



Bridging Theory and Practice: Supervisors' Professional Knowledge and Feedback Styles in Post-Observation Briefings in Iranian English Language Institutes

Mitra Peydaei Niyazi  (Corresponding Author)

Management and Humanities Faculty, Chabahar Maritime University, Chabahar, Iran.

mitra.niyazi.1364@gmail.com

Hooshang Khoshima 

Management and Humanities Faculty, Chabahar Maritime University, Chabahar, Iran.

khoshima2009@gmail.com

Nahid Yarahmadzahi 

Management and Humanities Faculty, Chabahar Maritime University, Chabahar, Iran.

n.yarahmadzahi@cmu.ac.ir

ARTICLE INFO:

Received date:

2026.06.22

Accepted date:

2026.07.25

Print ISSN: 2251-7995

Online ISSN: 2676-6876

Keywords:

EFL Supervision, Feedback Styles, Iranian English Language Institutes, Mixed-Methods, Professional Updating



Abstract

The supervision process in the Iranian EFL context has mainly been conducted in a directive style, neglecting the need for collaboration and teachers' professional development. Although literature has emphasized the need for professional development of supervisors, the relationship between such an activity and providing constructive feedback for teachers still needs clarification. This convergent parallel mixed-methods case study explored patterns of co-occurrence between supervisors' self-reported updating bands and predominant feedback styles in 36 briefing sessions with teachers across English language institutes in Tehran. Through thematic analysis of audio-recorded briefings and log files on updates of supervisors, the research has found that there is a certain association between the process of professional updating and the feedback style used by supervisors. It appears that greater engagement with professional development material correlates with a collaborative supervision style, while less engagement seems to correlate with a more directive and corrective style of feedback. The potential for change in supervisory culture through professional development is demonstrated by such associations. The study discusses context-bound observations from the English language institutes and calls for larger-scale research to validate the observed patterns.

Citation: Peydaei Niyazi, M.; Khoshima, H. & Yarahmadzahi, N. (2026). Bridging Theory and Practice: Supervisors' Professional Knowledge and Feedback Styles in Post-Observation Briefings in Iranian English Language Institutes. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 18 (37), 423-438.

DOI: 10.22034/elt.2026.73164.2878

Introduction

The increasing number of English language institutes in Iran is an example of the response to the growing need to become competent in using English in academia and the professional environment, making such centers very important in sustaining the quality of pedagogy and accessibility to English in these contexts (Mehrpour & Agheshteh, 2017). In recent years, the concept of supervision in English language institutes in Iran has been recognized more widely as a structured professional activity implying observation, feedback, and post-observation briefing. In the case of proper conduct of these processes, supervisory procedures can contribute to reflective practices, learner-centered approaches, and solving certain recurring issues like too much talking by teachers, insufficient communication in classes, and a tendency to use the native language in the classroom (Al-Zahrani & Al-Bargi, 2017). The influence of international standards such as CELTA and TKT has also strengthened expectations from supervisors about supporting teacher learning in private English language institutes (Azizpour & Gholami, 2021; Farahian & Asefi, 2022).

The findings from recent research on EFL teaching in Iran show that supervision is still based on the principles of traditional, directive supervision rather than dialogic professional development (Akbari & Yazdanmehr, 2021). While supervision has become a development procedure that can help teachers reflect on their work and improve it, little is known about the way supervisors' updating of their professional skills impacts the way they conduct their briefings after observing the lessons (Koç & Savaş, 2024; Mehrpour & Agheshteh, 2017). While collaborative feedback is well-known to be linked with teacher agency and reflection, directive feedback still prevails in many institutions, and the way supervisors engage in their professional development and briefings in private Iranian institutes needs more attention (Rashidi & Foroutan, 2015).

It appears that teachers expect more frequent and trusting collaboration, instead of quick evaluation sessions, while numerous students, time constraints, and inconsistent organizational support may make it difficult for teachers to implement recommendations suggested during supervision (Azizpour & Gholami, 2021). Therefore, the current study will focus on investigating the correlation between professional development engagement of EFL supervisors working at private English language institutes in Iran and the type of feedback they tend to provide in post-observation briefings. Accordingly, this study aims to explore whether supervisors' professional development engagement is associated with the feedback styles they use in post-observation briefings.

1. Literature Review

Supervision of language classes within the EFL context has come to be regarded not simply as a management process and evaluation exercise but as a vital element in teacher education, pedagogy, and institutional development. Supervisors in private English language institutes assume a very significant role in this process as they act as an important intermediary between institutional and class-level requirements. The job of the supervisor does not involve simply checking for teacher compliance with the teaching standards. Instead, it encompasses a range of tasks, such as observing teaching practices, assessing pedagogical needs, and facilitating briefings after observation that can promote teacher professional development and improve

teaching effectiveness or strengthen the inspection culture (Al-Zahrani & Al-Bargi, 2017). Recent research has thus focused on the role of language supervision not as inspection but as a dialogic and identity-driven professional activity (Yuan et al., 2022; Koç & Savaş, 2024).

This shift in perspective is triggered by the change in the role of the language supervisor since the traditional perception considered the role of language supervisor to be an observer and assessor of the lessons delivered and class management (Copland & Mann, 2010). However, in recent years, supervision of language teaching has been described more as a complex of actions, including, among other things, guidance, mediation, encouragement, and pedagogical support. As demonstrated in the systematic review by Yuan et al. (2022), supervision in the field of TESOL today tends more to be developmental in its character, rather than purely evaluative. Furthermore, according to Koç and Savaş (2024), supervisory feedback cannot be considered as a purely objective activity but as a discourse practice affected by social relations, institutional pressures, and personal views. Such rethinking of supervision is crucial because of the new understanding of the supervisor as a key factor in teacher development. The skills involved in observations, assessment, and provision of effective feedback go beyond technical skills and require regular updating and reflection. Supervisors need to stay abreast of developments in the profession through reading relevant literature, attending workshops and webinars, and maintaining peer relationships (Al-Zahrani & Al-Bargi, 2017).

Relational dynamics emerge clearly during post-observation briefings, and these are a vital component of supervision as they turn classroom observations into learning experiences. Research is unanimous in showing that the nature of the feedback given by supervisor's influences teacher perceptions of the supervision process (Alshammari, 2020). Koç and Savaş (2024) observe that the type of feedback in supervision can be placed on a continuum of directive or collaborative nature. Directive feedback implies the use of feedback aimed at corrective measures, evaluative and compliance-based, whereas collaborative feedback focuses on negotiating, reflecting, and empowering teachers (Rashidi & Foroutan, 2015). Researchers have recently suggested discourse strategies in providing feedback, such as mitigation, elicitation, prompting, and negotiated clarifications. These strategies will help in maintaining authority during the process without affecting teachers' sense of autonomy. The need for discourse strategies is more critical when conducting a briefing session on an evaluated teacher (Al-Zahrani & Al-Bargi, 2017; Copland & Mann, 2010). Therefore, good feedback is not only positive but pedagogical and contextual in nature, directly influencing whether a teacher feels empowered to reflect on their practice. (Agheshteh & Mehrpour, 2021; Randall & Thornton, 2021).

The nature of such feedback depends largely on the professional identity of a supervisor. According to Yuan et al. (2022), it would be unrealistic to believe in the existence of such a "super-human" professional who inherently has all the required skills; thus, supervision is a professional identity which is acquired over time by experience, self-reflection, and education—this is especially important in developing countries with high workload and insufficient institutional support of supervisors (Gholaminejad & Rezaei, 2024). Professional development of supervisors will make them able to respond to classroom situations and give feedback that will be valuable for each teacher individually. This research takes into

consideration the fact that supervisors' involvement in development programs will affect the content of their feedback after observations (Agheshteh & Mehrpour, 2021; Copland & Mann, 2010).

In addition to providing a broad notion of the importance of supervision, the above literature gives us a much better idea of where our current study is situated within the supervision process. In the case of Iranian private English language institutes, the focus of supervision does not only lie on the extent to which teachers comply with a certain procedure, but also lies on how supervisors perceive the realities of the classroom and translate them into their own practice of post-observation briefings. Literature related to teacher talk (Çelik Korkmaz, 2021; Copland & Neokleous, 2011), the use of the first language (Cook, 2001; Hall & Cook, 2023), lesson staging (Harmer, 2015), learner involvement, and control versus freer practice (Ellis, 2018; Sadeghi & Richards, 2023) indicates that pedagogical issues in the classroom are anything but neutral and mechanical matters; rather, they acquire meaning through being used by the supervisor as topics of discussion within the professional discourse. Therefore, in this study, these pedagogical issues are viewed as neither teaching variables nor separate elements, but rather the practical points of reference through which the feedback provided during the supervisory process can be studied.

This interpretation is founded on the principles of Reflective Practice Theory and Communities of Practice, which are the theoretical frameworks underlying the conceptualization of supervision as a socially-located professional learning process. In the case of the former, Reflective Practice stresses the importance of the experiential, investigative, and reflective approach to enhancing professional practice (Dewey, 1933; Gibbs, 1988; Schön, 1983), and in the latter, Communities of Practice underscores the importance of participation, learning, and legitimacy within the community in terms of developing professionally (Wenger, 1999). Considering the current research, one can say that these approaches imply that the style of supervisory briefings may be conditioned not only by personal knowledge or organizational requirements, but also by supervisors' involvement in professional discourse, collaborative learning, and professional development (Derakhshan & Zhang, 2021; Gebhard, 2017).

For this reason, the current study investigates the link between the supervisors' participation in the process of professional development and the type of feedback they provide after the class. This way, it is aimed at addressing a void in the existing literature which considers professional development, supervision and classroom feedback as isolated spheres rather than as interrelated aspects of the professional sphere. To illustrate the conceptual framework of the study, shown in Figure 1, the mentioned theories were integrated into a model; the model reveals how systemic lapses in Iranian EFL supervision, namely high-frequency updating and low community participation, maintain suboptimal feedback, suggesting that the high quality of regular professional networks and reflective updating improves teaching.

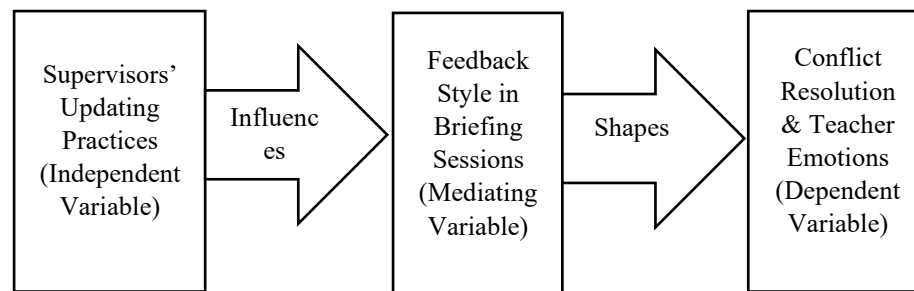


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework*

2. ap and Research Questions

High TTT, L1 overuse, and controlled-practice bias are prevalent in global and Iranian English language classrooms, yet supervision's role in addressing them is understudied (Xie & Li, 2023; Derakhshan & Zangoei, 2024). Critically, supervisors' own professional updating—via journals, webinars, or CoPs—and its impact on feedback styles and conflict resolution in post-observation briefings remains unexplored (Mehrpour & Agheshteh, 2017). In Iranian English language institutes, large classes and monolingual policies intensify these issues, but how supervisors' updating fosters collaborative, reflective feedback to resolve tensions is unknown. Bridging this gap is vital to link research and practice for enhanced EFL teaching quality in high-stakes contexts.

The research questions for the article were articulated as follows:

1. What are the professional updating practices of EFL supervisors in Iranian English language institutes, and how frequently do they engage with these resources to stay informed about ELT developments?
2. What types of feedback styles (directive or collaborative) are prevalent in post-observation briefing sessions, and how do these styles influence the resolution of persistent conflicts?
3. How do supervisors' professional updating practices relate to their feedback styles in briefing sessions, and what are the implications for teacher performance and EFL learning quality in Iranian contexts?

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This research used a convergent parallel mixed-methods case study approach to identify any patterns of association between the extent to which supervisors were engaged in professional development and their dominant styles of feedback delivery in the post-observation briefings within four large urban private English-language institutes in Iran (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The research design involved both quantitative description via content analysis of updating practices using chi-square, and qualitative depth in terms of thematic analysis of update reports and 36 recorded briefings (Stake, 1995).

An institutional case approach was used whereby each of the four English language institutes was regarded as an individual case for purposes of comparative analysis while at the same time being relatively stable in terms of policies and supervisor training. This study was

underpinned by theories of Reflective Practice Theory and Communities of Practice as advanced by Dewey (1933) and Lave and Wenger (1991), respectively. Such theories provided a conceptualization of supervision as professional development. They also improved the credibility and transferability of the current study through documentation of procedures involving the use of a semi-structured questionnaire and audio-recorded post-observation briefings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

A mixed-methods research design was especially relevant in the current study because it helped to overcome some of the weaknesses associated with either pure qualitative or pure quantitative research designs. Pure qualitative methods could suffer from biases due to subjectivity and personal perceptions, while the latter could overlook context. Consequently, no causal, directional, or mediational inferences were made in this study. The chi-square statistics were only analyzed in terms of the pattern of associations.

3.2.2. Instruments

This study employed two main instruments to examine supervisors' professional updating practices, feedback styles, and conflict resolution patterns in Iranian EFL contexts.

3.2.1. Semi-Structured Survey Questionnaire

To begin, 36 supervisors from the four English language institutes were given a semi-structured survey questionnaire as the first tool. One important open-ended question on the survey was, "What professional development activities do you conduct to stay current in ELT research, and how often?" Following that, responses were divided into three descriptive self-report categories that represented the frequency and range of participation: Low (one activity annually or vague engagement), Moderate (two to six activities annually), and High (one or more activities monthly).

This instrument was not utilized as a standardized validated scale because it was created specifically for the current study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Rather, it served as a practical instrument for encapsulating the scope and frequency of supervisors' updating procedures in a digestible manner. Two separate researchers classified the replies and discussed disagreements until agreement was attained in order to improve analytical dependability. Cohen's kappa was .78 ($p < .05$), indicating a satisfactory level of inter-rater agreement.

3.2.2. Briefing Transcripts

Transcripts of 36 post-observation briefings, one for each supervisor, made up the second tool. With permission, these sessions were audio recorded. TurboScribe (2023) was used to transcribe the recordings, and the accuracy of the transcriptions was carefully verified. To increase credibility and ensure that the transcripts faithfully captured the interactional substance of the briefings, all materials were anonymized following the transcription stage and underwent the process of member checking, where the participants checked their individual transcripts to ensure that the information about their feedback was presented accurately (Nowell et al., 2017). In addition, in order to maintain the rigor and credibility of the qualitative analysis, an audit trail was kept throughout the entire process of the research.

These transcripts served as the main qualitative corpus for detecting conflict resolution techniques and supervisory feedback types, such as collaborative and directive patterns. Additionally, they supported the convergent logic of the mixed-methods design by enabling systematic theme coding and cross-tabulation with the survey data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3.3. Participants and Corpus

Purposeful sampling was employed to ask 36 supervisors from four reputable private English language institutes in Tehran to participate in the study. These institutes were picked due to their standing, accreditation, and size range, which includes between 500 and 2,000 students and 20 to 80 teachers. According to Akbari and Yazdanmehr (2021), this setting offered access to a high-demand and competitive environment where supervisory difficulties like excessive teacher talking time and greater dependency on the first language are likely to be prominent.

As shown in Table 1, 58% of the 36 participants in the supervisor sample were female, with a mean age of 42.3 years ($SD = 7.1$). Regarding academic education, 72% of supervisors had an MA or PhD in TESOL or Applied Linguistics, and all had at least five years of experience. Regular classroom observation and post-observation feedback were part of their responsibilities. There were 36 instructor participants connected to these supervisors, and 64% of them were female. Their mean age was 34.6 years ($SD = 5.8$). Each of them had two to ten years of teaching experience, and they were all connected to a supervisor for the purpose of briefing sessions.

Table 1. *Overview of Study Participants*

Participant Group	Number (N)	Demographics	Selection Criteria	Role in Study
Supervisors	36	Age: 28-55 ($M=42.3$, $SD=7.1$); Gender: 58% female, 42% male; Education: 28% PhD. And 44% master's in TESOL/applied linguistics, 28% bachelor's with certifications	Purposive sampling from 4 institutes; ≥ 5 years supervision experience	Provided responses on updating practices; Involved in briefing sessions as feedback providers
Teachers	36	Age: 25-48 ($M=34.6$, $SD=5.8$); Gender: 64% female, 36% male; Experience: 2-10 years ($M=5.4$, $SD=2.3$); Education: Bachelor's/master's in ELT	Convenience sampling based on recent observations; Paired with supervisors	Participants in briefing sessions; Recipients of feedback on teaching practices

The corpus included around 15,000 words of transcript data from 36 post-observation briefings and about 1,200 words of supervisor responses regarding professional update procedures. In addition to pertinent non-verbal cues, the transcripts included naturalistic interactional aspects pertaining to teacher talking time, first-language usage, classroom time management, and activation phases. All information was gathered over the course of six months in 2025, digitized, and made anonymous for study.

Table 2. *Overview of Study Corpus*

Data Type	Size/Volume	Description	Collection Method	Analysis Focus
Supervisors' Responses	~1,200 words; 36 entries	Open-ended textual answers on ELT updating practices and frequencies	Online questionnaire distributed via institute channels	Thematic analysis of resources (e.g., articles, conferences) and engagement frequencies (e.g., annual vs. daily)
Briefing Session Transcriptions	~15,000 words; 36 dialogues	Verbatim records of post-observation feedback sessions, including verbal elements	Audio recordings during sessions, transcribed	Thematic analysis of feedback styles (directive vs. collaborative) and conflict themes (e.g., TTT, L1 use)

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Data collection took place in 2025 across the four large private English language institutes in Tehran. Supervisors completed an online survey containing one open-ended question about their professional updating practices and the frequency with which they engaged in such activities. This produced approximately 1,200 words of narrative data. Informed consent and anonymity were ensured through written procedures and reminder notices before participation.

Additionally, with the participants' consent, 36 post-observation briefings, each lasting roughly 10 to 20 minutes, were discreetly audio recorded. Naturally occurring supervisory exchanges involving topics like instructor talking time, L1 use, and lesson activation were caught in these recordings. TurboScribe.ai (2023) was used to transcribe the recordings, and their accuracy was subsequently checked by hand. When applicable, nonverbal cues were also recorded. To improve credibility and reliability, the generated corpus of over 15,000 words underwent member checking (Nowell et al., 2017). The recordings were included into standard supervisory procedures to lessen the chance of a Hawthorne effect, although self-consciousness might still have had some impact on the briefings' interactional tone (Gholaminejad & Rezaei, 2021).

The qualitative data were then examined using the thematic analysis method described by Braun and Clarke (2006). After familiarization through repeated reading, repeating patterns like "low updating" and "directive feedback" were coded both inductively and deductively. After that, codes were categorized into more general themes and examined for conceptual clarity and internal coherence. Feedback styles were divided into two main categories—directive and collaborative—to promote consistency. Two researchers independently coded to establish inter-coder reliability, which had a Cohen's kappa of .82 ($p < .05$).

Using SPSS, quantitative content analysis was carried out to compute frequencies and look at distributions, including the percentage of supervisors in each updating band. The relationships between professional updating frequency, feedback style, and conflict resolution outcomes were then investigated using chi-square testing (Krippendorff, 2018; Neuendorf, 2017).

Lastly, matrix coding and triangulation were used to merge the qualitative and quantitative strands. Because of this convergence, the study was able to investigate whether patterns in supervisors' updating practices matched the dispute resolution techniques and feedback styles

shown in their briefing sessions. While staying rooted in the study's descriptive, context-specific design, the integration of the two datasets enhanced the findings' interpretive significance (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

4. Findings

4.1. Supervisors' Professional Updating Practices

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of 36 supervisor survey responses revealed diverse updating resources: articles/journals (n=9), conferences/workshops, webinars, social media, and informal networks; podcasts were rare (n=1). Table 3 ranks resources by mention frequency; percentages exceed 100% due to multiple responses per participant (Krippendorff, 2018; Neuendorf, 2017). Example: "I read articles on Google Scholar and TESOL Quarterly regularly, probably every couple of months."

Briefing transcripts (N=36) yielded feedback styles: Directive/Non-collaborative (negative teacher emotions) vs. Collaborative/Supportive (positive resolutions). Frequencies in tables; excerpts illustrate patterns.

Table 3. *Resources Used by Supervisors for Professional Updating (Ranked by Frequency)*

Resource Category	Frequency (Count)	Percentage (%)
Reading Articles/Journals	9	25.00
Conferences	4	11.11
Workshops/Training Sessions	4	11.11
Webinars	4	11.11
Social Media/Online Communities	4	11.11
Blogs/Newsletters	3	8.33
Collaborations/Partnerships	3	8.33
Publisher Updates/Textbooks	3	8.33
Sporadic/Infrequent	3	8.33
Consultants/Curriculum Reviews	2	5.56
Courses/Modules	2	5.56
Reading Groups/Circles	2	5.56
Podcasts	1	2.78

Note: Percentages are calculated based on the total number of supervisors (N=36); totals exceed 100% due to overlapping categories and multiple responses per participant

It should be mentioned that these statistics indicate the complexity of self-reporting practice. It is typical of content analysis where categories can overlap (Krippendorff, 2018), and the answers of the participants about their professional development practices often touched on more than one category, thus leading to 43 mentions among all the members of the group. A complex approach to professional development is a defining feature of the dataset, since supervisors can combine various frequencies and forms of involvement.

In regard to these practices, it can be seen that the top sources combine event-based and reading-based updating, while lower-ranked podcasts can be viewed as areas for further development. Most supervisors self-reported Low descriptive band ($n=28/36$, 77.78%), with annual engagement predominant (50%), e.g., “I attend the national ELT conference held annually.” High-frequency practices like daily social media use were rare (11%).

Table 4. *Frequency of Mentions of Supervisors' Engagement in Professional Updating Activities*

Frequency Category	Count	Percentage (%)
Annual	18	50.00
Monthly	9	25.00
Biannual	5	13.89
Every 2-3 Years	4	11.11
Daily	2	5.56
Weekly	2	5.56
Quarterly	2	5.56
Sporadic	1	2.78

The table indicates a co-occurrence of self-reported Low band (yearly or less: $n=28/36$, 77.78%) in the data. Bands created post-hoc from single-item self-reports; not objective frequency. No causal link to feedback ability.

4.2. Thematic Analysis of Briefing Sessions

Analysis of 36 briefing transcripts revealed two dominant feedback styles: Directive/Non-collaborative ($n=16$, 44.4%) and Collaborative/Supportive ($n=20$, 55.6%), reflecting power dynamics in supervision (Gholaminejad & Rezaei, 2024). Sub-themes included TTT, L1 use, time management, and teaching phase imbalances.

Directive style featured supervisor monologues, harsh criticism, and invalidation (e.g., “Your ability to manage a classroom is in question”), associated with observed teacher frustration, sighs, or withdrawal. This style is not associated with suggestions and resolution.

The collaborative style began with praise, used reflective questions, and offered practical suggestions (e.g., “Pre-teach 3–4 key words, then ask a personal question in English”), associated with observed questions and suggestions. Teachers expressed gratitude with no resolution outcome coded.

Although each session was identified by the dominant communicative style of the supervisor, it should be understood that these communication styles can coexist. For example, a session categorized as ‘directive’ means that there is a predominant use of authority-based feedback; however, some utterances in the session may exhibit aspects of collaborative style. (Azizpour & Gholami, 2021; O’Leary, 2020). Table 5 details the distribution.

Table 5. *Distribution of Feedback Styles in Briefing Sessions*

Feedback Style	Count	Percentage (%)	Key Characteristics
Directive and Unprofessional	16	44.44	Supervisor-dominated; harsh criticism; no suggestions; negative teacher emotions (e.g., frustration, defeat)
Collaborative and Supportive	20	55.56	Praise first; reflective questions; practical suggestions; positive resolutions and mutual appreciation

Table 5 highlights a thin majority of collaborative approaches (binary predominant style only). Directive approaches remain prominent. Tension was observed in excerpts (e.g., Conversations 21-27, 28-35), with no systematic resolution coded.

4.3 Relationship Between Updating Frequency and Feedback Styles

Qualitative analysis showed co-occurrence patterns between self-reported updating bands and predominant feedback styles. Supervisors in the self-reported Low band ($n=28$, 77.8%) showed predominant directive feedback, co-occurring with observed frustration over TTT, L1 use, and time management. Examples: “Your methods are not producing results” (Conversation 7) or “Your opinions are irrelevant” (Conversation 10) triggered teacher frustration, sighs, and silence, leaving issues unresolved.

Supervisors in self-reported High band ($n=4$, 11.1%) showed predominant collaborative feedback, co-occurring with observed uptake in excerpts. Example: “Use a visible timer” (Conversation 28) elicited enthusiastic uptake: “I will use the timer next time.” Medium-updating (30.6%, $n=11$) leaned collaborative, e.g., “Pre-teach 3–4 key words” (Conversation 22) gained acceptance.

Cross-tabulation showed Directive style (44.4%, $n=16$) dominated low updating; Collaborative style (55.6%, $n=20$) prevailed in high updating. Patterns co-occur with Reflective Practice Theory: higher self-reported updating bands co-occur with collaborative styles in the data (Mehrpour & Agheshteh, 2017).

Table 6. *Cross-Tabulation of Feedback Styles by Supervisors' Updating Frequency*

Updating Frequency	Directive Style ($n=16$)	Collaborative Style ($n=20$)	Total Sessions ($n=36$)
Low ($n=28$)	14 (87.5%)	6 (30%)	20 (55.56%)
Medium ($n=11$)	2 (12.5%)	9 (45%)	11 (30.56%)
High ($n=4$)	0 (0%)	5 (25%)	5 (13.89%)

Note: Percentages represent proportions of the respective style-based sub-samples or total supervisors ($N=36$). Total frequencies exceed the sample size due to multiple reported activities (Krippendorff, 2018).

This is a result of the complex nature of supervisory practices, in which there is an interplay between professional updating and the different feedback styles at varied levels of frequency. Cross-tabulation (Table 6) showed low-updating supervisors (annual/sporadic) predominantly used Directive styles (14/16 cases), e.g., “Fluency without accuracy is useless” (Conversation 8), worsening TTT/L1 conflicts. High-updaters (daily/weekly) favored Collaborative styles (5/20), e.g., “Pre-teach 3–4 key words” (Conversation 22), fostering solutions. Medium-updaters leaned collaborative (9/20). Frequent updating enables reflective, effective feedback (Mehrpour & Agheshteh, 2017).

Chi-square test: $\chi^2(2) = 12.36$, $p = .002$, showing significant exploratory association. Cramér's $V = .41$ indicates moderate association strength. Exploratory association only; cross-sectional design precludes causal or predictive claims (Krippendorff, 2018). Small cells (e.g., High-Directive expected: 2.22) warrant caution, which is why Fisher's exact test is recommended for precision (Neuendorf, 2017).

5. Discussion

In the high-stakes setting of private Iranian English language institutes, the current study examined the relationship between supervisors' professional updating practices and their feedback methods. The findings show a strong correlation between these two constructs: supervisors classified as "Low updaters" (77.78%) tended to use directive feedback methods (44.44%), while supervisors classified as "High updaters" consistently preferred reflective, collaborative discourse (55.56%). These findings imply that professional updating is an essential part of supervisor identity that helps shift from evaluative, compliance-focused supervision to a developmental, facilitative practice rather than just an extra activity (Al-Zahrani & Al-Bargi, 2017; Rashidi & Foroutan, 2015; Yuan et al., 2022).

The findings point to a significant discrepancy in supervisory rhetoric. As seen in the exchange, "Your ideas are meaningless" (Conversation 10), low-updating supervisors, who were typically bound by strict institutional standards and traditional evaluation responsibilities, frequently resorted to prescriptive criticism empty of practical alternatives. This discursive approach is similar to the "compliance-focused" supervision outlined by O'Leary (2020), in which the supervisor's main responsibility is to ensure that institutional procedures are followed rather than encouraging teacher development. On the other hand, high updaters effectively reduced teacher resistance and encouraged autonomy by using their interaction with current ELT literature and professional networks to provide targeted, solution-focused advice (e.g., "Use a visible timer," Conversation 28). This indicates that professional updating serves as a source of discursive capital, allowing supervisors to move beyond "unreflective scripts" and negotiate a more sophisticated, facilitative identity (Copland & Mann, 2010; Gholaminejad & Rezaei, 2024).

This change in identity also has far-reaching implications from a theoretical perspective, especially in understanding the preconditions for "reflection-on-action." The findings expand on Reflective Practice Theory (Dewey, 1933; Schön, 1983), implying that supervisors lack the repertoire necessary to offer context-sensitive, nuanced criticism if they do not regularly engage with current pedagogical knowledge. This underscores a critical "knowledge-practice gap": without active updating, supervisors are prone to defaulting to rigid, top-down models of authority. Additionally, these results contribute to the Iranian EFL context of Communities of Practice (CoP) theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). In line with Koç and Savaş's (2024) focus on discourse strategies like mediation and elicitation, we found that supervisors who were active members of formal or digital professional networks were better at collaborative mediation. As a result, updating is more than just an individual effort; it is a way to fortify the "CoP," which empowers supervisors to withstand the directive bias that institutional accountability mechanisms frequently impose.

This means that, for both practitioners and institute managers, the need for change should not be approached through compulsory “top-down” training but rather through the creation of conditions where the role of the supervisor is that of a peer-participant in the profession. The “discursive capital” generated by involving the supervisor in disseminating pedagogic practices of the time will help ease the tension of the evaluation process.

Despite these significant implications, our methodological limitations must be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings. A strong triangulation of qualitative narratives and quantitative frequency counts was made possible by the study's use of a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. However, the cross-sectional form of the study makes it impossible to demonstrate causative or mediational relationships, which is a fundamental limitation. The chi-square analyses show a correlation rather than an influence trajectory. Additionally, the generalizability of these findings is hampered by our sampling frame, which was restricted to four sizable, urban, private English language institutes. According to [Safari et al. \(2020\)](#), these urban centers' high resource content produces a "specific ecology" that is very different from public, rural, or smaller private settings. Furthermore, although pragmatically effective in sustaining high response rates, the use of a single open-ended survey item for self-reported updating may have limited the breadth of our qualitative findings on the obstacles to professional progress. The supervisor-teacher relationship must be interpreted cautiously due to the possibility of social desirability bias in these self-reports and the subjectivity involved in transcribing and categorizing non-verbal cues ([Braun & Clarke, 2006](#)).

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, this study lays the groundwork for further investigation in Iranian EFL environments. Longitudinal mixed-methods designs are needed to monitor how particular interventions—like established monthly webinars or peer-coaching networks—affect both feedback styles and actual teacher performance in order to go beyond the existing snapshot of supervisory practices. To effectively capture the nuanced non-verbal aspects of supervisory engagement, future research would benefit from integrating multi-stakeholder views, such as learner outcomes and video-based sentiment analysis. Future researchers can more conclusively ascertain whether professional development does, in fact, serve as a lever for systemic change in language supervision by shifting toward more intricate, longitudinal designs.

Conclusions

A noteworthy and recurrent pattern in Iranian EFL supervision is revealed by this convergent parallel mixed-methods case study: the strong correlation between supervisors' professional updates and the feedback styles they use in post-observation briefings. The results show that a significant percentage of supervisors (77.8%) self-reported having little professional upgrading, and this trend was often linked to a feedback style that was mostly directive in 44.4% of the briefings. Extended supervisor chat, critical comments, and criticism without specific educational alternatives were common characteristics of this type of directive feedback. In actuality, this approach tended to be associated with teacher dissatisfaction and unresolved issues related to instruction, such as excessive usage of L1 and high Teacher Talking Time (TTT). By contrast, supervisors in the high and moderate updating bands were more often linked with a collaborative feedback style (55.6% of sessions), marked by reflective

questioning, mediation, and practical suggestions grounded in pedagogical reasoning. These interactions were more likely to support teacher engagement, openness, and willingness to revise practice.

These findings support the conceptual framework of the study by demonstrating that professional updating is an important part of supervisory identity and practice rather than a side activity. From the standpoint of Reflective Practice Theory, the results indicate that consistent participation in professional literature, workshops, webinars, and peer interaction may provide supervisors with the interpretative tools required to transition from routine evaluation to reflection-oriented discourse. In this approach, updating serves as a prelude to more productive reflection-on-action, allowing supervisors to frame classroom problems in ways that encourage teacher growth rather than compliance. By indicating that supervisors who stay involved in professional networks are more likely to build a common repertoire of cooperative, context-sensitive feedback techniques, the findings further broaden Communities of Practice viewpoints. This supports the view that supervision is not merely an individual task, but a socially situated practice shaped by ongoing participation in professional communities.

However, the study should be viewed cautiously. Its cross-sectional design prevents causal inference, and its scope was restricted to four sizable, urban private English language institutes. Furthermore, rather than directly seeing supervisors' developmental practices over time, self-reported updating measures capture supervisors' impressions of their professional engagement. Because of these factors, the findings should be interpreted as proof of connection rather than cause-and-effect. Future studies should expand on these results by examining how structured supervisory development programs affect feedback practices and classroom outcomes using longitudinal designs, larger samples from other institutional settings, and evidence from many sources. However, the current study highlights a significant implication for Iranian English language institutes: supervisors should receive regular, structured, and context-sensitive professional updating if supervision is to serve as a developmental rather than merely regulatory mechanism. Therefore, creating a culture of ongoing learning for supervisors may be essential to raising the caliber, responsiveness, and instructional value of EFL supervision.

References

- Agheshteh, H., & Mehrpour, S. (2021). Teacher autonomy and supervisor authority: Power dynamics in language teacher supervision in Iran. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research* 9(1), 87-106.
- Akbari, R., & Yazdanmehr, E. (2021). A comprehensive analysis of EFL teaching in Iranian private language institutes. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 12(4), 567-578. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1204.05>
- Alshammari, A. (2020). Exploring Kuwaiti EFL supervisors' and teachers' perceptions of post-observation feedback. *International Journal of Instruction*, 13(4), 759-776. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13446a>
- Al-Zahrani, M. S., & Al-Bargi, A. (2017). The impact of supervision on EFL teachers' performance: A Saudi perspective. *English Language Teaching*, 10(6), 117-130. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n6p117>
- Azizpour, S., & Gholami, J. (2021). EFL teacher-supervisors' attitudes toward supervision in Iranian language schools. *Iranian Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 10(1), 16-34.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

- Çelik Korkmaz, S. (2021). Teachers' beliefs and practices of L1 use in EFL classrooms in Turkey. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(1), 556–571. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1320476.pdf>
- Cook, V. (2001). Using the first language in the classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57(3), 402–423. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.57.3.402>
- Copland, F., & Mann, S. (2010). Dialogic or demonic? The role of the feedback session in pre-service teacher education. *Classroom Discourse*, 1(2), 143–160. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19463014.2010.512867>
- Copland, F., & Neokleous, G. (2011). L1 to teach L2: Complexities and contradictions. *ELT Journal*, 65(3), 270–280. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccq047>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Derakhshan, A., & Zangoei, A. (2024). The interplay of L1 use, foreign language enjoyment, and anxiety in Iranian EFL classrooms. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 18(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2023.2239290>
- Derakhshan, A., & Zhang, L. J. (2021). The relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' reflective teaching and their self-efficacy. *Language Teaching Research*, 25(5), 695–714. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211043529>
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think*. D.C. Heath and Company. <https://www.sciepub.com/reference/186612>
- Ellis, R. (2018). *Reflections on task-based language teaching*. Multilingual Matters.
- Farahian, M., & Asefi, M. (2022). EFL teachers' perceptions of clinical supervision in Iranian language institutes. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 14(2), 789–805. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-03-2021-0102>
- Gebhard, J. G. (2017). *Teaching English as a foreign or second language: A teacher self-development and methodology guide* (2nd ed.). University of Michigan Press.
- Gholaminejad, R., & Rezaei, S. (2021). Power dynamics in post-observation feedback: A case study of Iranian EFL contexts. *Journal of Language and Education*, 7(3), 45–60. <https://doi.org/10.17323/jle.2021.11854>
- Gholaminejad, R., & Rezaei, S. (2024). Power and face in post-observation feedback: A case study of Iranian EFL supervisors. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 24(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2023.2277869>
- Gibbs, G. (1988). *Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods*. Further Education Unit.
- Hall, G., & Cook, G. (2023). Own-language use in language teaching and learning: A state-of-the-art review. *Language Teaching*, 56(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444822000513>
- Harmer, J. (2015). *The practice of English language teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson Education. <https://i-jte.org/index.php/journal/article/view/451>
- Koç, F. S., & Savas, P. (2024). Supervision models and supervisory feedback in English language teacher education: A meta-synthesis study adopting a discourse analytic perspective. *TESL-EJ*, 27(4), 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.55593/ej.27108a1>
- Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mehrpour, S., & Agheshteh, H. (2017). Supervisory feedback efficiency: Developing a framework based on Iranian EFL teachers' and supervisors' perceptions. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 6(3), 24–34. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.6n.3p.24>

- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2017). *The content analysis guidebook* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- O’Leary, M. (2020). *Classroom observation: A guide to the effective observation of teaching and learning*. Routledge
- Randall, M., & Thornton, B. (2021). *Advising and supporting teachers*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rashidi, N., & Foroutan, A. (2015). On the Iranian in-service and pre-service language teachers’ perceptions of educational supervision concerning their professional development. *Issues in Language Teaching (ILT)*, 4(2), 27-55.
- Sadeghi, K., & Richards, J. C. (2023). The struggle to implement communicative language teaching: A case study from Iran. *RELC Journal*, 54(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882231156321>
- Safari, I., Davaribina, M., & Khoshnevis, I. (2020). The influence of EFL teachers' self-efficacy, job satisfaction and reflective thinking on their professional development: a structural equation modeling. *Journal on Efficiency and Responsibility in Education and Science*, 13(1), 27-40. <https://doi.org/10.7160/eriesj.2020.130103>
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Basic Books.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. SAGE Publications. <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/the-art-of-case-study-research/book214422>
- Wenger, E. (1999). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.wenger-trayner.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/2000-EWT-Article-for-Organization-CoPs-and-social-learning-systems.pdf>
- Xie, X., & Li, L. (2023). Teacher talking time in Chinese EFL classrooms: A sociocultural perspective. *Language Teaching Research*, 27(2), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688221140490>
- Yuan, R., Lee, I., De Costa, P. I., Yang, M., & Liu, S. (2022). TESOL teacher educators in higher education: A review of studies from 2010 to 2020. *Language Teaching*, 55(4), 434-469.