

THE ROLE OF FEEDBACK IN DEVELOPPING ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS IN EFL LEARNERS

Rzambetova Malika Marat qızı

Republic of Karakalpakstan, Nukus city

2nd-year student of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Karakalpak State University

Philology and Teaching Languages (English Language)

ARTICLE INFORMATION

ABSTRACT:

ARTICLE HISTORY:

Received:01.05.2026

Revised: 02.05.2026

Accepted:03.05.2026

KEYWORDS:

feedback, academic writing, EFL learners, peer review, teacher feedback, writing development, language learning, error correction

The development of academic writing skills remains one of the most challenging aspects of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Among the various pedagogical tools available, feedback plays a central role in shaping learners' writing competence, accuracy, and confidence. This article explores the multifaceted role of feedback in enhancing academic writing skills among EFL learners, examining its types, effectiveness, and impact on learner autonomy and performance. Drawing on contemporary research and classroom practices, the study highlights how constructive, timely, and targeted feedback contributes to improved grammatical accuracy, coherence, cohesion, and critical thinking. The article also addresses challenges associated with feedback implementation, including learner dependency and misinterpretation, and suggests strategies for optimizing its effectiveness in diverse educational contexts.

Academic writing is a complex cognitive and linguistic activity that requires learners to integrate multiple skills, including grammar, vocabulary, organization, and critical thinking. For EFL learners, this process is further complicated by limited exposure to authentic

language use and differences between their native language and English. In this context, feedback serves as a crucial mechanism through which learners can identify their weaknesses, refine their skills, and gradually achieve proficiency in academic writing.

Feedback in writing instruction can be broadly categorized into several types, including teacher feedback, peer feedback, and automated feedback. Teacher feedback is traditionally considered the most authoritative and reliable form, as it is based on the instructor's expertise and understanding of academic standards. It often includes corrections, comments, and suggestions related to grammar, vocabulary, organization, and content. Peer feedback, on the other hand, involves students reviewing and commenting on each other's work, promoting collaborative learning and critical evaluation skills. Automated feedback, provided through digital tools and software, offers immediate responses to linguistic errors and stylistic issues, supporting independent learning.

The effectiveness of feedback largely depends on its quality and delivery. Research indicates that feedback is most beneficial when it is specific, clear, and focused on both form and content. For instance, direct feedback, where errors are explicitly corrected, is particularly useful for lower-level learners who may struggle to identify and correct their own mistakes. Indirect feedback, which involves indicating errors without providing corrections, encourages learners to engage more deeply with their writing and develop problem-solving skills. A balanced combination of both approaches is often recommended to maximize learning outcomes.

Another important aspect of feedback is timing. Timely feedback allows learners to immediately apply corrections and reinforce learning, while delayed feedback may reduce its effectiveness. Continuous feedback throughout the writing process, rather than only on the final product, aligns with the process-oriented approach to writing instruction. This approach emphasizes drafting, revising, and editing as iterative stages, where feedback guides learners at each step.

Feedback also plays a significant role in improving key components of academic writing, such as coherence and cohesion. Through comments on organization and logical flow, learners become more aware of how to structure their ideas effectively. Feedback on the use of cohesive devices, such as linking words and transitions, helps learners create more unified and readable texts. Additionally, feedback on lexical choice and syntactic structures enhances linguistic accuracy and variety, contributing to more sophisticated writing.

Beyond linguistic improvement, feedback influences learners' motivation and self-confidence. Positive and constructive feedback can encourage learners to take risks and

experiment with new language forms, while overly critical or vague feedback may lead to frustration and reduced engagement. Therefore, it is essential for instructors to maintain a supportive tone and highlight both strengths and areas for improvement. This balanced approach fosters a growth mindset, where learners view writing as a skill that can be developed through effort and practice.

Despite its benefits, the use of feedback in EFL writing instruction is not without challenges. One common issue is learner overdependence on teacher feedback, which may hinder the development of autonomous writing skills. To address this, educators should gradually shift responsibility to learners by incorporating self-assessment and peer review activities. Another challenge is the potential for misinterpretation of feedback, especially when comments are unclear or too technical. Providing explicit explanations and examples can help mitigate this problem.

Cultural factors also influence how feedback is perceived and utilized. In some educational contexts, students may be less accustomed to critical feedback or peer evaluation, which can affect their willingness to engage with feedback processes. Teachers must therefore be sensitive to these factors and create an environment where feedback is viewed as a constructive and integral part of learning.

In recent years, technological advancements have introduced new possibilities for feedback in writing instruction. Digital platforms and tools offer automated feedback on grammar, spelling, and style, allowing learners to receive immediate responses and practice independently. While these tools are valuable supplements, they should not replace human feedback, which provides deeper insights into content, argumentation, and rhetorical effectiveness.

In conclusion, feedback is an indispensable component of developing academic writing skills in EFL learners. Its effectiveness lies in its ability to guide learners through the complexities of writing, enhance linguistic and organizational competence, and foster independent learning. By adopting a strategic and balanced approach to feedback, educators can significantly improve learners' writing outcomes and prepare them for academic and professional communication in English.

References

1. Dana R. Ferris (2003). *Response to Student Writing: Implications for Second Language Students*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

-
2. John Bitchener, & Ute Knoch (2010). The Contribution of Written Corrective Feedback to Language Development: A Ten-Month Investigation.
 3. John Truscott (1996). The Case Against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes.
 4. Ken Hyland, & Fiona Hyland (2006). Feedback in Second Language Writing: Contexts and Issues. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 5. Ilona Leki (1991). The Preferences of ESL Students for Error Correction in College-Level Writing Classes.
 6. Robert B. Kaplan (1966). Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education. *Language Learning*, 16(1-2), 1-20. (pp. 10-15)
 7. Lee, Icy (2008). Understanding Teachers' Written Feedback Practices in Hong Kong Secondary Classrooms. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 17(2), 69-85.
 8. Paul Kei Matsuda (2003). Process and Post-Process: A Discursive History. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12(1), 65-83. (pp. 70-75)
 9. David R. Russell (1990). Writing Across the Curriculum in Historical Perspective. *College English*, 52(1), 52-73. (pp. 60-65)
 10. Alister Cumming (2001). ESL/EFL Instructors' Practices for Writing Assessment: Specific Purposes or General Purposes? *Language Testing*, 18(2), 207-224. (pp. 210-215)