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Exploring EFL Teachers' Feedback in Teaching English Language Proficiency at Peduli Anak Foundation

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Abstrak

Umpan balik guru memiliki peran penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL), terutama dalam membantu siswa memahami kesalahan, meningkatkan partisipasi, dan mengembangkan ketepatan penggunaan bahasa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi jenis, fungsi, cara penyampaian, dan waktu pemberian umpan balik oleh guru bahasa Inggris di Peduli Anak Foundation sebagai lembaga pendidikan nonformal. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus yang melibatkan dua guru bahasa Inggris yang mengajar siswa kelas VIII pada tahun akademik 2025/2026. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas nonpartisipan dan wawancara semi-terstruktur, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru pertama lebih dominan menggunakan umpan balik positif, korektif implisit, dan deskriptif untuk mendorong motivasi, partisipasi aktif, serta kemampuan siswa memperbaiki kesalahan secara mandiri. Sebaliknya, guru kedua lebih dominan menggunakan umpan balik korektif eksplisit dan deskriptif untuk memberikan koreksi langsung serta memperjelas aturan tata bahasa dan pengucapan. Umpan balik terutama disampaikan secara lisan selama kegiatan pembelajaran dan pada akhir pembelajaran, dengan dukungan isyarat nonverbal serta umpan balik tertulis secara terbatas. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kedua guru menerapkan strategi umpan balik yang berbeda sesuai dengan pendekatan pengajaran masing-masing. Variasi umpan balik tersebut berperan dalam mendukung keterlibatan siswa, pemahaman terhadap kesalahan, dan ketepatan penggunaan bahasa Inggris dalam konteks pendidikan nonformal.

Kata kunci: umpan balik guru EFL; pembelajaran bahasa Inggris; umpan balik korektif; studi kasus kualitatif; pendidikan nonformal

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Abstract

Teacher feedback plays an important role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, particularly in helping students recognize errors, increase classroom participation, and develop language accuracy. This study aimed to explore the types, functions, delivery methods, and timing of feedback provided by EFL teachers at Peduli Anak Foundation, a non-formal educational institution. A qualitative case study design was employed involving two EFL teachers who taught eighth-grade students during the 2025/2026 academic year. Data were collected through non-participant classroom observations and semi-structured interviews and subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the first teacher predominantly employed positive feedback, implicit corrective feedback, and descriptive feedback to encourage motivation, active participation, and students' ability to correct their own errors. In contrast, the second teacher primarily utilized explicit corrective feedback and descriptive feedback to provide direct corrections and clarify grammatical rules and pronunciation. Feedback was mainly delivered orally during classroom activities and at the end of lessons, supported by non-verbal cues and limited written feedback. The study concluded that both teachers implemented different feedback strategies reflecting their respective instructional approaches. These variations in feedback practices played a role in supporting student engagement, error awareness, and language accuracy in English learning within a non-formal educational setting.

Keywords: EFL teacher feedback; English language learning; corrective feedback; qualitative case study; non-formal education

INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching plays an important role in developing learners' ability to communicate effectively in English, particularly in educational environments where opportunities to use the language outside the classroom are limited. Developing English language proficiency requires not only appropriate instructional strategies but also meaningful interactions between teachers and students throughout the learning process. One essential component of these interactions is teacher feedback, which helps learners recognize their strengths, identify language errors, and understand how to improve their performance. Feedback serves both instructional and motivational purposes because it provides guidance while encouraging students to participate actively in learning activities. Vattøy and Smith (2019) emphasized that students perceive feedback as more

meaningful when they understand their learning goals and recognize its relevance to their academic development. Similarly, Wisniewski et al. (2020) demonstrated that feedback can positively influence learning outcomes, although its effectiveness varies according to the information provided and the conditions in which it is delivered. In EFL classrooms, feedback is particularly important because learners frequently encounter difficulties involving grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Therefore, teachers need to provide clear, constructive, and supportive feedback that responds to students' individual learning needs and promotes continuous language development.

Teacher feedback is not limited to identifying incorrect answers but also involves providing explanations, encouragement, and opportunities for learners to reflect on their language performance. The effectiveness of feedback depends on several factors, including its type, clarity, timing, delivery, and relationship to students' learning objectives. Feedback may be delivered explicitly through direct correction and explanation or implicitly through reformulation, clarification requests, and guiding questions that encourage learners to recognize their own mistakes. Ellis (2017) explained that oral corrective feedback is an important aspect of second language instruction because it draws learners' attention to linguistic errors during classroom communication. Furthermore, Lyster et al. (2013) highlighted the pedagogical importance of corrective feedback in facilitating second language development, particularly when learners are encouraged to notice and respond to corrections. Beyond linguistic accuracy, the interpersonal dimension of feedback also deserves attention. Carless and Boud (2018) argued that effective feedback requires learners to understand, interpret, and use information to improve their subsequent performance. This perspective suggests that feedback should be viewed as an interactive learning process rather than simply a one-way transmission of information from teachers to students. Consequently, EFL teachers need to consider how their feedback strategies influence students' understanding, confidence, and classroom participation.

Previous research has demonstrated the importance of teacher feedback in supporting EFL learning, particularly in improving students' writing performance and their understanding of language errors. Hanan et al. (2022) investigated EFL teachers' written feedback in a senior high school context and identified difficulties related to feedback clarity,

specificity, and constructive guidance. Similarly, Arrafii & Kasyfurrahman (2024) examined university students' perceptions of written feedback and reported that students generally valued feedback, although indirect comments without sufficient explanation could create confusion. Sandiarsa & Firman (2024) also explored teachers' and students' perceptions of written corrective feedback in a blended learning environment and highlighted the importance of timely and understandable feedback. These studies indicate that feedback quality and delivery influence how learners interpret and respond to teachers' comments. In a broader educational context, Vattøy and Smith (2019) found that students' perceptions of teacher feedback were associated with motivational and self-regulatory factors. Nevertheless, the three studies reviewed in primarily addressed written feedback in formal educational institutions. Their findings provide a valuable foundation for understanding feedback practices but leave room for further investigation into how teachers provide oral feedback during naturally occurring classroom interactions, particularly in non-formal EFL educational settings.

The limited attention given to teacher feedback in non-formal educational institutions represents an important contextual gap that deserves further investigation. Unlike conventional school environments, non-formal educational settings may involve learners with diverse educational experiences, different levels of English proficiency, and varying needs for instructional support. Such conditions require teachers to adjust their feedback strategies according to students' understanding, classroom participation, and language learning difficulties. Peduli Anak Foundation provides a relevant context for examining these practices because English instruction takes place within a non-formal educational environment that supports learners from different socio-educational backgrounds. In this context, feedback may involve positive reinforcement, explicit correction, implicit correction, and descriptive explanations provided during or after classroom activities. Ellis (2017) emphasized the importance of understanding corrective feedback as part of classroom language learning, while Carless and Boud (2018) highlighted the need to consider how learners interpret and use feedback to improve their performance. However, the available studies discussed do not sufficiently explain how different forms of oral feedback are selected, delivered, and timed by EFL teachers in a foundation-based

learning environment. This gap establishes the need for a context-specific investigation of teachers' actual feedback practices, rather than focusing exclusively on written correction or students' perceptions of feedback.

To address this gap, the present study aimed to explore EFL teachers' feedback practices in teaching English language proficiency at Peduli Anak Foundation. Specifically, the study investigated the types of feedback employed by teachers, the pedagogical functions of their feedback, the ways feedback was delivered, and the timing of feedback during classroom instruction. Particular attention was given to oral feedback, including positive feedback, explicit and implicit corrective feedback, and descriptive feedback, as these forms are directly related to classroom interaction and students' language learning experiences. Using a qualitative case study approach involving two EFL teachers who taught eighth-grade students, the study examined how feedback was implemented in everyday English lessons and how teachers adapted their responses to students' learning needs. By focusing on teachers' actual classroom practices, the research sought to provide a more detailed understanding of feedback in a non-formal educational context. The findings were expected to contribute to the existing literature on EFL teacher feedback and offer practical insights for teachers seeking to develop supportive, responsive, and meaningful feedback practices. Rather than measuring changes in students' English proficiency, the study focused on describing and interpreting how feedback was provided to support language learning.

METODE

This study employed a qualitative research design with a case study approach to explore English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' feedback practices in teaching English language proficiency at Peduli Anak Foundation. A qualitative case study was considered appropriate because it enabled an in-depth investigation of teachers' feedback practices within a real classroom context. As explained by Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research facilitates an understanding of individuals' experiences, behaviors, and interactions in natural settings. Furthermore, Yin (2018) emphasized that case study research allows researchers to investigate contemporary phenomena within their real-life contexts.

The participants consisted of two EFL teachers who taught eighth-grade students at Peduli Anak Foundation during the 2025/2026 academic year. The participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement in English language instruction and their active use of feedback during classroom activities. This sampling technique was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to select participants who could provide relevant and detailed information about the phenomenon being investigated (Campbell et al., 2020).

Data were collected through non-participant classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Classroom observation served as the primary data collection technique, allowing the researcher to examine teachers' feedback practices without participating in classroom activities. An observation sheet was used to record feedback types, delivery methods, timing, linguistic focus, and students' responses. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both teachers to obtain additional information about their feedback strategies, perceptions, and instructional considerations. These interviews also helped clarify the practices identified during classroom observations. According to DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019), semi-structured interviews provide flexibility for exploring participants' experiences while maintaining consistency with the research objectives.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the approach described by Braun and Clarke (2022). The analysis involved familiarizing the researcher with observation notes and interview transcripts, identifying meaningful data segments, generating initial codes, developing and reviewing themes, and interpreting the findings. The analysis focused on feedback types, delivery methods, timing, linguistic focus, and students' responses. To strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings, information obtained from classroom observations was compared with teachers' interview responses through data triangulation. This procedure helped establish consistency between the observed classroom practices and the participants' explanations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The study investigated EFL teachers' feedback practices at Peduli Anak Foundation, a

non-formal educational institution, involving two English teachers who taught eighth-grade students during the 2025/2026 academic year. Data were collected through non-participant classroom observations and semi-structured interviews and analyzed thematically. The findings revealed differences in the types, delivery, and timing of feedback employed by the two teachers.

Types and Functions of Teacher Feedback

The findings showed that Teacher 1 predominantly employed positive feedback, implicit corrective feedback, and descriptive feedback. Positive feedback was the most frequently observed type, particularly during interactive activities involving games, group work, and video-based comparisons. Expressions such as "Good job!" and "Alright!" were used to acknowledge students' correct responses and encourage participation. Classroom observations indicated that students responded positively by smiling, raising their hands, and becoming more willing to participate in subsequent activities.

Teacher 1 also employed implicit corrective feedback to encourage students to recognize and correct grammatical errors independently. During activities involving comparative adjectives, students were guided to identify appropriate forms such as bigger, taller, and happier through questioning and collaborative activities rather than direct correction. This approach was supported by the teacher's interview statement:

"I did not correct them directly. The correction happened through the game, so they thought and discovered it by themselves."

In contrast, Teacher 2 predominantly used explicit corrective feedback and descriptive feedback, with positive feedback serving a supporting role. Explicit correction was particularly evident when students produced incorrect comparative and superlative forms. For example, when a student used "more big," the teacher immediately corrected the expression by saying, "Not 'more big', but 'bigger'." Similar corrections were provided when students incorrectly combined most with the superlative suffix -est.

Teacher 2 also provided grammatical explanations to clarify the rules underlying correct

language forms. Students were observed revising their sentences after receiving these explanations. The teacher emphasized the importance of understanding grammatical rules rather than simply memorizing correct answers.

Comparison of Feedback Practices

Table 1 summarizes the main findings from the classroom observations and interviews.

Table 1. Comparison of EFL Teachers' Feedback Practices

Aspect	Teacher 1	Teacher 2
Dominant feedback	Positive and implicit corrective	Explicit corrective
Additional feedback	Descriptive	Descriptive and positive
Main purpose	Encourage participation and self-correction	Clarify errors and grammatical rules
Delivery	Mainly oral, supported by non-verbal and limited written feedback	Mainly oral, supported by non-verbal cues
Timing	During and after activities	During and after activities
Instructional focus	Comparative forms, engagement, and independent discovery	Comparative and superlative forms, grammatical accuracy
Observed student responses	Smiling, participation, peer discussion, and self-correction attempts	Sentence revision, attention, and responses to corrections

Feedback Delivery and Timing

Both teachers primarily delivered feedback orally, although their approaches differed. Teacher 1 combined verbal encouragement with non-verbal expressions, including

smiling, nodding, and clapping. Limited written feedback was also provided when checking students' worksheets, particularly through individualized assistance for learners who required additional support.

Teacher 2 relied more heavily on direct oral correction during sentence construction, reading activities, and classroom questioning. Non-verbal cues, such as nodding and facial expressions, were used to reinforce verbal responses. Written feedback was not identified as a significant component of Teacher 2's observed practice.

Regarding timing, both teachers provided feedback during and after classroom activities. Teacher 1 emphasized encouragement during activities and reflection at the end of lessons. Meanwhile, Teacher 2 prioritized immediate error correction, followed by a review of common grammatical mistakes at the end of instruction.

These findings indicate that the two teachers adopted different but complementary approaches. Teacher 1 placed greater emphasis on maintaining students' confidence and participation, whereas Teacher 2 emphasized grammatical clarification and immediate correction. Importantly, the observed student responses demonstrate classroom engagement and short-term correction rather than independently measured improvements in English language proficiency.

Discussion

The findings revealed that both EFL teachers at Peduli Anak Foundation employed different feedback strategies according to their instructional priorities and students' learning needs. Teacher 1 emphasized positive reinforcement and implicit correction to encourage participation and independent learning, whereas Teacher 2 prioritized explicit correction and grammatical explanations to improve students' understanding of language forms. These findings suggest that feedback in EFL classrooms serves both motivational and instructional functions. This interpretation is consistent with Wisniewski et al. (2020), who demonstrated that the effectiveness of feedback depends on its content and instructional context rather than simply its frequency.

Teacher 1's use of positive feedback appeared to create an encouraging learning

environment in which students were more willing to participate in classroom activities. Expressions such as "Good job!" and "Alright!" were accompanied by supportive gestures and interactive learning tasks. These findings are consistent with Vattøy and Smith (2019), who emphasized the importance of students' perceptions of teacher feedback in EFL learning. Furthermore, the findings can be interpreted through Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, particularly the concept of scaffolding, in which teachers provide assistance that enables students to complete tasks beyond their independent abilities. Through guided questions and games, Teacher 1 encouraged students to discover appropriate grammatical forms rather than depending entirely on direct correction.

In contrast, Teacher 2 demonstrated a stronger preference for explicit corrective feedback, particularly when addressing grammatical errors involving comparative and superlative adjectives. By identifying incorrect expressions and explaining the appropriate grammatical rules, the teacher provided clear information that students could immediately apply to their sentences. This finding corresponds with the feedback principles discussed by Wisniewski et al. (2020), who found that informative feedback can support learning by helping students recognize errors and develop more accurate understanding. The observed sentence revisions suggest that explicit correction helped students respond to grammatical difficulties during the lessons, although longer-term improvement was not assessed.

Another important finding concerned the use of descriptive feedback. Both teachers provided explanations and guidance, although Teacher 1 integrated them into interactive activities while Teacher 2 delivered more direct grammatical clarification. These practices are relevant to Carless and Boud's (2018) concept of feedback literacy, which emphasizes learners' ability to understand feedback, make judgments about their performance, and take appropriate action. In this study, students demonstrated initial feedback engagement through self-correction attempts, sentence revision, and classroom discussion. Nevertheless, these behaviors should be interpreted as immediate responses rather than evidence of sustained feedback literacy development.

Regarding feedback delivery, oral feedback was the dominant approach used by both teachers. Teacher 1 combined oral feedback with non-verbal encouragement and limited written comments, whereas Teacher 2 primarily used direct verbal explanations and corrections. These findings indicate that oral feedback was particularly suitable for the observed classroom activities because it allowed teachers to respond immediately to students' language production. The results also relate to Sandiarsa & Firman (2024), whose study highlighted the importance of timely and understandable corrective feedback. Although their research focused on written corrective feedback in a blended learning environment, both studies emphasize the value of clarity and accessibility in supporting students' responses to feedback.

The timing of feedback also played an important role in both classrooms. Teacher 1 provided immediate encouragement during interactive activities and reflective feedback at the end of lessons. Teacher 2 frequently corrected errors as they occurred and subsequently reviewed common mistakes. This combination of immediate and delayed feedback provided opportunities for students to recognize errors during language production and revisit important grammatical rules after completing classroom activities. These findings are consistent with the broader argument of Wisniewski et al. (2020) that feedback effectiveness depends on the quality and relevance of the information communicated to learners.

The findings also extend the discussion of previous EFL feedback studies. Hanan et al. (2022), Arrafii & Kasyfurrahman (2024), and Sandiarsa & Firman (2024) primarily examined written feedback in formal educational contexts. In contrast, the present study focused on oral feedback during classroom interaction in a non-formal educational institution. This contextual difference highlights the importance of considering learners' characteristics, instructional activities, and classroom environments when selecting feedback strategies. Rather than relying exclusively on implicit or explicit correction, teachers may benefit from combining motivational encouragement with clear grammatical explanations according to students' needs.

Overall, the findings suggest that positive, implicit corrective, explicit corrective, and

descriptive feedback can serve complementary functions in EFL instruction. Teacher 1's approach was associated with active participation and opportunities for self-correction, while Teacher 2's approach supported immediate grammatical clarification and sentence revision. These observations indicate that flexible feedback practices may help teachers address both students' emotional engagement and linguistic needs. However, because this qualitative study involved only two teachers and did not include standardized proficiency assessments, its findings cannot establish the comparative effectiveness of the two approaches or demonstrate measurable gains in English language proficiency.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that EFL teachers at Peduli Anak Foundation apply different types of feedback to support students' English language learning. Teacher 1 predominantly uses positive feedback, implicit corrective feedback, and descriptive feedback to encourage participation, build confidence, and promote self-correction. In contrast, Teacher 2 mainly uses explicit corrective feedback and descriptive feedback to address grammatical errors, clarify language rules, and improve students' understanding of correct language forms. Both teachers primarily deliver feedback orally, supported by non-verbal expressions, while feedback is provided during classroom activities and at the end of lessons. These findings indicate that teachers adapt their feedback strategies to instructional objectives and students' learning needs. Overall, teacher feedback serves both motivational and corrective functions in supporting classroom engagement and language accuracy in this non-formal educational setting.

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