Investigating University EFL Teachers' Feedback Literacy and Practices in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Sumaya Ismael Arfi[1] - Karmand Abdullah Hamad[2]

sia510h@ena.soran.edu.iq - karmand.hamad@soran.edu.iq

[1+2]English Department, Faculty of Arts, Soran University, Soran, Kurdistan Region, Iraq.

Abstract

With the changes and development of educational systems worldwide, feedback has received scholarly attention. Student learning depends on effective feedback, but giving appropriate feedback has proved to be a challenge to both teachers and students. This study investigates teachers' feedback literacy and practices at universities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq from the perspectives of the students. It also aims to explore the types of feedback that teachers provide to enhance students' learning outcomes and motivate them through learning from the feedback. To achieve this aim, a semi-structured questionnaire was used, including both close-ended questions and open-ended questions. The participants were 211 third-year and fourth-year students of English department at Soran university. The results indicated that students had a positive attitude towards providing different types of feedback. The participants also preferred receiving individual feedback from teachers rather than general feedback in front of their classmates. The results also showed that students perceived significant inconsistency in the feedback they receive from different teachers and emphasize the importance of more standardized and coordinated approaches to ensure clarity, fairness, and effectiveness. Moreover, the results showed that feedback in front of classmates, general feedback, self-consciousness, teachers' bias, and limited time are the most common challenges that students face while receiving feedback.

Keywords: Teacher Feedback, Literacy, EFL Classes, Students' Improvement.

لێکۆڵینەوە لە شارەزایی و بەکارهێنانی فیدباک لە لایەن مامۆستایانی زمانی ئینگلیزی وەک زمانی بیانی (EFL) لە زانکۆیەکانی هەرێمی کوردستانی عێراق

سومەیە ئیسماعیل عەرفی¹ - کارمەند عەبدوڵڵا حەمەد²

¹+²بەشی ئینگلیزی، فاکەڵتی ئاداب، زانکۆی سۆران، سۆران، هەرێمی کوردستان، عێراق.

پوخته

لەگەڵ بەرەوپێشچوونی سەردەم و گۆڕانی سیستەمەکانی خوێندن و فێربوون، بابەتی فیدباکیش دەبێتە جێگەی لێکۆڵینەوە و تێڕامان، هەر بۆیە گرنگی خۆی لەوە دەبینێتەوە، کە مامۆستایان فیدباکێکی بەسود بدەن بە فێرخوازان، بەڵام پێدانی فیدباک ڕەنگە بۆ پەروەردەکاران، هەروەها بۆ فێرخوازانیش ئاستەنگی هەبێت. ئەم توێژینەوەیە بەدواگەڕانی زانیاری مامۆستایان دەکات، دەربارەی فیدباک و بەکارهێنانی لە زانکۆیەکانی هەرێمی کوردستانی عێراق، بەو ئامانجەی لە جۆرەکانی فیدباک بکۆڵێتەوە، کە مامۆستایان پێشکەشی دەکەن، بۆ هاندانی فێرخوازان و بەرەوپێشبردنیان. بۆ گەیشتن بەم ئامانجە، پرسیارنامەیەکی نیمچە کراوە بەکارهاتوە، کە پێکهاتەکەی لە هەردوو جۆری پرسیاری کراوە و پرسیاری داخراوە، بەشداریوانی ئەم ڕاپرسییە بریتیبوون لە ٢١١ قوتابی، لە قۆناغەکانی سێیەم و چوارەمی بەشی زمانی ئینگلیزی لە زانکۆی سۆران. ئەنجامەکانی ئەم توێژینەوە دەریدەخات، کە فێرخوازان ئاراستەیەکی ئەرێنییان هەبووە، بەرامبەر بە پێشکەشکردنی جۆرە جیاوازەکانی فیدباک، بۆ ئەوەی زیاتر پێشکەوتوبن لە خوێندنیاندا، سەرەڕای ئەمەش، بەشداریوان پێیان باشتربو فیدباکێکی تاکەکەسی بدرێت بە فێرخوازان، بەشێوەیەکی تایبەت، نەک فیدباکێکی گشتی، لەبەردەم هاوپۆلەکانیاندا. هەروەها دەرکەوت، کە فێرخوازان ناتەبایی بەرچاو لە فیدباکەکاندا هەستپێدەکەن، کە لە مامۆستا جیاوازەکانەوە وەریدەگرن، هەر بۆیە ئاماژە بە گرنگی ڕێبازە ستاندارد و هەماهەنگترەکان دەکەن، بۆ دڵنیابون لە ڕونی، دادپەروەری و کاریگەری لەسەر پرۆسەی خوێندن و فێربوندا. هەروەها، ئەوەش نیشاندەدرێت، کە فێرخوازان لە کاتی وەرگرتنی فیدباکدا، ڕوبەڕوی چەندین بەربەست دەبنەوە، کە باوترینیان بریتین، لە پێدانی فیدباک لە بەردەم هاوپۆلەکاندا، فیدباکی گشتی، خودئاگایی، نادادپەروەری مامۆستایان، هەروەها سنورداری کات.

وشه سەرەکیەکان: فیدباکی مامۆستا، شارەزایی، پۆلەکانی (EFL)، بەرەوپێشچوونی قوتابییان.

1. Introduction

Feedback is one of the most important components of an outstanding teaching and learning strategy because it is critical to the growth of all learners and their academic performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). It is highly important to be able to process and provide feedback in order to support learning. Because supportive critique is extremely useful in helping EFL students to develop confidence and improve themselves in university, the idea of feedback literacy and the way it functions in English as a Foreign Language is shifting around the world even though it remains relatively young in educational studies (Alharbi, 2021).

In the Kurdistan Region, assessing how teachers provide feedback and looking at their feedback literacy is significant for achieving better results and matching teaching practices to international frameworks. There is a growing interest in this area because more and more people are realizing that effective feedback can make a big difference in helping students improve their writing, speaking, listening, and reading skills in EFL classrooms. Feedback plays a significant role on student learning and achievement. According to Brookhart (2008), feedback has several types, namely appreciative, descriptive, evaluative, constructive,

formative, summative, peer, and reflective feedback. He believes that the most effective forms of feedback are evaluative feedback, which gives grades or a judgment, and descriptive feedback, which tells students about their progress. Nonetheless, in EFL contexts, both descriptive and evaluative feedback are crucial because the former helps students understand how to get better while the latter reveals their current position.

Correcting errors is not the only focus of feedback in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It is important to offer helpful guidance to a student, like the way to use vocabulary correctly, strengthen grammar skills and selecting contextually appropriate expressions (Harmer, 2001). Given that students' motivation and performance are considerably influenced by the quality of feedback teachers provide, it is crucial for teachers to have a clear understanding how to give good feedback. In addition, feedback works best when it helps learners understand their tasks, leads them toward better strategies and inspires them to do better (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

There is a lot of evidence that feedback is both crucial and hard to deal with for teachers in various subjects, including second-language teaching (Evans, 2013). Few studies exist that look into teachers' abilities to use feedback and how they address issues when implementing it. Because of this, stakeholders such as policymakers, educators and training institutions can better support teachers in developing their feedback practices to improve student results (Shute, 2008).

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What feedback approaches and methods are popular for teachers teaching English as a foreign language?
2. What are the viewpoints students have towards the feedback provided by their EFL teachers?
3. How similar or different are EFL teachers in the way they deliver feedback?
4. What challenges do students face while receiving feedback?

2. Literature Review

Feedback Literacy

Feedback literacy has been defined by many authors, the term has been used in the learning process that includes the variety of skills needed to give, evaluate, and use feedback. According to Carless and Boud (2018), feedback literacy supports students and teachers in interacting with each other in order to enhance learning and progress. Moreover, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) state that feedback literacy does not include the ability to give feedback but ensure that it is understood, acted upon, and integrated into future learning effectively.

Feedback literacy is based on three basic aspects. Teachers begin by working on their skill in giving feedback that improves student performance and helps them improve instead of just giving a judgment

(Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Moreover, teachers and students have to make sure feedback is easy to grasp, while students practice interpreting it and use it to progress in learning (Boud & Molloy, 2012). Furthermore, feedback culture enhances the learning environment because teachers consider feedback to be an essential component of education and accept it as a chance to become better rather than official assessment (Price et al., 2010). Besides, as Henderson et al. (2019) explain, individuals should realize that feedback must be ongoing and enable students to think critically, learn how to combine knowledge, and improve in various aspects. Therefore, feedback is something teachers ought to actively experience in the classrooms not just knowing it theoretically.

Feedback Practices

Teacher feedback practices refer to the various methods and strategies used by teachers to provide feedback to students, the practices can be categorized into two broad types: written feedback (e.g., on assignments and exams) and oral feedback (e.g., in-class comments or discussions). Teachers may also use a combination of formative and summative feedback strategies, depending on the learning objectives and the stage of instruction. The success of these strategies depends largely on how clear the feedback is, when it is provided and its relevance to what students aim to learn (Sadler, 2010). Concurrently, educators should consider the individual circumstances of learners and the type of the classes they attend when making feedback choice decisions (Davis & Lee, 2019). Thus, effective teachers understand that proper methods of delivering feedback are significant.

Delivery Methods

There are various methods of giving feedback by teachers, including oral feedback, peer feedback, self-assessment, written feedback, and digital feedback, which have various advantages and disadvantages based on the situation and goal of providing feedback to the student and assisting them in comprehending and utilizing feedback (Carless & Boud, 2018). Written comments, usually found in assignments and tests, are extensive accounts that can be reflected upon, but it can take a long time and can be challenging to understand (Williams, 2024). Though verbal feedback has been hailed because of its flexibility and timeliness, it is usually administered in a discussion or institutionalized one-on-one format but can be challenging in large classes and can be easily forgotten without being documented (Boud & Molloy, 2012). Peer feedback will promote communication and active participation of students in self-monitoring to ensure that they work together in support of one another learning, which is social constructivist theory by Vygotsky (1978). Self-evaluation is an evaluation where students assess their performance with the help of such tools as rubric or a journal (Zimmerman, 2002). As technology grows, interactive and more flexible responses are being met with digital feedback either text, audio, or video-based, on a platform such as the Learning Management System (LMS) or through email (Deeley, 2018). Hence, the bilateral connection between teacher feedback literacy and those practices of feedback is reciprocal.

The Interplay between Teacher Feedback Literacy and Teacher Feedback Practices

The relationship between teacher feedback literacy and feedback practices is reciprocal, teachers may be influenced by the choices of feedback strategies, while the actual feedback practices provide opportunities for teachers to enhance their feedback literacy, that is why teachers with high feedback literacy tend to employ more varied and individualized feedback methods that support student engagement and learning (Wiliam, 2011). Without feedback literacy, some teachers might use feedback methods that are too simple or not very helpful for their students' needs. As teachers reflect on and change their methods of offering feedback, their feedback literacy can develop with time (Shute, 2008). Evans (2013) states that teachers with low feedback literacy provide unclear and judgmental feedback that focus on grade which may lack clarity or fail to address how students can improve, reflecting a limited understanding of the formative purpose of feedback. Teachers with high feedback literacy tailor feedback to individual students because they know that students have different learning styles and levels, and they adjust their feedback practices accordingly (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Challenges in Receiving Effective Feedback

The feedback often proves difficult to the students because of the technical language and generalized comments limiting its effectiveness (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Also, depending on culture, students can have different ideas about feedback reception and reactions to it, which sometimes may lead to misunderstandings or even engagement (Smith et al., 2013). Besides, lack of proper feedback timing like receiving feedback quite late hampers the capacity of students to improve in time. Other students lack motivation and are not self-regulated, thus they are unable to learn and act upon the feedback given to them effectively (Zimmerman, 2002).

Previous Studies

Teacher feedback literacy is an important part of the research in education that focuses on teachers' development of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are necessary to provide students with informed feedback. Moreover, feedback literacy is not about the ability of teachers to offer feedback but also the ability to manage the whole process of the feedback from the beginning till the end that promotes student engagement and education. In this paper many significant studies are discussed mentioning their aims, methodology, findings about teacher feedback literacies and practices, along with their implications for teaching and learning.

Wiggins (2012) formulated a framework to address the difficulties teachers and students face when providing feedback. They specified the core aspects: grasping the feedback goal, handling feelings, and acting upon it. The research found that encouraging interaction encouraged teachers and students to focus on growth, so that students welcome feedback as constructive recommendations. According to the authors, implementing ideas that involve students and support their self-regulation in learning should be key, and teachers require proper training programs in effective feedback.

Black and Wiliam (1998) found out that effective feedback is influenced by the level of trust between a teacher and their students. With strong relationships, students find it easier to accept and follow advice given to them rather than considering it as negative feedback. Teachers should build good relationships with students and make sure that feedback helps students reach the targets set by them.

It was found by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) that useful feedback gives students the power to direct their learning and consider how they are learning. According to the research, feedback is meant to guide students in checking and improving their studies on their own. Using group projects led to active self-evaluation, according to the study, so teachers can assist students by organizing group activities with self-review.

Liu and Carless (2006) discovered that when teachers gave effective feedback, it encouraged students to pay more attention and take part in class. Quality feedback from teachers allowed students to achieve better goals and develop their language skills. They said that understanding feedback literacy involves being aware of various cultures and how students react to being corrected.

It is clear from the review of the related literature that all the types of feedback are significant for improving learning outcomes and may enhance instructional strategies, especially modern ones. Hence, both teachers and students held a positive view of them. However, none of the studies in Kurdish context have considered students and teachers' attitudes together towards both feedback literacy and feedback practices and have not dealt with the importance of the relationship between them. Thus, the current study is dedicated to investigating the EFL teachers' feedback literacy and practices at universities in the Kurdistan region of Iraq and exploring the relationship between the knowledge that teachers have about feedback and the implementation of feedback in their classrooms to improve students. That is why this study seeks to identify the aspects of feedback literacy that mostly influence teachers' feedback practices within EFL classroom contexts and the challenges that teachers and students face when translating this proficiency into effective application of feedback.

3. Methodology

Population and Sampling

For this study, the respondents consisted of 211(78 males and 133 females) Kurdish EFL students from the English Department in two faculties at Soran university, from both morning and evening classes. The researchers specifically chose third- and fourth-year students as their expanded experience supposedly give them greater exposure to and engagement with feedback. Since the researchers conducted the study during morning classes as well as evening classes, few students were over the age of 27. The rest were aged between 17-26. The probability sampling was the appropriate method because of the characteristics of the quantitative method of data collection (Ahrens & Zasceriniska, 2015). Therefore, a simple random sampling method is used, everyone having the right to participate (Delice, 2010).

Instrument

The researchers designed a semi-structured questionnaire, mixing closed and open-ended questions to gather the data. As stated by Cohen et al. (2007), this approach is placed midway between two extremes: fully-open and highly-structured questionnaires. According to Gray (2009), when survey questions are all the same format, respondents could become bored and give inaccurate or fewer responses. Hence, it is suggested to offer a range of ways to ask questions. Both types of questions were included: Likert-scaled closed-ended ones and open-ended ones asking students of their thoughts.

Correlation analysis was used to know the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. Independent sample t-test was used to analyze the relationship between the dependent variables separately such as the sections of the questionnaire, such as teacher feedback types (TFT), timeliness of feedback (TF), student engagement and interest in teacher feedback (SEITF), quality of feedback (QF), satisfaction with teacher feedback practices (STFP), and feedback consistency across teachers (FCT).

Table 1. Correlations Between Scores of Individual TFT, TF, SEITF, QF, STFP, and FCT Items and the Total Score for each of them separately

TFT	Corr.	TF	Corr.	SEITF	Corr.	QF	Corr.	STFP	Corr.	FCT	Corr.
Q1	.685**	Q9	.714**	Q15	.750**	Q20	.522**	Q28	.590**	Q34	.602**
Q2	.641**	Q10	.682**	Q16	.744**	Q21	.641**	Q29	.699**	Q35	.701**
Q3	.611**	Q11	.617**	Q17	.643**	Q22	.698**	Q30	.685**	Q36	.549**
Q4	.657**	Q12	.555**	Q18	.695**	Q23	.737**	Q31	.728**	Q37	.666**
Q5	0.028	Q13	.629**	Q19	.677**	Q24	.628**	Q32	.583**	Q38	.734**
Q6	.558**	Q14	.383**			Q25	.625**	Q33	.740**	Q39	.628**
Q7	.513**					Q26	.661**				
Q8	.559**					Q27	.540**				

Table 1 presents the correlations between individual items and their total scores across six constructs: TFT, TF, SEITF, QF, STFP, and FCT. The majority of items demonstrate moderate to strong positive correlations, reflecting solid internal consistency. However, Q5 shows a very weak and non-significant correlation (0.028), indicating that it should be considered for removal from the TFT construct due to its low and insignificant contribution.

validity and reliability

To check the validity of the gathered data, face validity was used. The researcher sent the questionnaire through email to a jury committee at some universities in Kurdistan. The jury members were EFL teachers with the academic titles professor, assistant professor, and lecturer. The expert committee specialized in different fields like TESOL, ELT, applied linguistics, linguistics, and psycholinguistics. The research objectives, research questions, research procedures, and research tools were all submitted to them via their personal emails. They were asked to evaluate the items' readability, clarity, and comprehension. Additionally, they were asked to provide any feedback regarding additions and/or deletions. Finally, their comments were taken into consideration, the content tools were revised, and reformulated when necessary in order to be more valid.

As for reliability, the internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha reliability score. Field (2009) states that Cronbach's alpha is used to determine the degree of consistency among the questionnaire items and to investigate the items' group relationships. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha is regarded as a suitable measure for assessing the dependability of internal consistency, particularly when utilizing a Likert scale.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis for all dimension about literacy and practice

	Number of items	Alpha Cronbach
TFT	7	0.704
TF	6	0.749
SEITF	5	0.743
QF	8	0.787
STFP	6	0.758
FCT	6	0.721

Table 2 displays the reliability analysis results for the six dimensions using Cronbach's Alpha. The alpha values range from 0.704 to 0.787, indicating that all dimensions demonstrate acceptability to good levels of internal consistency. The TFT (7 items) has a reliability score of 0.704, while TF (6 items) achieves a slightly higher alpha of 0.749. The SEITF scale (5 items) records 0.743, and QF, with 8 items, shows the highest reliability at 0.787, reflecting strong consistency. Similarly, STFP and FCT (each with 6 items) have reliability scores of 0.758 and 0.721, respectively. These results confirm that the measurement tools used in the study are reliable for assessing the respective dimensions.

Data Analysis Procedures

After obtaining the completed surveys, the researchers began analyzing the quantitative data. The data were manually entered into an Excel sheet. The SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software version 26 was then used to examine the entered data in terms of frequency and percentage. Thus, a statistical and descriptive analysis was performed on the quantitative data.

Results

For analyzing the collected data, the SPSS program was used.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Characteristics

		N	%
Age	Below 21	18	8.5%
	21-23	157	74.4%
	24-26	23	10.9%
	27 and more	13	6.2%
Gender	Male	78	37.0%
	Female	133	63.0%
Year of study	Third year of study	120	56.9%
	Fourth year of study	91	43.1%
Faculty	Arts	104	49.3%
	Education	107	50.7%
Class	Morning	164	77.7%
	Evening	47	22.3%

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for demographic characteristics, the majority of participants were aged between 21 and 23 (74.4%), followed by 24–26 (10.9%), below 21 (8.5%), and 27 years or older (6.2%), respectively. Most respondents were female (63.0%), and slightly more than half were third-years (56.9%) compared to those in their fourth year (43.1%). The participants were almost evenly distributed

between the Faculty of Arts (49.3%) and the Faculty of Education (50.7%). Additionally, a significant majority of students (77.7%) attended morning classes, while a smaller portion (22.3%) were enrolled in evening classes.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Feedback Types

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	SD
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Teachers provide written feedback.	39	18.5%	34	16.1%	70	33.2%	44	20.9%	24	11.4%	2.905	1.250
Teachers provide oral feedback.	11	5.2%	27	12.8%	55	26.1%	76	36.0%	42	19.9%	3.526	1.105
Teachers provide feedback during the tasks and assignments.	24	11.4%	24	11.4%	77	36.5%	58	27.5%	28	13.3%	3.199	1.158
Teachers provide feedback types according to the nature of the activity (reading, speaking, listening, or writing).	13	6.2%	38	18.0%	68	32.2%	55	26.1%	37	17.5%	3.308	1.140

											Mean	SD
Teachers use digital learning platforms (e.g. LMS) to give feedback.	47	22.3%	38	18.0%	48	22.7%	43	20.4%	35	16.6%	2.910	1.393
Teachers give general feedback.	10	4.7%	29	13.7%	52	24.6%	68	32.2%	52	24.6%	3.583	1.141
Teachers give individual feedback.	27	12.8%	46	21.8%	52	24.6%	46	21.8%	40	19.0%	3.123	1.303
Overall of Teacher Feedback Types											3.222	0.730

Table 4 is about students' perceptions of teacher feedback types. The mean score of 3.222 from survey results shows that teachers use different feedback methods with low variability (SD = 0.730). The survey found that general feedback was the most popular response type and received the best rating of 3.583, just above oral feedback, which got 3.526. It was found that task-based feedback and getting help with assignments were moderately used. Individual feedback seemed to vary more than the delivery of feedback to the whole group. The two categories with the lowest mean scores were written feedback (2.905) and feedback using digital platforms (2.910). At the same time, the digital methods group had the highest standard deviation (SD = 1.393). Based on these outcomes, it becomes clear that instructors generally use both general and oral feedback, even though much fewer use written and digital methods.

<div align="center">Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Timeliness of Feedback</div>

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	SD
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Teachers usually give feedback within a reasonable timeframe.	27	12.8%	25	11.8%	77	36.5%	52	24.6%	30	14.2%	3.156	1.195

Teachers are aware of the importance of timely feedback.	23	10.9%	35	16.6%	80	37.9%	58	27.5%	15	7.1%	3.033	1.080
Teachers clearly inform students when they will receive feedback.	18	8.5%	36	17.1%	81	38.4%	53	25.1%	23	10.9%	3.128	1.090
Teachers provide feedback before students submit the next task or assignment.	37	17.5%	43	20.4%	58	27.5%	48	22.7%	25	11.8%	2.910	1.267
Teachers give comments on my work early enough for me to make improvements.	16	7.6%	49	23.2%	62	29.4%	52	24.6%	32	15.2%	3.166	1.169
Prompt feedback by teachers helps me perform better in future tasks.	7	3.3%	29	13.7%	59	28.0%	53	25.1%	63	29.9%	3.645	1.143
Timeliness of Feedback											3.173	0.689

Table 5 outlines students' perceptions regarding the timeliness of teacher feedback. The overall average score is 3.173, indicating a moderate level of agreement, with a standard deviation of 0.689, reflecting a fair level of consistency in responses. The item with the highest mean score is "Prompt feedback by teachers helps me perform better in future tasks" (3.645), showing that students strongly value timely responses in improving their future performance. On the other hand, the lowest-rated item is "Teachers provide feedback before students submit the next task or assignment" (2.910), suggesting that feedback is often perceived as arriving too late to be useful for upcoming work. Other statements, such as teachers providing feedback in a reasonable time (3.156), informing students about when feedback will be given (3.128), and being aware of its importance (3.033), received moderate agreement, indicating that students see some effort from teachers but also expect greater consistency and clarity in delivering feedback on time.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for Student Engagement and Interest in Teacher Feedback

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	SD
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Teachers encourage me to engage with and reflect on the feedback they give.	19	9.0%	30	14.2%	59	28.0%	57	27.0%	46	21.8%	3.384	1.227
Teachers explain how students can use feedback to improve their performance.	14	6.6%	31	14.7%	56	26.5%	80	37.9%	30	14.2%	3.384	1.104
Teachers use feedback as a tool to maximize student learning motivation.	11	5.2%	34	16.1%	70	33.2%	70	33.2%	26	12.3%	3.313	1.050
Teachers help students feel more confident after they receive feedback.	18	8.5%	29	13.7%	64	30.3%	63	29.9%	37	17.5%	3.341	1.170
The feedback teachers give helps students take more responsibility for their learning.	16	7.6%	17	8.1%	65	30.8%	57	27.0%	56	26.5%	3.569	1.183
Student Engagement and Interest in Teacher Feedback											3.398	0.806

This table shows how students responded to statements about their engagement and interest in teacher feedback. The average scores, all just above 3 on a 5-point scale, suggest that students generally have a moderately positive view. The highest agreement was that feedback encourages students to take greater responsibility for their learning, with a mean score of 3.569, making it the most appreciated aspect. Students also somewhat agree that teachers promote reflection on feedback and clearly explain how to use it for improvement, both with means of 3.384. The aspects of feedback boosting confidence and motivation received slightly lower average scores, 3.341 and 3.313 respectively, indicating less strong agreement among students. Overall, the engagement and interest in teacher feedback scored a mean of 3.398, showing a generally positive attitude with some variation in responses. This suggests that while students value feedback, their experiences and perceptions of its different effects vary.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics for Quality of Feedback

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	SD
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
The feedback teachers provide is informative, clear, and relevant.	12	5.7%	29	13.7%	51	24.2%	63	29.9%	56	26.5%	3.578	1.182
Teachers provide detailed qualitative feedback.	20	9.5%	35	16.6%	76	36.0%	51	24.2%	29	13.7%	3.161	1.148
Teachers include suggestions for improvement in	21	10.0%	27	12.8%	73	34.6%	60	28.4%	30	14.2%	3.242	1.152

the feedback they provide												
Teachers provide constructive feedback in their comments.	23	10.9%	31	14.7%	87	41.2%	47	22.3%	23	10.9%	3.076	1.114
Teachers provide critical feedback in their comments.	21	10.0%	29	13.7%	79	37.4%	53	25.1%	29	13.7%	3.190	1.143
Teachers highlight my strengths and weaknesses when they provide feedback.	18	8.5%	27	12.8%	60	28.4%	69	32.7%	37	17.5%	3.379	1.166
Teachers refer back to previous feedback when providing new feedback.	39	18.5%	39	18.5%	65	30.8%	50	23.7%	18	8.5%	2.853	1.220
Teachers are fair and unbiased in the feedback they provide.	33	15.6%	36	17.1%	71	33.6%	45	21.3%	26	12.3%	2.976	1.228
Quality of Feedback											3.188	0.743

Table 7 shows students' views on the quality of feedback provided by teachers. The highest-rated aspect was that the feedback is clear, relevant, and informative (mean = 3.578), indicating a generally positive perception in this area. Students also moderately agreed that teachers highlight their strengths and weaknesses (mean = 3.379) and offer suggestions for improvement (mean = 3.242). However, lower average scores were recorded for feedback being critical (3.190), detailed (3.161), and constructive (3.076), suggesting that students felt these elements were not consistently present. The lowest ratings were given to whether teachers refer to previous feedback (mean = 2.853) and whether the feedback is fair and unbiased (mean = 2.976), implying concerns in these areas. Overall, the average score for feedback quality was 3.188, reflecting a moderate level of student satisfaction. While students generally appreciate the clarity and helpfulness of feedback, they feel there is room for improvement in areas such as fairness, continuity, and depth.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics for Satisfaction with Teacher Feedback Practices

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	SD
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Teachers provide sufficient amount of feedback.	24	11.4%	38	18.0%	92	43.6%	35	16.6%	22	10.4%	2.967	1.106
Teachers motivate students to discuss about feedback with peers.	31	14.7%	46	21.8%	59	28.0%	53	25.1%	22	10.4%	2.948	1.216
Teachers are skilled at giving meaningful feedback.	25	11.8%	30	14.2%	71	33.6%	60	28.4%	25	11.8%	3.142	1.166

Teachers create a safe atmosphere where students can discuss the details of feedback with them.	24	11.4%	26	12.3%	73	34.6%	55	26.1%	33	15.6%	3.223	1.192
The feedback teachers provide helps me develop as a learner.	16	7.6%	22	10.4%	58	27.5%	68	32.2%	47	22.3%	3.512	1.168
Teachers use different strategies to make feedback more effective.	33	15.6%	35	16.6%	49	23.2%	55	26.1%	39	18.5%	3.152	1.333
Satisfaction with Teacher Feedback Practices											3.157	0.806

Table 8 represents students' levels of satisfaction with their teachers' feedback practices, based on a 5-point rating scale. The overall average score of 3.157 indicates a moderate level of satisfaction. Among the items, the highest-rated statement was that teacher feedback supports students' development as learners (mean = 3.512), showing that many students recognize the positive impact of feedback on their academic growth. Students also moderately agreed that teachers create a safe space for discussing feedback (mean = 3.223) and are competent in giving meaningful feedback (mean = 3.142). However, satisfaction was lower when it came to teachers using varied feedback strategies (mean = 3.152) and encouraging peer discussions about feedback (mean = 2.948). The lowest rating was for the sufficiency of feedback provided (mean = 2.967), suggesting students may feel they are not receiving enough feedback.

Overall, while students generally appreciate the quality and usefulness of feedback, they are less satisfied with the frequency, variety, and opportunities for collaborative discussion related to feedback.

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics for Feedback Consistency across Teachers

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	SD
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		

Different teachers use different approaches when giving feedback on assignments.	12	5.7%	15	7.1%	62	29.4%	55	26.1%	67	31.8%	3.711	1.153
Teachers provide detailed and helpful feedback.	16	7.6%	30	14.2%	76	36.0%	57	27.0%	32	15.2%	3.280	1.118
Teachers give only brief or general comments.	19	9.0%	30	14.2%	74	35.1%	56	26.5%	32	15.2%	3.246	1.149
Teachers follow clear and consistent standards when giving feedback.	19	9.0%	40	19.0%	81	38.4%	48	22.7%	23	10.9%	3.076	1.101
Feedback strategies and practices across teachers seem to have been coordinated.	20	9.5%	40	19.0%	74	35.1%	54	25.6%	23	10.9%	3.095	1.121
Teachers consistently communicate assignment expectations and feedback criteria.	23	10.9%	35	16.6%	77	36.5%	52	24.6%	24	11.4%	3.090	1.141
Feedback Consistency across Teachers											3.250	0.730

Table 9 presents students' views on the consistency of feedback provided by different teachers, using a 5-point scale. The overall average score of 3.250 reflects a moderate level of perceived consistency. While some uniform practices are noted, students generally experience variation in how feedback is delivered across teachers.

The item with the highest mean score was "Different teachers use different approaches when giving feedback" (mean = 3.711), indicating a strong perception of inconsistency. This suggests that students are often met with varying feedback styles, which could lead to confusion or uncertainty about expectations. In contrast, lower mean scores were seen in statements such as "Teachers follow clear and consistent standards when giving feedback" (mean = 3.076), "Feedback strategies and practices across teachers seem to have been coordinated" (mean = 3.095), and "Teachers consistently communicate assignment expectations and feedback criteria" (mean = 3.090). These findings highlight a need for better alignment among teachers when it comes to feedback practices. Additionally, responses to "Teachers provide detailed and helpful feedback" (mean = 3.280) and "Teachers give only brief or general comments" (mean = 3.246) suggests that students have mixed experiences with the depth and usefulness of feedback. Overall, the results show that students perceive significant inconsistency in the feedback they receive from different teachers and point to the importance of more standardized and coordinated approaches to ensure clarity, fairness, and effectiveness.

Figure 1. Average Scores of each of the TFT, TF, SEITF, QF, STFP, and FCT
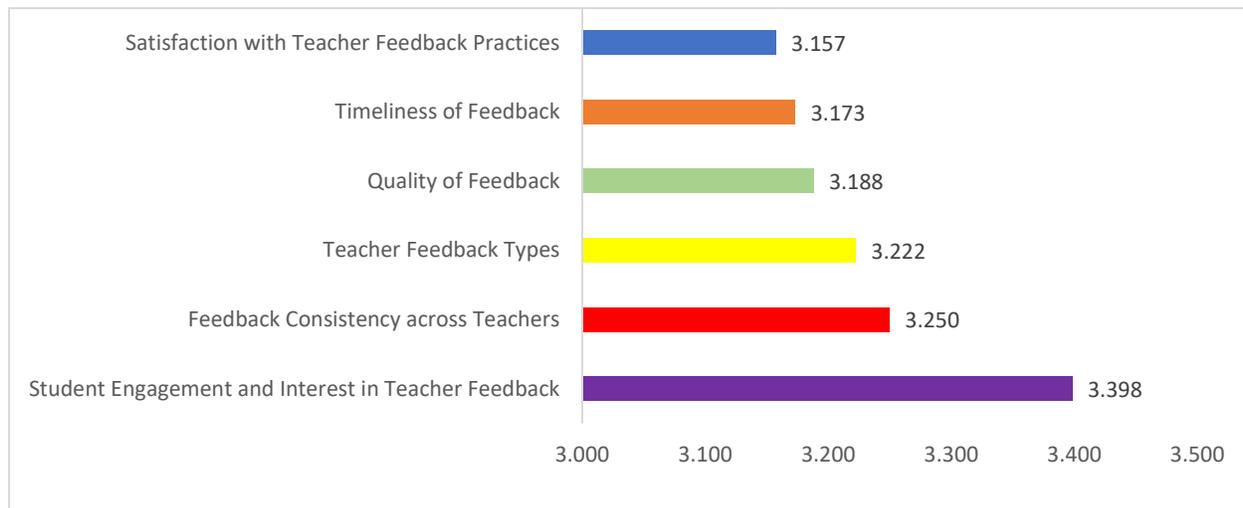

Figure 1 indicates that students are most engaged and interested in the feedback they receive from teachers, with this area receiving the highest rating (3.398). Feedback consistency among different teachers (3.250) and the variety of feedback types (3.222) also scored moderately well, reflecting some positive practices. However, aspects such as the quality (3.188) and timeliness (3.173) of feedback were rated lower, suggesting room for improvement in how effectively and promptly feedback is delivered. Overall satisfaction with teacher feedback practices received the lowest score (3.157), highlighting the need for more consistent, timely, and higher-quality feedback to better support student learning.

Table 10. Comparing the mean for each of the sections with specific value = 3

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	p-value
TFT	211	3.222	0.730	4.417	0.000
TF	211	3.173	0.689	3.645	0.000
SEITF	211	3.398	0.806	7.173	0.000
QF	211	3.188	0.743	3.671	0.000
STFP	211	3.157	0.806	2.832	0.005
FCT	211	3.250	0.730	4.964	0.000

Table 10 shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean of each items with the hypothesized value (3) because their p-values are less than the significant level of α=0.05. SEITF had the highest mean score (3.398), suggesting that students are particularly engaged and interested in the feedback provided by their teachers. FCT (3.250) and TFT (3.222) also received favorable ratings, indicating positive perceptions of feedback consistency and variety. Meanwhile, the scores for QF (3.188), TF (3.173), and STFP (3.157), though statistically higher than the neutral point, were only slightly above average, implying that students recognize potential for improvement in these areas. Overall, the findings point to generally positive student views on teacher feedback, with certain aspects needing further development.

Table 11. Descriptive statistics for student's challenges in understanding or applying teacher feedback

	N	%
It is challenging when the teachers give feedback in general	32	20.13
Sometimes they do not offer feedbacks; we ourselves have to ask them to tell us if we perform well or poorly on the task	7	4.40
In front of classmates, it is bad and challenging	17	10.69
Lack written feedback (just oral)	13	8.18
Stress	13	8.18
Self-consciousness	16	10.06

Teachers are bias	16	10.06
Using a language or vocabularies that we cannot understand	8	5.03
Not enough time for feedback	18	11.32
Too much feedback at once	3	1.89
Negative feedback	6	3.77
Teachers only care about marks	5	3.14
The way they look at me	5	3.14
Total	159	100

Table 11 shows the result of students' challenges in understanding or applying teacher feedback, with the most common issue being that feedback is often too general or vague, as noted by 20.13% of respondents. This makes it difficult for students to identify specific areas for improvement. Additionally, 4.40% of students mentioned that teachers rarely provide feedback unless asked, which leaves them uncertain about their performance. Receiving feedback in front of classmates was reported by 10.69% as uncomfortable or embarrassing, while 10.06% expressed self-consciousness that prevent them from engaging with the feedback effectively. 8.18% said they only received oral feedback, which is easy to forget, and preferred written feedback for clarity. Similarly, 5.03% found the language or vocabulary used by teachers too complex to understand. A notable 11.32% felt there was not enough time allocated for feedback, while 1.89% were overwhelmed by receiving too much feedback at once. Negative or overly critical feedback was discouraging for 3.77% of students. Meanwhile, 3.14% believed teachers focused more on grades than on learning, and another 3.14% felt intimidated by teachers' non-verbal behavior, such as disapproving looks. Finally, 10.06% perceived teachers as biased, which made them distrust the feedback they received. These findings suggest a need for more constructive, personalized, clear, and empathetic feedback practices.

Table 12. Descriptive statistics for Student Suggestions for Improving Teacher Feedback

	N	%
Give more feedback it is not enough	27	15.52
Encouraging us when we perform better than before	8	4.60
Positive feedback please	9	5.17

Getting feedback in private (individual feedback)	46	26.44
Use a happy and friendly tone	16	9.20
Having rubrics before tasks and plans	8	4.60
Use all the types of feedback	8	4.60
Support students by feedback not discourage them	5	2.87
Using a simpler language that the aim is improving themselves by advanced language	9	5.17
Providing clear examples and explain how to correct our mistakes step by step (how to improve)	18	10.34
Making an environment that mistakes are ways of success	7	4.02
Considering students psychology	13	7.47
Total	174	100

Table 12 shows the result of students who shared a variety of suggestions for enhancing how teachers deliver feedback, emphasizing the need for it to be more clear, supportive, and personalized. The most common recommendation, made by 26.44% of students, was to provide individual feedback in private, rather than in front of classmates. They believe private feedback allows for open discussion and avoids embarrassment, making it easier to reflect and ask questions. Additionally, 15.52% expressed that feedback is too limited, and they would benefit from receiving more frequent and detailed comments to guide their progress. Around 10.34% recommended that teachers offer specific examples and step-by-step explanations to help them clearly understand their mistakes and how to correct them. 9.20% emphasized the importance of using a friendly and positive tone, explaining that this encourages learning and reduces anxiety. Similarly, 5.17% asked for more positive reinforcement, stating that recognizing their strengths builds motivation and confidence. Another 4.60% suggested that teachers acknowledge individual improvement over time, not just final results, as this helps students stay encouraged. The same percentage also recommended providing rubrics before assignments to clarify expectations and support focused efforts. 4.60% of students also advocated for the use of diverse feedback methods, including written, oral, and digital tools, to suit different learning preferences. 5.17% requested that teachers use simpler, more understandable language, especially when giving feedback, to ensure students can easily grasp how to improve. A small portion (2.87%) felt that some feedback was discouraging rather than constructive, and encouraged teachers to focus on guiding improvement rather than pointing out faults

harshly. Additionally, 4.02% suggested that teachers foster an environment where mistakes are treated as learning opportunities, helping students feel safer to take academic risks. Finally, 7.47% of students stressed the importance of considering students' emotional and psychological well-being when giving feedback, to ensure that it supports rather than harms their motivation and mental health. Altogether, these suggestions highlight a strong student desire for feedback that is meaningful, compassionate, and growth-oriented

Discussions

According to the first research question (what feedback approaches and methods are popular for teachers teaching English as a foreign language?), the results indicate that oral and general feedback types are popular among EFL teachers which is a characteristic of the traditional classroom. Nonetheless, it seems that written and digital feedback methods are used much less. The use of different forms of feedback was well perceived by students who acknowledged its role in improving academic achievements. Interestingly, they favored the option of having individual feedback communicated to them privately as opposed to making general remarks in the presence of their classmates. It supports the importance of the personalized approach to the feedback practices, because it could help establishing a less threatening and more supportive learning process. These results can be compared with the ones obtained by Hyland and Hyland (2006) as the authors state that an effective feedback must be context-sensitive and individualized to the needs of students.

Regarding the second research question (What are the viewpoints students have towards the feedback provided by their EFL teachers?), the results consist of a generally moderate positive view of the feedback that the students receive by their EFL teachers. Though they understand the effort put in by instructors, they want more consistency, clarity, and timely nature of the feedback process. All these different answers indicate that, as much as students treasure feedback, experiences vary according to the mode and time of offering feedback. This correlates with previous research conducted by Carless and Boud (2018) who claim that effective feedback should be timely, specific, and constructive to engage students and help them improve. Therefore, the results indicate that though the existing feedback procedure is partially efficient, students want more formal and personalized feedback.

Concerning the third research question (how similar or different are EFL teachers in the way they deliver feedback?), the results reveal that there is a perceptible lack of consistency in the way teachers give feedback to students. Whereas various teachers may provide timely, concrete, and effective feedback, others might be vague or slow, which can disorient and irritate the students. This difference implies the absence of a common strategy, which can provide students with unequal opportunities to learn. Hence more standardized practices of feedback are required to enhance fairness, clarity and productive learning. Consistency in providing the feedback, As Hattie and Timperley (2007) claim, is essential to improve the effect of feedback on student learning and to make sure that all students can profit equally on instructional assistance.

According to the fourth research question (What challenges do students face while receiving feedback?), the results demonstrate that there are various issues concerning feedback delivery, clarity, and emotional effect that students experience when receiving feedback. In regard to feedback, many students noted that they would prefer more individual and personal feedback as sometimes feedback given in front of others can be uncomfortable and does not allow the person to be truthful in their reflections. They even mentioned that the feedback is sometimes too short or too general, so it is not clear what to do better. The absence of particular examples and definite explanations also restricts their chances to implement the feedback properly. Also, students marked that supportive and respectful tone is of high importance, and some students noted that harsh or too critical remarks may ruin the motivation and stir up anxiety. The affective and psychological sides of feedback were pointed out as well; students demanded more motivation and appreciation of their achievements throughout the time. These problems contribute to the stance of Henderson et al. (2019) that feedback must be emotional agile and dialogic and the assertion of Winstone et al. (2017) that creating a psychologically secure environment is a requirement to effective feedback.

Conclusion

This paper identified the importance of effective feedback in aiding the academic growth of students in universities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The results indicate that students value different types of feedback, particularly, personalized and privately delivered feedback, which they consider more helpful and encouraging. Nonetheless, the fact that different teachers provide feedback in a different way is still a significant issue, which is why more uniform and unbiased approaches to providing feedback are necessary. The paper has also determined the major issues that students have when it comes to receiving feedback including time constraints, bias, shyness and the awkwardness of getting feedback in front of other people. By dealing with them, one could make the learning process more positive and fairer.

References:

Ahrens, A., & Zaščerinska, J. (2015). Principles of sampling in educational research in higher education. In *Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference Society, Integration, Education* (Vol. 1, pp. 25–35).

Alharbi, B. (2021). Feedback to EFL learners' writing: An investigation of teachers and students' perceptions at a Saudi University. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, *5*(S1), 1671–1683.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, *5*(1), 7–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969595980050102

Boud, D., & Molloy, E. (2012). Rethinking models of feedback for learning: The challenge of design. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *38*(6), 698–712. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2012.691462

Brookhart, S. M. (2008). *How to give effective feedback to your students*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Carless, D., & Boud, D. (2018). The development of student feedback literacy: Enabling uptake of feedback. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *43*(8), 1315–1325. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2018.1463354

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.). Routledge.

Davis, K., & Lee, J. (2019). Differentiated feedback strategies: Addressing individual student needs in diverse classroom contexts. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *86*, 102–115.

Delice, A. (2010). The sampling issues in quantitative research. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, *10*(4), 2001–2018.

Deeley, S. J. (2018) 'Using technology to facilitate effective assessment for learning and feedback in higher education', *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 43(3), pp. 439–448. doi: 10.1080/02602938.2017.1356906.

Evans, C. (2013). Making sense of assessment feedback in higher education. *Review of Educational Research*, *83*(1), 70–120. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654312474350

Field, A. (2009). *Discovering statistics using SPSS* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Gray, D. E. (2009). *Doing research in the real world* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching* (3rd ed.). Longman.

Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, *77*(1), 81–112. https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487

Henderson, M., Phillips, M., Ryan, T., Boud, D., Dawson, P., Molloy, E., & Mahoney, P. (2019). Conditions that enable effective feedback. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *38*(7), 1401–1416. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2019.1657807

Hyland, F., & Hyland, K. (2006). Feedback on second language students' writing. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Eds.), *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues* (pp. 3–33). Cambridge University Press.

Liu, N. F., & Carless, D. (2006). Peer feedback: The learning element of peer assessment. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *11*(3), 279–290. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510600680582

Nicol, D. J., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, *31*(2), 199–218. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070600572090

Price, M., Handley, K., Millar, J., & O'Donovan, B. (2010). Feedback: All that effort, but what is the effect? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *35*(3), 277–289. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930903541007

Sadler, D. R. (2010). Beyond feedback: Developing student capability in complex appraisal. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *35*(5), 535–550. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930903541015

Shute, V. J. (2008). Focus on formative feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, *78*(1), 153–189. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654307313795

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

Wiggins, G. (2012). Seven keys to effective feedback. *Educational Leadership*, *70*(1), 10–16.

Wiliam, D. (2011). *Embedded formative assessment*. Solution Tree Press.

Williams, A. (2024). Delivering effective student feedback in higher education: An evaluation of the challenges and best practice. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science*, *10*(2), 473–501. https://doi.org/10.46328/ijres.3139

Winstone, N. E., Nash, R. A., Parker, M., & Rowntree, J. (2017). Supporting learners' agentic engagement with feedback: A systematic review and a taxonomy of recipience processes. *Educational Psychologist*, *52*(1), 17–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2016.1207538

Vattøy, K.D. and Smith, K., 2019. Students' perceptions of teachers' feedback practice in teaching English as a foreign language. Teaching and Teacher Education, 85, pp.260–268.

Zimmerman, B. J. (2002). Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview. *Theory into Practice*, *41*(2), 64–70. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4102_2