

Direct Written Corrective Feedback and Its Role in Developing Writing Accuracy: Implications for the Uzbek EFL Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Writing is widely recognised as one of the most cognitively demanding skills in second language acquisition because it requires learners to manage grammatical accuracy, lexical choice, syntactic organisation, and discourse coherence simultaneously (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Unlike speaking, writing provides limited real-time interactional support, placing greater responsibility on learners to monitor linguistic form independently. In EFL contexts, this challenge is compounded by restricted exposure to English outside the classroom, which reduces opportunities for extended writing practice and meaningful feedback.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Contextual Background

Writing is widely recognised as one of the most cognitively demanding skills in second language acquisition because it requires learners to manage grammatical accuracy, lexical choice, syntactic organisation, and discourse coherence simultaneously (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Unlike speaking, writing provides limited real-time interactional support, placing greater responsibility on learners to monitor linguistic form independently. In EFL contexts, this challenge is compounded by restricted exposure to English outside the classroom, which reduces opportunities for extended writing practice and meaningful feedback.

Therefore, classroom techniques become particularly significant for developing students' writing proficiency. As a result, classroom instruction plays a central role in shaping learners' writing development, with teacher feedback functioning as a primary source of linguistic input. Hyland and Hyland (2006) argue that feedback in L2 writing is not merely corrective but socially situated, reflecting institutional norms and instructional priorities. In teacher-centred educational traditions, learners often interpret feedback as authoritative guidance and tend to value explicit correction of linguistic errors.

One of the primary approaches to address linguistic integrity in student writing in such classrooms is through written corrective feedback.

From a second language acquisition perspective, corrective feedback contributes to learning by directing learners' attention to problematic linguistic forms. Nassaji (2015) argues that the primary function of interactional feedback is to facilitate noticing, whereby learners become aware of gaps between their interlanguage and target language norms. This noticing process is fundamental to subsequent restructuring of linguistic knowledge. Similarly, Lyster and Ranta (1997) demonstrated that corrective feedback facilitates

learner uptake by making such gaps salient. Although their study focused on oral interaction, this principle has strongly influenced research on written corrective feedback, particularly in accuracy-oriented contexts. Corrective feedback has become considered as a possibly beneficial pedagogical technique in L2 writing teaching, that might be explained by these research results.

Nevertheless, the pedagogical value of written corrective feedback remains contested. John Truscott (1996, 2007) argued that grammar correction in L2 writing is ineffective and potentially harmful, whereas subsequent research has shown that certain feedback practices, when applied selectively and systematically, can support accuracy development (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Ferris, 2010). Within this debate, direct written corrective feedback has emerged as a widely used yet theoretically contested approach. Neomy Storch (2018) argues that written feedback should be evaluated not only in terms of linguistic outcomes but also in relation to how learners engage with and appropriate the feedback.

According to this argument, the efficacy of direct written corrective feedback depends on more how it is applied and how students interact with it than on its universal applicability. This essay presents an adaptable view, suggesting that when direct written corrective feedback encourages noticing, controllable cognitive processing, and active learner participation, it can support writing accuracy.

2. Defining Direct Written Corrective Feedback

The phrase *direct written corrective feedback* is used to describe a method of providing feedback in which the teacher provides the appropriate linguistic form for an error that has been found in a learner's written text, as stated by Ferris (2010). In order to successfully complete this assignment, it may be necessary to incorporate grammatical components that are missing, to substitute incorrect forms, or to reformulate structures that are not fitting the bill. As opposed to indirect feedback, which requires learners to individually identify and correct errors, learners who receive direct feedback are given prompt access to the target form.

Since it represents different presumptions about how learners receive corrective input and improve linguistic accuracy, the contrast between direct and indirect textual corrective feedback is crucial. Karim and Nassaji (2019, p. 31) distinguish between these two feedback types based on the cognitive demands they impose: direct feedback provides explicit correction, while indirect feedback requires learners to engage in problem-solving and metalinguistic reflection. This contrast highlights that direct feedback reduces the burden on learners by supplying correct forms, whereas indirect feedback places greater responsibility on learners to self-correct.

The idea of noticing is frequently used to explain the educational usefulness of direct written corrective feedback from the standpoint of second language acquisition. Nassaji (2015) argues that learners are more likely to benefit from feedback when their attention is explicitly drawn to gaps between their interlanguage and the target language. By providing the correct form directly, written corrective feedback may increase the salience of linguistic features that learners might otherwise overlook.

The theoretical rationale for direct written corrective feedback is also closely related to research on form-focused instruction. Lyster and Ranta (1997) demonstrated that explicit feedback can facilitate learner uptake by making linguistic forms more noticeable. Although their study focused on spoken interaction, similar noticing processes are assumed to occur in written contexts, particularly when learners are provided with clear models of correct language use.

Learners' reactions to remedial feedback are influenced by cognitive aspects in addition to noticing. Mackey and Sachs (2011) argue that learners' working memory capacity influences their ability to process corrective input and benefit from it. From this perspective, direct written corrective feedback may be especially helpful for learners who have limited cognitive resources or insufficient linguistic knowledge to self-correct effectively.

Providing learners with immediate and explicit correction may therefore reduce ambiguity and lower cognitive processing demands during writing tasks. This can be particularly beneficial in contexts where learners are simultaneously required to generate ideas, organise content, and monitor linguistic accuracy in a second language.

When taken as a whole, these theoretical considerations imply that direct written corrective feedback should not be seen as intrinsically better than other forms of feedback, but rather as a pedagogical choice whose efficacy depends on learners' cognitive ability, developmental readiness, and opportunities to interact with

feedback. This understanding provides a foundation for examining empirical research on direct written corrective feedback in the following section.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Theoretical Foundations of Written Corrective Feedback

The theoretical mechanisms with which corrective feedback improves in second language learning must be taken into account in order to comprehend why direct written corrective feedback may promote writing progress. From a second language acquisition perspective, corrective feedback has been widely discussed within research on form-focused instruction. Nassaji (2015) argues that the primary function of interactional feedback is to facilitate noticing, whereby learners become aware of gaps between their interlanguage and target language norms. This noticing process is considered essential for triggering subsequent restructuring of linguistic knowledge.

Similarly, Lyster and Ranta (1997) demonstrated that corrective feedback facilitates learner uptake by making problematic linguistic forms salient. Although their study focused on oral interaction in communicative classrooms, the underlying principle of drawing learners' attention to form has strongly influenced later research on written corrective feedback, particularly in accuracy-oriented instructional contexts.

Although noticing offers a crucial explanation for how feedback could enhance learning, it falls short in explaining variations in learners' capacity to gain from remedial input. Research has therefore highlighted the role of cognitive factors in mediating feedback effectiveness. Mackey and Sachs (2011) argue that learners' working memory capacity constrains how much corrective information they can process at a given time. Learners with limited cognitive resources may struggle to engage in complex problem-solving when revising their writing, particularly when feedback requires extensive self-correction.

According to this cognitive viewpoint, by giving students instant access to precise goal forms and direct written corrective feedback might decrease processing demands. This can be especially beneficial in writing tasks where learners are required to attend simultaneously to content generation, organisation, and linguistic accuracy.

When considered collectively, these concepts imply that written corrective feedback's efficacy rely not only on its existence but also on how it facilitates observation and controls students' cognitive processing needs. This theoretical foundation helps explain why empirical studies have produced varying findings and provides a framework for examining research on direct written corrective feedback.

3.2 Empirical Evidence Supporting Direct Written Corrective Feedback

Several research studies have examined the efficacy of direct written corrective feedback in enhancing learners' writing correctness, depending on the theoretical points of view mentioned above.

Baymot Mekuriaw Wondim, Kassie Shifere Bishaw, and Yinager Teklesellassie Zeleke (2024) discovered that when direct written corrective feedback is accompanied by metalinguistic explanation, it leads to greater improvement in writing accuracy than indirect written corrective feedback. Their findings suggest that explicit correction, combined with brief explanations, helps learners better understand grammatical errors and apply corrective input during subsequent revisions.

These findings lend credence to the idea that direct feedback can be especially successful when it improves students' awareness of forms of language and offers precise instructions on how to fix mistakes. Elfiyanto and Fukazawa (2021) similarly state that direct written corrective feedback supports improvement in grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary. In addition, they point out that learners' cultural and educational backgrounds influence how feedback is received and interpreted. The authors further argue that the effectiveness of written corrective feedback depends on who provides the feedback, with teacher-provided feedback often being perceived as more authoritative and reliable.

All of these research studies show that direct written corrective feedback can help students develop in a variety of writing-related areas, especially when they are given specific criticism that is in line with their requirements and associated with the lesson. However, improvements in accuracy alone do not fully explain how learners benefit from feedback, highlighting the need to consider learners' engagement with corrective input.

3.3 Learner Engagement and Sociocultural Dimensions

Yet, since learners' involvement with feedback is a key factor for evaluating its efficacy, advances in writing accuracy cannot be explained exclusively by the supply of corrected information.

Saeli and Cheng (2019) describe how direct written corrective feedback relates to student engagement, focusing on cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. They argue that cognitive engagement involves learners actively processing and understanding feedback, while emotional engagement relates to learners' attitudes toward feedback, and behavioural engagement refers to the extent to which learners act on feedback during revision. The authors further explain that misalignment between feedback practices and learners' perceptions may limit the effectiveness of corrective feedback.

Cognitive engagement is one of those elements that is very important since learning requires learners to observe and cognitively digest corrective input. When learners perceive feedback as meaningful and supportive, they are more likely to engage actively with corrections and apply them to subsequent writing tasks.

Neomy Storch (2018) similarly argues that written corrective feedback should be evaluated not only in terms of linguistic outcomes but also in relation to how learners engage with and appropriate the feedback. From a sociocultural perspective, feedback is viewed as mediated assistance that supports learners' development through interaction, reflection, and gradual internalisation of linguistic forms.

According to this engaging viewpoint, when students actively interact with and internalize input instead of just duplicating corrections, direct written corrective feedback works best. This view complements cognitive explanations of feedback effectiveness by highlighting the importance of learner agency and participation in the feedback process.

4. The Uzbek EFL Writing Context

The unique features of the Uzbek EFL writing setting must be taken into account in order to apply the theoretical and empirical insights covered above to classroom practice. From my experience as an English teacher in an Uzbek secondary school, writing instruction is typically characterised by a strong emphasis on grammatical accuracy and formal correctness. This emphasis reflects exam-oriented curricula and long-established teacher-centred pedagogical practices, where success is often measured by the absence of linguistic errors rather than by communicative effectiveness. As noted by Hasanova (2019), students' exposure to English outside the classroom is limited, and opportunities for extended writing practice are generally confined to controlled classroom tasks and examination preparation.

In Uzbek classrooms, persistent grammatical difficulties are particularly noticeable in areas such as article usage, tense–aspect distinctions—especially the present perfect and past simple—and preposition choice. These challenges are largely attributable to structural differences between Uzbek and English, as Uzbek lacks articles. Despite repeated instruction, such errors often recur across writing tasks, suggesting that learners require sustained and explicit support.

Feedback techniques in Uzbek EFL classes are influenced not just by difficulties with language but also by practical limitations. Large class sizes and heavy teaching loads make it unrealistic to provide extensive individualised feedback on every aspect of students' writing. As a result, feedback strategies must be not only pedagogically sound but also manageable within real classroom conditions.

This educational setting emphasizes the necessity of using written feedback in a focused and intentional manner instead of fixing every mistake. These contextual factors provide a rationale for examining how direct written corrective feedback can be applied selectively and effectively in Uzbek EFL writing classrooms.

4.1. Purposeful Use of Direct Written Corrective Feedback

The thoughtful and deliberate use of direct written corrective feedback becomes especially crucial within the limitations and standards of the Uzbek EFL writing setting.

Direct written corrective feedback, which involves teachers explicitly providing correct linguistic forms, can help learners identify and correct errors more effectively (Saeli & Cheng, 2019). In the Uzbek EFL context, where students often expect clear and authoritative guidance, direct written corrective feedback may reduce ambiguity and support writing accuracy, particularly at lower proficiency levels.

This strategy is consistent with theoretical viewpoints that contend that providing direct feedback can help students notice while lowering their mental processing demands. By supplying correct forms directly, teachers can support learners who may lack the linguistic resources or confidence to self-correct independently.

However, direct written corrective feedback is more beneficial when it is applied strategically and with focus than when it is provided indiscriminately.

Providing direct correction for every error may overwhelm learners and limit opportunities for developing self-editing skills. As a result, direct written corrective feedback is most effective when targeted at recurrent or developmentally challenging errors that learners are unable to resolve on their own.

This intentional use of direct written corrective feedback lays the groundwork for incorporating other support techniques, like metalinguistic clarification, which can improve students' comprehension of mistakes.

4.3 Integrating Direct Written Corrective Feedback with Metalinguistic Explanation

Direct written corrective feedback gives students unambiguous goal forms, but when paired with metalinguistic explanation, it can be more efficient as well.

Research indicates that direct written corrective feedback is more effective when accompanied by metalinguistic explanation, particularly for recurring or structurally complex errors (Wondim et al., 2024). By briefly explaining why an error is incorrect, teachers can help learners understand underlying grammatical rules rather than relying solely on surface-level correction.

Deeper cognitive engagement with feedback is supported by this mix of clarification and direct correction. Learners are more likely to reflect on their errors and apply corrective input to new writing tasks when they understand the reasons behind corrections.

In the Uzbek EFL context, where learners often rely on teacher guidance and value clear explanations, integrating metalinguistic comments with direct correction may be especially beneficial. However, explanations should remain concise and focused to avoid overwhelming learners or increasing cognitive load unnecessarily.

Therefore, by encouraging transfer of information and aiding longer-term writing improvement, metalinguistic explanation can be utilized strategically to supplement direct written corrective feedback.

4.4 Supporting Accuracy in Grammar, Sentence Structure, and Vocabulary

Direct written corrective feedback is crucial for enhancing the fundamental elements of writing accuracy in as well as helping students comprehend mistakes. DWCF has been shown to contribute to improvements in grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary, which are key components of EFL writing (Elfiyanto & Fukazawa, 2021). These linguistic areas are often prioritised in exam-oriented writing tasks, where accuracy is a central assessment criterion.

This precise assistance is especially essential in the context of Uzbek EFL. As learners are frequently evaluated on their control of grammatical forms and sentence-level correctness. Direct written corrective feedback allows teachers to address these areas efficiently by providing clear models of accurate language use.

Teachers may therefore prioritise direct written corrective feedback in tasks where linguistic accuracy is the primary instructional objective, such as academic writing assignments or examination preparation. When applied in this manner, direct written corrective feedback reinforces proper language forms for further use while supporting instant accuracy improvements.

4.5 Learner Engagement and Cultural Expectations

Beside language accuracy, learners' participation and cultural norms around feedback procedures also influence how effective written corrective feedback is.

The effectiveness of written corrective feedback depends on learners' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement with feedback (Saeli & Cheng, 2019). Excessive, unclear, or overly critical correction may reduce learners' motivation and willingness to revise, whereas focused and comprehensible feedback can encourage active engagement with the writing process.

Learners' cultural and educational backgrounds have an impact on how feedback is viewed and utilized in along with interaction. Elfiyanto and Fukazawa (2021) note that learners' prior educational experiences shape their expectations of feedback and their responses to correction. In teacher-centred learning contexts, students may view teacher feedback as more authoritative and reliable than peer feedback.

to learners' expectations of teacher authority. Peer feedback may still offer potential benefits; however, it is more likely to be effective when introduced gradually and supported with clear guidance and modelling.

When taken as a whole, these factors indicate that direct written corrective feedback should be given in a fashion that both maintains student involvement and complies with cultural norms. Such alignment increases the likelihood that learners will attend to, reflect on, and apply feedback in subsequent writing tasks.

4.6. Strengthening Teacher Awareness and Professional Development

Teachers' comprehension of the pedagogical goals of written corrective feedback is just as important to its effectiveness as the form of feedback they choose. Effective use of written corrective feedback requires teacher awareness of different feedback types and their instructional functions (Ellis, 2009)

Teachers need to recognise when direct written corrective feedback is appropriate and when alternative approaches may better support learners' long-term development.

In the Uzbek EFL context, professional development initiatives could play an important role in teachers' feedback practices. Such initiatives may focus on increasing teachers' understanding of direct, indirect, and metalinguistic feedback, as well as on developing skills for matching feedback strategies to learner needs and task objectives. By engaging in reflection and professional dialogue, teachers can make informed decisions about how to balance accuracy-focused correction with strategies that promote learner autonomy. Therefore, increasing teacher awareness through professional development may improve written corrective feedback's overall efficacy and support more long-term writing growth in Uzbek EFL classrooms.

Conclusion

The function of Direct written corrective feedback in enhancing writing accuracy has been investigated in this study, along with its teaching implications for Uzbek EFL writing classes.

Drawing on theoretical perspectives from second language acquisition, the discussion has shown that direct written corrective feedback can contribute to learning by promoting noticing of linguistic forms and reducing cognitive processing demands, particularly for learners who lack the linguistic resources to self-correct independently. Empirical evidence reviewed in this essay further suggests that direct written corrective feedback can lead to improvements in grammatical accuracy, sentence structure, and vocabulary, especially when combined with metalinguistic explanation and applied selectively.

In the Uzbek EFL context, where writing instruction is often accuracy-focused and teacher-centred, direct written corrective feedback aligns well with learners' expectations for clear and authoritative guidance. However, practical constraints such as large class sizes and limited instructional time necessitate a targeted and purposeful use of feedback rather than comprehensive correction of all errors.

When considered collectively, these results provide support to written corrective feedback that is adaptable to context. Rather than viewing direct written corrective feedback as either universally effective or pedagogically ineffective, this essay argues that its value lies in how, when, and for whom it is used. When integrated with metalinguistic support, learner engagement, and balanced feedback strategies, direct written corrective feedback can contribute to sustainable writing development and greater learner autonomy in Uzbek EFL classrooms.

AI Usage Statement

This assignment was developed with limited use of AI tools to support the writing process. ChatGPT and Claude AI were used during the preparatory stage to clarify unfamiliar theoretical concepts (e.g., distinctions between feedback types) and to assist with organizing an initial outline. Grammarly was used for final proofreading only.

No AI-generated text was copied into this submission. All arguments, critical analysis, source synthesis, and pedagogical interpretations were developed independently by the author based on close reading of academic literature and professional teaching experience. AI tools supported learning and revision processes but did not replace independent academic work.

Example of AI Use:

User query: "Explain the difference between input-providing and output-prompting feedback in Nassaji's framework."

AI response: "Input-providing feedback gives learners the correct form directly (e.g., direct correction), while output-prompting feedback encourages self-repair through elicitation or prompts."

This helped me understand the concept before reading Nassaji (2015) directly. I then incorporated this understanding into the essay using my own words based on the source material.

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