

## Cultural Differences in Feedback Practice Between EFL and ESL Pre-service Teachers in ELT Context: A Literature Review

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### Abstract

This literature review investigates how cultural contexts shape feedback practices among pre-service teachers in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) settings. Feedback plays a crucial role in language learning and teacher professional development by supporting reflection, error correction, and pedagogical improvement. Previous studies have explored corrective feedback, peer and teacher feedback, and pre-service teachers' perceptions of feedback; however, limited attention has been given to how sociocultural backgrounds influence feedback practices across EFL and ESL contexts. Drawing on recent studies, this review identifies key differences between the two settings. In EFL contexts, feedback practices tend to emphasize teaching performance, pedagogical reflection, and instructional delivery, with pre-service teachers showing stronger preference for teacher feedback due to perceptions of credibility and authority. In contrast, ESL contexts place greater emphasis on corrective feedback practices, particularly in supporting students' language production through direct written correction. The review argues that sociocultural and educational environments significantly shape how feedback is provided, interpreted, and utilized by pre-service teachers. The study highlights the need for further comparative research on culturally influenced feedback practices to support more context-sensitive teacher education programs.

**Keywords:** *corrective feedback; EFL; English Language Teaching; ESL; feedback practices; peer feedback; pre-service teachers; sociocultural factors; teacher education; teacher feedback*

### INTRODUCTION

The act of providing and receiving feedback has long been an indispensable component in many contexts, including teaching and learning processes. Feedback not only functions as a means to evaluate specific points, but also to identify flaws and

formulate plans for improvement. In language learning, feedback is also frequently used by teachers as a way to manage learners' mistakes in using their target language. This is particularly important since it allows learners to identify their errors while also offering them a clear direction for improvement (Fatima et al., 2024). However, learners need to understand, accept and act upon feedback proactively on top of receiving feedback for the feedback to be productive (Fuentes-Cimma et al., 2024). Within the context of English Language Teaching (ELT), feedback from a more knowledgeable individual plays an essential role for teachers and students alike, and it serves as an especially vital role for pre-service teachers' professional development.

In the field of ELT, the practicum is considered a crucial stage in the preparation of future language teachers (Smith, 2010). During this stage, pre-service teachers have the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in real classroom settings while receiving guidance from supervisors after they have received feedback from fellow pre-service teachers during teaching demonstrations. Several previous studies have suggested that feedback practice in both English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) countries is a major factor in shaping pre-service teachers' pedagogical skills and reflective abilities. Among the various practices performed in EFL classrooms, corrective feedback has been shown to contribute to teachers' professional development by increasing their awareness of students' errors and promoting more reflective instructional practices, although this represents only one of several feedback dimensions emphasized in EFL settings, alongside a broader focus on pedagogical reflection and instructional delivery (Nurfaidah et al., 2024). In ESL settings, written corrective feedback is considered essential for enhancing the writing abilities of both learners in general and pre-service teachers, as it provides them with meaningful information about their current performance and supports their ongoing development (Jatoi & Kabilan, 2025). Due to the pre-service teachers' limited teaching practice opportunities, however, they may be uncertain about how to provide effective feedback when they assume their roles as professional teachers.

Despite numerous studies examining feedback practices in pre-service teacher education, these studies form a cluster based on three main strands. Studies on corrective feedback in language classrooms have consistently shown that structured feedback improves pre-service teachers' error awareness and encourages more reflective instructional practices (Nurfaidah et al., 2024; Li & Qing, 2026; Rkiki et al., 2025). Building on this, the second strand is related to pre-service teachers' beliefs and

perceptions of feedback, which illustrates that how teachers interpret and internalize feedback shapes whether it translates into actual practice improvement (Abdelhalim & Alsahil, 2025). A third, more recent strand has examined teacher and peer feedback as tools for fostering collaboration and reflective practice, suggesting that feedback exchanged among peers can be as developmentally valuable as feedback from supervisors (Yildirim, 2026). Taken together, this body of work establishes that feedback, whether corrective, evaluative, or peer-based, is a consistent driver of pre-service teachers' reflective and pedagogical growth. However, these studies share a common limitation: they examine feedback practices within single, culturally homogeneous settings, treating feedback as culturally neutral in both the function and reception. This gap is particularly significant in light of the findings that individuals' prior assessment, cultural background and feedback histories influence how they recognise, understand, and utilise feedback in new educational environments (Rovagnati et al., 2022). While feedback is widely acknowledged as a foundational element of both language learning and teacher development and is known to be influenced by cultural factors, research comparing how these culturally influenced feedback practices differ among pre-service teachers in EFL and ESL contexts remains underexplored. Up to the present day, studies that directly compare how pre-service teachers in EFL and ESL settings both receive and provide feedback within the same practicum-based framework is still lacking, which becomes a gap this study addresses. Further research is essential, as differences between these contexts may affect how feedback is provided, interpreted, and utilized by pre-service teachers.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the cultural differences in feedback practices between EFL and ESL pre-service teachers within the ELT context. Understanding these differences matters because teacher education programs increasingly train and supervise pre-service teachers across culturally diverse and international settings. Without a clear picture of how cultural context shapes feedback practices, supervisors and teacher educators risk applying uniform feedback protocols that may not be effective across different settings. Specifically, the study investigates how pre-service teachers from these different educational environments provide and interpret feedback during their teaching practicum. By comparing these contexts, the study aims to provide insights into how cultural factors influence feedback practices and how such differences may affect pre-service teachers' professional development. In particular, it

examines how pre-service teachers receive feedback from their teacher advisors and how they subsequently provide feedback to their students during practicum teaching. To meet this objective, this study adopts a conceptual, literature-based approach to systematically synthesize and compare existing empirical and theoretical studies on feedback practices in EFL and ESL pre-service teacher education in order to construct a comparative understanding of how cultural context shapes the giving and receiving of feedback during practicum.

## **FEEDBACK PRACTICES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

Feedback, defined as either written or spoken response for evaluation purposes regarding an individual's production performance (Heine & Vesterager, 2024), has been widely known as one of the factors that contributed to the development of language learning, especially in English Language Teaching (ELT). With the central objective of mending mistakes made by learners, feedback practice remains a relevant process in enhancing learners' skills (Sohail et al., 2026). Narciss and Huth (2004) asserted that the value of feedback is constructed out of three aspects which are the function (cognitive, meta-cognitive, or motivational), the content (evaluative component and informative component such as hints, cues and explanations), and the presentation (timing, schedule, adaptivity). In relation to academic performance, research has shown that exposure to instructional feedback can support higher academic performance and improve learners' ability to distinguish errors to polish their language competence (Isnani & Hapsari, 2026; Jiao et al., 2026; Sohail et al., 2026). Meanwhile, other studies suggested that constructive feedback plays a role in learners' development, particularly in terms of motivation, self-efficacy, and engagement (Ali et al, 2026; Imsa-ard & Barrot, 2026; Iqbal et al, 2026). As indicated by Hyland and Hyland (2006), feedback is more than just a form of correction as it is a social and pedagogical process that impacts the way learners learn and revise.

Feedback appears in a variety of typology, source and strategies. Feedback types can be classified based on what kind of feedback is given or who provides the feedback (Panadero & Lipnevich, 2022). For example, feedback may be explicit or implicit depending on how clearly learners are informed about the errors in their performance. In addition, it can also come from different sources namely teacher feedback, peer feedback, self-feedback and automated feedback, all of which have a different degree of contribution to learners' development. On the other hand, feedback strategies

consist of corrective and non corrective feedback, as well as direct and indirect feedback (Ismail et al., 2008). In the case of corrective feedback, the practice focuses on identifying and addressing errors, while non corrective feedback simply provides either comments, suggestions, or encouragement without direct correction.

The effectiveness of feedback varies, determined by several pedagogical and contextual factors (Alghazo, 2026). A research by Sari and Han (2024) indicated that combined automated-teacher feedback was found to be more effective than the conventional teacher-only feedback in terms of enhancing learners' self-efficacy and performance. These findings highlight that the effectiveness of feedback is influenced by the method of delivery and the quality of its implementation. Similarly, further study suggests that teachers' professional development influences the effectiveness of feedback implementation (Tesfaye et al., 2025). Nevertheless, several challenges remain in feedback implementation. In peer feedback contexts, for instance, comments may be inaccurate or may create social discomfort among learners (Isnani & Hapsari, 2026). In other cases, research demonstrated that teacher mediation is still at the center stage as it provides more effective scaffolding when compared to peer feedback (Ali et al, 2026). Given these considerations, there are several aspects that need to be taken into account when determining the most appropriate approach for feedback.

### **PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' FEEDBACK PRACTICE IN EFL AND ESL CONTEXTS**

As a teacher candidate, pre-service teachers are involved with feedback practice during the micro teaching practices and practicum stage for the purpose of facilitating pre-service teachers in working collaboratively and understanding their teaching practices in depth in a supportive environment (Yildirim, 2026). In these contexts, feedback is used to support reflection and professional development of pre-service teachers and is generally practiced through teacher feedback and peer feedback after they have conducted either teaching simulations, lesson planning activities, oral presentations, or classroom teaching. Some past studies consistently demonstrated that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pre-service teachers tend to value teacher feedback more compared to peer feedback because it is often perceived as professional, reliable, and detailed, indicating that the teachers' authority and doubts about peers' credibility may influence how feedback is accepted (Erdemir & Yeşilçınar, 2021; Yiğitoğlu-Aptoula, 2021; Fki, 2023). In contrast to that, peer feedback is not quite

as valued due to pre-service teachers perceiving it as less objective, overly positive, and in some cases, lacking professional depth due to emotional and cultural concerns related to criticizing peers (Bader et al., 2024). The form of feedback received by EFL pre-service teachers differs depending on the activities they performed. In cases where they performed in speaking-oriented activities such as microteaching, oral instruction, or classroom performance evaluation, the feedback is commonly delivered orally through direct comments and discussions because immediate interaction allows pre-service teachers to reflect on their instructional performance more collaboratively and efficiently. In addition to that, the feedback focuses on instructional delivery, teaching strategies, classroom management, and the effectiveness of pedagogical practices. Meanwhile, in activities involving the creation of lesson plans, written feedback is typically provided instead (Cavanagh & Tran, 2025).

While feedback practices among EFL pre-service teachers are often associated with reflection on teaching performance and pedagogical development, feedback practices in ESL contexts additionally emphasize how pre-service teachers provide corrective feedback to support students' language learning. Hyland and Hyland (2019) stated that providing feedback to students is unmistakably a part of teaching English, whether it is English as a second or foreign language. More specifically, pre-service teachers situated in English as a Second Language (ESL) country are found to be more inclined to provide corrective feedback in written activities, specifically by utilizing direct correction strategies to address students' errors (Guénette & Lyster, 2013). The use of direct correction itself was found to remain consistent regardless of the types of errors in students' work (Guénette & Lyster, 2013). Similarly, a study related to ESL pre-service teachers showed that they tended to rely heavily on direct corrective feedback approaches rather than indirect ones due to limited training and high workloads (Jatoi & Kabilan, 2025). Although ESL pre-service teachers sometimes focus on lower-order writing concerns such as grammar, spelling, and word choice, one study revealed that they pay greater attention to higher-order aspects for students with stronger writing skills, namely content development and organization (Vögelin & Keller, 2021). Nevertheless, despite the widespread use of corrective feedback, ESL pre-service teachers often experienced tensions between their theoretical understanding of effective feedback and their actual classroom practices (Guénette & Lyster, 2013). Therefore, it is necessary for pre-service teachers to engage in more reflective

opportunities and teacher training programs to help them critically evaluate and improve their corrective feedback practices.

In sum, several past studies provided insights that the feedback practices among pre-service teachers vary across EFL and ESL contexts depending on their feedback culture (Guénette & Lyster, 2013; Vögelin & Keller, 2021; Yildirim, 2026). In EFL contexts, feedback practices are commonly associated with reflection on teaching performance, instructional delivery, and pedagogical development, whereas feedback practices in ESL contexts are centered on corrective feedback and students' language production. These findings suggest that sociocultural and educational contexts may influence the purposes and focus of feedback practices among pre-service teachers. However, the existing findings remain insufficient to determine the extent to which differences in EFL and ESL contexts shape feedback preferences and practices among pre-service teachers. Therefore, further examination related to sociocultural factors for pre-service teachers is necessary to understand better how feedback practices between pre-service teachers from different backgrounds are constructed.

## **SOCIOCULTURAL INFLUENCE ON FEEDBACK PRACTICE**

In Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development (SCT), learning is introduced as a social activity that is inherent with learners' cultural and societal contexts in interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). An integral element within this theory includes the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which depicts that learners are considered apprentices who gain knowledge and skills through interactions with people who are more knowledgeable (Yusof, 2021). In accordance with the theory's view of learning as a process mediated by social activity, feedback is not merely an individualized exchange of information as it is also influenced by social and cultural factors (Fuentes-Cimma et al., 2024). Fuentes-Cimma et al. (2024) further conceptualize this through three connected layers: the feedback encounter layer, shaped by participant interactions and knowledge resources; the course design layer, which frames feedback opportunities through structured teaching elements; and the knowledge domain layer, which highlights how cultural tools, social conventions, and contextual factors collectively influence feedback practices. Consequently, whether feedback proves effective depends on the degree to which students, teachers, and their sociocultural environment engage in productive interaction (Esterhazy, 2019).

This demonstrates that sociocultural factors are not merely background conditions since they actively shape how learners engage in pedagogical practices.

According to Hyland and Hyland (2006), Feedback is shaped by institutional and cultural contexts of teachers and learners which influence the formats of feedback that are practiced. On a similar note, Hofstede (2011) found that cultural dimensions such as power distance and individualism-collectivism play a significant role in shaping the feedback formats that are considered appropriate within educational contexts. In accordance to power distance and teacher feedback, higher power distance means greater acceptance of social and economic inequalities, which results in learners accepting social order as natural and not requiring further justification when faced with teacher who has higher power distance. The aforementioned cultural essence is magnified by Lortie (1975, as cited in Borg, 2004)'s apprenticeship of observation, by which novice teachers tend to revert to the feedback models they have absorbed as learners, therefore applying a conservative pressure on the teaching profession. Given that pre-service teachers from high power distance or collectivist societies would have experienced predominantly directive and evaluative feedback throughout their learning phase, similar feedback models are likely to resurface in their own teaching practice (Hofstede, 2011). This has particular implications for comparing ESL and EFL pre-service teachers, whose divergent sociocultural learning histories may produce fundamentally different feedback performance despite undergoing the same professional training with shared values; therefore, further discussion on teacher feedback that is influenced by sociocultural perspectives is essential to understand how culturally influenced feedback experiences shape the pedagogical characteristics of pre-service teachers across both ESL and EFL contexts.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

This literature review aims to examine cultural differences in feedback practices between EFL and ESL pre-service teachers within the ELT context, with particular attention to how these pre-service teachers receive feedback from their teacher advisors and subsequently provide feedback to their own students during practicum. Drawing on a synthesis of existing empirical and theoretical literature, this review has shown that feedback practices are not simply culturally neutral processes but are shaped by the distinct educational environments in which pre-service teachers are trained. In EFL contexts, feedback practices tend to center on teaching performance, pedagogical reflection, and

instructional delivery, with pre-service teachers showing a noticeable preference for teacher feedback over peer feedback due to perceptions of authority and credibility (Erdemir & Yeşilçınar, 2021; Yiğitoğlu-Aptoula, 2021; Fki, 2023). In ESL contexts, by contrast, feedback practices are more strongly oriented toward corrective feedback in support of students' language production. ESL pre-service teachers rely heavily on direct written correction strategies (Guénette & Lyster, 2013; Jatoi & Kabilan, 2025). When situated within Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and Hofstede's (2011) cultural dimensions, these differences suggest that pre-service teachers' own learning histories, shaped by the power distance and collectivist or individualist orientations of their educational cultures, continue to inform the feedback models they reproduce as pre-service teachers (Lortie, 1975, as cited in Borg, 2004).

When put together, these findings address the gap identified in the introduction. While prior research has examined corrective feedback, peer and teacher feedback, and pre-service teachers' beliefs about feedback as separate strands of inquiry, this review has synthesized these strands into a comparative account of how sociocultural context shapes feedback practices across EFL and ESL settings. Therefore, it offers a conceptual foundation that has not previously been articulated in a single, unified comparative framework.

Nevertheless, this review is not without limitations. As a conceptual, literature-based study, its conclusions are necessarily derived from existing findings rather than from original empirical data, and the studies synthesized here vary in context, methodology, and scope, which may limit the generalizability of the comparative patterns identified. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, the EFL and ESL distinction does not map neatly onto Hofstede's cultural dimensions, since both categories encompass considerable internal diversity. Therefore EFL and ESL should not be treated as stand-ins for fixed cultural orientations.

In light of these limitations, several suggestions are proposed. First, future empirical research should directly compare EFL and ESL pre-service teachers within a shared practicum-based framework, using interviews, classroom observations, or reflective journals to capture how feedback is both received and given in practice. Second, teacher education programs are encouraged to move away from uniform feedback protocols and instead adopt context-sensitive approaches that account for the sociocultural backgrounds and feedback histories of pre-service teachers. Third, further theoretical work is needed to refine how cultural frameworks such as Hofstede's dimensions can be more precisely applied to EFL and ESL distinctions, given the internal diversity within both categories. Through these directions, future research can build on the conceptual groundwork laid out in this review to develop more nuanced, empirically grounded, and pedagogically useful understandings of feedback practices across culturally diverse ELT contexts.

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