

Immediate Feedback in Writing Instruction: A Literature-Based Analysis of Its Role in Enhancing Students' Writing

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التغذية الراجعة الفورية في تعليم الكتابة: تحليل للأدبيات حول دورها في تعزيز مهارات الكتابة لدى الطلاب

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الملخص

في هذه المقالة نبحث، من منظور بيئات التعلّم في تعليم اللغة الثانية/اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (L2/EFL)، في مدى أهمية التغذية الراجعة الفورية في تعزيز الكتابة الجيدة. وتُعدّ الكتابة مهارة معرفية عالية المتطلبات، إذ تتضمن دمج المعرفة اللغوية بالموارد المعرفية والتنظيم ما وراء المعرفي. وانطلاقًا من نظرية العبء المعرفي، ونظرية الكفاءة الذاتية، ونماذج تطور الكتابة، تدعم الدراسة فكرة أن التغذية الراجعة المقدَّمة أثناء عملية الكتابة أو بعد انتهائها مباشرة تُعدّ عاملًا حاسمًا في تحسين الجودة والدقة والطلاقة، وفي دعم التقدم نحو التطور طويل المدى في الكتابة.

وتتكامل في هذه الدراسة المقاربات النظرية مع الدراسات التجريبية التي تناولت الكيفية التي تسهم بها التغذية الراجعة الآنية في إدارة الذاكرة العاملة، والحد من الحمل المعرفي الزائد، ودعم تصحيح الأخطاء على المستويين المحلي والعالمي لإنتاج النص. كما تُبرز الدراسة أهمية التغذية الراجعة السريعة للمتعلمين، إذ تتيح لهم تنمية الوعي ما وراء المعرفي وتنظيم الذات، بما يمكّن الكتّاب من التأمل في اختياراتهم، والمراجعة بصورة استراتيجية، وممارسة المهارات عند الكتابة مستقبلًا.

وتناقش الورقة ثلاثة أنماط رئيسة من التغذية الراجعة الفورية: التغذية الراجعة المقدَّمة من المدرّس، والتغذية الراجعة الآلية المعتمدة على الحاسوب، وتغذية الأقران الراجعة، مع عرض مزايا كل نمط وحدوده وآثاره التربوية. وتقدّم الدراسة أدلة تجريبية تشير إلى أن التغذية الراجعة الفورية تؤدي إلى تحسين جودة المراجعة، وزيادة دقة الكتابة، وتعزيز الطلاقة، وتحقيق مزيد من التحسن في مهام الكتابة اللاحقة. ومع ذلك، تتناول الورقة أيضًا بعض التحديات، مثل الإفراط في التغذية الراجعة، واعتماد المتعلمين المفرط عليها، واختلاف السياقات الخاصة بكل تخصّص.

وتختتم المقالة بالتأكيد على أهمية التغذية الراجعة المتوازنة، والآنية، والموجَّهة نحو الأهداف، بوصفها عاملًا يعزز استقلالية المتعلم ويدعم في الوقت نفسه التقدم في الكتابة. وبصورة عامة، تدعم نتائج الدراسة الأهمية التربوية للتغذية الراجعة الفورية باعتبارها عنصرًا أساسيًا في تعليم الكتابة الفعّال.

الكلمات المفتاحية

التغذية الراجعة الفورية؛ تعليم الكتابة؛ الكتابة في سياق EFL/ESL ؛ التنظيم ما وراء المعرفي؛ دقة الكتابة؛ تطوّر الكتابة

Abstract

In this article, from the perspective of learning environments in L2/EFL, the relevance of immediate feedback in promoting good writing is investigated. Writing is considered a cognitively demanding skill that involves the integration of linguistic competence, cognitive resources, and metacognitive regulation. Depending on cognitive load theory,

self-efficacy theory, and models of writing development, we support the notion that feedback provided during or shortly after the writing experience is important for increasing quality, accuracy, fluency, and progress to long-term development. The study integrates theoretical approaches and empirical studies on the ways in which proper real-time feedback assists in working memory management, reduces cognitive overload, and supports error correction at local and global levels of text production. It also illustrates the importance of quick feedback for learners, allowing them to develop metacognitive awareness and self-regulation, such that writers can introspect their choices, revise strategically, and practice skills when they write in the future. The paper discusses three main types of immediate feedback: instructor-provided feedback, automated computer-based feedback, and peer feedback, as well as discussing their affordances, limitations, and pedagogical implications. The study presents empirical evidence that immediate feedback results in better revision quality, more accurate writing, greater fluency, and further improvement in writing tasks in the future. Yet the paper also considers some challenges including feedback overload, learner overreliance, and discipline-specific context. The article ends by underscoring the importance of balanced, timely, goal-directed feedback that promotes learner autonomy and also promotes writing progress. Collectively, the findings of the study support the pedagogical significance of immediate feedback as an important aspect of effective writing instruction.

Keywords

Immediate feedback; Writing instruction; EFL/ESL writing; Metacognitive regulation; Writing accuracy; Writing development

1. Introduction

Writing is recognized as one of the most cognitively demanding skills in second-language learning. It requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, working memory resources, and metacognitive regulation to generate coherent and meaningful texts. For learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL), the development of writing proficiency is challenging because it simultaneously involves managing vocabulary, grammar, organization, and rhetorical conventions.

Therefore, feedback plays a crucial role in supporting learners' writing development., Learners receive information about the strengths and weaknesses of their writing through feedback, and this allows them to revise their texts and gradually improve their linguistic abilities. Among different forms of feedback adopted in writing instruction, immediate feedback provided during or shortly after the writing process has attracted increasing attention in recent research. Immediate feedback enables learners to address problems while the writing task is still freshly cognitively active, thereby facilitating error correction, metacognitive awareness, and strategic revision.

Previous research has suggested that timely feedback can reduce cognitive overload during writing, enhance learners' self-efficacy, and promote more effective engagement with the writing process. Furthermore, empirical studies in both first-language and second-language contexts have shown that immediate feedback can lead to improvement in writing accuracy, revision quality, and overall writing fluency.

Despite the growing body of research on feedback in writing instruction, the mechanisms through which immediate feedback influences writing development remain

an important area of investigation. Understanding these mechanisms is essential for teachers seeking to design effective writing instruction and feedback practices in EFL and ESL classrooms.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the role of immediate feedback in enhancing students' writing development. Specifically, the paper synthesizes theoretical perspectives and empirical findings from previous studies in order to explain how immediate feedback supports writing accuracy, revision processes, and long-term writing development. By analyzing existing research, the study seeks to highlight the pedagogical value of timely feedback and provide insights into its effective implementation in writing instruction.

2. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative literature-based research design. Rather than conducting an experimental intervention, the study relies on secondary data analysis of previously published research works that examine the role of feedback in writing instruction. Secondary data analysis allows researchers to synthesize findings from existing empirical studies in order to identify broader patterns and theoretical implications.

Relevant academic studies were identified through searches of scholarly databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, and other academic sources focusing on language education and writing research. The selected literature primarily includes peer-reviewed journal articles and academic publications addressing feedback in ESL and EFL writing contexts.

The studies included in this analysis were selected based on three main criteria: (1) relevance to feedback in writing instruction, (2) focus on immediate or timely feedback during the writing process, and (3) empirical or theoretical contributions to understanding writing development.

The selected studies were analyzed thematically to identify key mechanisms through which immediate feedback supports writing development. Particular attention was given to findings related to cognitive load, metacognitive regulation, writing accuracy, revision quality, and long-term learning outcomes.

By synthesizing findings from these studies, the present paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how immediate feedback contributes to effective writing instruction and learner development in second-language learning environments.

3. Theoretical Foundations

Writing, one of the most basic skills required for academic success, requires not only good transcriptional and syntactic proficiency but also conceptualization of ideas and arguments and organizing them into coherent, cohesive texts. In fact, when a new language is acquired or taught during the second language (L2) learning process, an important influence on oral skills growth occurs. Thus, writing ability comes from multiple drafts, large amounts of written content, and corrective feedback on prior drafts and submitted content. Thus, understanding which aspects of feedback better promote development is fundamental to the success of L2 writing programs.

The two main types of feedback that readers provide on drafts of academic papers are global feedback, which pertains to overall organization or text coherence, and local feedback, which concerns specific problems of error or infelicity in individual sentences

and phrases, such as lexical selection, grammatical structure, or punctuation. By following an extended response analysis design, this paper examines the positive impacts of feedback on academic writing over several drafts, four feedback features, and long-term influence on new assignments that can be found in transfer language education, writing studies, and general education. The earlier L2 writing development begins, the more gradual the growth of written performance tends to be. Developmental-phase writing feedback positively influences the resolution of grammatical and lexical errors in writing (Lavolette et al., 2015).

4. Mechanisms by Which Immediate Feedback Influences Writing Development

Writing is a multifaceted process that requires cognitive and metacognitive strategies to generate and critique multiple drafts. To help learners develop these strategies, immediate feedback is particularly effective (Lavolette et al., 2015). Immediate feedback is defined as feedback provided at the end of a writing task; delayed feedback occurs one to three weeks later. Writing is a complex skill that involves various types of knowledge and strategies, and learners progress through different levels of development. A shift away from writing instruction that focuses on the correctness of individual words and sentences allows students to develop greater fluency in writing papers.

4.1. Cognitive Load and Working Memory

The connection between writing and cognitive load is well known. Writing is multileveled, and encompasses a range of complex practices such as expression of ideas, choice of vocabulary, sentence structure, text organization, spelling, punctuation, and style (Hayes, 1996). Writing is a multidimensional process that requires planning, translating and reviewing (Hayes & Flower, 1980) and often involves simultaneous or rapid switching between these processes (McCutchen, 1996). Writing can quickly overwhelm both working memory and attentional resources, leading to decreased writing fluency (McCutchen, 1996). If the cognitive load exceeds the resources at one's disposal, there exists a higher chance of task failure, ineffective writing and poor text quality (Sweller, 1988). So, too much cognitive load can block writing activity and learning. Instant feedback reduces cognitive workload by addressing errors promptly and minimizing the need for extraneous revisions (Collins McLaughlin, 2007). In addition to this, feedback regarding various features allows students to allocate sufficient time to essential processes during subsequent compositions, thus avoiding premature termination of writing activity. As with self-evaluation and applying a strategy based on learning and information, receiving immediate feedback also supports it, while supporting the management of attentional resources.

4.2. Metacognitive Regulation and Self-Efficacy

Cognitive theories on writing development highlight how feedback that is given instantaneously positively affects writing quality, along with overall self-efficacy and metacognitive regulation (Tsao, 2021). Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as the belief in one’s ability to organize and perform the actions required to achieve a desired outcome, stating “perceived self-efficacy influences the level of performance, the effort expended,” and perseverance with which individuals pursue goals. Tsao (2021) found strong relationships between writing self-efficacy, attention to instructor feedback, and self-regulation in students, indicating that enhancing writing self-efficacy had the most potential for facilitating increased engagement.

Similarly, in the course of an educational task the application of metacognitive knowledge, regulation, and experience appears to impact many learning behaviours and outcomes strongly, including test performance (Mohammad Al-Jarrah et al., 2019). For example, Chen et al. (2021) suggest that the immediate delivery of low-stakes multiple-choice questions facilitates use of metacognitive knowledge and monitoring, which improves general engagement and performance. Timely formative feedback may similarly provoke metacognitive involvement, potentially enhancing writing adherence and performance during both high-stakes and lower-stakes tasks (Rosamond, 2017).

4.3. Learning FProcesses and Error Correction

When learners write, they undergo cognitive operations to incorporate gradually knowledge of form, surface-level features, cohesive devices, and rhetorical structure into L2 writing scripts that parallel the flow of the sentence and the structure of the target genre. The feedback element promotes an incremental improvement to the generated text and may start the reconstruction of scripts (Lavolette et al., 2015). Feedback gives students information about these processes and responses to a question: "Is what I wrote the ultimate object I wanted to produce?" These assumptions initiate an error-correcting process that helps learners revise at the larger organizational level, rather than focusing on small sentences and word-level components that they might alter from one draft to another. During that process, text and genre knowledge verification or knowledge of the reader may impact their consideration. Yet, this feedback mechanism has been hampered by the high cognitive attentional load in L2 learning situations with a number of elements that require focus: that is, using feedback and an L2 input text if the L2 acquisition is not already satisfactory, still burdens the processing load of L2 scripts. In addition, it becomes apparent that large volumes of feedback created through automated computer-based approaches may subsequently overload the learner with consideration that exceeds simultaneous management capacity.

5. Modes of Immediate Feedback

Immediate feedback is a teaching strategy characterized by a quick and direct response to learners' work on their primary task. Immediate feedback enables students to take a moment to consider their writing and respond to important questions without unnecessary interruptions, motivates them, and encourages internalization of linguistic and rhetorical points. Three types of immediate feedback that can apply to writing development include instructor-provided feedback (commenting) which the teacher provides during the writing task completion, feedback given through computer-based automated systems, and peer feedback. Instructional feedback that differs from teacher correction is not only conducive to cognitive engagement in a task and fluency in written production but also facilitates self-directed behaviors through additional corrections. Drafts that are returned after a delay typically do not affect the subsequent piece of writing, while drafts returned with immediate feedback that is acted on still benefit the writer in a later piece. In other fields, prompt feedback appears less important, but significant effects of commenting on mechanical aspects are recognized: teacher's commentary on certain topics has increased subsequent writing accuracy in control and experimental groups (Lavolette et al., 2015).

5.1. Instructor-Provided Feedback

Feedback generated by teachers can improve the teacher-student dynamic specifically, at the level of prose skills and also on tone (S Campbell & Feldmann, 2017). In order to

encourage an evolution in student writing, feedback should consist of advice regarding alternate organising structures for ideas and requests for elaboration of less developed points. For supporting students in producing revisions, ideas for how to include more passages to discuss, or areas in text that they should turn to for further knowledge, may help. Generalised commentary identifying types of errors has the potential to support concept understanding far more than feedback to correct specific forms of language. Instructional materials must stress the point that feedback is subjective, influenced by an individual's knowledge and aims, thus rendering analyses of alternative input forms and deeper understanding of corrections necessary (Wisz, 2018).

5.2. Automated Feedback Systems

Automated feedback involves the use of technology and such tools as automated grammar, spelling as well as style checkers as methods to offer immediate feedback on fundamental language features (Wang & Han, 2022). Students are provided with immediate feedback as they draft, allowing them to refine their papers and make adjustments before submitting the final drafts. Due to the rapid development of the Internet, e-learning in the twenty-first century, and the proliferation of computer-based writing programs, these tools have undergone a swift transformation across several platforms as popularity and use have developed rapidly. As a rising, well-known writing tool, these tools come with a number of features: instant feedback, modes of writing practice, and prewriting support. In education, they analyze different textual works, including essays, reports, summaries, and letters, in real time and give on-the-fly feedback on language features. Online platforms enabling topic-based writing practice can produce instant feedback at the time students finish a task about their proficiency level. Automated corrective feedback is well-suited to assist ESL and EFL learners in identifying, diagnosing, and finally rectifying language errors in the writing process.

5.3. Peer Feedback

Peer feedback may inspire more cognitive and metacognitive processing than that by instructors, in light of the timeliness of the response attributed to the writer's work. Peer feedback thus constitutes a form of modality that is of specific significance when feedback from the instructor may still extend beyond a reasonable delay time, or when the instructor comments are still being processed. The provision of peer assessment may also benefit from adopting a writing template similar to the instructor's that is organised to lead students in giving the same types of feedback that an instructor would.

Peer feedback involves one or more students offering criticisms of a paper draft, regarded as one way to produce better quality writing. This is because peer feedback usually combines giving comments to classmates on the work of the writer and considering comments made by classmates on the writer's own draft, and both types have been considered conducive to students' development in writing. Peer assessment and review of feedback, however, also demand a high cognitive load among students who are not already trained to perform peer evaluations. Writing-specific templates can aid students at this point by guiding their comments. If additional cognitive load becomes excessive, an alternative—in the form of mid-provision and final-provision—may focus on an earlier-due draft returned with instructor comments.

A writing template has been found to support peer feedback provision among students from primary to tertiary education. Characters can form a separate input on a page appended to the draft—genuine handwritten writing is not only still valued but is also recognized for its potential to increase cognitive processing (Kazemi et al., 2018). When

both peer input offered on a page and instructor feedback returned with the earlier draft are provided concurrently, a double provision can be advantageous to writing development.

6. Empirical Evidence on Effectiveness

Immediate feedback refers to feedback provided during the writing process or shortly after a writing task has been completed, rather than after a significant delay (Kothari & Civelek, 2017). In classroom contexts, such feedback may take several forms, including verbal comments, written annotations, or simple evaluative markers that guide learners toward improving their drafts (González-Bueno & Pérez, 2020).

A growing body of empirical research has demonstrated the effectiveness of immediate feedback in supporting writing development. One explanation for its effectiveness relates to the cognitive demands involved in writing. Writing requires learners to simultaneously manage multiple processes, including idea generation, sentence construction, vocabulary selection, and text organization. These processes place considerable demands on working memory (González-Bueno & Pérez, 2020). When learners struggle with linguistic accuracy, the cognitive load becomes even greater, this may interfere with writing fluently.

Immediate feedback helps lessen this cognitive burden by allowing learners to correct errors while the writing task is still cognitively active. By addressing problems at the moment they occur, learners can avoid repeating the same mistakes in subsequent drafts and can allocate more cognitive resources to developing ideas and organizing their texts (Lavolette et al., 2015).

Research conducted in both first-language and second-language writing contexts provide empirical support for these claims. For example, Lavolette et al. (2015) found that feedback provided during the drafting process resulted in greater accuracy in subsequent essays compared with feedback delivered only after the completion of the draft. Similarly, Kothari and Civelek (2017) reported that feedback on texts in progress improved the quality of revisions and positively influenced students' performance in later writing assignments.

In addition to improving accuracy, immediate feedback has also been associated with improvements in writing fluency and overall writing quality. Studies indicate that learners who receive timely feedback demonstrate greater improvement between successive writing tasks and produce higher-quality texts across extended writing activities (Lavolette et al., 2015).

Longitudinal research also suggests that the benefits of immediate feedback may extend beyond individual writing tasks. González-Bueno and Pérez (2020) found that feedback provided on early sections of an extended writing assignment had lasting effects on students' writing performance months later, indicating that timely feedback can contribute to long-term writing development.

Overall, these findings suggest that immediate feedback plays a significant role in enhancing writing accuracy, improving revision processes, and supporting sustained writing development.

6.1. Writing Accuracy and Fluency

Frequent writing efforts continue to be fundamental to the development of writing skills, but students need to invest substantial amounts of time and energy in generating written products. Providing too much time elicits a reduction in cognitive engagement

and the use of content as opposed to other higher order skills such as planning, structuring, and evaluating (L Moore, 2019). For this reason, writing fluency is a primary instructional goal that encourages good planning, revising, and editing and generation of complex sentences. Timely feedback during regular writing conferences promotes higher order skills development and fluency while providing learners with the chance to practice. Research demonstrates feedback around fluency, structure, and planning help to maintain writing velocity (Lavolette et al., 2015). Even advanced and experienced learners need to plan for their progress and put in the time and effort to plan very much. Feedback that activates planner engagement increases both cognitive efficiency and writing structure. Since feedback is delivered late in writing processes, learners easily become detached from the content. Building a large scale of content knowledge lays the groundwork for organizing complex sentence networks, requiring repeated writing practice and ample feedback across domains.

6.2. Revision Quality and Transfer to Prospective Writing

Feedback is useful information to use when revising. Studies conducted in classrooms also suggest that how much revision someone makes, informed by instructor feedback on multiple drafts, can be relatively effective in improving the quality of overall writing. Assessment of the rhetorical and grammatical reforms in elementary writers who were exposed to extensive instructor commentary has shown that they improved their subsequent drafts of various texts (Begham Othman & Mohamad, 2007). Even though there were language errors in every text, students showed increased sensitivity to how ideas were logically organized in text structures. While reviewing drafts, graduate law students were able to recognize common strengths and weaknesses as well as independently select which parts of future assignments to emphasize (Gelbwasser Freed & Atlas, 2019). The content analysis of peer feedback across several drafts noted correspondence with scores given by instructors, with revision prompts encouraging students to work on areas noted in the commentary (Court, 2012).

6.3. Longitudinal Outcomes

In advanced languages, significant development of writing over a variety of topics is often performed. Recent research (Kern, 2018) has also shown that immediate feedback during writing significantly enhances the long-term acquisition of writing accuracy in a second language. Norton et al. (in press) studied the influence of immediate feedback on the attainment of phonological and vocabulary accuracy in speaking. All language learners (grouped into conditions) recorded conversations on video. Some got feedback straight away in conversation, others after it. Improvements upon the target phonological and vocabulary features did not persist over time except in the immediate-feedback group. In another study, Kern studied the effect of specific verbal formative feedback on writing in a second language with focus on longer-term writing development and transfer. Students received an assignment, generated a first draft, and brought it to a feedback conference, in which teachers guided on one feature. Subsequent drafts showed long-term improvements in the targeted feature even with no feedback.

7. Practical Considerations for Implementation

Writing development requires timely feedback by which students are the most involved in the writing process soon after submission and thus, timely feedback allows students to be stimulated to think about their writing from a new angle and to fight the

destructive effects of procrastination. Campbell and Feldmann (2017) recommend a feedback latency of no longer than one week and, where possible, a feedback latency of no more than 24 hours. For longer intervals, feedback attentiveness drops steeply; after one week, students perceive work to be outdated (e.g., review frequency falls below 18% after 2–3 days, falls to around 5% one week later, goes down to 0% after 16–18 weeks). As a text, meaningful response is nuanced, involving written content, writer identity, emerging progress, emerging relationships, emerging efforts and evolving understanding (M. Ph.D. Lehman et al., 2019). Responses vary according to the writers' skills, identity, and motivation, the type of task (cognitive, genre, task, writing process), expected audience and estimated readership (S Campbell & Feldmann, 2017), and their knowledge about the theme. This suggests that almost all written artefacts should have some predefined authorial target audience regarding the educational setting.

7.1. Timeliness and Feedback Latency

When it comes to writing development, timely feedback is important and students engage most directly with their writing after submitting their work; thus, timely feedback inspires students to re-image their writing with a new view and reduces the impact of procrastination. Campbell and Feldmann (2017) recommend a feedback latency of no longer than one week and, where possible, a feedback latency of no more than 24 hours. Feedback attentiveness decreases rapidly with longer intervals; students view work as obsolete after one week; review rates go below 18% after 2–3 days, drop to roughly 5% within a week, and drop to 0% in 16–18 weeks. Meaningful response is an act that does many things, which include textual content, writer identity, evolving progress, relationships, evolving efforts, and changing understanding (M. Ph.D. Lehman et al., 2019). Responses vary according to writer ability, identity, and motivation; type of task defined knowledge—cognitive, genre, task, writing process; intended audience and estimated readership—their expectations and knowledge about the theme (S Campbell & Feldmann, 2017). Such considerations suggest the potential use of a pre-determined authorial audience among all written artefacts in an education context.

7.2. Specificity, Tone, and Actionability

Feedback in writing instruction is frequently described, among other things, in terms of its specificity—that is, the amount of detail that it reflects. Specificity refers to the level of precision in the comments given and is inclusive of the breadth of their coverage (S Campbell & Feldmann, 2017). And without a clear assignment guiding students on what to revise, they often remove text at random, and feedback that fails to signal the source of a problem in writing brings no benefits. Vague statements like "this is confusing," "good point," or "clarify" do not actually generate significant revision. Still, too much targeted input that tells students precisely what to change is just as unhelpful, in that it leaves students' expertise unexpanded. Empirical findings suggest that high-knowledge, domain-specific comments narrow the zone in which students feel comfortable making personal, contextual decisions. An analysis of expert comment patterns reveals that the highest-achieving creative writers provide students with numerous, novel, yet viable alternatives that preserve the voice of the author.

In this way the tone of feedback is also worth noting. Feedback is not the only thing that is evaluated on a matter of whether or not it will lead towards moving a revision forward, but also on the attitude it conveys, or implies about the writer. As a result, received inputs perceived as negative no longer serve merely as a means to end but work against socio-cognitive, motivational, and emotional goals. Feedback is more effective when it does

not criticize preferred elements, is delivered by someone the students wish to please, or helps encourage a positive mood. Teachers who are willing to invite the students' feedback together and share what they have learned with them give students a more complete picture of their revision while allowing them to retain ownership over the revision and their authorship

Immediate feedback is also appreciated by its ease of action, that is, the amount of time it allows students to follow pathways. The immediate feedback encourages this kind of movement; once delay has occurred it is likely to arise uncertainty whether the comments reach to the original text or be applied to a later draft.

7.3. Alignment with Instructional Goals

In an intervention study comparing instruction with and without explicit criteria for effective writing, significant short- and longer-term improvements were observed in students who received criteria. Without criteria, students gained proficiency only in fluency, and were statistically indistinguishable from a no-instruction control group at follow-up (Gelbwasser Freed & Atlas, 2019). The positioning of writing as advanced comprehension rather than ‘mere’ communication is compatible with these predictions about metacognitive regulation, self-efficacy, and the nature of the act of writing, but the inclusion of criteria—another focus through which attention is directed—presents further opportunities for explorative discussion for cognitive load, developmental appropriateness, modes of learning, and error correction (Lavolette et al., 2015).

7.4. Equity and Accessibility

Struggling writers often do not produce any work at all because they do not know how to continue. Rapidly drafting new material gives this group of writers vast scope to gain confidence and establish gains. It would take students a minimum of 20 minutes to accumulate enough errors before providing timely feedback would be beneficial. Writing tasks should thus require considerably longer final essays than traditional ones. Feedback on surface-level issues also addresses anxious writers’ ego concerns more strongly than content. The writers can eliminate a considerable portion of a peer’s errors, especially sentence completion and other higher-order issues. High-quality vocal presentations, particularly of such words that are easily confused, may also serve as a means to redirect the attention of student focalisation. Presentations that preview without commenting on content also protect against unnecessary anxiety and are able to be revised for the next draft (Lavolette et al., 2015), (Kern, 2018), (S Campbell & Feldmann, 2017).

8. Challenges and Limitations

If feedback is frequently available, the danger is that the writer may incorrectly assess their own writing and over-rely on feedback, leading to a conflict between intuitive and external sources of writing normativity or pressure between the meaning of the message and form. Considerable cognitive load is required to process and interact with feedback. Under some conditions a writer’s interpretation of and response to feedback may cease altogether, especially once an assignment has been marked as “complete.” Feedback fatigue may be evoked when processing more than five revisions or on longer feedback forms (Kern, 2018). These circumstances are especially concerning given that writing across disciplines—e.g., the social sciences, humanities, and formal sciences—seldom

adheres to a single normativity but instead exhibits considerable variability (Lavolette et al., 2015).

8.1. Potential for Overreliance on Feedback

In one-to-one sessions and in formal assessments, feedback is commonly given about the organizational structure, content, and linguistic accuracy of the students' writing. To substantiate such advice, the literature reviewed asserts that giving writing feedback while a student engages in writing improves many elements of writing development, especially for novices ((Victor) Zhang & Hyland, 2018). Nevertheless, an underlying concern about immediate feedback is that it results in excessive dependence on teacher corrections (S Campbell & Feldmann, 2017). Such a situation is highly undesirable, as the language learners need to develop their ability to recognize and address linguistic forms independently, or else their ability to produce written texts will remain severely limited when writing under pressure and without support.

The task then is to make feedback real-time—so that development is accelerated across the target phases of the writing process—while at the same time enabling independent writing and avoiding a deleterious reliance on teacher input. The instructor's assessment will provide a level of detail on the specific content and organization for learners' use, which would benefit them to concentrate more closely on linguistic accuracy and the surface features of the text. L2 proficiency limitations generally render these factors paramount. Tools that provide quick feedback by short message on surface feature errors help students concentrate on the meaning of what they are writing for prolonged periods. Additionally, feedback from automatic programs to check spelling and grammar also provides students with an opportunity to correct themselves and expand formal knowledge while paying close attention to content.

8.2. Cognitive Overload and Feedback Fatigue

Writing development and improvement are associated with immediate feedback. Immediate feedback is known to have a number of positive effects on writing development via several theoretical mechanisms including cognitive load and working memory, metacognitive regulation and self-efficacy, learning processes and error correction, and motivational aspects. Nevertheless, some researchers caution that immediate feedback can encourage overreliance or exacerbate cognitive overload, particularly with automated systems. More research is warranted to investigate the extent to which these challenges materially hinder writing development (Lavolette et al., 2015).

How much and often and in what form feedback is, it occupies a prominent position in educational discourse. In response, McCarthy, Petros, and Mowrer specifically focused their investigation in postsecondary contexts, employing text-based feedback on lyrics as a case study. Feedback generally supports learning and writing, yet educators remain concerned about student engagement, reliance, and satisfaction (S Campbell & Feldmann, 2017).

8.3. Contextual Variability Across Disciplines

Different disciplines focus on different aspects of writing and vary in what they require in terms of content, style, and presentation. The same writer's drafts, for example, might be vastly different if the ideas he or she is transferring are across the domains of literature and history or between Spanish and English. As a result, how feedback regarding the underlying writing processes may vary within and across disciplines,

which is indicated by students' preference for feedback directly related to content (Diana Lj., 2017). In the context of an interdisciplinary initiative for preservice teachers partnered with middle school students, students preferred feedback that acted as validation, denial, or encouragement concerning the content of the text. This multidimensionality emphasizes how peer feedback with an interdisciplinary component offers opportunities (M. Ph.D. Lehman et al., 2019). Contextual and topical variability within writing brings with it increased freedom and greater self-consciousness with feedback (Wisz, 2018).

9. Implications for Teaching Practice

Effective writing is an important aspect of literate participation in society so it is an area of interest in educational studies. Immediate feedback, or the feedback provided at the moment of an action, be it in terms of performance, effort, or progress, is a well-accepted teaching strategy across all academic areas. However, the research has not examined how those varied forms of immediate feedback affect writing development.

Feedback is immediate when it arrives at the time of writing or revision, when participants are still processing the text or still thinking about an intended revision. The feedback also stays immediate when the learner returns to re-visit their writing to engage with feedback given. In contrast, the first action has already taken place, and at this phase, the interaction occurs in a different, secondary place of learning compared with the initial writing activity (Lavolette et al., 2015).

10. Conclusion

Writing development in second-language contexts is a complex process that requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, cognitive resources, and metacognitive regulation. The present study examined the role of immediate feedback in enhancing students' writing by synthesizing theoretical perspectives and empirical findings from previous research.

The literature reviewed in this paper suggests that immediate feedback plays a significant role in supporting writing development. By providing learners with timely information about their performance during or shortly after the writing process, immediate feedback helps reduce cognitive overload, supports working memory management, and promotes metacognitive awareness. These mechanisms enable learners to identify and correct errors more efficiently, improve the quality of revisions, and gradually develop greater accuracy and fluency in writing.

The analysis of empirical studies also indicates that immediate feedback contributes not only to short-term improvements in writing tasks but also to longer-term development of writing skills. Learners who receive timely feedback tend to demonstrate greater engagement with the writing process and show improvements in subsequent writing assignments.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings highlight the importance of integrating timely and goal-directed feedback into writing instruction. Teachers should aim to provide feedback that is clear, constructive, and delivered while learners are still cognitively engaged with their writing tasks. At the same time, feedback practices should be carefully balanced in order to avoid cognitive overload or excessive learner dependence on external corrections.

Despite the benefits identified in the literature, further research is needed to explore how different forms of immediate feedback—such as teacher feedback, automated feedback systems, and peer feedback—affect writing development across diverse educational contexts. Future empirical studies, particularly classroom-based interventions, may provide deeper insights into the most effective ways to implement immediate feedback in writing instruction.

Overall, the evidence reviewed in this study underscores the pedagogical importance of immediate feedback as a powerful tool for enhancing students' writing development. When implemented effectively, timely feedback can support learners in developing greater independence, confidence, and proficiency in academic writing.

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