating scaffolding techniques—such as providing exemplars or metalinguistic clues—to gradually build students' confidence and capability in using this feedback effectively (Cheng & Zhang, 2021). Another critical dimension of this discussion is the role of peer feedback, which has gained prominence as a collaborative and student-centered feedback strategy. Peer feedback allows students to review and critique one another's work, creating opportunities for shared learning and mutual support. Research has shown that when implemented correctly, peer feedback enhances critical thinking, builds learner confidence, and fosters a sense of community in the classroom (Cai *et al.*, 2019).

In this study, both students and teachers recognized the value of peer feedback in promoting engagement and broadening perspectives. Students reported feeling more connected to their writing process when they participated in reviewing their classmates' work. Moreover, giving feedback helped them become more analytical about their own writing. Henderson *et al.* (2019) noted that peer feedback helps learners internalize assessment criteria and reflect on their progress in a more meaningful way. Nonetheless, the successful implementation of peer feedback requires thoughtful planning. Teachers expressed concerns about students' readiness to provide accurate and constructive feedback. Some students lacked the confidence or language ability to critique their peers' writing effectively, which could lead to superficial or incorrect feedback (Yu & Hu, 2017). To address this, structured peer review sessions with clear rubrics, modeling, and teacher supervision were recommended. This structured approach ensures that peer feedback remains focused, respectful, and educationally valuable.

The preference for direct feedback, as identified in this study, underscores the importance of clarity and specificity in teacher-student communication.

Students feel more secure and guided when feedback clearly indicates what needs to be corrected and how. This aligns with Beuningen *et al.* (2008), who argue that direct feedback minimizes ambiguity and supports quicker writing improvement. However, the benefits of indirect feedback, particularly in fostering long-term writing competence and metacognitive skills, cannot be overlooked. This suggests that a hybrid or blended feedback model—one that combines the immediate clarity of direct feedback with the developmental benefits of indirect and peer feedback—may be the most pedagogically sound approach (Wondim *et al.*, 2024). By adopting a balanced feedback strategy, educators can cater to a broader range of learner needs. Structured direct feedback can address surface-level issues efficiently, while indirect feedback can guide learners toward deeper revision and critical analysis. Simultaneously, peer feedback can provide social and cognitive benefits that contribute to a more engaging and collaborative learning environment. Ultimately, the findings from this study emphasize that effective feedback is not a one-size-fits-all process. Teachers must be sensitive to their students' linguistic abilities, learning preferences, and levels of confidence. By blending direct instruction with guided discovery and peer interaction, teachers can create a dynamic and responsive writing classroom. In doing so, they not only correct errors but also cultivate independence, motivation, and a lifelong capacity for self-improvement. Addressing the limitations and challenges of each feedback method—through professional development for teachers, capacity-building strategies for students, and the integration of technology and peer support—will be essential for advancing writing instruction in EFL contexts. As writing continues to be a cornerstone of academic and professional success, tailoring feedback strategies to promote both immediate improvement and sustained development remains a cornerstone of effective pedagogy.

### **Conclusion**

Research on the effectiveness of direct feedback, indirect feedback, and peer feedback in correcting errors in EFL writing classes provides valuable insights into their impact on undergraduate students' writing abilities. The results show that both students and teachers highly appreciate direct feedback due to its clarity and effectiveness in correcting errors

promptly. This approach is particularly beneficial for enhancing accuracy and providing immediate guidance, which is crucial for beginner-level learners who may struggle to identify their mistakes independently. Indirect feedback is recognized for fostering critical thinking and autonomy, promoting deeper learning and self-directed learning skills. By encouraging students to reflect on their writing and identify errors independently, indirect feedback helps learners develop strategies for improvement and enhances their ability to engage actively with their writing.

Peer feedback, while less frequently used, is seen as beneficial for enhancing confidence and fostering collaborative learning environments. However, it requires careful implementation and training to be effective, as students often lack the confidence or expertise to provide meaningful input. Despite these challenges, peer feedback has the potential to provide diverse perspectives and enhance writing quality through mutual learning and shared feedback. The study highlights the importance of balancing feedback strategies to cater to diverse student needs. By incorporating structured direct feedback for immediate corrections, promoting indirect feedback for critical thinking and implementing peer feedback with proper guidance, educators can create a comprehensive learning environment that supports both accuracy and autonomy in writing. Addressing the challenges associated with each feedback type through professional development for teachers and strategies to build student confidence will be crucial for improving outcomes in writing instruction. Overall, this research highlights the need for teachers to tailor their feedback strategies to meet the diverse needs and preferences of their students, ensuring that they receive the most effective support in improving their writing skills. By doing so, educators can enhance student engagement, motivation, and overall writing proficiency, ultimately contributing to more effective EFL writing instruction.

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#### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) do not have any conflict of interest.

#### **Data Availability Statement**

Data is available upon request to the corresponding author.

#### **Ethics Statement**

Every study involving human participants must be evaluated by the Ethical Clearance Committee Board before proceeding. The current study was reviewed and approved by the Ethical Clearance Committee Board of Mizan Tepi University (Reference No (MTU/IRB/159/2024)). Participants were also told they could leave the study whenever they wanted.

#### **Informed Consent Statement**

Participation was completely voluntary and informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

#### **Permission to Reproduce Material from other Sources**

No figures or tables have been adapted from previously published works.

#### **Author Contributions**

- **Tamirat Taye:** Conceptualization, methodology, original draft preparation; writing—review and editing, visualization.
- **Gemechis Teshome:** supervision. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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