

Teachers' translanguaging practices in providing written corrective feedback: An exploratory study of learners' affective engagement with feedback

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Abstract

The present study investigated five intermediate English learners' affective engagement with teacher-generated written corrective feedback. In addition, the mediating effects of the teacher's translanguaging practices were examined. The data were collected from a total of 10 student essays with teacher feedback on them, followed by a series of qualitative interviews and stimulated recalls. On five of these essays, the teacher only provided feedback in English, but on the other five, she provided feedback in both English and Persian, the teacher's and learners' first language (L1). The analysis of the data showed that some of the learners valued the teacher's feedback in Persian, while others sought to maximize the written English input they received from their teacher. During the stimulated recalls, some learners also mentioned that Persian feedback would be useful in providing meta-feedback. Moreover, the teacher showed her appreciation for using Persian when providing meta-feedback, but referred to some institutional constraints on using Persian. Overall, this study suggests that some learners may value teachers' use of their L1 in written corrective feedback, thereby engaging with this feedback positively from an affective standpoint.

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Introduction

Providing written corrective feedback (WCF) has been a traditional part of language teachers' job, although the debate on the actual effectiveness of WCF has been ongoing for several decades. After Truscott's (1996) article called into question the effectiveness of WCF in the second language (L2) writing classroom, numerous studies

(e.g., Chandler, 2004; Ferris, 1999) provided theoretical, conceptual, and empirical support for the inclusion of WCF in teachers' writing-related practices. Motivated by this, many studies have focused on delineating the benefits of various types of WCF (e.g., Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Bitchener et al., 2005; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007), albeit providing inconclusive results about the superiority of specific feedback methods. While the existing literature on the efficacy of different types of feedback have yielded mixed results, these studies have encouraged researchers to delve more deeply into the role learners play as the ultimate consumers of feedback. For example, a body of research in L2 writing has focused on learners' preferences for different sources of feedback. These studies suggest that WCF provided by teachers has been generally perceived as superior to other sources of feedback (e.g., Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Ferris, 1995; Lee, 2008), and that peer feedback may be (mis)perceived as inaccurate by some English learners (e.g., Saeli & Cheng, 2019, 2021). This attention to learners' thoughts, perceptions, and preferences has encouraged applied linguists to investigate what Ellis (2010) calls learners' engagement with feedback. Assuming three components to the construct of learner engagement with feedback, Ellis postulates this engagement includes affective, behavioral, and cognitive facets. Since 2010, several existing articles have concluded that positive engagement with feedback is integral to the effectiveness of teacher-generated feedback (e.g., Han, 2017; Han & Hyland, 2015), peer feedback (e.g., Saeli & Cheng, 2021), and automated feedback (e.g., Koltovskaia, 2020). Overall, these studies provide novel insights into what learners do with feedback after receiving it, and how their patterns of engagement with feedback may influence the working of feedback.

Relevant to the present study is the sub-construct of affective engagement. Affective engagement with feedback has been defined by Ellis (2010) as learners' initial emotional reactions to the feedback they receive. Several previous studies (e.g., Han, 2017; Han & Zhu, 2021; Saeli & Cheng, 2019, 2021) have shown that learners' affective engagement with feedback has important ramifications for the ultimate efficacy of feedback. Ellis (2010), Han (2017), and Saeli and Cheng (2019) show that learners' initial perceptions, preferences, and attitudes are important determinants of their subsequent affective engagement with feedback. For example, Saeli and Cheng (2019) examined Iranian English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) learners' affective engagement with feedback. Their findings showed that misaligned teacher practices and learner perceptions could negatively affect learners' affective engagement with feedback, which in turn might lead to undesirable learning outcomes.

The second important variable in the present study is pedagogical translanguaging in feedback. Cenoz and Gorter (2020) define pedagogical translanguaging as "intentional instructional strategies that integrate two or more languages and aim at the development of the multilingual repertoire as well as metalinguistic and language awareness" (p. 300). An extensive body of research has focused on how translanguaging impacts teachers' classroom pedagogy and learners' experience. As the recent literature suggests, pedagogical translanguaging allows L2 learners to

“benefit from their whole linguistic repertoire” (Cenoz & Santos, 2020, p. 2) and correlates with a decrease in student anxiety (Cenoz, Santos & Gorter, 2022). Teachers’ translanguaging practices can enhance their pedagogy in different aspects such as classroom instruction and the development of teaching materials (Han, 2022) and by enhancing student engagement (David, Shepard-Carey, Swearingen, Hemsath, & Heo, 2022; Han, 2022). Moreover, translanguaging can facilitate various formative assessment processes in many ways such as enhancing comprehension, fostering critical thinking, and keeping learners engaged (Greenier, Liu & Ziao, 2022).

Translanguaging practices when providing peer feedback has also received some conceptual and empirical attention (Canagarajah, 2011; Zheng, 2019; Kim & Chang, 2022; Zhu & Mann, 2021), and the existing results suggest that learners hold various perceptions about the role of using their first language (L1) during the feedback process (e.g., Sun & Zhang, 2022). These studies conclude that pedagogical translanguaging can be an effective tool in improving the effectiveness of peer feedback in the L2 classroom.

However, a review of the existing literature shows that, as Canagarajah (2011) also points out, studies on translanguaging in writing are scarce, and that the few available studies on translanguaging in written feedback have been almost exclusively limited to peer feedback (e.g., Kim & Chang, 2022; Saeli & Rahmati, 2023; Sun & Zhang, 2022). However, much less attention has been paid to learners’ perceptions and attitudes (collectively referred to as affective engagement with feedback in the present study) toward their teachers’ translanguaging practices in providing WCF. In addition, to the authors’ best knowledge, no previous study has investigated teachers’ written translanguaging practices in an Iranian EFL contexts. In fact, the only empirical study on translanguaging in the Iranian EFL context is the one by Nazari and Karimpour (2023). In their study, Nazari and Karimpour aimed to explore eight Iranian EFL teachers’ emotional reactions to translanguaging in their classroom. The data collected from observation protocols and qualitative interviews revealed that these teachers perceived English pedagogy as an important means of improving their students’ proficiency, that they often struggled to strike a healthy balance between their use of L1 and L2 to impress their fellow teachers, and that they held mixed views about the role of translanguaging in the L2 classroom. Drawing upon the above review, the present study hypothesizes that learners’ affective engagement with feedback may be influenced by their teachers’ translanguaging practices when providing WCF. Specifically, recent research (e.g., Fang & Liu, 2020; Jiang et al., 2022) suggests that learners, in particular EFL learners, hold varying perceptions toward teacher and student translanguaging practices, and that these perceptions may shape learners’ affective engagement with WCF (e.g., Saeli & Cheng, 2019) provided in learners’ L1.

A handful of empirical studies have examined the role of translanguaging in peer feedback. For example, Kim and Chang (2022) explored 24 Japanese students’ translanguaging practices while providing peer feedback. After analyzing samples of

student writing, Kim and Chang concluded that these learners mostly used English, their L2, along with symbols, to provide feedback on their peers' grammatical errors. The analysis of the open-ended data showed that the learners resorted to using their L1 and L2 for a variety of reasons. For instance, the learners used Japanese, their L1, when they did not have the proficiency to provide feedback in only English. In another related study, Sun and Zhang (2022) examined 79 Chinese students' peer feedback to identify the patterns of L1 and L2 use. Their study included a translanguaging group and a control, English-only group. The analysis of samples of student writing, as well as qualitative interviews, showed that L1 use led to improvements in the students' writing quality. These studies, among a few others, suggest that, when provided in peer feedback, translanguaging has the potential to improve L2 learners' writing quality.

While the study by Nazari and Karimpour (2023) provides novel insights about the complex nature of translanguaging in the Iranian EFL contexts, an examination of teachers' WCF practices, as mediated by translanguaging, and their students' emotional reactions to these practices (collectively referred to as affective engagement) has yet to be examined in the Iranian EFL contexts. Therefore, the current study was an exploratory attempt to answer the two following research questions:

RQ₁: What are an Iranian EFL teacher's WCF practices, as mediated by her translanguaging practices in providing such feedback?

RQ₂: What are the patterns of five Iranian EFL learners' affective engagement with this teacher-generated WCF, as mediated by the teacher's translanguaging practices?

Methodology

Operationalization of the Variables

In the present study, the following variables were operationalized:

- WCF: Feedback provided on learners' grammatical errors;
- Teacher WCF: Grammar-centered commentary provided by teachers;
- Direct WCF: Direct notification of errors and provision of correct forms (Shintani & Ellis, 2013);
- Indirect WCF: Direct notification of errors without provision of correct forms (Shintani & Ellis, 2013);
- Meta-feedback: Commentary on the nature of grammatical errors (Shintani & Ellis, 2013);
- Translanguaging: Multilingual language users' ability "to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system" (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 401)
- Affective engagement with feedback: Learners' initial emotions and attitudes in reaction to feedback (Ellis, 2010).

Study Context and Participants

This study was conducted at a language school in Tehran, Iran. The school offered general English classes in various proficiencies, and these courses were focused on the

four major skills of English. In these classes, teachers were encouraged to both teach specific aspects of writing and provide WCF on student writing. While there were no specific guidelines on providing feedback, teachers attended two in-house workshops every year to discuss the most effective ways of responding to various issues in student writing. During these workshops which were spearheaded by the English program director of the school, teachers were provided with a few samples of student writing, ranging from short sentences to longer argumentative essays. Teachers then provided feedback on these samples and discussed their related practices as a group. In addition, teachers were encouraged to adapt their feedback practices according to their students' proficiency levels. For lower-proficiency learners, teachers were encouraged to pay more attention to their students' local issues (e.g., grammatical errors), thereby aiming to improve these learners' accuracy. For upper-intermediate and advanced learners, teachers were encouraged to provide feedback on a wider variety of issues, including but not limited to content, organization, grammar, word choice, and mechanics.

The data for the present study were collected from five learners, willingly enrolled in a class of 14 intermediate learners. Intermediate learners were chosen because it was hypothesized that their English proficiency would allow them to understand and appreciate WCF in English, while also benefiting from WCF in Persian due to likely issues in their English proficiency. In addition, since intermediate learners in the study were required to write descriptive essays, it was hypothesized that the length of these essays was conducive to more grammatical errors, and therefore, more WCF points provided by the course instructor. After every student in the class received an invitation, five completed the forms and consented to participate in the data collection. All of the participating learners and the course instructor reported Persian as their first language. Table 1 provides some background information on the learners. All names are pseudonyms.

Table 1
Background Information of the Participants

	Anita	Dina	Iman	Kaveh	Yalda
Gender	Female	Female	Male	Male	Female
Age	Early 20s	Early 20s	Early 20s	Late 20s	Early 20s
Length of English learning	4 years	5.5 years	3 years	5 years	2.5 years
Major	Law	Accounting	Chemistry	MBA	Arts

The course instructor, who wished to be called Mary, had 16 years of teaching general English classes at various language schools in Tehran, Iran. Mary, who was in her late 30s, had an MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from a large state university in Iran. She reported having 15 years of experience in teaching writing and having extensive experience in providing feedback on learners' issues in writing. Mary also noted that she felt "very comfortable" addressing her students' grammatical errors

and believed that error correction was an integral part of teaching English writing to her students. It should be noted that Mary was not provided with any instruction on whether, how, and when to use Persian in her WCF practices. This way, it was assured that the WCF she provided on the collected samples of student writing was an accurate reflection of her daily, authentic feedback practices.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data sources in the present study were triangulated. The first data source comprised 10 samples of student writing, two essays per student, with teacher's WCF on them. This meant that each of the five learners received two rounds of WCF from the teacher. The students were required to write a minimum of three essays during a 10-week semester. The essay prompts used in this study were on the following topics: "Describe your ideal vacation. Then, provide 2-3 reasons to support your opinion." and "Describe your ideal job. Then, provide 2-3 reasons to support your opinion." These two essay prompts were randomly assigned to the two feedback types: "Describe your ideal vacation" to the English-only WCF, and "Describe your ideal job" to the Persian and English WCF. Because the focus of the present study was grammar-centered feedback (i.e., WCF), the teacher was instructed to provide feedback only on grammatical issues, and given the freedom to utilize Persian in this WCF whenever appropriate/necessary. The two essays were written in a two-week interval, and the course instructor provided feedback on the essays within three days of submission.

All of these essays were typed and printed out, and the course instructor also provided WCF on these essays on paper. After collecting these samples of student writing, the essays were analyzed in the following areas: Methods of WCF, error types, and frequency of Persian vs. English WCF points for these methods and types. These essays were co-coded by the first author and an experienced English teacher. The two coding schemes were in strong agreement ($r = .90$), and any discrepancies between them were resolved in a follow-up meeting. Further analysis of the essays showed that the course instructor had provided comprehensive WCF on the 10 essays, thereby addressing all of the grammatical errors identified by the first author and the experienced EFL teacher.

The final coding scheme revealed that three methods of WCF had been utilized. In particular, direct WCF, indirect WCF, and meta-feedback were employed by the course teacher to provide WCF on the students' grammatical errors. Drawing upon the article by Shintani and Ellis (2013), direct WCF was defined as identification of errors and provision of correct forms, indirect WCF as identification of errors (e.g., underlining errors) without provision of correct forms, and meta-feedback as "consciousness-raising" (p. 290) information about the nature of errors. In addition, we identified three types of grammatical errors in the essays. Specifically, we found grammatical errors related to subject-verb agreement, verb tense issues, and the English article system.

Next, the data from the stimulated recalls (SR) and the qualitative interviews were collected (see Appendix A and B, respectively). A total of five sessions were arranged with the learners to explore the learners' perceptions about their teacher's translanguaging feedback practices and their affective engagement with this feedback. These sessions took place approximately one week after the learners turned in their second essays and received feedback on their grammatical issues. The interviews were all conducted in Persian to maximize the learners' eloquence. Each learner attended one session with the first author, and the data with regard to learners' affective engagement with WCF were collected. In particular, the SRs were aimed at uncovering the five learners' perceptions of, preferences for, and attitudes about English and Persian WCF on their grammatical errors. In addition, the interviews explored the learners' thoughts, rationales, and attitudes about the teacher's WCF practices, which helped shed more light on their responses to the SR questions. To maximize the learners' convenience, both the SR and interview data were collected in the same session, with the mean length of 23 minutes. These data were recorded on a personal, digital device, and the recordings were transcribed within one month. The transcriptions then underwent open coding during which the main ideas in both the interviews and SRs were noted. Next, the individual ideas were juxtaposed to identify the recurring thematic categories in the data. These categories shed light on the learners' affective engagement with the two types of WCF they had received: English-only WCF and English and Persian WCF. The results of this coding procedure are reported in the Results and Discussion section of this study.

To further investigate the feedback-related translanguaging practices of the teacher, the first author conducted an additional qualitative interview with the course instructor. The interview questions helped explore the teacher's WCF practices, the rationales she had for adhering to such practices, the reasoning she had for using Persian in her feedback practices, and any other feedback-related thoughts she had. The interview questions (see Appendix C) revolved around Mary's perceptions regarding the advantages of utilizing Persian in her feedback practices and whether such practices were determined by learner-related variables (e.g., proficiency levels). This interview lasted 34 minutes and was conducted on Zoom. The procedure for the collection and analysis of this teacher interview was similar to that incorporated for the learner data. In the Results and Discussion section, Mary's feedback-related practices, thoughts, and rationales are provided to discuss her students' affective engagement with feedback. All of the reported excerpts in the Results and Discussion section were translated to English by the first author, a native speaker of Persian.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the results of the study are presented, and the two research questions are revisited. First, some statistics regarding the teacher's WCF practices are provided. Then, the results of the data analysis related to the qualitative interviews and SRs with the five learners are presented.

Research Question 1: The Teacher's WCF Practices Shaped by Translanguaging

The analysis of the 10 samples of student writing showed that the teacher provided a somewhat similar quantity of WCF points on both essays. The mean length of these 10 essays was 188 words ($M = 188$), the total number of feedback points for the English-only WCF essays was 70 ($M = 14$), and the total number of the feedback points for the English and Persian WCF essays was 82 ($M = 16.4$). It should be reiterated that all of these feedback points were on grammatical errors, that they were teacher-generated, and that all of the identified grammatical errors in the essays had been corrected by the teacher. Table 2 presents some statistics on the WCF provided on the essays which received English-only WCF and the essays which received Persian and English WCF. The reported raw frequencies add up to the total number of feedback points, but the percentages have been rounded, so they may not add up to 100.

Table 2
Statistics for Feedback Methods and Error Types

	WCF methods		Error types	
English-only WCF: Five essays	Direct feedback	64 (91%)	Subject-verb agreement	23 (33%)
	Indirect feedback	5 (7%)	Verb tense	27 (47%)
	Meta-feedback	1 (1%)	Articles	20 (29%)
	Total	70 (100%)	Total	70 (100%)
Persian and English WCF: Five essays	Direct feedback	53 (65%)	Subject-verb agreement	29 (35%)
	Indirect feedback	7 (9%)	Verb tense	34 (41%)
	Meta-feedback	22 (27%)	Articles	19 (23%)
	Total	82 (100%)	Total	82 (100%)

As Table 2 shows, for the English-only WCF, an overwhelming majority of the WCF points were direct. This means that, for 91% of the errors, the teacher underlined the error and provided the correct form. For example, upon finding the error "Vacation is the exciting opportunity to me," the teacher underlined "the" and replaced it with "an." For indirect WCF, the teacher detected an error in "Family vacation are more entertaining to me" (i.e., subject-verb agreement), underlined "are," but did not provide the correct form.

In addition, the analysis showed that, for the Persian and English WCF, 27% of all the feedback points were focused on providing meta-feedback. Table 3 provides some statistics on the identified patterns of translanguaging in the essays which received Persian and English WCF.

Table 3
Patterns of Translanguaging in the Persian and English WCF

	WCF methods		Error types	
English WCF	Direct feedback	53 (65%)	Subject-verb agreement	25 (30%)
	Indirect feedback	7 (9%)	Verb tense	24 (30%)
	Meta-feedback	0 (0%)	Articles	9 (11%)
	Total	58 (71%)	Total	58 (71%)
Persian WCF	Direct feedback	0 (0%)	Subject-verb agreement	4 (5%)
	Indirect feedback	0 (0%)	Verb tense	10 (12%)
	Meta-feedback	22 (27%)	Articles	10 (12%)
	Total	24 (29%)	Total	24 (29%)
Grand total	Grand total	82 (100%)	Grand total	82 (100%)

According to Table 3, on the one hand, all of the provided direct and indirect (i.e., underlining) WCF was provided in English. On the other hand, the course instructor provided all of her meta-feedback in Persian. This meta-feedback addressed the errors pertaining to subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and articles in the 10 essays. Excerpt 1 provides an example of how Mary, the course instructor, utilized Persian, her students' and her own L1, to provide meta-feedback on an article error in an essay. It should be reiterated that all of the Persian feedback points have been translated to English by the first author:

Excerpt 1:

If you mention something for the first time, use a or an. For all the other cases, you should use the before that noun. (Mary's Feedback on Student Writing)

During the interview with the course instructor, she was asked about her rationale for using Persian exclusively for providing meta-feedback on her students' grammatical errors. Mary touched upon a few important reasons, as you can see in Excerpt 2:

Excerpt 2:

I actually like the idea of using Persian when giving feedback to students, especially lower-proficiency students. As you know, many of them [lower-proficiency students] may not be able to understand direct feedback that involves crossing out an error and giving the correct form. Also, the case is even worse if I were to provide explanations about the nature of an error in English. I mean, for students who make errors in the English article system, understanding a longer explanation about the nature of that error is not very likely. Instead of this, using Persian in providing such explanations [i.e., meta-feedback] is conducive to much better results. This is because students can

easily understand my explanations, and the [English] language barrier will be a non-factor. (Mary: Interview Transcripts)

As shown in Excerpt 2, Mary believed that using Persian helped make her meta-feedback more easily understandable to her students. She thought that, for students who were already overburdened with the English article system, in-depth explanations about the nature of such errors were not likely to lead to improvements in the students' writing quality.

In contrast to using Persian in her meta-feedback, Mary mentioned that, for direct feedback, English WCF was sufficient, because her students could see both the errors and correct forms. Mary added that English WCF was a viable option after her students received her meta-feedback on a preceding error of the same type. Mary also added that she was under institutional pressure to adopt an English-only pedagogy because of the stigmatization of using an L1 by language teachers in her place of work. She claimed that, based on her teaching experience, many Iranian EFL students did not welcome the idea of teachers' use of Persian in an English class, and that, for writing activities and written feedback, such negative attitudes were even more prevalent. Despite this, Mary clarified that, if given the institutional freedom, she would use Persian in her WCF practices when providing meta-feedback to lower-proficiency students, a perception which materialized in her WCF practices in the present study.

Overall, the analysis of the interview data with the course instructor highlighted her positive perceptions about using Persian in providing written meta-feedback because such feedback could reportedly improve her students' understanding of this feedback. What Mary reported as her perceptions and what she actually practiced is a reflection of the current scholarship that calls into question the strict boundaries between learners' L1 and L2 (Cenoz, 2017; Cenoz & Gorter, 2013; García & Sylvan, 2011; Liu & Fang, 2022). However, as Mary noted, there were institutional guidelines which instructed teachers to adopt an English-only curriculum in the L2 classroom. Burton and Rajendram (2019) also point to the difficulties in implementing translingual teaching practices by instructors and conclude that, even for those teachers who adopt such practices, their pedagogical decisions are fraught with uncertainties, mostly because of the stigmatized nature of using an L1 in the L2 classroom.

The findings of the present study underscore the participating teacher's positive perceptions about the value of using Persian in WCF practices. Nonetheless, the literature on teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and views about the role of pedagogical translanguaging in the L2 classroom remains inconclusive (e.g., Creese & Blackledge, 2011; Liu & Fang, 2022; Wang, 2019). In fact, many EFL teachers like Mary need to cope with the constant struggle between using their L1 and English in their pedagogical practices (Ticheloven, et al., 2021). As reported above, Mary believed that her language school expected her to employ an English-only curriculum, which was somewhat misaligned with Mary's own perceptions. The constraints placed by language schools

on teachers' translanguaging practices have been noted in the literature (e.g., Fan & Liu, 2022; Wang & Kirkpatrick, 2012), although the available studies in EFL contexts are somewhat limited to the Chinese ones. The only exception is the study conducted by Nazari and Karimpour (2023) in an Iranian EFL context who also concluded that language schools in Iran strongly prioritize the use of target language, including English, in the L2 classroom.

Despite the identified differences between Mary's feedback-related perceptions and her hiring language school's guidelines, Mary's actual practices regarding translanguaging in WCF suggests that she might have been aware of her students' needs, interests, and preferences (Stille et al., 2016). However, in the following sections, the presentation of the learners' affective engagement with WCF in Persian paints a different picture: That Mary might have overgeneralized her students' preference for receiving Persian meta-feedback. The limited existing literature on Iranian EFL learners' affective engagement with feedback (see Saeli & Cheng, 2019, for an example) shows that misaligned teacher practices and learner perceptions may lead to negative affective engagement with feedback, and therefore, attainment of unsatisfactory learning outcomes. Therefore, Mary's use of Persian when providing meta-feedback could negatively impact her students' engagement with feedback, as discussed in the following sections.

Research Question 2: The Learners' Affective Engagement with WCF in English and Persian

To explore the students' affective engagement with feedback, the data from the qualitative interviews and the SRs were analyzed. Because of the randomized order of the two prompts, first, the learners' affective engagement with English-only WCF is presented here, followed by their engagement with Persian and English WCF. As the analysis showed, the five learners of the study reported specific emotional reactions to the English-only WCF they received from their instructor. While these learners did not differentiate among the targets of WCF (i.e., subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and the English article system) in their reactions, the analysis of the interviews and SRs shed light on their overall affective engagement with English-only WCF. In the following sections, the affective engagement of the individual learners with feedback are presented.

Dina and Yalda: Preferring English-only WCF on Grammatical Errors

The analysis of the data showed that Dina and Yalda were the two learners who preferred English-only WCF on all of their grammatical errors. These learners did not reportedly value the incorporation of Persian in providing WCF on their essays. Excerpt 3 includes Dina's reported preference for English WCF on her grammatical errors, as suggested by her SR data:

Excerpt 3:

[Did you like receiving this explanatory feedback in Persian here on your English article error?] The feedback here [in Persian] is actually easier to read, but I do not like it ... I think the same feedback could have been delivered in English, and I could have understood it perfectly well. (Dina: SR Transcripts)

As shown in Excerpt 3, Dina preferred to receive the meta-feedback in English because she believed that she could understand the content of the feedback equally well in English. In Excerpt 4, Dina discussed why she preferred to receive English-only feedback on all of her grammatical issues.

Excerpt 4:

This is an English class, so receiving feedback in Persian does not make a lot of sense to me. I prioritize learning English over the ease of reading comments [in Persian]. I do not mind putting some extra time and effort into understanding my teacher's comments. If anything, it can help me improve my English skills ... I think Persian feedback belongs in a Persian class, and English feedback belongs in an English class. (Dina: Interview Transcripts)

In Excerpt 4, Dina shared her concerns about receiving Persian feedback in an English class. Dina perceived Persian feedback as a hindrance to her English learning endeavors. In Excerpt 5, Yalda reported a similar concern about using Persian in her teacher's feedback practices. Yalda pointed to the importance of maximizing her exposure to and interaction in English, thereby preferring English-only feedback on all of her grammatical errors.

Excerpt 5:

I think English feedback should be the only feedback we receive in an English class. I am here to learn English, so I want to be exposed to as much English as I can. This is even more important in writing because the writing and the feedback on it do not go away. The feedback is written, so I may end up referring back to it. So, Persian feedback is just not appropriate for an English class, because it just defeats the purpose of attending an English class when the feedback is in Persian. (Yalda: Interview Transcripts)

Overall, both Dina and Yalda shared their concerns regarding their teacher's use of Persian in providing WCF. Their negative attitudinal reactions toward the use of Persian in WCF suggests that their affective engagement with Persian feedback could be possibly negative. In fact, these two learners deemed the meta-feedback provided in Persian rather unnecessary, since they were both willing to allocate more time and effort into understanding their instructor's English feedback. Additionally, they both aimed to maximize the English input, especially written input, they received from Mary, so they evaluated the Persian meta-feedback negatively.

Anita, Iman, and Kaveh: Valuing Direct WCF in English, but Preferring Meta-feedback in Persian

The data analysis suggested that the three other learners, Anita, Iman, and Kaveh, preferred to receive direct WCF on their grammatical errors in English. However, they believed that, for those errors that required explanation (i.e., meta-feedback), Persian WCF would be effective. These three learners, however, had different reasons for preferring Persian meta-feedback. On the one hand, Anita and Iman believed that Persian meta-feedback would be beneficial to them because of their perceived low English proficiency; on the other hand, Kaveh claimed that, because of his busy schedule, Persian meta-feedback would help him save time in understanding the nature of his grammatical issues. In Excerpt 6, Anita discussed why she preferred her teacher's meta-feedback delivered in Persian.

Excerpt 6:

[What do you think about this explanation provided in Persian?] I liked the feedback here. My issue was about an article error. I did not know when to use “the,” so my teacher's explanation made it easier for me to understand. I believe my English proficiency is quite low, so if I learn why I made some errors in my writing, I can do better in the future and try to avoid those errors. (Anita: SR Transcripts)

In Excerpt 6, Anita suggested that her teacher's Persian meta-feedback could help her improve her grammatical accuracy in writing, at least partially because of her low English proficiency. In a similar vein, Iman believed that direct WCF in English was an effective practice, and that meta-feedback would be more efficient if delivered in Persian. See Excerpt 7 for Iman's perceptions:

Excerpt 7:

Any comment that is direct, like underlining an error and giving the correct form, should be in English. For simpler errors, English feedback makes sense because I just need to see what the issue is. However, before these direct comments I would like to receive some explanation about the nature of these errors. If I receive some type of explanation for the first few errors, I can apply my understanding to all the other similar errors ... This explanation can be in Persian. My English proficiency is not high enough yet, so Persian explanation can help me understand the root of my grammatical issues. (Iman: Interview Transcripts)

Kaveh also agreed with Anita and Iman, in that he valued his teacher's Persian meta-feedback. Unlike Anita, Kaveh believed that this feedback could save him time. See Excerpt 8 for Kaveh's perceptions.

Excerpt 8:

I am completely fine with receiving any feedback that requires explanation in Persian. I have a busy schedule, so if those explanations on my errors are in English, I may not

pay enough attention to them ... because I may not have the time to review the explanations and see what my issues are. If the feedback is simple to understand, like when my teacher crosses out an error and writes the correct form above, English is fine, but this type of feedback is very quick to read and easy to understand. (Kaveh: Interview Transcripts)

Overall, Anita and Kaveh reported a preference for meta-feedback to be delivered in Persian, albeit for different reasons. These positive perceptions about their teacher's WCF practices is an indication that these learners' affective engagement with the feedback they received was likely positive. The existing literature about learners' perceptions of L1 use in the English classroom has yielded mixed results. For example Wang (2019) concluded that EFL learners' attitudes toward pedagogical translanguaging were divided, where nearly half of the participants sought an English-only pedagogy. Similarly, Ticheloven et al.'s (2021) and Graham et al.'s (2021) studies showed that learners' perceptions about the effectiveness of pedagogical translanguaging are mixed. A smaller body of research has investigated learners' perceptions of translanguaging practices in peer feedback. For example, Yu and Lee (2014) concluded that their Chinese student participants preferred English over Chinese when delivering grammar feedback. In contrast, Yeh (2018) reported that Chinese EFL learners valued feedback in their L1 because this feedback was cognitively less demanding than that in English, a finding also reported in the present project. Moreover, Sun and Zhang (2022) concluded that their Chinese EFL learners valued feedback in both English and Chinese. Similar to the findings of the present study, Sun and Zhang noted that some of their learners preferred feedback in English because this feedback pushed them to use more English in their writing. Although the learners in the current study shared some of the perceptions reported in the literature, the discussion of their affective engagement with WCF, filtered through their teacher's translanguaging practices, can hopefully augment our understanding of L2 learners' emotional and attitudinal reactions to their teachers' use of their L1. Overall, these studies point to the complex nature of learners' perceptions of pedagogical translanguaging in the L2 classroom, in general, and in providing/receiving feedback, in particular.

The findings reported in this study have hopefully addressed a number of shortcomings in the literature. First, the investigations of teachers' translanguaging practices in providing WCF have been scarce, especially in the Iranian EFL contexts. To our best knowledge, the present study is the first empirical attempt at exploring teachers' use of Persian in their feedback practices and learners' affective engagement with such practices. With the increasing attention paid to pedagogical translanguaging as a theoretically and empirically motivated approach, the present study sheds further light on WCF-specific affective engagement of Iranian EFL learners with feedback partially provided in their L1, Persian.


Conclusion


The present study aimed to explore five Iranian EFL learners' affective engagement with feedback, while taking into account the mediating effects of their teacher's translanguaging practices. The two research questions of the study were answered after collecting the data from triangulated sources: 10 samples of student writing with teacher WCF on them, qualitative interviews, and SRs. The analysis of the collected student writing suggested that Mary, the course instructor, provided her direct and indirect WCF in English. However, when providing WCF on five of 10 essays where she provided WCF in both Persian and English, Mary's meta-feedback was delivered solely in Persian. In a qualitative interview, Mary pointed to both the value of Persian, her students' and her own L1, in providing meta-feedback and to the institutional constraints she had to cope with when she preferred to provide feedback in Persian. These constraints pushed her to use English almost exclusively in her pedagogical practices. This was particularly the case for commenting on her students' essays. In addition, the analysis of the qualitative interviews and SRs revealed important findings about the five student participants' affective engagement with WCF. The identified patterns of engagement pointed to varying degrees of value attached to Persian WCF. That is, while two learners sought to maximize their exposure to English in the form of teacher-generated WCF on their essays, the remaining three appreciated Mary's use of Persian when providing meta-feedback on their grammatical errors. Overall, the present study provides new insights into the working of WCF and the role of translanguaging in teacher-generated WCF in the Iranian EFL contexts.


Although the study reported here was exploratory in nature and the number of participants was limited, several pedagogical implications are listed here. These implications may not be applicable to some teaching contexts, mostly because of the constraints on translanguaging practices in contexts where students come from various linguistic backgrounds, and where teachers and students do not share the same L1. Nonetheless, in more linguistically homogeneous contexts, especially EFL ones, these implications may be beneficial to policy-makers, teacher trainers, and teachers. First, as Mary, the course instructor, reported, her employing language school preferred English-only curricula and teaching practices, especially for WCF practices. What stood in contrast with these policies were both Mary's own perceptions regarding the value of using Persian in her feedback practices and the majority of her participating students' positive affective engagement with Persian meta-feedback on their grammatical errors. These findings suggest that meta-feedback delivered in an L1 may be an effective feedback tool which can improve learners' understanding of their grammatical issues in English. Second, because two of the five student participants sought to maximize their exposure to written English, feedback provided in an L1 may lead to their negative affective engagement with feedback. As shown by the existing literature (e.g., Han, 2017; Han & Hyland, 2017, Saeli & Cheng, 2019, 2021), learners who engage with feedback negatively from an affective standpoint may not utilize the necessary cognitive and metacognitive resources to read and understand the feedback and incorporate it in their future writing. Therefore, teachers should

utilize their L1 when providing feedback with a heightened understanding of their students' values, perceptions, and attitudes. Otherwise, making blanket assumptions about students' feedback-related preferences may be detrimental to effective learner engagement with feedback practices, in this case, the use of an L1 in teacher-generated feedback. Motivated by the interconnected nature of learners' engagement with feedback and teachers' translanguaging practices, in a future project, the researchers aim to explore whether Iranian EFL learners' initial affective engagement with WCF, as mediated by teachers' translanguaging practices, may shape their subsequent cognitive and behavioral engagement with this feedback, thereby improving the quality of their writing.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Stimulated Recall Questions

Did you like the feedback that you received from your teacher? Discuss why you (dis)liked the feedback.

Appendix B

Interview Questions for the Students

Please state your name, age, gender, major, and English learning experiences.

What do you think effective feedback practices are? In which areas of your writing do you want to receive feedback?

Do you prefer to receive feedback on your grammar issues? How much feedback is ideal? What methods of feedback do you prefer?

Do you want your teacher to provide feedback on your grammar issues only in English?

Do you want your teacher's feedback on grammar to be delivered in Persian, as well? For the language of this feedback, which types of errors do you want corrected in English vs. in Persian? Please discuss.

Do you have any reasons for preferring the specific feedback languages? Please discuss.

Is there anything you would like to discuss regarding the feedback you received, as well as the language in which the feedback was provided to you?

Appendix C

Interview Questions for the Course Instructor

Please state your name, age, gender, academic background, and English teaching experiences. Please share your experience in teaching writing and providing feedback on student writing.

What are "ideal" feedback practices? What is "ideal" student writing?

Which errors in student writing do you mostly focus on? Which methods of providing feedback do you think are most effective? Please discuss.

Do you see any value in using Persian, your students' and your own L1, when commenting on students' writing? For which errors do you think Persian feedback would be useful? For which methods of feedback do you think Persian can be useful? Please share any thoughts you might have about feedback, the role of Persian in your feedback practices, and any other aspect of your feedback practices which we did not discuss.