

The use of written feedback in developing english writing skills in teenagers

El uso de la retroalimentación escrita para el desarrollo de las habilidades de escritura en inglés en adolescentes

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Abstract

Written feedback is a key pedagogical strategy for developing writing skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This study aimed to analyze how teachers' written feedback contributes to strengthening the writing performance of adolescent students, particularly in terms of grammatical accuracy, text organization, coherence, and communicative competence. The research adopted a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design involving a group of adolescent students enrolled in an English tutoring center. Data were collected through the analysis of students' written compositions, observations of the feedback process, and the interpretation of students' responses to the teacher's written comments. The findings revealed that structured and timely written feedback facilitated the revision and correction of texts, promoted greater awareness of linguistic errors, and enhanced students' autonomy throughout the writing process. In addition, an increase in students' confidence and participation during writing activities was observed. It is concluded that written feedback is an effective pedagogical tool for improving English writing performance by fostering the development of linguistic competencies and supporting students' self-regulated learning.

Resumen

La retroalimentación escrita es una estrategia pedagógica clave para el desarrollo de las habilidades de escritura en inglés como lengua extranjera. Este estudio se realizó para analizar cómo la retroalimentación escrita del docente contribuye al fortalecimiento de la producción escrita de estudiantes adolescentes, particularmente en aspectos relacionados con: precisión gramatical, organización textual, coherencia y competencia comunicativa. La investigación es de enfoque cualitativo con diseño de estudio de caso descriptivo, desarrollado con un grupo de estudiantes adolescentes pertenecientes a un centro de tutorías de inglés. La información obtenida mediante el análisis de producciones escritas, observaciones del proceso de retroalimentación y la interpretación de las respuestas de los estudiantes frente a las observaciones realizadas por el docente. Los resultados revelan que la retroalimentación escrita estructurada y oportuna favoreció la revisión y corrección de los textos, promovió una mayor conciencia sobre los errores lingüísticos y fortaleció la autonomía de los estudiantes en el proceso de escritura. Asimismo, se

observó un incremento en la confianza y la participación durante las actividades de producción escrita. Se concluye que la retroalimentación escrita es una herramienta pedagógica eficaz para mejorar el desempeño en la escritura en inglés, al favorecer el desarrollo de competencias lingüísticas y la autorregulación del aprendizaje.

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INTRODUCTION

In the current context of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), developing writing skills has become a fundamental priority for adolescent learners, as these skills are essential for academic achievement and future professional success. Writing is not only an academic skill; it is also a life skill that helps students organize their thoughts logically, communicate effectively, and demonstrate their knowledge in various contexts. Moreover, it plays a vital role in language development because it requires students to apply grammatical rules and use vocabulary accurately. However, despite continuous instruction and practice, many EFL learners still struggle to express their ideas clearly and coherently, limiting their ability to demonstrate their knowledge and hindering their progress in language learning.

Since writing in English provides opportunities to consolidate grammar and vocabulary in authentic and meaningful contexts, it is essential to implement instructional strategies that effectively support students' writing development. Among these strategies, written feedback plays a crucial role in helping students identify and correct mistakes in their writing, encouraging revision and reflection. By analyzing how teenage EFL learners use written feedback, this research contributes to the field by providing evidence of how feedback can be used as a practical pedagogical tool to improve students' academic writing performance. Furthermore, it offers insights into the development of more dynamic, engaging, and reflective writing environments that promote language development and deeper engagement with English as a foreign language.

Understanding how feedback is used is particularly relevant in the Ecuadorian context, where the national curriculum places strong emphasis on writing as a core skill for the development of English proficiency. The Ecuadorian curriculum, known as the Currículo de los Niveles de Educación Obligatoria, states that the ability to produce coherent and well-structured written texts is a key learning outcome (Ministerio de Educación, 2016). Similarly, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) emphasizes the importance of writing fluently and coherently to demonstrate communicative competence in a second or foreign language (Council of Europe, 2018). Accordingly, teachers are expected to help students achieve these standards. Consequently, effective written feedback becomes an essential pedagogical tool, not only for supporting writing development but also for guiding students toward achieving the communicative goals required at each level of English learning.

Feedback in writing instruction should not be seen as a simple checklist for correcting errors but rather as a bridge between what students currently know and what they need to improve or reinforce. According to Bitchener and Ferris (2012), effective written feedback helps students enhance grammatical accuracy, organization, and overall confidence in writing tasks. When feedback is clear, specific, and supportive, it encourages students to reflect critically on their mistakes and incorporate corrections into subsequent drafts. This reflective process helps learners become more aware of their writing process and develop autonomy.

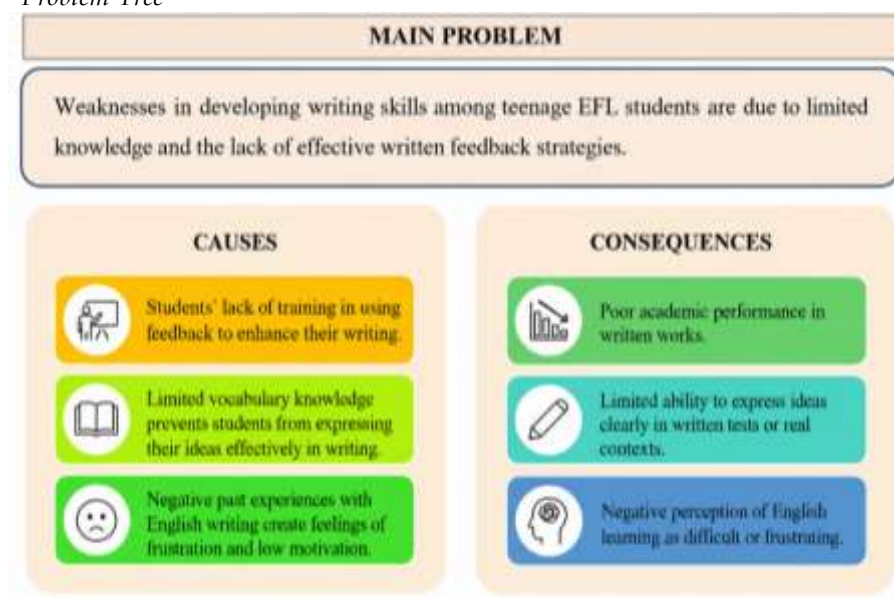
Furthermore, written feedback that acknowledges students' efforts while providing constructive suggestions can increase learners' motivation and encourage deeper engagement with the writing process.

Moreover, feedback carries an important affective component because writing in a foreign language is often perceived as intimidating by teenage learners. In this regard, the motivational dimension of feedback is particularly significant, as many adolescents may feel confused, frustrated, or insecure when expressing themselves in English. However, when students receive constructive feedback that highlights their strengths and provides supportive guidance on how to improve, they are more likely to develop a positive attitude toward writing (Cen & Zheng, 2024). This sense of encouragement strengthens learners' confidence and motivates them to take greater risks when using the target language. Furthermore, fostering a classroom culture where mistakes are viewed as natural and valuable steps in the learning process can positively transform students' perceptions of writing, making writing tasks feel less threatening and more meaningful for their academic and linguistic development.

By examining how teenage EFL students use written feedback, this study aims to generate valuable insights for both teachers and students. Understanding this process is crucial not only because it addresses a persistent challenge in language classrooms but also because it provides evidence that can inform and improve teaching practices. Additionally, the findings may assist teachers in providing more effective and personalized feedback tailored to learners' specific needs. Through meaningful feedback, students are encouraged to reflect on their writing, identify grammatical and organizational weaknesses, and develop strategies for continuous improvement. As a result, they progressively strengthen their autonomy and responsibility for learning. Ultimately, effective written feedback enables students to become more confident and competent writers who are capable of expressing their ideas clearly, coherently, and accurately in English for both academic and real-world purposes.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze how written feedback contributes to the development of English writing skills among adolescent EFL learners and to examine its role in promoting writing accuracy, learner autonomy, and communicative competence.

Figure 1
Problem Tree



Problem Statement

In many EFL classrooms, particularly among adolescent learners, the development of writing skills remains a persistent challenge. Despite curricular efforts, technological resources, and teacher initiatives, many students continue to produce texts characterized by grammatical inaccuracies, limited vocabulary, and weak organization. Although teachers frequently provide written feedback through comments, corrections, and suggestions, students do not always understand how to interpret or apply it to improve their writing. Consequently, feedback is often perceived as a form of external correction rather than as a learning opportunity, leading students to make superficial revisions without critically reflecting on their errors or internalizing strategies for long-term improvement.

This situation reflects a broader pedagogical challenge in which learners are insufficiently prepared to use written feedback as a tool for developing writing competence across different tasks. Instead of viewing feedback as part of an active learning process, many students perceive it as an external evaluation and either disregard corrections or apply them without meaningful understanding. This situation may result in repeated errors, frustration among learners and teachers, limited writing development, and negative effects on academic performance, confidence, and effective communication in English (Ferris, 2004).

The problem becomes more complex when considering current feedback practices. A key limitation is the lack of explicit instruction on how students should engage with and apply the feedback they receive, which reduces its potential as a transformative learning strategy (Washington University in St. Louis, 2026). In the Ecuadorian context, this challenge is intensified because English is learned as a foreign language and is rarely practiced beyond the classroom. According to Guerrero and Moreira (2025), limited exposure to English affects students' opportunities to develop productive skills such as writing. Furthermore, weak writing performance can influence achievement in other academic areas where written communication is essential.

Therefore, understanding how adolescent EFL learners use written feedback to improve their writing skills represents an important educational need. This problem is related to two interconnected factors: students' limited ability to interpret and apply feedback effectively and feedback practices that often prioritize error correction over meaningful learning. Investigating how students perceive, interpret, and implement written feedback may provide valuable insights for designing more effective, motivational, and learner-centered feedback practices.

The primary beneficiaries of this research are adolescent EFL learners in different educational contexts where writing is an essential component of language learning. By exploring how written feedback can be used more effectively, this study seeks to support students in developing greater autonomy, responsibility, and confidence throughout the writing process. Feedback should not only identify linguistic problems but also encourage reflection, self-correction, and the understanding of writing as a recursive process involving drafting, revision, and improvement.

Another important beneficiary is the teacher-researcher working in a personalized teaching context. Understanding how students perceive, interpret, and use written feedback will allow reflection on current teaching practices and the development of strategies that better respond to learners' cognitive and emotional needs. This reflective process may contribute to improving feedback practices, instructional decisions, and students' writing development.

This study is based on the assumption that written feedback is a pedagogical strategy that promotes the development of writing skills among adolescents learning English as a

Foreign Language (EFL). Effective feedback enables students to identify weaknesses, reflect on their errors, strengthen self-correction processes, and progressively improve their written production. Based on this assumption, the following research question guides the study: How is written feedback used by adolescents learning English as a Foreign Language to develop their writing skills? This question directs the research process toward understanding how feedback contributes to writing development and its potential as a tool for learning, reflection, and continuous improvement.

Importance of Writing feedback

This chapter presents the study entitled “The Use of Written Feedback in Developing English Writing Skills in Teenagers,” which focuses on addressing the challenges faced by adolescent English learners in developing effective writing skills. The empirical foundation of the study begins with a review of three relevant previous studies, including two national studies conducted in Ecuador and one international study from Chile. These studies provide important insights for the research design and the identification of key variables. Each study is analyzed considering its authorship, year of publication, objectives, methodological approach, and main findings, followed by a discussion of its relevance to the current research. This review demonstrates an understanding of the existing scholarly discussions and situates the present study within a broader academic context.

The chapter then introduces the theoretical framework that supports the research by grounding it in recognized linguistic and educational perspectives. It begins with key concepts related to second language acquisition and establishes connections among relevant theories and constructs. Subsequently, it focuses on written feedback, its different types, its role in the development of writing skills, and its cognitive and emotional influence on adolescent learners. The discussion is supported by contributions from relevant scholars, providing a solid and reliable theoretical foundation for understanding how written feedback may contribute to the improvement of English writing abilities.

Previous Studies

This first national study corresponds to González-Torres and Sarango (2023). It aimed to evaluate and compare the effectiveness of three types of written feedback: direct teacher feedback, indirect teacher feedback, and peer feedback, focusing on the EFL writing abilities of high school students. Additionally, it explored students’ perceptions, preferences, and opinions regarding the usefulness of the feedback received.

The research employed a mixed-method quasi-experimental design supported by survey components, combining quantitative and qualitative data. Eighty-two Ecuadorian high school students learning EFL, aged 17 to 18, participated in the study. They were divided into four groups: three experimental groups receiving different feedback types and one control group without feedback. The intervention lasted two months and included pre- and post-tests to measure improvements in writing skills, particularly grammar, coherence, and organization. A questionnaire was also administered to examine students’ perceptions and engagement with the feedback process.

The findings showed that all three feedback types produced significant improvements in writing performance compared with the control group, confirming the value of written feedback as a tool for developing EFL writing skills among adolescents. However, no significant differences were found among direct teacher feedback, indirect teacher feedback, and peer feedback, suggesting that the presence of guided feedback itself contributes to

writing development. Students particularly valued a combination of teacher and peer feedback, highlighting the importance of multiple feedback sources in promoting motivation, understanding, and confidence.

From an EFL teaching perspective, this study provides relevant evidence regarding the flexibility of feedback practices. It demonstrates that different feedback approaches can effectively support writing development while emphasizing the collaborative nature of learning. This perspective aligns with sociocultural theories, which consider teacher guidance and peer interaction as forms of scaffolding within the learner's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). As McLeod (2024) explains, the ZPD refers to the difference between what learners can achieve independently and what they can accomplish with appropriate support. Therefore, González-Torres and Sarango's study offers valuable national evidence on the effectiveness of diverse written feedback strategies and their potential to enhance adolescent EFL writing development.

The second study is also national and was conducted by Intriago Cañizares and Ramírez-Ávila (2024). This research aimed to explore how peer feedback influences the academic writing abilities of first-year university students in Ecuador. Specifically, it examined learners with B1-B2 English proficiency levels to determine whether participating in peer feedback activities could improve writing accuracy, fluency, and organization.

The researchers conducted an action research study using mixed methods at a private university in Guayaquil. Sixty first-year students participated in a sixteen-week intervention. The quantitative component included pre- and post-tests to measure changes in grammar, structure, and fluency, while the qualitative component involved questionnaires exploring students' experiences and perceptions of peer feedback. This approach allowed the researchers to assess both measurable improvements and learners' attitudes toward the feedback process.

The findings showed significant progress in students' writing abilities, with a medium effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.39$), indicating a positive impact of peer feedback on academic writing development. Students reported benefits such as greater awareness of errors, collaborative learning, and improved reflective thinking through peer evaluation. However, challenges were also identified, including uncertainty about evaluating classmates' work and hesitation when accepting peer comments. These results demonstrate the complex nature of peer feedback, which can promote learner autonomy while requiring appropriate guidance.

From an EFL teaching perspective, this study provides relevant evidence on the role of peer feedback in writing development. Although the participants were university students, the findings are applicable to adolescent learners because peer feedback fosters awareness, metacognitive skills, and collaboration. Nevertheless, effective implementation requires teacher support through scaffolding strategies, such as models, evaluation criteria, and clear guidelines. Overall, Intriago Cañizares and Ramírez-Ávila's study highlights peer feedback as a valuable component of a comprehensive feedback approach that complements teacher input and promotes autonomy, confidence, and collaborative learning.

The last study is international and was conducted in Chile by Kloss and Quintanilla (2024). This research aimed to explore how second-language learners perceive written feedback as a teaching and learning strategy in higher education. Unlike studies focused mainly on linguistic outcomes, it examined how students interpret feedback, value the comments received, and relate their perceptions to effective language learning practices.

The researchers administered an online survey to 202 university students enrolled in an English course in Chile. The questionnaire collected quantitative and qualitative data regarding the types of feedback students received, their preferences, perceptions of

usefulness, and experiences with writing. This mixed-methods approach allowed researchers to identify general trends while also exploring students' personal perspectives on feedback.

The findings revealed that students had clear preferences regarding feedback, although these often differed from pedagogical recommendations. While educational theory emphasizes feedback as a tool for reflection and self-correction, students mainly associated effective writing support with surface-level corrections, such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation. They tended to view feedback as a final product rather than as part of an ongoing learning process.

From an EFL teaching perspective, this study highlights the importance of considering learners' perceptions of feedback. Although the participants were university students, the findings are relevant to adolescent learners because students' understanding of feedback influences how effectively they use it. If feedback is perceived only as error correction, its potential to develop reflection, organization, and self-editing skills may be limited.

Therefore, teachers should balance students' immediate expectations with a broader, process-oriented approach to feedback. Gradually guiding learners to recognize feedback as a tool for improvement can increase engagement, autonomy, and confidence. In summary, Kloss and Quintanilla's study emphasizes the need to align feedback practices with learners' perspectives, ensuring that feedback becomes both meaningful and pedagogically effective.

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural Theory, developed by Vygotsky (1978), offers a powerful lens for understanding how language learning occurs as a socially mediated process rather than an isolated cognitive activity. According to Vygotsky, learning is not simply the internalization of knowledge transmitted by teachers but rather the result of meaningful interaction with others and the use of cultural tools, language being the most fundamental. Within this theory, one of the central concepts is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), defined as the distance between what a learner can achieve independently and what they can accomplish with guidance or collaboration. The ZPD highlights the idea that learners progress most effectively when supported through structured assistance, or scaffolding, provided by a more capable peer, teacher, or mediated tool.

Likewise, James P. Donato (1994) introduced the concept of collective scaffolding, emphasizing that knowledge is not constructed solely through teacher guidance but also through collaborative interactions among peers. Within this shared learning space, students support one another by exchanging ideas, negotiating meaning, and solving problems collectively, enabling them to accomplish tasks that would be difficult to complete independently. In the context of writing, this suggests that learners benefit not only from teachers' written feedback but also from discussing their texts with classmates, comparing perspectives, and reflecting on different suggestions for improvement. Such interactions encourage students to become active participants in the revision process rather than passive recipients of corrections.

Similarly, Mohamad (2023) argues that Sociocultural Theory (SCT) places particular emphasis on interaction and learners' active participation in the learning environment. From this perspective, learning is understood as a dynamic and socially mediated process in which cognitive development occurs through dialogue, collaboration, and meaningful participation in authentic learning activities. Consequently, written feedback should not be viewed merely as a mechanism for correcting linguistic errors but as a mediational tool that promotes reflection, self-regulation, and the gradual internalization of writing strategies. Teacher comments, peer feedback, and subsequent discussions create opportunities for learners to

interpret feedback, negotiate its meaning, and apply it in subsequent writing tasks, thereby facilitating movement from their current level of performance toward higher levels of competence.

Applying Sociocultural Theory to teenage EFL learners is particularly relevant because adolescents are at a developmental stage in which social interaction strongly influences both cognitive and affective learning processes. Since English is primarily learned within the classroom in EFL contexts, interactions with teachers and peers become essential sources of linguistic input, guidance, and support. Therefore, written feedback can function as an effective scaffold only when students actively engage with it, reflect on its meaning, and use it to revise and improve their writing. This theoretical perspective directly supports the present study by framing written feedback as an interactive learning process rather than a one-way transmission of corrections, highlighting its potential to foster writing development, learner autonomy, and continuous improvement.

Adolescents tend to think that hanging out with friends and getting their peers' approval is super important for figuring out who they are and what drives them. Feedback, therefore, is not just a cognitive aid but also an affective and motivational tool. When teachers give clear direction or when classmates work together and give feedback, students get the right support to try out tougher writing stuff within their ZPD like, a kid who's having a tough time making their writing flow smoothly might get some pointers from their teacher on how to use stuff like 'however' or 'furthermore' to connect ideas better.

So basically, Sociocultural Theory establishes the theoretical foundation for this study by framing written feedback as a mediating practice that allows learners to progress within their ZPD, seeing written feedback as a way for learners to move forward in their ZPD. Teacher and peer feedback act like support beams that help students write better than they could on their own. This view highlights how key it is to work together, help each other out, and have some guidance to really boost writing skills in the EFL classroom.

Written Feedback

Written feedback is one of the most influential tools in second language writing instruction, as it provides learners with direct input on their written performance while guiding them toward improvement. Feedback refers to the information that teachers give to students about their writing to enhance accuracy, coherence, and overall quality. In addition, Ellis (2009) explains that direct feedback occurs when the teacher explicitly corrects, such as rewriting an incorrect verb tense or adding a missing article. This type of feedback is clear and immediately understandable, making it especially helpful for lower-level learners who may struggle to identify their errors.

Written feedback shouldn't be seen as mere error correction but rather as a tool for metalinguistic reflection. By engaging with comments, students notice patterns in their mistakes, understand underlying rules, and take greater responsibility for their learning (Tamayo & Cajas, 2017). This perspective positions feedback as a developmental process that extends beyond the correction of isolated sentences to build long-term writing competence.

In the context of teenage EFL learners, written feedback plays a crucial role; it provides learners with specific guidance for improving their grammar, vocabulary, organization, and style. Similarly, peer feedback can promote a sense of collaboration, making writing a shared learning experience rather than a solitary task. By incorporating different types of feedback, the study aims to explore not only their effectiveness in improving writing accuracy but also their impact on learner engagement, autonomy, and confidence.

Writing Skills in EFL Contexts

The acquisition and development of writing skills in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context has long been recognized as one of the most complex aspects of language learning. Unlike speaking, which often develops naturally through interaction, writing requires learners to engage in deliberate processes of linguistic organization, planning, and revision (Khudaverdiyeva, 2025). Writing involves not only expressing ideas through words but also structuring them coherently, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and applying grammatical accuracy. This complexity makes writing particularly challenging for EFL learners, who often have limited exposure to authentic written input and few opportunities for meaningful practice.

Richards and Renandya (2002) highlight that writing in EFL is demanding because it requires simultaneous control of multiple cognitive and linguistic resources. Students must manage grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and text organization while adapting their writing to specific purposes and contexts. Moreover, they may lack the cultural and rhetorical knowledge needed to construct effective arguments or narratives. For teenage learners, these challenges can be intensified by developmental factors, such as limited engagement with revision processes or the perception of writing as an evaluative rather than developmental activity.

Another important aspect is that EFL writing involves not only linguistic knowledge but also connections with other language skills and cultural contexts. Writing is closely related to reading, as students use texts as models; speaking, since oral interaction often precedes written production; and listening, as learners receive input that influences their written expression (Bežilová, 2024). Therefore, developing writing skills requires instructional approaches that integrate feedback, guided practice, and progressive skill development. Writing instruction should incorporate authentic tasks that demonstrate how writing functions beyond the classroom and serves as a means of effective communication.

For this reason, guided practice and feedback play an essential role in the development of EFL writing. Learners benefit from explicit modeling, opportunities to draft, and continuous cycles of feedback and revision. Thus, writing instruction moves beyond product-oriented approaches, which focus mainly on the final text, toward process-oriented approaches that emphasize reflection, improvement, and learner development. This perspective is particularly relevant for teenagers, whose writing abilities are still developing and who require supportive scaffolding to manage linguistic and organizational demands.

In the context of this study, writing skills represent the central focus of the research objectives. Written feedback provided by teachers or peers functions as a form of guided practice, enabling learners to identify weaknesses, reflect on errors, and progressively improve accuracy, coherence, and organization. By understanding writing as a multidimensional skill involving linguistic, cognitive, and social processes, this study considers feedback not merely as correction but as a structured learning opportunity that helps bridge the gap between learners' current abilities and their desired proficiency levels.

Written Corrective Feedback (WCF)

Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) has become one of the most debated topics in second language acquisition (SLA) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy. It refers to feedback provided by teachers or peers on learners' written texts to highlight linguistic errors and encourage improvement (Ellis, 2009). WCF focuses mainly on syntax, vocabulary, mechanics, and organization, helping students recognize differences between their current

performance and target language conventions. Beyond correction, it serves as a pedagogical tool that promotes reflection and metalinguistic awareness.

Direct and indirect corrective feedback represent two major approaches in WCF research. Direct feedback provides the correct form, such as correcting verb tense or spelling errors, while indirect feedback indicates the presence of an error through strategies such as underlining or error codes, allowing learners to identify and correct it independently. Direct feedback may be more suitable for beginners with limited linguistic knowledge, whereas indirect feedback encourages deeper cognitive engagement and learner autonomy. Both approaches can complement each other depending on learners' proficiency and instructional objectives.

Another important distinction concerns focused and unfocused WCF. Focused WCF addresses specific error categories, such as article use or verb tense, while unfocused WCF targets multiple types of errors simultaneously. Although focused feedback may promote long-term accuracy by allowing learners to concentrate on specific features, unfocused feedback reflects more authentic communication contexts. Therefore, the selection of each approach depends on learners' needs, proficiency levels, and the characteristics of the writing task.

In EFL classrooms, WCF is closely connected to process-oriented writing instruction. When integrated into drafting and revision cycles, feedback becomes part of an ongoing learning process rather than a single correction. This perspective aligns with sociocultural theory, as feedback functions as scaffolding that supports learners within their Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). Students do not simply receive corrections; they actively construct understanding through interaction with teachers and peers, gradually internalizing linguistic knowledge.

For the present study, WCF is considered a fundamental instructional tool that supports teenage EFL learners in improving accuracy, coherence, and organization. By addressing linguistic errors while encouraging reflection, WCF connects language development with writing improvement and provides valuable insights into how learners perceive, interpret, and respond to feedback.

Synthesis of Framework: From Theory to Practice

This study is framed by Sociocultural Theory, where written feedback, whether provided by teachers (direct or indirect) or peers, functions as scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The key concepts reviewed are interconnected and guide the intervention process. Written Feedback represents the broader pedagogical strategy, while Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) is examined as a specific form that provides guidance for error correction. Learner Perceptions of Feedback contribute to understanding how students interpret and apply feedback, while Peer Feedback reflects the collaborative dimension of scaffolding and sociocultural learning.

The conceptual progression moves from general theory to the specific constructs applied in this study, establishing theoretical coherence to support the research design and selected instruments. Ultimately, feedback is understood not as a mere corrective mechanism but as an interactive and developmental process that helps learners progress beyond their independent performance. This perspective provides the foundation for the methodological approach presented in the following chapter.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative single-case study design complemented by descriptive elements, as it seeks to explore in depth how written feedback contributes to the development of writing skills among adolescent students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) within a specific educational context. According to Yin (2018), case study research is appropriate when researchers aim to analyze a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly defined. Similarly, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that qualitative case studies enable a comprehensive understanding of educational experiences through the detailed analysis of participants' perspectives, behaviors, and practices.

Therefore, this design was considered appropriate because the purpose of the study was not to generalize findings, but rather to understand how written feedback is perceived, interpreted, and applied by students within a specific tutoring environment. This approach allowed the researcher to examine feedback as a learning process, considering both the development of writing skills and students' experiences throughout the revision process.

Research Context and Participants

The study was conducted in a private tutoring center that provides academic support and personalized instruction to school-aged students learning English as a foreign language. Unlike traditional educational institutions, the center offers individual and small-group tutoring sessions adapted to students' academic needs, focusing on reinforcement activities, homework support, and skill development. This context provided a suitable environment for examining written feedback practices due to the personalized interaction between teachers and learners.

The participants were selected through convenience sampling, considering their accessibility and active participation in the English tutoring program. The sample consisted of 15 adolescent students between 13 and 16 years old who regularly attended English tutoring sessions during the academic period of the study. Their English proficiency levels ranged approximately from A2 to B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), indicating that they possessed basic grammatical knowledge and vocabulary but continued to experience difficulties producing coherent and accurate written texts.

The inclusion criteria were: (a) being an adolescent student enrolled in the tutoring program, (b) regularly participating in English writing activities, and (c) voluntarily agreeing to participate in the study. Before data collection, informed consent was obtained from parents or legal guardians, and student assent was collected, ensuring compliance with ethical principles. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was guaranteed throughout the research process.

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data collection involved multiple qualitative techniques to obtain a comprehensive understanding of students' experiences with written feedback. Initially, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the owner of the tutoring center to gather contextual

information about the institution, its educational approach, students' characteristics, academic needs, and existing feedback practices. Additionally, this interview provided authorization to access the research setting and invite potential participants.

The main data collection process included semi-structured interviews with the participating students, analysis of their written productions and the feedback provided on these texts, and observations of writing activities and interactions related to feedback. Students completed different writing tasks, including personal paragraphs, descriptive texts, and responses to guided prompts. These written samples served as primary evidence for examining how feedback influenced students' revision processes and writing development. The activities were conducted during tutoring sessions under similar conditions to ensure consistency, and students were encouraged to complete their texts independently before receiving feedback.

Furthermore, a questionnaire was administered to explore students' perceptions of written feedback. It included closed-ended questions to identify general attitudes and preferences, as well as open-ended questions that allowed participants to express their experiences and opinions in greater depth. The combination of interviews, writing samples, observations, and questionnaires enabled data triangulation, providing a broader perspective on both the development of writing skills and learners' interpretations of feedback.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed through qualitative thematic analysis. This process involved identifying recurring patterns, categories, and themes related to students' perceptions of feedback, revision practices, and writing improvement. The analysis focused on understanding how students interpreted feedback, how they incorporated it into their writing processes, and how feedback contributed to their development as EFL writers.

This analytical approach allowed written feedback to be examined beyond its traditional role as a mechanism for correcting linguistic errors, recognizing it instead as a pedagogical process that involves reflection, interaction, and continuous improvement.

Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, several strategies were implemented. Content validity was addressed by designing all data collection instruments in accordance with the research objectives. Interview questions, questionnaire items, and writing tasks were developed to directly address the main constructs of the study: written feedback, writing development, and learner perceptions. Additionally, the instruments were reviewed by a peer colleague to improve their clarity and relevance.

Reliability was strengthened by maintaining consistency throughout the data collection process. Writing activities were conducted under comparable conditions during tutoring sessions, and feedback was provided following structured criteria, including direct, indirect, and metalinguistic feedback approaches when applicable. The same questionnaire was applied to all participants to ensure consistency in the information collected.

Another important strategy was methodological triangulation. The study combined different sources of evidence, including interviews, questionnaires, written productions, and observations, allowing the researcher to compare information from multiple perspectives and reduce potential bias. Finally, ethical procedures were followed throughout the study by obtaining informed consent, protecting participants' identities, and ensuring the

confidentiality of the collected information. These procedures contributed to the credibility and dependability of the findings within the scope of this qualitative case study.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide insights into the role of written feedback in the development of writing skills among adolescent EFL learners within a specific tutoring context. The results suggest that written feedback represents not only a mechanism for identifying linguistic errors but also a learning process that encourages students to reflect on their written productions, recognize areas for improvement, and progressively develop their writing abilities. This perspective is consistent with Bitchener and Ferris (2013), who emphasize that written corrective feedback can contribute to second language writing development when learners actively engage with the feedback provided. Similarly, Ellis (2009) highlights that different types of written corrective feedback may influence learners' attention to linguistic aspects and support the improvement of written accuracy.

The participants' experiences indicate that feedback should be understood as an interactive process rather than a simple correction procedure. The analysis revealed that students' perceptions and responses to feedback played an important role in how they revised and improved their texts. This finding is consistent with the sociocultural perspective proposed by Vygotsky (1978), which considers learning as a process mediated through interaction and support. In this sense, written feedback can function as a form of scaffolding that guides learners toward greater independence in the writing process, as suggested by Donato (1994) in relation to collective scaffolding in second language learning.

The study also highlights the importance of revision practices in EFL writing development. Through the analysis of students' written productions and their interaction with feedback, it was possible to observe how revision contributed to a deeper understanding of writing as a process involving planning, reflection, and improvement. This aligns with Richards and Renandya (2002), who argue that writing instruction in language learning should move beyond the final product and emphasize the processes involved in composing texts. Additionally, Khudaverdiyeva (2025) points out that writing development involves cognitive, communicative, and pedagogical dimensions that require continuous practice and feedback.

Regarding the role of the learning context, the findings demonstrate that the tutoring environment provided a specific space where students could receive guidance and engage with feedback practices. Since this study was conducted in a particular educational setting, the results should not be generalized to all EFL learners; however, they provide valuable information about how students experience and apply written feedback in similar contexts. This interpretation is consistent with Yin (2018) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016), who emphasize that qualitative case studies aim to achieve an in-depth understanding of phenomena within their real contexts rather than statistical generalization.

The findings also reinforce the relevance of considering students' perspectives when analyzing feedback practices. Understanding how learners interpret, accept, and use written feedback is essential because the effectiveness of feedback depends not only on the teacher's comments but also on students' active participation in the revision process. Therefore, feedback practices should promote reflection, autonomy, and meaningful engagement with writing tasks.

This study contributes to the understanding of written feedback as a pedagogical resource for EFL writing development. The evidence obtained suggests that feedback can support learners in becoming more aware of their writing processes and developing strategies

for improvement. Future research could explore larger groups of learners, different educational contexts, or comparative approaches involving other feedback modalities, such as peer feedback or technology-assisted feedback, to expand understanding of how feedback influences second language writing development.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to explore how written feedback contributes to the development of English writing skills among adolescent EFL learners within a specific tutoring context. The findings show that written feedback is not limited to correcting linguistic errors; rather, it functions as a learning process that encourages students to reflect on their written productions, recognize areas for improvement, and gradually develop their writing abilities.

A key conclusion of this study is that the effectiveness of written feedback depends on its quality and the way students interpret and use it. Feedback that is clear, specific, and constructive supports learners in understanding their difficulties and making meaningful revisions. Therefore, feedback should be viewed as a form of guidance that promotes active participation, reflection, and greater responsibility in the writing process.

The study also concludes that written feedback involves both cognitive and emotional dimensions. Students' confidence, motivation, and willingness to revise their texts are influenced by the way feedback is communicated. Consequently, teachers should adopt supportive feedback practices that combine correction with encouragement, creating an environment that facilitates learning and continuous improvement.

Finally, the findings highlight the importance of the educational context in shaping feedback practices. The personalized nature of the tutoring environment allowed closer interaction between teachers and students, providing opportunities for individualized guidance according to learners' needs. Although the study was conducted in a specific context with a limited number of participants, it provides valuable insights into the role of written feedback in EFL writing development and suggests the need for further research in different educational settings.

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