



Experience Matters: Iranian EFL Teachers' Beliefs on Corrective Feedback

Hamid Reza Dowlatabadi  (Corresponding Author)

Assistant Professor of English Language and Literature Department, Arak University, Arak, Iran.

h-dowlatabadi@araku.ac.ir

Hamed Badpa 

PhD Candidate of English Language and Literature Department, Arak University, Arak, Iran.

hamedbadpa1377@gmail.com

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Abstract

Corrective feedback (CF) is widely recognized as vital in second language acquisition, yet the evolution of teachers' beliefs about CF across experience levels remains insufficiently explored in the Iranian EFL context. This explanatory mixed-methods study examined whether significant differences exist between novice and experienced teachers' beliefs regarding CF, and explored their views on types and effectiveness of strategies. Sixty Iranian EFL teachers completed a 36-item questionnaire assessing beliefs about explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, and repetition, followed by semi-structured interviews with six teachers. Quantitative data were analyzed using t-tests, while qualitative data underwent inductive thematic analysis. Results revealed statistically significant differences. Experienced teachers demonstrated a flexible, context-aware orientation, adapting strategies based on learner proficiency, task demands, and instructional goals, prioritizing errors that hindered communication over comprehensive correction. Novice teachers favored a uniform approach with explicit, immediate correction of all errors to ensure standardization. Both groups acknowledged the value of immediate and delayed feedback depending on context. The findings carry implications for feedback pedagogy, pre-service teacher training, and in-service professional development.

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Introduction

Corrective feedback, which involves teachers pointing out students' linguistic mistakes, has been studied a lot in connection with second language learning. Under the theories such as those put forward by Long on the interaction hypothesis (1996) and Swain on the output hypothesis (1985), this form of feedback could assist learners to realize where their linguistic skills lack and develop accuracy through effective output. Nevertheless, there exist controversies on its value. In this regard, Truscott (1996) questions grammatical correction, citing that it often fails, hurts the learner, and lacks empirical evidence. On the flip side, other studies challenge this viewpoint by showing that certain types of corrective feedback do offer minor but beneficial effects under specific conditions. Nonetheless, scholars argue that the success of corrective feedback greatly relies on situational and individual factors. This means that there is a great need for an exploration of how teachers give and use corrective feedback in actual classroom settings.

The perspective that the teacher has towards corrective feedback is the one that influences all aspects of corrective feedback delivery and usage. These views can shift through more experience, extra training, and reflecting on their practices. In general, the more teaching experience a teacher gains, the more flexible he or she becomes in his/her views concerning corrective feedback than novices, who usually adhere to the traditional method of giving feedback that is based only on rules (Farrell, 2008; Kuzborska, 2011). Nevertheless, empirical studies have proven to be inconsistent, which suggests that there is an interplay between feedback beliefs and teaching experience, which depends on other factors, such as expectations of educational institutions and the requirements of the curriculum.

In the Iranian EFL setting, we can really see how teaching experience affects beliefs about corrective feedback. Classes generally have 25 to 35 students, following a strict national curriculum centered around grammar for big exams. The setup is pretty traditional with teachers as the main source of knowledge (Gholami, 2024; Sadeghi & Richards, 2016). So, new teachers often rely on direct, error-focused corrections. However, experienced educators are being exposed to communicative teaching through online resources, slowly shifting things. The clash between the old focus on accuracy and these newer, student-centric approaches makes Iran a key place to look into how teaching experience can adjust beliefs about corrective feedback. Despite the importance of this area, there's not much empirical research on what Iranian EFL teachers think about corrective feedback. Plus, most studies don't actually compare novice teachers with the more experienced ones. They mainly depend on questionnaires but don't dive into why teachers hold certain views. Also, the unique challenges of Iranian classrooms—like really big classes, exam pressures, and cultural views on teacher authority—are hardly ever looked at. So, looking at these gaps, it's really important to design better teacher education programs for Iranian EFL teachers. This would help them develop feedback practices that work well within their specific context. That said, this study intends to see if there are any real differences between what novice and experienced Iranian EFL teachers believe about corrective feedback. It will also look into how they perceive various types of feedback and consider which ones they think are effective.

Literature Review

Theoretical Background

Importance of Corrective Feedback in SLA

Corrective feedback is really important for second language learners. It helps them notice mistakes and improves accuracy and fluency (Li et al., 2025). Teachers providing this feedback aid students in recognizing discrepancies between their speech and the actual target language. This noticing is key for language learning (Aisha et al., 2018). For example, Gholami (2024) found that if the feedback matches a student's skill level, it boosts their grammar accuracy and even helps them remember stuff long-term. Still, experts aren't entirely sure what the perfect way to give CF is. Some think it depends on whether the approach is implicit or explicit (Nassaji & Kartchava, 2017). At the end of the day, it really hinges on what the learner needs and the goals of the lesson.

Several critical aspects make corrective feedback effective, including learners' proficiency level, types of errors made, and context. While direct correction centered on errors helps beginners immensely and significantly increases their accuracy immediately, more subtle methods, such as recast – when errors are pointed out through examples in ordinary conversations – assist in improving fluency and fostering learner autonomy (Mackey, 2020). Moreover, timing plays an important role. While immediate correction proves to be effective in speaking activities, delayed correction allows students to reflect on the errors made in writing (Li et al., 2025). All in all, the complexity of the issue at hand becomes apparent from the above discussion. Furthermore, this issue demonstrates the significance of identifying teachers' beliefs concerning corrective feedback since these beliefs greatly impact its application in the classroom.

Theoretical Bases of Corrective Feedback

The CF approach is based on a number of SLA theoretical perspectives, which stress varied aspects of the acquisition process. For instance, according to the Input Hypothesis, the acquisition process is motivated by the provision of comprehensible input to the learners, which CF helps in making more noticeable by bringing out features of the target language. According to the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1993), the acquisition process depends on interaction between the teacher and learner during the negotiation of meaning, whereby CF motivates learners to notice and incorporate target structures. Also, the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1995) highlights the need for learner output in hypothesis testing, and CF provides the feedback necessary in the interlanguage development process. Based on the above theories, Ellis et al. (2019)'s cognitive interactionist theory of CF combines the Input Hypothesis, Interaction Hypothesis, Output Hypothesis, and Noticing Hypothesis by arguing that CF is effective due to its effect on three interrelated factors. The three are: the learners' attentional capacity, the salience of the feedback, and the possibility of producing the corrected output. In other words, according to this theory, CF promotes language learning when learners: (a) realize that their production differs from the correct form of the language, (b) understand that the correction should be made, and (c) generate modified output (Ellis et al., 2019; Lyster & Ranta, 2013).

Types of Corrective Feedback & Their Effectiveness

There is a continuum on the extent to which different types of feedback involve explicitness, and meta-analysis allows us to have a clear comparative understanding of how effective the different types of feedback can be. The type of feedback that is commonly used the most in class instruction is recasts, where teachers implicitly reformulate learners' incorrect forms of expression, but the results from meta-analyses show that they can lead to only small to moderate improvements in language acquisition in learners since learners do not always detect the corrective nature of the feedback (Lyster & Ranta, 2013; Mackey, 2020). Explicit correction, on the other hand, leads to greater immediate improvements, especially for morphosyntactic errors and for low-level learners (Li, 2010; Ellis et al., 2019). Elicitation, or prompting learners to self-correct without providing the answer, has proven to be highly effective for grammatical errors, particularly those whose students have some knowledge of the target language construction (Lyster & Ranta, 2013; Li et al., 2025). Metalinguistic feedback, or explanations of grammatical rules, has proved highly effective but is more appropriate for learners with higher proficiency levels (Gholami, 2024). Error repetition accompanied by questions is the least effective technique, as it provides no clue to the correct response. Most importantly, each feedback style has its advantages; therefore, a balanced approach, combining both explicit and implicit feedback, has been recommended to foster optimal learning outcomes (Aisha et al., 2018; Lyster & Ranta, 2013).

Teacher Beliefs and Experience in CF

The beliefs held by teachers on CF play a vital role in determining their classroom approaches, and there have been increased findings that experience is an important mediator in influencing the cognitive dispositions of teachers regarding CF. Some of the disparities include the fact that, despite the similarities observed between novice and experienced teachers, there were notable differences in terms of OCF strategies and beliefs, especially in relation to error correction on varying language parts. Moreover, it has been shown that novice teachers form their beliefs based mainly on their past learning experiences, in a process called the "apprenticeship of observation," while experienced teachers derive their dispositions mostly from classroom experience and reflective thinking after service. Actually, in some instances, prior learning experiences have been seen to positively and negatively shape WCF dispositions of novice teachers.

Notably, the differences between these two categories are qualitative rather than quantitative. In comparing a novice and an experienced ESL teacher, [Junqueira and Kim \(2013\)](#) observed that even though the amount of CF employed by each teacher was almost equal, the latter managed to create more teacher-student interactions and employed more varied types of feedback targeting various linguistic aspects. Additionally, [Moradkhani and Goodarzi \(2020\)](#) stated that when compared to an experienced teacher, a novice educator seemed to be fond of applying the explicit corrective and metalinguistic feedback, but the comprehensive use of OCF techniques like recasts and elicitation appeared in experienced teachers' classes only. In their turn, [Fallah and Nazari \(2019\)](#) analyzed the impact of teaching experience on L2 teachers' beliefs concerning corrective feedback.

Further qualitative differences have been identified in the underlying rationale for these choices. Findings from interviews conducted in the same study showed that novice teachers perceived feedback as more of an emotional aspect compared to the experienced teachers, who viewed it as a developmental device. From this finding, one can conclude that there is a change in the cognition aspect when it comes to viewing feedback. In essence, there is a change from regarding feedback as a relational device to an educational one. These studies together prove that experienced teachers utilize CF techniques in a more adaptable manner and that they are capable of combining explicit and implicit methods of correction depending on their students' levels (Farrell, 2008). According to current research, it is suggested that professional development should include both theory and its practical implementation by allowing teachers to implement CF strategies depending on different classroom situations (Borg, 2006). Nevertheless, some findings show that in Iran, there remains a discrepancy between what the teachers think about the correction of errors and how they act in reality (Soleimani & Rahimi, 2021). Thus, the authors found that despite the fact that the majority of Iranian teachers believe in the importance of CF as an element of classroom management and have a proper understanding of such factors as timing of corrections (immediate/delayed) and proficiency of the students, this information is not put into practice. The following research questions guided the present study:

RQ1. Are there any significant differences between Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers' beliefs about the types of corrective feedback?

RQ2. How do novice and experienced Iranian EFL teachers differ in their views regarding different types of corrective feedback and their effectiveness?

Method

Design and Participants

The mixed methods approach that was used for this research had an explanatory nature and thus served the purpose of answering the research questions raised by the researcher. The quantitative data were dominant, while the qualitative data were supplemental. As for the quantitative part of this study (RQ1), a non-experimental comparative approach was employed in order to compare teachers' beliefs at different stages of their experience. The main independent variable was teachers' experience, and it consisted of two different levels. Specifically, these levels were "novice," defined as less than 3 years of teaching experience, and "experienced", defined as more than 3 years of experience. The three-year threshold was determined according to the existing studies on teacher development, whereby there are various stages in teacher development, and one of them starts during the period when teachers learn from their first training and build their practice. Choosing this particular threshold was done not only by taking into account the seminal study but also due to the fact that the existing literature on teacher development considers that there are three important years when teachers change from novice theory-based practitioners to practitioners who develop individual skills depending on context (Farrell & Farrell, 2025). The dependent variable in the research paper was teachers' beliefs regarding corrective feedback and was operationalized and measured via a 5-point Likert scale feedback type preference questionnaire developed by Kaivanpanah, Alavi, and Sepehrinia (2012).

Regarding the qualitative research question (RQ2), a descriptive case study approach was used. The semi-structured interviews were held with 6 randomly chosen teachers (3 novices and 3 experienced) among those from the previous research question. Questions about the effectiveness of various types of feedback on second language acquisition (corrective feedback, recasts, clarification requests, and repetition) were asked through open-ended questions. In addition, interviews were recorded, and transcripts were analyzed thematically. Regarding the quantitative research question (RQ1), the population consisted of Iranian EFL teachers with no more than 3 years of teaching experience (novices) and over 3 years of experience (experienced). The secondary schools in Arak in the 2022-2023 academic year formed the basis of the study. Based on the information gathered from the Department of Education of Arak, the number of teachers in this population was about 180.

A simple random sampling technique was used to sample 30 novice and 30 experienced teachers from the population frame. Voluntary participation was assured by all the sampled respondents, while anonymity was guaranteed as well. Among the 30 novice teachers, there were 15 females and 15 males with an average teaching experience of 1.5 years each. On the other hand, the 30 experienced teachers sampled comprised 18 females and 12 males with an average teaching experience of 8 years. In the qualitative phase (Research Question Two), the purposeful sampling method was applied to select 3 novice and 3 experienced teachers among the respondents who answered the quantitative questionnaires.

All subjects gave consent through the signature of informed consent forms, thus agreeing to willingly take part in the study. It was emphasized that they had the right to leave the study anytime without being penalized. To ensure confidentiality, all names were coded and no personal data of the participants was revealed in any publication or presentation of the research findings. On the whole, the sampling techniques enabled the researcher to find enough participants to answer research questions. All subjects were qualified at least Bachelor's degree level in English Language Teaching or a relevant discipline. As far as the secondary school setting in Arak is concerned, it features relatively big class sizes (from 25 to 30) and follows a nationwide curriculum focusing on grammatical correctness and preparing for university entrance examinations.

Instrumentation

The data were collected through a feedback preference questionnaire and a follow-up semi-structured interview, the details of which are given in the following:

Feedback Preference Questionnaire

This study utilized a revised version of the questionnaire developed by Kaivanpanah, Alavi, and Sepehrinia (2012) to examine the teachers' views of corrective feedback (CF). In order to tailor the questionnaire to the aim of the present study, it was piloted on 20 Iranian EFL teachers to ensure the reliability and comprehensibility of the items. Internal consistency of the questionnaire was determined by using Cronbach's alpha. Reliability coefficient for the overall scale of the questionnaire is $\alpha = 0.89$. Cronbach's alphas for the four subscales are: Explicit correction ($\alpha = 0.86$), Recasts ($\alpha = 0.84$), Clarification requests ($\alpha = 0.81$), and Repetition ($\alpha = 0.79$), which shows an adequate to high internal consistency for each subscale. The

questionnaire consists of four scales referring to different types of CF that were investigated in the study. Each scale included nine items. The items were as following: Explicit correction (9 items such as 'I directly point out the student's error and give the correct form of it'); Recasts (9 items such as 'I reformulate student's wrong utterance into a correct one implicitly'); Clarification requests (9 items such as 'I use the question type "What do you mean by that?" and other clarifying questions to trigger self-correction'); and Repetition (9 items such as 'I repeat student's mistake with interrogative intonation'). Content validity was determined by expert judgment from three specialists working in the SLA and CF area (2 PhDs in TEFL and 1 teacher educator who has been researching CF for more than 10 years). Based on their comments, ambiguous items were reworded or omitted. Disagreements among the experts were resolved through discussion, and a consensus was reached after two rounds of review. The questionnaire is a 5-point Likert scale consisting of 36 items addressing different CF-oriented constructs, with the items ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. The questionnaire was administered to 60 EFL teachers.

Semi-structured Interview

In order to gain a deeper look into the Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of CF, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6 teachers immediately after the questionnaires were filled out. More precisely, a purposeful sampling technique was used to select and interview 3 novice teachers and 3 experienced teachers from the original quantitative sample. These 6 teachers represented a variety in terms of gender, years of teaching experience (between 1-3 years for novices and 5-15 years for experienced), and school location. They were selected randomly from among the teachers who filled out the questionnaire. The interview questions were developed based on the questionnaire and the related literature. The purpose of the interview (conducted in a face-to-face mode and recorded digitally) was to obtain more specific information about teachers' CF preferences and the reasons behind their choices, their beliefs about the effectiveness of different types of feedback, and peer/teacher CF factors thought to be influencing their practices in providing feedback. The duration of the interviews was nearly 20 minutes.

Data Collection Procedure

For the quantitative study (RQ1), a listing of suitable schools and English language teachers was obtained, and 60 respondents (30 novice, 30 experienced) were randomly selected from this list. Contacts of participants were obtained using emails and phone numbers, and the participants were asked for their participation. On obtaining agreement, the participation information sheet and consent form were sent to them. When written consent was obtained, an appointment was made for administering the questionnaire to them. Before collecting data, a pilot test was done using 20 teachers to check the reliability of the feedback preference questionnaire. The researcher traveled to the schools where the selected participants taught outside the class hours and distributed questionnaires using a trained assistant. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately. Data was entered into SPSS 26 and screened for errors and missing responses. Means were calculated for each questionnaire item. An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to establish if significant differences existed between novice and experienced groups' feedback beliefs.

For the qualitative phase (RQ2), a purposeful maximum variation sampling technique was used to select 6 teachers (3 novice and 3 experienced) from the original quantitative sample, ensuring diversity in gender, years of teaching experience (1–3 years for novices; 5–15 years for experienced), and school location (urban and suburban). Interview times were scheduled via phone/email. Interviews were conducted in a quiet room at participants' schools to minimize distractions. The researcher explained the interview purpose and obtained verbal consent to record. A semi-structured interview protocol guided discussions while allowing flexibility. Probes were used as needed. Interviews averaged 20 minutes. Transcripts were analyzed through an inductive coding process. Meaningful quotes were highlighted related to feedback beliefs and experiences. Emerging themes were identified through constant comparison across transcripts. Recording established relationships between themes.

Data Analysis

This study adopted an explanatory mixed-methods approach both in collecting and analyzing the data to address the research questions. After administering the questionnaire, the mean of all responses was calculated for all questionnaire items. To address RQ1, an independent samples t-test was used to compare novice and experienced teachers' total questionnaire scores. Additionally, four separate independent samples t-tests were conducted on the subscale scores for Explicit Correction, Recasts, Clarification Requests, and Repetition to identify potential differences in beliefs about specific feedback types. As for RQ2, the audio files of the interviews were inductively content-analyzed based on the guidelines proposed by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) for analyzing qualitative data. In doing so, the responses were initially transcribed. Then, the responses were coded and recorded based on the similarity of the emerging themes.

Results

The results of the analyses are reported in relevant Tables and Figures.

Results of Research Question 1

The first research question addressed whether there was any significant difference between Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers' beliefs about the types of corrective feedback. As shown in Table 1, the independent-samples t-test revealed a significant difference in the total questionnaire scores between experienced teachers ($M = 126.50$, $SD = 20.40$) and novice teachers ($M = 108.30$, $SD = 18.10$), $t(57.99) = 2.98$, $p = .004$. The effect size, calculated using Cohen's d , was 0.77, indicating a medium-to-large practical significance.

Table 1. Independent Samples T-Test Comparing the Mean Scores of the Experienced and Novice EFL Teachers on the Feedback Preference Questionnaire

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		Test for		t-test for Equality of Means					
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances Assumed	5.07	.00	.68	58	.00	.93	1.35	-1.78	3.65
Equal variances not assumed			.68	57.99	.00	.93	1.35	-1.78	3.65

In order to explore more differences related to beliefs concerning different kinds of feedback, four separate t-tests comparing the scores obtained by novice teachers with those of experienced teachers were performed for each subscale of the questionnaire, namely Explicit Correction, Recasts, Clarification Requests, and Repetition. Multiple comparisons were not corrected, increasing the possibility of Type I errors. Nonetheless, significant differences were found in the case of Explicit Correction and Recasts. In particular, novice teachers ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.52$) showed a significantly higher tendency toward Explicit Correction than did experienced teachers ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.79$), $t(58) = 7.21$, $p < .001$. On the contrary, teachers with experience ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.48$) preferred Recasts significantly more than inexperienced teachers ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.61$), $t(58) = 7.89$, $p < .001$. There were no significant differences between teachers regarding preferences toward Clarification Requests or Repetition. It appears that differences between teachers' belief systems relate primarily to the choice between direct and indirect correction strategies. It is safe to say that the less experienced a teacher is, the more he tends to focus on errors made by students.

Results of Research Question 2

Semi-structured interview guide consisting of 6 core questions was used during the study. Through the use of purposeful sampling technique, six participants, three novices (N1, N2, N3) and three experienced teachers (E1, E2, and E3) were chosen for interviews from the initial sample. Interviews took place according to the previously negotiated time by phone. They were conducted in Persian (the first language of participants) in order to prevent any linguistic barriers for the teachers in expressing their beliefs regarding the use of technology. The decision to do so was based on previous findings that demonstrated that second language speakers experience decreased lexical and metalinguistic knowledge while explaining concepts related to pedagogy in a foreign language (Borg, 2006). The research purpose was clarified for participants, and informed verbal consent was obtained for the recording of interviews. The six items of the interview included the following:

- Q1. What strategies do you prefer using to provide corrective feedback to students during class activities (e.g., implicitly, explicitly, tactfully, etc.)?
- Q2. When do you think is the best time to provide corrective feedback to students – immediately or wait until the end of the activity?
- Q3. How do you determine what language errors to correct and what to overlook during class?
- Q4. What linguistic forms do you prefer focusing corrective feedback on most (e.g., pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary)?
- Q5. How do you gauge whether students comprehend the feedback provided or need clarification/repetition?
- Q6. What techniques do you use to draw students' attention to their errors (e.g., recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback)?

The first interview question addressed the strategies experienced/novice EFL teachers prefer using to provide corrective feedback to students during class activities (e.g., implicitly, explicitly, tactfully, etc.). The experienced teachers stated that:

E1: *I prefer starting implicitly by recasting errors in response to students. This avoids directly focusing on mistakes and allows them to self-correct. If errors persist, I use the questioning approach to have students identify issues themselves before explicitly addressing gaps. I also selectively correct based on the importance of communication rather than perfection. My goal is to develop independent learning over the punishment of errors.*

E2: *It depends on the student's level and personal preferences, which I assess. Lower levels benefit most from explicit correction with clear models to mimic. For higher levels, indirect feedback through recasts and clarification requests preserves confidence while achieving understanding. I also vary based on private versus public errors, carefully balancing correction with praise to build rapport and motivation.*

E3: *Feedback is individualized. Some students prefer direct remarks while others respond better to written annotations. I favor tactful approaches like reframing errors as learning steps and emphasizing progress over problems. Peer feedback and self-correction through reflective questions also cultivate autonomy. The goal is to empower students to independently monitor accuracy according to communicative needs.*

Novice teachers said that:

N1: *I always clearly point out errors and precisely show the correct forms to ensure students fully understand mistakes. Repeating drills helps cement learning. Praise comes after mastering everything to maximize efforts. Feedback should directly remedy weaknesses.*

N2: *I provide answers and explanations for all errors so students are not confused. Regular testing identifies areas to intensively focus on. Some error*

types must be eliminated before moving forward. Feedback is about fixing gaps, not subjective feelings.

N3: *Students learn best when aware of all flaws. I directly point out each error for full transparency. Explaining rules ensures conceptual understanding. Some repetition may be needed depending on the student. The goal is accuracy above all else.*

The second interview question examined the best time to provide corrective feedback to students – immediately or wait until the end of the activity. The experienced teachers expressed the following opinions:

E1: *It depends on the activity and the student. For speaking, immediate feedback allows improving the current response while modeling is fresh. However, too frequent interruptions disrupt the flow. Written tasks benefit from delayed feedback, so I can comprehensively address patterns without breaking concentration. Students can then self-correct before moving forward.*

E2: *For beginners, immediate feedback reinforces learning when working on foundational skills. However, for advanced students engaged in complex problem-solving, delayed feedback allows focusing on meaning over accuracy and preserves confidence. I also gauge nonverbal cues - if students seem frustrated, feedback may be better delayed to avoid demotivation.*

E3: *Either can be effective depending on implementation. Immediate feedback fosters self-correction skills if delivered encouragingly. Delayed feedback prevents fixating on errors and enables focusing on communication and then comprehensively addressing issues. I vary based on personality, context and purpose – accuracy or fluency. The most important is making corrections supportive, not critical.*

The novice teachers stated the following:

N1: *Students need to fix mistakes immediately before practicing incorrectly. Immediate feedback interrupts poor habits and ensures reinforcing the right response there and then. Delay risks forgetting corrections.*

N2: *Errors should always be addressed as they arise, so students fully understand concepts when fresh and don't practice inaccuracies. Delay risks confusion and reduces accountability for mistakes made.*

N3: *Immediate feedback is best for preventing and correcting problems efficiently as students do the activity. Delay risks negatively reinforcing errors instead of the proper response. Addressing issues as they happen is clearest for learners.*

The third interview question investigated the type of language errors to correct and what to overlook during class. The responses provided by the experienced teachers were the following:

E1: *I prioritize errors that impede communication over minor mistakes. For beginners, anything related to meaning is critical. As proficiency rises, flow and complexity take priority, so I occasionally let accuracy lapse to keep focus on interaction. Student goals also factor in - those aiming for proficiency tolerate more errors than those needing accuracy for work.*

E2: *I assess error type, frequency, student level and personality. Recurrent phonological/structural errors hamper development and require attention, while one-off mistakes can be left to avoid discouragement. Higher levels earn more leeway as long as communication succeeds. More anxious students prefer all corrections to build confidence slowly, whereas outgoing personalities appreciate selective feedback.*

E3: *Context and purpose matter. For practice, I address the most frequent or serious errors to move learning forward. During tests, anything directly related to content needs correction to assess understanding fairly. In peer work, only issues repeatedly disrupting communication warrant attention to empower risk-taking. After, I thoroughly address patterns and support self-reflection on what impeded meaning.*

The novice teachers expressed their ideas as well:

N1: *All inaccuracies should be pointed out, prioritizing grammar and vocabulary over fluency errors. Consistency is important for cementing rules and building strong habits.*

N2: *As the teacher, it's my role to correct any mistakes to set students on the right path. Leaving errors unaddressed risks reinforcement.*

N3: *Students need to know where they went wrong to improve. I address all errors noticed, deferring correction of minor slips when time may be short. Accuracy should be the focus.*

The fourth interview question examined the linguistic forms that experienced/novice EFL teachers prefer focusing corrective feedback on most (e.g., pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary). The comments by the experienced teachers were the following:

E1: *I consider learners' needs and goals. Beginners may need extensive pronunciation coaching, while advanced students favor polishing grammar. Business English students benefit from the correction of formal lexical errors, whereas general English learners value feedback on everyday vocabulary use. Flexibility depends on individual paths.*

E2: *All elements support each other, so a balanced approach works best. Minor grammar lapses receive less attention than vocabulary flaws, impeding the exchange of core concepts. However, pronunciation issues left unaddressed can undermine confidence. I primarily focus on feedback where it moves students furthest along the communicative axes important to them.*

E3: *It depends on context. Tests necessitate addressing errors across the skills being evaluated. Conversations allow emphasizing fluency over perfection, so I attend more to obstacles blocking comprehension. Presentations require polish, focusing on feedback on delivery mechanisms. The primary considerations are function over form, progress over product, and empowering student agency through enhanced self-awareness.*

Novice teachers stated that:

N1: *Grammar is paramount as it constructs the foundation for learning. Mistakes in verb conjugations and other rules must be eliminated.*

N2: *All elements need equal attention. Learners succeed fastest when feedback drills pronunciation, vocabulary and structure consistently.*

N3: *As a beginner teacher, I concentrate on feedback on core grammatical structures to establish a solid base before introducing complexity.*

The fifth interview question addressed the way experienced/novice EFL teachers gauge whether students comprehend the feedback provided or need clarification/ repetition. The responses by the experienced teachers were as follows:

E1: *I employ various techniques - paraphrase feedback, have students restate advice in their own words, engage them in problem-solving similar issues independently, and observe nonverbal signals. Comprehension takes priority over rote correction. Misunderstandings invite re-explanation using multiple modalities - visuals, role plays, peer teaching - tailored to learning preferences.*

E2: *During feedback discussions, I invite open-ended questions and periodically check perceptions by asking how students will apply advice or what areas remain unclear. Individual follow-ups after allowing private comprehension checks without peer pressure. Feedback is an iterative dialogue, not a one-way delivery, for real understanding.*

E3: *I gauge through thoughtful listening, noting hesitations, and questioning tones implying confusion. Inviting non-judgmental clarification questions and paraphrasing also assess the depth of processing versus surface compliance. Follow-up flexibility shows my role is empowering self-driven learning, not perfunctory correction. Real comprehension enables autonomous progress.*

The novice teachers expressed their ideas as such:

N1: *Students should demonstrate an understanding of feedback through focused practice, applying it. Questions risk confusion by reopening points best left closed.*

N2: *I clearly explain each feedback point and have students repeat the main substance to check assimilation before moving on. Further queries may slow progress.*

N3: *As a new teacher, I concentrate on delivering feedback accurately and trust students' diligence to cement it properly without requiring extensive explanation.*

The final question of the interview figured out the techniques experienced/novice EFL teachers use to draw students' attention to their errors (e.g., recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback). The experienced teachers mentioned:

E1: *I gauge each student's preferences and use a variety of techniques. Some appreciate direct clarification requests while others prefer indirect recasts. Younger learners may need modeling to notice errors, but adults stimulate thinking through questions. Early on, recasts highlight errors gently. As students develop, I use elicitation and metalinguistic clues for deeper learning. Follow-up ensures understanding without losing confidence.*

E2: *The goal is autonomous learning, so I facilitate self-identification. For fluency-focused tasks, selective recasts preserve the flow. More accuracy-driven activities employ tactful elicitation through expanded output or related examples. Higher levels benefit from noticing activities and metalinguistic comments. I adapt to learners and trust their abilities, intervening minimally and gradually releasing responsibility.*

E3: *Every learner is unique. Quieter students may rely on written annotations while engaged peers catch errors independently. My role is to create a safe space and equitable experiences. No one technique alone suffices – a repertoire flexibly timed and delivered cultivates each person's strengths and agency. Progress matters most, not performance at any moment.*

Novice teachers expressed their opinions as such:

N1: *Students need direct guidance to recognize errors. I point out mistakes and have them repeat corrections to reinforce the right patterns.*

N2: *Clarification is important for understanding, but ambiguity risks confusion. Straightforward identification through recasts ensures students discern inaccurate applications needing remediation.*

N3: *As a new teacher, I prioritize respectfully drawing attention to errors through simple, consistent techniques. With experience, my toolkit will expand, but foundations require clarity above novelty.*

Table 2. Thematic Analysis of Novice and Experienced Teachers' Views on Corrective Feedback

Theme	Subtheme	Novice Teachers (N1, N2, N3)	Experienced Teachers (E1, E2, E3)
1.Feedback Strategies	Approach to error correction	Explicit, direct, and uniform. <i>"I always clearly point out errors and precisely show the correct forms"</i> (N1). <i>"Feedback is about fixing gaps, not subjective feelings"</i> (N2).	Implicit, adaptive, and learner-centered. <i>"I prefer starting implicitly by recasting errors... allows them to self-correct"</i> (E1). <i>"It depends on the student's level and personal preferences"</i> (E2).
2.Timing of Feedback	Immediate vs. delayed correction	Strong preference for immediate correction. <i>"Students need to fix mistakes immediately before practicing incorrectly"</i> (N1). <i>"Delay risks forgetting corrections"</i> (N2).	Context-dependent; varies by activity, level, and purpose. <i>"For speaking, immediate feedback... Written tasks benefit from delayed feedback"</i> (E1). <i>"Either can be effective depending on implementation"</i> (E3).
3.Error Prioritization	What to correct vs. overlook	Correct all errors; prioritize grammar and vocabulary. <i>"All inaccuracies should be pointed out"</i> (N1). <i>"As the teacher, it's my role to correct any mistakes"</i> (N2).	Prioritize errors that impede communication. <i>"I prioritize errors that impede communication over minor mistakes"</i> (E1). <i>"One-off mistakes can be left to avoid discouragement"</i> (E2).
4.Linguistic Focus	Grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary	Grammar-focused; equal attention to all elements. <i>"Grammar is paramount as it constructs the foundation"</i> (N1). <i>"All elements need equal attention"</i> (N2).	Flexible; varies by learner needs, goals, and context. <i>"I consider learners' needs and goals... Flexibility depends on individual paths"</i> (E1). <i>"Function over form, progress over product"</i> (E3).
5.Checking Comprehension	Gauging student understanding	Teacher-centered verification (repetition, practice). <i>"Have students repeat the main substance to check assimilation"</i> (N2). <i>"Trust students' diligence without requiring extensive explanation"</i> (N3).	Interactive dialogue and observation. <i>"Paraphrase feedback, have students restate advice... observe nonverbal signals"</i> (E1). <i>"Feedback is an iterative dialogue, not a one-way delivery"</i> (E2).
6.Attention-Drawing Techniques	How errors are highlighted	Direct guidance and repetition. <i>"Point out mistakes and have them repeat corrections"</i> (N1). <i>"Straightforward identification through recasts"</i> (N2).	Varied repertoire tailored to individual learners. <i>"I gauge each student's preferences and use a variety of techniques"</i> (E1). <i>"No one technique alone suffices"</i> (E3).
7. Overall Goal of Feedback	Ultimate purpose	Accuracy and error elimination. <i>"The goal is accuracy above all else"</i> (N3). <i>"Feedback should directly remedy weaknesses"</i> (N1).	Learner autonomy and communicative competence. <i>"My goal is to develop independent learning over the punishment of errors"</i> (E1). <i>"Empower students to independently monitor accuracy"</i> (E3).

Discussion

As can be seen from the results of this study, there is a considerable difference between the beliefs of novice and experienced Iranian English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers concerning the practice of corrective feedback (CF). This is in line with what some other studies have recently found in regard to teacher cognition and SLA (Borg, 2006; Farrell & Farrell, 2025). As far as the quantitative results obtained in this study are concerned, they prove that experience influences the beliefs of teachers regarding CF because the total difference between questionnaire scores can be attributed to the Explicit Correction and Recast subscales. The absence of significant differences in beliefs regarding clarification requests and repetition may indicate that these types of CF are considered as universal strategies that are valid for any level of teaching experience. Still, there might be some other reasons for the result such as the unreliability of some subscales or poor statistical power. This may indicate that these techniques are perceived as more foundational or less contentious components of the CF repertoire, potentially emphasized uniformly in initial teacher training programs in Iran. Alternatively, their perceived utility might be more universally accepted—Clarification Requests may be perceived as a core tool for promoting negotiation of meaning, while Repetition serves as a simple, low-effort strategy to signal an error without supplying the correct form. Consequently, the use of these two feedback types appears less dependent on a teacher's accumulated experience. In contrast, novice teachers' preference for explicit, uniform correction reflects a reliance on theoretical training and limited exposure to diverse classroom dynamics, consistent with Soori et al.'s (2011) observations in Iranian EFL contexts.

The qualitative findings further illuminate these differences, highlighting experienced teachers' learner-centered, interactionist approaches. Their use of varied CF strategies—such as recasts, clarification requests, and elicitation—tailored to student proficiency and task demands, aligns with interactionist theories emphasizing negotiation of meaning (Long, 1993; Li et al., 2025). The use of considerations regarding time (immediate vs. delayed) and selective corrections in addressing learner errors shows that the teachers' approach puts emphasis on developing communicative competence as opposed to strict accuracy, hence showing principled eclecticism (Nassaji & Kartchava, 2017). On the contrary, the use of a prescriptive method by novice teachers in correcting all learner errors through immediate and explicit means demonstrates traditional methods used widely in Iranian education settings, in which there is emphasis on accuracy (Soori et al., 2011). Such an approach indicates that novice teachers might need professional training in applying flexible CF approaches. It not only shows a lack of practical experience but can also be seen as an imitation of the traditional approach learned in their own education system (Soori et al., 2011).

Contextual factors also play a significant role in shaping CF beliefs. The Iranian educational system's emphasis on linguistic accuracy may reinforce novice teachers' prescriptive approaches, as noted in Soori et al.'s (2011) study of cultural influences on EFL pedagogy. Nonetheless, the capacity of experienced teachers to maintain a balance between accuracy and communicative objectives is an adaptation of SLA tenets at a global level to a specific local context, hence a support for situated cognition theory (Borg, 2006). Such results suggest the need for teacher training programs that incorporate experiential and cross-cultural learning to

encourage teachers to adopt an adaptive approach towards CF. Further studies might look into the longitudinal effects of such interventions in terms of belief development and the effectiveness of such training to ensure alignment of novices' beliefs with evidence-based pedagogical beliefs. Even though the prescriptive nature of this approach might seem somewhat narrow, it could also be seen as a necessary step for development or even just a reaction to the challenging demands of the Iranian educational setting.

Conclusion & Implications

Two key conclusions were drawn from the analysis of the questionnaire and interview results. The first conclusion was that a significant difference was observed in the mean scores of experienced and novice teachers on the 36-item feedback preferences questionnaire, with experienced teachers exhibiting more diversified views. This supported the hypothesis that experience impacts belief formation regarding feedback. It resonated with research showing that enhanced pedagogical content knowledge shapes cognition as teachers gain practical wisdom over career progression (Borg, 2006; Farrell & Farrell, 2025).

The second conclusion from interview analysis found that the experienced teachers demonstrated a nuanced, contextualized approach to feedback, considering learners and situations. They tailored a range of implicit and explicit strategies adaptively. Both immediate and delayed correction had merit depending on factors. Errors were prioritized for communication relevance over precision alone. They employed a varied focus for feedback, tailored to the situation yet aimed at balanced skill development. Comprehension involved student-centered discussion. Motivation was preserved through strategic error-handling techniques. In contrast, novice teachers employed a prescriptive methodology, favoring the explicit and immediate correction of all errors through standardized repetition drills and display questioning to assess comprehension.

Findings suggest that mixed longitudinal studies, which prospectively trace change over time and across contexts, offer a fruitful approach for offsetting the limitations of static, cross-sectional designs in mapping developmental trajectories (Borg, 2006). The difference between novice and experienced teachers reveals opportunities for future experimentation or developmental research into the effects of targeted training approaches for the purpose of reconstructing first feedback thoughts (Nassaji & Kartchava, 2017; Farrell & Farrell, 2025). In the future, experimental research might involve the design and assessment of professional development courses aimed at closing this gap in beliefs, with emphasis on methods that facilitate context-based decision making similar to that shown by experienced teachers.

While the current research is notable for its strength in terms of a mixed-methods design, there are some limitations that must be taken into account. Firstly, the sample for the study consisted only of secondary school students from Arak public secondary schools, which may hinder the ability of researchers to generalize their findings to another setting of education, whether a private institute or universities, and/or another area in Iran. Secondly, while the research utilizes self-reports of beliefs and practices, further research should include direct observations of the class in order to provide a fuller perspective regarding how these beliefs are actually translated into practices of correctional feedback provision.

There are various directions that future researchers can pursue based on the results of this study and its shortcomings. Firstly, it would be necessary to conduct replication studies using more varied sample sizes consisting of novice teachers from language institutes, universities, and different parts of Iran to generalize the results obtained here about the difference in the CF beliefs between novice and experienced teachers. Secondly, one might conduct longitudinal quasi-experimental studies where the same group of novice teachers would be followed during three to five years while their CF beliefs transform under the influence of teaching experiences, mentoring, and professional development. Third, interventions in the form of designing and evaluating the effect of various training programs, for instance, video reflections, coaching sessions on implicit CF, or action research, can be employed to facilitate changes among novice teachers towards adopting a more dynamic approach to CF. Lastly, cross-cultural comparisons of Iranian English teachers and others from different ESL/EFL countries, such as Turkey, China, and Saudi Arabia, can reveal the degree to which differences in CF beliefs are due to years of teaching experience or the result of cross-cultural influences. Research in these areas will not only enhance our understanding of teacher cognition but also provide valuable information for foreign/second language teacher training.

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Appendix

Appendix A. Feedback Preference Questionnaire (Kainvanpanah, Alavi, & Sepehrinia, 2012)

1. I prefer classmates to correct one another's errors.
2. When the teacher corrects the errors, one is less stressed than when the classmates.
3. I prefer classmates/teacher to simply give the correct form of the erroneous utterance.
4. I prefer the classmates/teacher to provide some wrong and correct examples like "he go or he goes" and ask me to choose the correct answer.
5. The classmates have the competence needed for correcting others' errors.
6. I prefer the classmates to correct vocabulary errors.
7. Only the teacher should correct the errors in pronunciation.
8. Only the teacher should correct the grammatical errors.
9. I prefer classmates/teacher to correct the error and explain about the error.
10. I prefer the teacher to explain about the errors the classmates have pointed out.
11. I prefer classmates/teacher to correct pronunciation errors immediately.
12. When the classmates correct the errors, one does not feel humiliated.
13. I prefer the classmates/teacher to repeat the erroneous part with a rising intonation helping one notice the error.
14. I prefer the teacher/classmates to repeat the corrected form of the erroneous part by a rising intonation.
15. I prefer the teacher/classmates to repeat corrected form of the whole utterance with a normal tone.
16. I prefer the classmates/teacher to repeat the erroneous part of my utterance with an interrogative tone and ask me to repeat.
17. The classmates are sincere in correcting others' errors.
18. The classmates care about correcting others' errors.
19. I prefer the classmates to correct the grammatical errors only.
20. I prefer the teacher/classmates to repeat the corrected form of the erroneous part.
21. I prefer the teacher/classmates to ask for self-correction by saying "sorry?" or "excuse me?"
22. Learning is more effective when classmates correct the errors 3.77 1.12
23. I prefer the teacher/classmates to repeat only the erroneous part of the utterance with an interrogative tone.
24. I prefer the teacher/classmates to correct vocabulary errors immediately.
25. I prefer the teacher/classmates to repeat the utterance up to the erroneous part and wait for self-correction.
26. Only the teacher should correct the errors.
27. I prefer the teacher/classmates to point out the errors and prompt for self-correction.
28. The classmates should only correct pronunciation errors.
29. I prefer the teacher/classmates to repeat the whole utterance but stress the erroneous part for easier noticing.
30. Only the teacher should correct vocabulary errors.
31. The classmates can provide better feedback as they might know points, I might be unaware of.
32. The teacher/classmates should explain about my grammatical errors at the end of conversation.
33. Everyone should care about correcting his/her own errors.
34. Only the teacher has the knowledge to give feedback.
35. Learning is more effective when the teacher corrects the errors.
36. Only the teacher cares about correcting the errors.