Correction Codes: A Tool for Enhancing Writing Qualities

Rameshwar Thakur

Abstract

Writing is essential for documenting ideas, feelings and information. Students submit assigned tasks in written forms, which teachers mark for errors using codes to prevent their recurrence in the future. The symbols teachers use to provide written feedback should help improve student writing. However, most students' fail to understand such symbols. Consequently, they pay less attention to the feedback, and continue to make similar mistakes in their subsequent writings. This qualitative study aimed to explore various forms of codes used by 10 English language teachers teaching in grades 11/12 in different schools in Kavrepalanchok district of Bagmati Province. The study found that students did not understand most of the correction codes used by teachers, nor did they contact the teachers morever for clarification. This lack of interaction hindered the effectiveness of these codes in improving writing. Teachers did not orient students about such codes, and most students did not seek help to understand them. It was recommended that the teacher use context-based techniques for scoring and providing written corrective feedback.

Introduction

With the popularity of information and communication technology in educational activities, both formative and summative evaluation systems have experienced significant changes. These shifts have also influenced the ways language skills are assessed, particularly writing. Writing, as a productive language skill, requires both mental and physical processes. While audio and audio-visual mode submissions are becoming popular, most students and teachers still rely on written assignments due to their practicality. Although the process of writing involves complex morphological and syntactic activities, a person's social and cultural background also impacts their writing. Sperling (1996) notes that 'writing, like language in general, [is] a meaning-making activity that is socially and culturally shaped and individually and socially purposeful' (p. 55).

In expressing ideas, individuals, including students, use codes; thus, students often submit assignments in written form, which teachers mark and provide corrective feedback. This feedback allows students to make corrections by identifying and understanding their

mistakes. Teachers can review and offer feedback on these written works at their office, home, or elsewhere. Some students understand the correction codes used by teachers while others may need additional guidance. In such cases, teachers assist them in interpreting the codes, enabling them to improve their writing. Meaningful feedback, as Obilor (2019) states, "helps students identify gaps in their learning, provides suggestions to improve learning, creates responsive learners, sharpens teaching strategies, and motivates students" (p. 40).

Assignments or homework submissions often consist of short or long written responses, making writing assessments a common form of language performance evaluation. Teachers are responsible for reading these texts and offering written feedback. The effectiveness of this feedback depends on the teacher's attention to writing style, content, mechanics, and grammar. Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) emphasize that effective feedback significantly helps students improve their writing skills (p. 282). However, written feedback loses its value when it is merely used for grading. If errors in written texts are not properly addressed, "errors become deeply ingrained, making it doubly difficult for the learner to use the language correctly" (Semke 1984, p. 195). Consequently, these errors in writing can become fossilized.

Feedback and Students' Learning

The outcomes of an academic session often hinge on writing, as most institutions use subjective written exams to assess students' progress and achievements. Recently, academics have emphasized process writing, which relies heavily on providing feedback to students' written work, allowing them to correct potential errors. Various marking or scoring systems are in place; however,

students and parents frequently question the validity and reliability of these systems. Many students disregard written feedback and focus solely on their grades (Obilor, 2019, p. 40). On the other hand, diligent students are more attentive to their scores and demand fairness in marking.

In Nepal, schools generally do not employ multiple assessment methods or engage community members, parents, and researchers in evaluating students' achievements. Teachers do not consistently follow the scoring criteria outlined by the curriculum and grading standards. Additionally, there is a significant discrepancy between scoring for objective and subjective test items. Since subjective questions require thoughtful responses, the grading techniques should be meticulously applied. Ashir et al. (2021) remark that subjective exams are often viewed as "more complex and intimidating by both students and teachers due to their context" (p. 1). Rather than using standardized marking symbols, teachers often tick, underline, or cross out answers. This lack of uniformity in grading causes both students and parents to question the validity and reliability of tests. When results are released, many students, dissatisfied with their grades, request a score re-totalling; however, current regulations do not allow re-evaluation of board examination answer sheets. Without consistent and effective marking practices, the validity and reliability of writing assessments will continue to be questioned. This highlights a gap between the intended scoring systems of curricula and their real-world application. If feedback mechanisms are not effectively implemented to address this gap, the desired learning outcomes may not be achieved.

This study investigates the disparity created by the written corrective feedback system. Are

teachers and students sufficiently committed to giving and receiving feedback at the upper secondary level, specifically in grades 11 and 12? The English grading criteria suggest certain standards for providing comments on written work; however, teachers' performance in evaluating and giving feedback on assignments has proven unsatisfactory. Thus, this study also examines the correction codes teachers use to improve students' writing skills and explores alternative methods to bridge the gap between curriculum guidelines and classroom practices.

Literature Reviews

Writing is a complex phenomenon that requires putting down thoughts, opinions and emotions on a sheet of paper using appropriate symbols or codes. Learners express their learnt knowledge through scripts, and a teacher evaluates them on that basis. For constructive transformation, s/he provides relevant feedbacks so that they can correct the existing mistakes or errors, and avoid possible errors in future.

Scoring Systems

Different scoring schemes are developed for various types of test items, with subjective assessments often posing greater complexity due to the need to consider multiple types of errors. Factors such as context, time constraints, the importance of the content, and scorer expertise influence the choice of marking scheme. Some experts, like Semke (1984), advocate for a system that marks error locations with a code to indicate the type of error, requiring students to make their own corrections (p. 196). Conversely, some English teachers prefer to avoid direct corrections, instead responding to content with comments and questions (as cited in Semke,

1984). Nevertheless, serious errors should be corrected carefully to prevent fossilization.

Weigle (2002) describes three main scoring scales for written assessments. The Primary Trait scoring scale focuses on how well students can write within a specific type of discourse, often using a detailed and specific rubric for each task. This approach allows evaluators to assess the effectiveness of the writing in achieving the task's purpose.

The second system, *Holistic Scoring (HS),* provides a single score based on the overall impression of the text. The scorer quickly reviews the script and assigns a score based on a rating scale or rubric. White (1984) argues that HS is valid as it reflects an authentic, personal reaction of the reader (p. 409). This method has high construct validity and is commonly used in certification, placement, and research (Russikoff, 1995). However, Perkins (1983) highlights potential threats to HS reliability due to subjectivity influenced by bias, fatigue, inconsistent standards, and familiarity with the student (p. 653). Despite this, Homburg (1984) suggests that HS can be reliably applied to ESL writing (p. 103), though Weigle (2002) counters that a single score limits a rater's ability to distinguish between different aspects of writing (p. 114). While the rubric provides some structure, a gap may still exist between the marking scheme and the examiner's subjective weighting of features (Greatorex, 2019, p. 220).

The *Analytical Scoring (AS)* method, by contrast, is comprehensive and provides detailed insights into a student's performance across criteria such as content, organization, cohesion, vocabulary, and grammar (Weigle, 2002, pp. 114-115). This system is often favored over holistic scoring as it offers

more useful diagnostic information about students' writing abilities (p. 120). Gannon (1985) supports the reliability of AS for free writing assessments, as components like vocabulary, syntax, spelling, and punctuation lend themselves to objective evaluation (as cited in Freihat & Al-Makhzoomi, 2011, p. 143). Veloo, Aziz, and Yaacob (2018) also endorse AS, particularly for small-scale assessments where detailed feedback can help identify strengths and weaknesses in student writing (p. 21). This method evaluates separate components and calculates a total score by combining them. Hughes (2003) notes that AS reduces the impact of uneven skill development on scoring reliability (p. 102), though it requires more time and may shift attention away from the overall writing effect (p. 103).

In comparing AS with HS, Lloyd-Jones (1977) describes AS as "atomistic," focusing on specific writing features, while holistic scoring considers the text as a whole (p. 33). For precise, objective marking, the analytical approach is suitable for scoring written compositions.

The General Impression (GI) scoring criterion, as Weigle (2002) states, is never explicitly mentioned (p. 112), as no rubric or clear-cut scoring scheme is designed. This method involves one or more graders awarding a single or multiple grade/s based on the total impression of the composition topic as a whole. Freihat & Al-Makhzoomi (2011) take it more tiring and faster (p. 143) as it 'does not allow isolating the discrete features of the components of test items in order to assess the quality of a candidate's performance' (Saud, 2018, p. 1). The scorer who adopts this method quickly skims the written items rather than giving a comprehensive look to each and every item. As marking fully depends on the scorer's personal discretion,

the method is blamed for not having precision and reliability. Quellmalz (1982) and White (1985) mention that 'classroom teachers carry out independently when they read, comment on and then assign a grade to an essay is considered GI scoring' (cited in Goulden 1989, p. 4). It means GI is more informal and individual centered in nature.

The scoring approaches discussed hold contextual significance, with the primary goal of enhancing students' writing skills, enabling them to gain better control over their writing. Regardless of the scoring method used, the role of the scorer is essential in producing meaningful outcomes. The choice of scoring method often depends on the type of text, the teacher's attitude toward error correction, the students' engagement with feedback, and the importance of the themes within the text. Whatever technique a teacher chooses, they must use certain symbols or codes to indicate errors, helping students correct these issues and avoid repeating them in future tasks.

However, the codes used can vary widely from one teacher to another. Most of grade 11/12 teachers are part-time… and may lack the time to thoroughly review students' written work. Consequently, they often apply a general impression scoring technique rather than marking specific errors. Students, in turn, may not give the feedback the attention it requires. The type of scoring technique a teacher employs generally involves using different codes to highlight various aspects of writing. This study, therefore, seeks to identify the techniques used in scoring writing tasks and the codes employed in these processes.

Corrective Feedback Strategies

Feedback provides information on reactions or criticisms to a product for improvement,

and when given in written form using letters, words, phrases, or symbols, it's known as written corrective feedback (WCF). Suman et al. (2023) note that "giving feedback on EFL/ESL students' writing plays a critical role in teaching writing because feedback enables students to see their strengths and weaknesses and improve their writing by working on their weaknesses" (p. 23). Winne and Butler (1994) describe feedback as information that helps a learner confirm, add to, adjust, or restructure knowledge in memory (p. 5740). Hattie and Timperley (2007) argue that feedback can be effective at the task level, the process of creation, self-regulation, and the personal or self-directed level, with remedial feedback playing a crucial role at each level (p. 90).

Ellis (2009) identifies six main types of corrective feedback, with direct feedback (DF), indirect feedback (IF), and focused/unfocused feedback (FF/UF) being particularly notable (p. 99). *Direct Feedback* (DF) involves providing the correct form of an error and offering learners the exact target language form. Marisela (2021) explains that DF "provides learners with overt corrections of their written inaccuracies" (p. 9). Bitchener and Knoch (2008) elaborate that DF consists of explicit corrections provided near the linguistic error (p. 411). According to Frear and Chiu (2015), DF can involve either crossing out an error and providing the correct form or giving a metalinguistic rule along with the correction. However, Ellis (2009) notes that DF "requires minimal processing on the part of the learner" (p. 99). While DF supports immediate revisions, Wang (2017) suggests it is more beneficial for younger learners as it stimulates prompt correct usage (p. 77).

In *Indirect Feedback* (IF), the teacher points out error locations without providing corrections, allowing students to identify the correct forms independently. Bitchener (2008) describes IF as involving tasks such as crossing out unnecessary words, adding missing words or phrases, or indicating the correct structure (p. 105). He further explains four ways to implement IF: underlining or circling the error, noting the number of errors in the margin, or using codes to indicate the type of error and its location (p. 105). Ellis (2009) emphasizes that IF promotes student reflection on linguistic forms, which is why IF is often preferred over DF for WCF (p. 100).

Unfocused Feedback (UF) involves corrections for all errors, while *Focused Feedback* (FF) targets specific errors. Sanavi and Nemati (2014) suggest that in UF, the scope is broad, addressing all errors—whether grammatical, lexical, or sociolinguistic (p. 2). When a teacher encounters multiple errors in one piece of writing, they may correct all rather than focusing intensively on each one. This "extensive" approach, as described by Eslami (2014), addresses a range of errors simultaneously (p. 446). In contrast, FF, as Ellis explains, focuses solely on errors the teacher has previously taught, leaving other errors unmarked. FF allows the learner to examine repeated corrections for specific errors, providing substantial evidence of error patterns. FF thus narrows its scope to "one specific category of error" (Sheen & Ellis, 2011, p. 599) or a "single or limited number of linguistic categories" (Stefanou & Révész, 2015, p. 264), which is especially effective when combined with classroom instruction (Wei & Cao, 2020, p. 2). FF is preferred over UF for EFL/ESL instruction, as it yields more comprehensive and targeted improvements.

Corrective feedback is essential for refining written text. Teachers should be diligent

enough in providing authentic, relevant comments, and students should engage with feedback to enhance their writing. Feedback should ultimately guide students toward self-regulation, reducing error frequency over time.

Theoretical Framework

Based on the literature review, this study employs socio-cultural theory to frame its perspective. Scoring written texts involves both physical and cognitive activities from teachers and students, making collaborative relationships and mutual interactions essential for producing meaningful writing. Pathan et al. (2018) highlight the "role of social, cultural, and historical artifacts in a child's cognitive development" (p. 232). Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory similarly posits that human learning has a "specific social nature" and is a process by which children integrate into the intellectual life of those around them (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 88). Vygotsky further asserts that children can imitate actions beyond their immediate capabilities, allowing them to accomplish "much more in collective activity or under the guidance of adults." This theory views human development as a socially mediated process that helps individuals acquire cultural values, beliefs, and problem-solving skills through collaboration with knowledgeable members of society.

Social and cultural experiences are crucial for child development, as "higher mental functions are socially formed and culturally transmitted" (Vygotsky, p. 126). Vygotsky explains that children expand their understanding by internalizing social values, cultural knowledge, and other socially elaborated symbols, thereby shaping their perception of reality. Interactions with knowledgeable individuals in their environment foster internal speech and reflective thought and "provide the foundation for voluntary behavior" (p. 88). Supporting socio-cultural theory, Daneshfar & Maharami (2018) emphasize that immersing children in social environments where they gain social, cultural, and interpersonal experiences is essential (p. 600). Such interactions stimulate internal developmental processes that, once internalized, become parts of the child's independent achievements.

Vygotsky argues that "learning is a necessary and universal aspect of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological functions" (p. 90), explaining that significant learning occurs through social interaction with skilled individuals who model behaviors and provide guidance. Pathan et al. (2018) describe how an expert, peer, or parent can create a scaffolded learning environment in which a child can "elevate their current skills and knowledge to higher levels of performance" (p. 233). Teaching, therefore, becomes a process of collaboration and cooperation, essential for cognitive development. Vygotsky refers to this collaborative dialogue as cooperative or collaborative interaction, where a tutor, teacher, or parent provides instruction that the child internalizes to guide their own performance.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky defines the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as "the distance between the actual developmental (AD) level and the level of potential development (PD)," with AD representing a learner's current capabilities in independent problem-solving and PD achieved through problem-solving "under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, p. 86). He suggests

that child development depends on guidance from adults or more knowledgeable peers, as collaboration can bridge the gap between these levels. The ZPD includes "functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation," representing skills that are in an embryonic state today but will develop fully in the future.

The ZPD concept aligns with providing written feedback on subjective answers, where the tutor's comments must be accessible to the learner's understanding. When feedback surpasses a learner's current comprehension, the teacher's role becomes crucial in clarifying the feedback. This collaboration between the tutor and the learner can make feedback more meaningful and productive. Ellis (2009) describes corrective feedback episodes as "an arena for studying how interaction mediates learning through the construction of ZPDs" (p. 12). According to Lantolf (2011), the ZPD captures "the social activity where learning and development come together to form a unified process, where each feeds the other" (p. 305). This involves a more capable individual, such as a teacher or parent, working with a learner on a task until the learner can perform it independently (Chaiklin, 2003, p. 2).

The ZPD framework thus highlights teachers' roles in offering corrective feedback on students' written assignments and emphasizes students' active engagement in understanding and applying this feedback to improve their writing. Without guidance on marking codes or feedback symbols, students may lack the motivation to incorporate these corrections effectively. This study incorporates the concept of ZPD to emphasize the importance of teachers' support in enhancing students' writing skills.

The present research had the following goals:

- To identify the correction codes teachers use to provide feedback on students' written submissions.

- To explore alternative ways to provide feedback on students' scripts.

Methodology

The researcher employed a qualitative research design to explore alternative approaches for providing feedback on students' subjective written assignments. This study specifically examined the methods and techniques used by English teachers in Grades 11 and 12 to score and provide feedback on such assignments, as well as the reasons why students may not improve their writing quality in response to teachers' comments. Additionally, the study investigated the actual practices teachers follow when marking written exercises and identified a suitable technique for correction codes that could bridge the gap between the theoretical and practical aspects of scoring written texts, particularly within an informal classroom setting.

For this study, the researcher purposefully collected primary data from 10 English teachers who teach Compulsory English in grades 11 and/or 12 across 10 different schools and colleges in Kavrepalanchok district, Bagmati Province, Nepal. The researcher initially met each teacher to discuss the study context, which led to the preparation of a questionnaire to gather their insights. A Google Form with eighteen questions (in addition to eight introductory and demographic questions) was then designed and sent to each respondent. The questionnaire included five multiple-choice questions, eleven short-answer questions, and two long-answer questions. The researcher

analyzed and interpreted the responses in detail to develop an innovative approach to scoring and providing corrective feedback on subjective written assignments.

Findings and Discussion

The current study uses Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory to interpret the data collected from respondents. The ZPD concept emphasizes the importance of interactions and collaboration between teachers and students, where teachers provide corrective feedback on students' writing, and students respond to the feedback to improve their skills. The effectiveness of this process depends largely on the relationship and communication between the teacher and the student. The findings and the discussions have been presented under the following four themes:

Table: Correction codes applied on students writing

Feedback on Spelling and Capitalization

Spelling mistakes can distort the intended meaning of words, leading to misunderstandings. Cook (1999, as cited in Fitria, 2020, p. 242) identified four common types of spelling errors: omission, substitution, transposition, and insertion. Therefore, such mistakes should be carefully highlighted using appropriate symbols or relevant descriptions. In this study, 40% of teachers preferred using symbols such as 'X', '?', '#', and '____' to indicate spelling mistakes, while another 40% favored letters like 'S', 'S and K', and 'SP'. The remaining 20% utilized both symbols and letters. Additionally, 33.3% of respondents focused on underlining erroneous words or phrases, and another 33.3% wrote 'S' to indicate errors; 20% used 'SP'. Underlining helps students easily locate incorrect phrases, but simply writing 'S' may not clearly convey that a spelling correction is needed. For better

Respon dents	Spelling mistakes	Capitalization mistake	Tense mistake	S-V agreement	Paragraph change	Addition	Deletion	Right answer	Wrong answer
R1	X	Circle	X	X	Arrow	#	X, D	√	X
R2	S	A-Z	1, 2	SV	SB	B	X	C	W
R3	Underline and #	Underline again and #	Underline and #	Underline and #	Letter and #	Add word #	Redlines #	√	X
R4	S & K	Z	T	S	1	T	P	R	W
R5	S	C	G	SV	#	Λ	.....	Right	W
R6	ABC, X, #, ?, circle	/	circle	#	#	+	Underline X	√	circle, X
R7	circle	circle	circle	Circle & underline	arrow	Blank dots	X	√	Double √
R8	Underline & writing SP	underlining	correcting	correcting	Longer line with an arrow	Insert symbol, ?	X	√	X
R9	SP	Cap	T	SV	Writing para	Λ	Del	√	X
R10	Circle, underline	circle	correcting	Underline, circle	Slant arrow	Λ ↘	Cross along the center of the word	√	X

recognition, 'SP' guides learners to identify spelling mistakes. Providing symbols or letters without explicit comments can confuse learners, preventing them from correcting errors and potentially leading to fossilization of mistakes. Although such indirect feedback can create difficulties without proper orientation, highlighting error locations is an effective scaffolding strategy for novice writers (Allen, 2001). Therefore, both underlining erroneous phrases and writing 'SP' above them can make teachers' intentions clearer to learners.

Capitalization is crucial in writing as it clarifies the meaning of sentences and specific words, eliminating ambiguity. Petty (1962) noted that improper capitalization can distract readers from the intended thought, stating that "such distractions interfere with communication and must be avoided" (pp. 63–64). Siddiqui (2015) regards capitalization as a micro-feature of English composition, necessitating the appropriate use of uppercase and lowercase letters (p. 232). Given its importance, teachers should attentively and intelligibly mark capitalization errors. To indicate these errors, 33.3% of teachers circled the word, 20% underlined the letter, while 10% used 'C' and another 10% used 'Cap'. Circling or underlining can help locate the mistake, but only using these methods may create confusion. The abbreviation 'Cap' brings the learner closer to understanding the intended correction. This suggests that both circling or underlining and writing 'Cap' above the words can be more effective for student.

Feedback on Verb, Tense and Subject-Verb Agreement

Verb tense plays a vital role in comprehending written text. Overlooking mistakes in students' compositions can mislead their understanding.

Incorrect or inconsistent verb tenses can create confusion and irritate readers. Developing a better understanding of tenses is crucial because "if we don't use appropriate tenses, it can cause misunderstandings or misconceptions, particularly in written language" (Bukit, 2020, p. 100). Teachers should provide remedial instruction to students who commit errors. To identify tense mistakes, 80% of respondents favored indirect feedback using symbols such as 'X', 'G', 'T', and underlining, while 20% emphasized writing the correct forms as direct feedback. Circling or underlining the phrase and writing 'T' above it can help students recognize tense-related errors. A combination of symbols and letters is thus very useful.

Ensuring verb agreement with its subject is essential for accuracy and clarity, facilitating successful communication. Students should internalize the concepts of singularity and plurality in verbs and subjects. The study found that 90% of respondents preferred using symbols or codes like 'X', '#', 'circle', 'SV', or underlining to indicate mistakes, while the rest used the correct forms. Using both codes and letters can help students find subject-verb agreement errors more effectively. Observations reveal that circling or underlining and writing 'S-V' can assist learners. Celce-Murcia and Freeman (1983, p. 10) stated, "In spite of the early introduction and superficially simple rules of subject-verb agreement, they still pose problems for ESL learners at all levels of proficiency." Although students are exposed to these rules early on, they often face challenges in applying them. Therefore, teachers should orient students regarding the codes or symbols used, as indirect feedback can motivate them to identify and correct mistakes themselves.

Paragraph Structure and Additions and Deletions

When transitioning to a new idea, writers must start a new paragraph. Many students struggle with this, merging multiple concepts into a single paragraph. To ensure smooth transitions, proper paragraph usage is essential. According to the data, 40% of respondents used an arrow to indicate paragraph changes in students' writing, while 30% used the symbol '#'. An appropriately styled arrow, possibly accompanied by the word 'para', can aid learners in understanding where to begin a new paragraph. Combining codes and letters appears to be effective in this context.

Teachers need to clearly mark additions and deletions in students' writing, as redundancy can spoil compositions. For additions, all respondents used codes or symbols like '#', '+', '...?', and 'Λ', sometimes accompanied by 'Add word'. Using 'Add word' with the code '#' provides clarity while allowing for creative thinking. Symbols like 'Λ' can indicate the need to insert words or letters. It is advisable to use relevant codes with guiding directions to prevent confusion. For deletions, 50% marked 'X', 20% used 'D/Del', and 10% crossed out words. While 'X' is familiar to students, it might be perceived negatively. Underlining the word to be deleted and writing 'X' can assist in making corrections properly.

Understanding Feedback Codes

A teacher should pay more attention to the correct answers, which can be at the word, sentence, or discourse level. The type of correction code used to show these must encourage students to enhance their writing skills. Use of wrong or incomprehensible codes can have long-term effects and cause fossiliazation. A written text normally contains more correct answers than wrong ones, and thus, it is a difficult task to show all correct answers. In this regard, 70% of respondents reported using '√' to show the right answers. The codes 'C', 'R', and 'Right' share the remaining percentage equally. The use of the 'tick' mark seems to be easier and more familiar to both teachers and students, and it is frequently used for verification of items as a predominant affirmative code for convenience. The analytical scoring method proposes using it to show different content items. Likewise, multiple-choice items in questions focus on ticking the best answer. Similarly, 60% stated using 'X', 30% used 'W', and 10% used '√√'. The use of 'X' might confuse students in grasping its meaning, as it is used to show deletion as well. Therefore, their interactions can make it easier for them to understand.

Teachers provide feedback to students regarding the mistakes or errors they make in writing. It is easier to address mistakes, but errors can become fossilized if not properly corrected. Thus, the right codes, symbols, or directions must be used to point out such issues. Misunderstanding these codes by students can lead to long-term effects that may spoil their writing quality and the intended meanings they want to convey.

In response to the question of whether students fully understand the meaning of feedback codes, only 40% agreed, while 60% disagreed. However, the percentage should have been higher given the age groups of the students. The reasons behind this, as R3 stated, are: "The reason may not be explained properly to the students"; R4 said, "They are not properly listening"; R5 focused on "Lack of exposure"; and R8 highlighted "Lack of their background knowledge."

In response to the question of whether their scoring technique is appropriate, R7 admitted, "No," but R8 asserted, "But I have to change it according to the students and changes in time." Similarly, R2 suggested "Item Analysis"; R3 stated, "Break down the marks for introduction, body (positive and negative aspects), and conclusion. If there are some impressive lines, then mark as good"; R5 recommended, "It would be better to grade the learners rather than point scoring"; R7 pointed out, "Teachers and students both need orientation"; and R8 focused on "discarding general mistakes."

Implication and Recommendations

Students in grades 11 and 12 are normally expected to understand the meanings of codes and letters used for corrective feedback. However, the use of improper strategies in marking, insufficient explanations to students, lack of exposure or instructions regarding codes, students' carelessness, poor background knowledge, and lack of strong motivation are the chief causes of misunderstanding the codes. It was also found that teachers are burdened with heavy teaching loads, and most of the students seem to copy from their friends or the Internet. As a result, teachers do not pay much attention to providing written corrective feedback.

While theoretical aspects are important, practical implications vary depending upon teachers' efficiency, students' capacity, and teaching contexts. Since causes for misunderstandings exist, they should be properly addressed in a timely manner. The problem of students not understanding corrective feedback codes reveals a communication gap between teachers and students. This highlights the relationship between Actual Development (AD) and Potential Development (PD), where students, in cooperation with teachers and their peers, can develop insights into the various forms of corrective feedback codes or symbols and decipher their meanings in context.

To address this issue, respondents suggested several measures. They recommended that teachers should conduct item analysis orientations and break down the total marks for different components of the writing text, as is done in Analytical Scoring (AS). They also proposed replacing traditional scoring methods with more recent ones and applying a grading system instead of assigning numerical marks. Additionally, organizing training sessions about scoring and marking systems for both teachers and students was advised, along with using proper symbols for coding.

Conclusion

Writing is an essential activity in teaching and learning contexts. Students write to complete assignments, answer exam questions, keep records for future reference, build relationships, improve comprehension of class materials, and seek clarifications from peers and teachers. Whether the writing is very short, short, or long, it employs key elements such as spelling, capitalization, grammar, addition, deletion, physical formatting changes, and indications of right and wrong answers. If used properly, these features enhance the written content. Therefore, great care must be taken while correcting students' writing; otherwise, they may fossilize mistakes or errors in their writing. Teachers should use appropriate written corrective feedback (WCF) and marking codes to provide feedback.

However, context-based issues sometimes compel teachers to deviate from theoretical scoring methods, resulting in variations in the use of different codes for the same types of items in a written composition. In this regard, cooperation and collaboration among students, and between students and teachers, should strengthen writing skills. Yet, carelessness and negligence of teachers in choosing proper scoring systems, corrective feedback techniques, and codes or symbols to point out mistakes or errors in writing, as well as students' ignorance in understanding such codes and their reluctance to seek help from teachers, have created gaps. This situation indicates that some symbols or codes used by teachers to mark students' writings confuse them, as they cannot cope with such feedback because they are not taught or instructed about the correction codes. Consequently, they fail to understand what teachers want them to do.

Therefore, teachers should conduct orientations to clarify the symbols, codes, and abbreviations used to provide comments. Regarding scoring techniques, they should use context-based scoring methods rather than adhering strictly to a particular one.

The Author:

Rameshwar Thakur, MPhil in English, is a lecturer of English at AMC & ABM school Banepa and a secondary level teacher at SDSS. Furthermore, he worked as a trainer at ETC, the Chief editor of NBJ (2001-2024), an editor of NELTA ELT forum (2020-2021) and a reviewer of NELTA journal; and is serving as the president of NELTA Bagmati and the chief editor of NELTA ELT Forum (2024-25). He has completed TPD, ToT, Master ToT and Capacity Building Trainings and TESOL from ASU. He has presented papers in national and international conferences, facilitated training sessions and got his articles published in different journals.

References

Allen, A. (2001). *Error correction strategies in the editing performance of advanced and basic ESL native English-speaking writers*. University of Georgia ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

Barkaoui, K. (2007). Rating scale impact on EFL essay marking: A mixed-method study. *Assessing Writing, 12*(2), 86-107.

Barkaoui, K. (2008). Effects of scoring method and rater experience on ESL essay rating processes and outcomes. (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

Berkant, H. G., Dererb, N. B., & Dererb, O. K. (2020). The effects of different types of written corrective feedbacks on students' texting mistakes. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal. 3*(3), 174-187.

Bitchener, J., & Knoch, U. (2008). The value of written corrective feedback for migrant and international students. *Language teaching research, 12*(3), 409-431.

Celce-Murcia, M. & Larsen-Freeman, D. (1983). The Grammar Book: An ESL/ EFL Teacher's Course. The University of Michigan: Newbury House.

Chaiklin, S. (2003). The zone of proximal development in Vygotsky's analysis of learning and instruction. In A. Kozulin, B. Gindis, V. S. Ageyev, & S. M. Miller, (Eds.), Vygotsky's educational theory in

cultural context (pp. 39-64). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, A.D. (1989). 'Reformulation: A technique for providing advanced feedback in writing'. *Guidelines: A Periodical for Classroom Language Teachers, 11*(2), 1–9.

Ellis, R. (2009). A typology of written corrective feedback types. *English Language Teaching Journal, 63*(2), 97-107. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccn023

Ellis, R (2009). Corrective Feedback and Teacher Development. *L2 Journal, 1*(1), 3-18. https://doi.org/10.5070/l2.v1i1.9054

Guenette, D. (2007). 'Is feedback pedagogically correct? Research design issues in studies of feedback on writing'. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 16*(1), 40–53.

Hattie, J. and Timperley, H. (2007). The Power of Feedback. *Review of Educational Research.* Vol. 77, No. 1, pp. 81-112. DOI: 10.3102/003465430298487.

Homburg, T. J. (1984). Holistic evaluation of ESL composition: Can it be validated objectively? *TESOL Quarterly, 18*(1), 87-107. https://doi.org/10.2307/3586337

Hughes, A. (2003). Testing for language Teachers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lalande, J. F. (1982). Reducing composition errors: An experiment. *The Modern Language Journal, 66,* 140–149. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1982.tb06973

Lim, S. C. & Renandya, W. A. (2020). Efficacy of Written Corrective Feedback in Writing Instruction: A Meta-Analysis. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language.* Volume 24, Number 3. Pp 1-26.

Perkins, K. (1983). On the use of composition scoring techniques, objective measures, and objective tests to evaluate ESL writing ability. *TESOL Quarterly, 17*(4), 651-671. https://doi.org/10.2307/3586618

Petty, W. T. (1962). The language arts in elementary school. New York: Center for Applied Research in Education.

Russikoff, K. A. (1995). *A comparison of writing criteria: Any differences? [Proceeding].* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other languages, Long Beach, California.

Sanavi, R. V. & Nemati, M. (2014). The Effect of Six Different Corrective Feedback Strategies on Iranian English Language Learners' IELTS Writing Task 2. SAGE Open, 4(2),1-9. doi: 10.1177/2158244014538271

Sermsook, K., Liamnimitr, J. & Pochakorn, R. (2017). The Impact of Teacher Corrective Feedback on EFL Student Writers' Grammatical Improvement. English Language Teaching; 10(10), 43-49. doi:10.5539/elt. v10n10p43

Stefanou, C. & Rèvesz, A. (2015). Direct Written Corrective Feedback, Learner Differences, and the Acquisition of Second Language Article Use for Generic and Specific Plural Reference. *The Modern Language Journal, 99*(2),

263–282. doi: https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12212

Suman, R.S., Moccia, S., Singh, B. & Regin, R. (Eds.) (2023). Handbook of Research on Learning in Language Classrooms Through ICT-Based Digital Technology. IGI Global.

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

Wei, W. & Cao, Y. (2020). Written Corrective Feedback Strategies Employed by University English Lecturers: A Teacher Cognition Perspective. *SAGE Open,10*(3), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020934886

Weigle, S. C. (2002). *Assessing writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

White, E. M. (1984). *Holisticism. College Composition and Communication, 35*(4), 400-409. https://doi.org/10.2307/357792

Winne, P. H., & Butler, D. L. (1994). Student cognition in learning from teaching. In T. Husen & T. Postlewaite (Eds.). *International encyclopedia of education (2nd ed.)* (pp. 5738-5745). Oxford.