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## TPSOL Teachers' Beliefs about Providing Corrective Feedback on Learners' Writing Performance: A Transcendental Phenomenology

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## TPSOL Teachers' Beliefs about Providing Corrective Feedback on Learners' Writing Performance: A Transcendental Phenomenology

### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate Teaching Persian to Speakers of Other Languages (TPSOL) teachers' beliefs about providing corrective feedback (CF) on TPSOL students' writing. To that end, the transcendental phenomenological design was used in which the experiences and practices of six TPSOL teachers (four male and two female teachers) were examined to obtain TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF on students' writing. A series of phenomenological interviews were conducted with TPSOL teachers. Moreover, students' writing samples corrected by TPSOL teachers were collected and analyzed. Finally, the data were analyzed and synthesized using Giorgi's (2009) five steps framework. The findings indicated that TPSOL teachers believed that (1) providing CF is a pedagogical responsibility of TPSOL teachers, (2) providing CF on local errors is more crucial than global errors, (3) providing direct CF is more beneficial rather than providing indirect and oral CF, (4) peer feedback is not applicable in TPSOL context, and (5) providing CF in the process is more beneficial compared to providing CF as a product. TPSOL teachers believed in providing CF on their students' writings; however, they had different pedagogical beliefs concerning the types and methods of providing CF.

### Keywords

corrective feedback, teachers' beliefs, transcendental phenomenology, TPSOL, writing skills, language teaching

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# **TPSOL Teachers' Beliefs about Providing Corrective Feedback on Learners' Writing Performance: A Transcendental Phenomenology**

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The purpose of this study was to investigate Teaching Persian to Speakers of Other Languages (TPSOL) teachers' beliefs about providing corrective feedback (CF) on TPSOL students' writing. To that end, the transcendental phenomenological design was used in which the experiences and practices of six TPSOL teachers (four male and two female teachers) were examined to obtain TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF on students' writing. A series of phenomenological interviews were conducted with TPSOL teachers. Moreover, students' writing samples corrected by TPSOL teachers were collected and analyzed. Finally, the data were analyzed and synthesized using Giorgi's (2009) five steps framework. The findings indicated that TPSOL teachers believed that (1) providing CF is a pedagogical responsibility of TPSOL teachers, (2) providing CF on local errors is more crucial than global errors, (3) providing direct CF is more beneficial rather than providing indirect and oral CF, (4) peer feedback is not applicable in TPSOL context, and (5) providing CF in the process is more beneficial compared to providing CF as a product. TPSOL teachers believed in providing CF on their students' writings; however, they had different pedagogical beliefs concerning the types and methods of providing CF.

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## **Introduction**

Due to the salient relationship between teachers' beliefs and teachers' practices, recent decades of second language (L2) pedagogy have witnessed a growing body of research on teachers' beliefs and practices (e.g., Al-Bakri, 2016; Esfandiari & Husseini, 2023; Lee, 2008; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). Teachers' beliefs can drive teachers' practices in the classrooms (Bai & Yuan, 2019), and teachers' practices can lead to changes in teachers' beliefs (Mo, 2020). Consequently, teachers' beliefs can be regarded as one of the most critical factors to develop their classroom practices and vice-versa. In L2 pedagogy, understanding teachers' beliefs about different pedagogical techniques, methods, and approaches, such as providing corrective feedback on L2 learners' performances, can help us apprehend what direct teachers' practices in their classes. The whole process will be an essential one for language teacher education programs in which teachers are educated to practice appropriately in their classes.

One of the long-lasting problems in language learning classes concerns writing skills, especially providing corrective feedback on L2 learners' writing (Ferris et al., 2013). Whether or not to provide corrective feedback (CF) on L2 learners writing performance is one of the debates of recent years in applied linguistics. Many researchers (e.g., Ferris, 1999, 2004; Truscott, 1999, 2004, 2007, among many others) have debated for and against providing CF

on L2 learners' writing performance. However, there are no clear answers on whether the feedback helps students' writing performance. Moreover, research studies have shown that providing CF has various challenges (Gu nette, 2012), making it difficult for L2 teachers to provide CF on L2 learners' writing performance. Such controversial issues will directly influence the beliefs of L2 teachers and, ultimately, the way they address providing CF on L2 learners' writing performance.

During the last three decades, L2 researchers' attention has been devoted to the (in)effectiveness of providing CF on L2 learners' writing performances (Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). Although the (in)effectiveness of providing CF has been widely seen in different contexts of L2 pedagogy, L2 teachers' beliefs about providing CF have seldom been reported. Moreover, there is a lack of research on the beliefs of TPSOL (Teaching Persian to Speakers of Other Languages) teachers regarding providing CF. Investigating TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF can lead to understanding the structure of their beliefs, contributing to preparing professional preparation and practices concerning writing pedagogy (Fives & Buehl, 2012). This is due to the pivotal role of teachers' beliefs in driving teachers' practices in classrooms (Griffiths, 2007). Thus, understanding TPSOL teachers' belief about providing CF on TPSOL students writing performance helps (1) TPSOL teacher educators to recognize the (mis)matches between teachers' beliefs and their practices to address them in TPSOL teacher education programs and (2) TPSOL teachers to become an agent of change (Phipps & Borg, 2009) and readdress their practices through reflection. Consequently, the current study was an exploratory investigation to delve into TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF on TPSOL students' writing performances. This study was an attempt to provide an answer to the following question: What are TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF on TPSOL students' writing performance?

## **Literature Review**

### **L2 Teachers' Beliefs: The Interplay of Belief, Knowledge, and Cognition**

Various interplays among belief, knowledge, and cognition should be considered when researching teachers' beliefs (Mo, 2020). However, it is not an easy task to distinguish the distinctions among the three terms. The following paragraphs attempt to clarify each concept to distinguish among the three concepts and address their interplays. Moreover, understanding the concepts is conducive to understanding the model (section 2.2.) used to address TPSOL teachers' beliefs in this study.

The concept of belief has been critically defined in various fields such as anthropology, business, education, and psychology. However, there is no "one-size-fits-all" definition for belief. One reason for the inconsistency in the definition of belief is the few epistemological studies. Skott (2015) defined teachers' beliefs as "individual, subjectively true and value-laden mental constructs that are of relatively stable results of substantial social experience and that have a significant impact on one's interpretations of and contributions to classroom practices" (p. 19). According to Skott's (2015) definition, the concept is a mental construct including cognitive and affective aspects. For instance, teachers' cognition about assessment techniques or how they deal with critical incidents in their classes might be constructed through their negotiations with their community of practice.

Taking an epistemological perspective, Fenstermacher (1994) stated that knowledge is based on factual tenets while belief is rooted in personal assumptions. Moreover, Fives and Buehl (2012) pointed out that beliefs are based on the subjective acceptance of claims while knowledge has an objective origin verified by external resources. Others, such as Richardson (1996), believed that one's beliefs are constructed through his/her personal understandings and

propositions. Finally, while some researchers, such as Haney et al. (2003), referred to beliefs as to one's convictions and opinions, others, such as Alexander et al. (1991) addressed knowledge as "all that a person knows or believes to be true, whether or not it is verified as true in some sort of objective or external way" (p. 317). In the current study, the researcher took Fives and Buehl's (2012) definition of teachers' beliefs based on which beliefs are subjective acceptance of claims which might affect their teaching practices. The reason for selecting and following this definition was that the interrelationship between beliefs and practice was focused on the current study.

Among the three concepts, cognition is the umbrella term. According to Borg (2003), cognition can be described as "what teachers know, believe and think" (p. 81), which encompasses teachers' beliefs and knowledge. For Richards and Burn (2012), teachers' cognition includes "the mental lives of teachers, how these are formed, what they consist of, and how teachers' beliefs, thoughts, and thinking processes shape their understanding of teaching and their classroom practices" (p. 4). Moreover, Tsui (2011) defined teachers' cognition as "as a network, as a continuum, or as clusters of beliefs." According to these definitions, teachers' cognition is the higher-order term addressing teachers' beliefs and teachers' knowledge.

It is pivotal that the researchers use applicable theories and models for their studies showing how to address the preferred terms. Given the interplays among the three concepts, it is important to use a model to address TPSOL teachers' beliefs. The model should assure the researcher that it signified teachers' beliefs over the other two concepts: knowledge and cognition.

### **Function of Teachers' Beliefs: A Model to Examine Teachers' Beliefs**

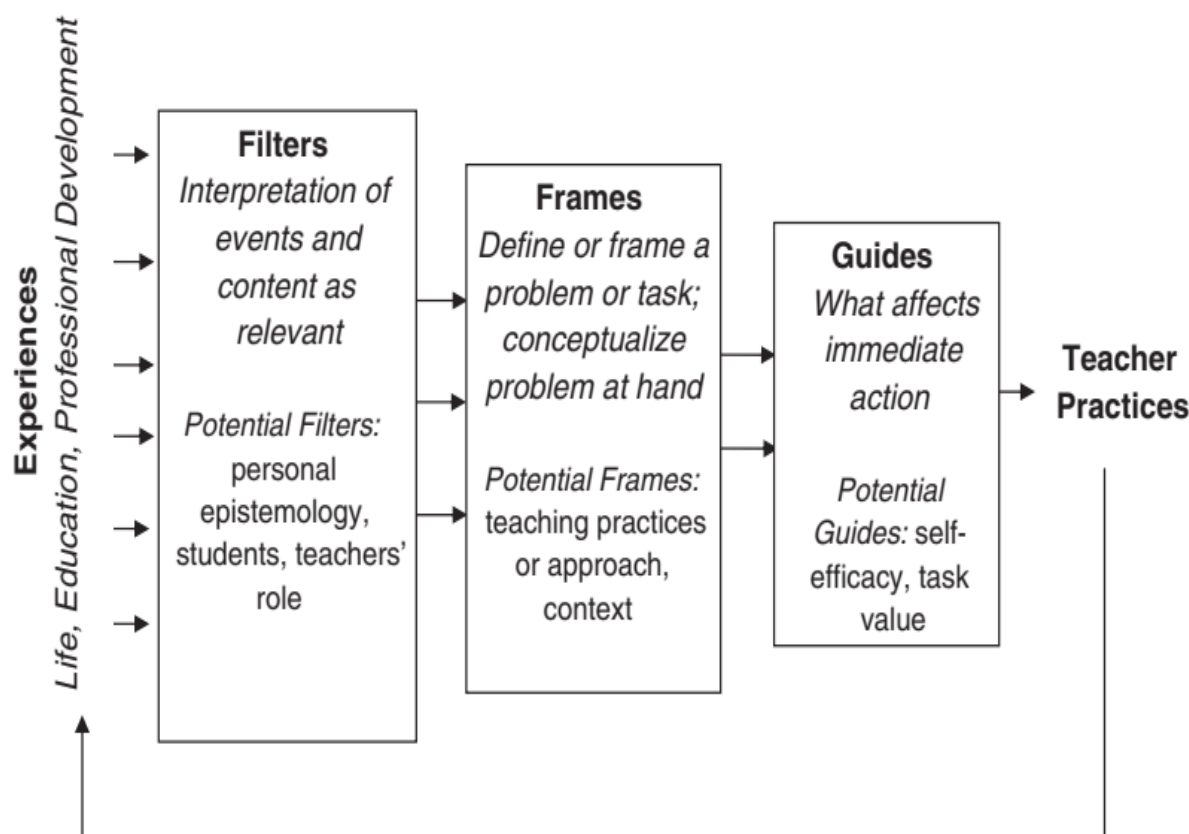
The inseparable links among belief, knowledge, and cognition make it difficult to examine teacher beliefs. Hence, TPSOL teachers' beliefs may be addressed through a theory that can show teachers' beliefs through teachers' practices and experiences. Fives and Buehl (2012) proposed the function of teachers' beliefs, a functional model examining the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices. Fives and Buehl's (2012) model have three functions, including (a) filters for interpretation, (b) frames for defining problems, and (c) guides or standards for action (Figure 1, extracted from Fives & Buehl, 2012).

As a filter for interpretation, beliefs are related to practices through which individuals interpret experiences and information. Teachers' beliefs as a filter influence how teachers interpret and understand new information and experiences. Thus, teachers' beliefs can "shape what and how they learn about teaching" (Fives & Buehl, 2012, p. 479). Moreover, filtering is based on teachers' information about different teaching aspects in their classes. It is associated with what to instruct and how to practice it. Teachers' beliefs filter the information to be instructed in the classrooms and the specified practices to deliver the information to the learners. Based on this model, beliefs frame the situations and problems. According to Fives and Buehl (2012), beliefs can have the role of framing to identify the way problems and tasks are defined. Accordingly, when teachers filter the information by using teachers' beliefs as a filter, their beliefs continue conceptualizing and framing the problems. Thus, teachers' beliefs push teachers to frame a classroom problem and address that problem. Back to the aim of this study, this stage refers to how TPSOL teachers' beliefs filter the way they provide CF in their classes. Finally, according to Fives and Buehl's (2012) model, beliefs might guide teachers' actions and intentions. It has a direct association with teachers' motivation (Fives & Buehl, 2012). Accordingly, teachers' beliefs as a guide drive the motivational aspects of teachers to act.

The model proposed by Fives and Buehl (2012) was an appropriate one to be used in the current study. The reason for that was that this model, operationalized appropriately, helped the researcher to delve into the TPSOL teachers' experiences and practices to understand their beliefs about providing CF on TPSOL learners. This was applicable since the researcher could obtain TPSOL teachers' beliefs by filtering, framing, and guiding their experiences and practices using the model.

**Figure 1**

*The Function of Teachers' Beliefs: Beliefs Act as Filters, Frames, and Act (Extracted from Fives & Buehl, 2012)*



### Teachers' Beliefs about Providing Corrective Feedback on L2 Writing

There is a long debate concerning whether to provide CF on L2 learners' writing performance. To help students understand their errors and avoid them in their writing, corrective feedback involves a variety of types of information provided by external agents such as teachers (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008). The literature is imbued with the (in)effectiveness of providing corrective feedback (Bitchener et al., 2005; Chandler, 2003; Ferris et al., 2013; Guénette, 2008; Lee, 2008). However, few studies have examined the relationship between L2 teachers' beliefs and how they practice CF in L2 writing classes (Lee, 2008; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). Although some studies (e.g., Ghanizadeh et al., 2017; Morad et al., 2013) were conducted to investigate the effectiveness of CF on TPSOL students' language skills, no study to date has been done to investigate TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF on TPSOL students' writing performance.

Lee (2008) conducted a study to investigate L2 teachers' beliefs and practices concerning CF in Hong Kong. She used two sources to address the purpose of her study, including (1) analyzing CF provided by 26 teachers on 174 texts and (2) information provided by 206 secondary teachers on a questionnaire. The focus of the second source was to investigate teachers' beliefs about providing CF. The results revealed ten mismatches between teachers' beliefs and practices concerning providing CF on L2 learners' writing performance. The mismatches were (1) language forms were paid the most attention by the teachers while they believed good writing was more than accuracy, (2) while selective marking was preferred by the teachers, they marked errors comprehensively, (3) whereas teachers' tendency was to correct each and every error for the learners, they believed that learners should develop their learning through the provided CF, (4) teachers tended to use codes for different errors, and they thought learners were unable to decode the CF, (5) teachers' awarded grades might draw away students' focus on CF, (6) teachers' tended to focus on learners' weaknesses and not their writing strengths, (7) teachers thought that their CF would lead to students control over their writing, (8) although teachers believed process writing was more beneficial, they asked learners to conduct one-shot writing, (9) teachers believed that errors would recur, but they were constant in providing CF, and (10) while teachers thought their effort concerning providing CF did not pay off, they continued providing CF.

In an exploratory case study, Al-Bakri (2016) explored the teachers' beliefs and practices concerning providing CF and the challenges they faced. Al-Bakri collected qualitative data (semi-structured interviews) and quantitative data (the provided CF on 18 learners' writing performance by six teachers). The results of the study indicated that teachers' beliefs and contextual factors influenced the way teachers provided CF. Like Lee's (2008) study, the results of the study by Al-Bakri (2016) indicated several mismatches between teachers' beliefs about CF and their practices. Moreover, the results indicated a lack of communication between teachers and learners regarding the provided CF.

In a recent study, Mao and Crosthwaite (2019) investigated the (mis)alignment between teachers' beliefs and practices concerning providing CF on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners writing performance. They collected data from five EFL teachers through questionnaires and interviews. Moreover, teachers' CF provided on 100 learners' writing was analyzed. The results indicated an alignment between teachers' beliefs and their practices concerning providing CF in some instances. The results of their study also showed that there were three areas of misalignment, including (1) teachers believed that they provide direct CF while they provided more indirect CF, (2) teachers believed that they showed the errors in the margins, but they did not, and (3) while teachers believed they provided more CF on global rather than local errors, in practice, they did vice-versa.

One finds a paucity of literature about TPSOL teachers' beliefs and practices concerning CF (Lee, 2008; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019) by reviewing the related literature. However, if understanding teachers' beliefs is crucial for their professionalism (Borg, 2006; Fives & Buehl, 2012), then it is crucial to investigate their beliefs concerning the "how" and "why" of their teaching.

## **Context of the Research**

As a researcher studying teacher education and L2 writing skill in EFL (English as a foreign) contexts, I found it critical to understand the beliefs of TPSOL teachers about providing CF on students' writing performance. Understanding their beliefs can help teacher educators to revisit L2 teacher education programs, so they can help TPSOL teachers to perform better concerning teaching writing in their classes. The topic was important for me

since I wanted to understand whether TPSOL teachers' beliefs concerning providing CF are different of other L2 teachers.

## Method

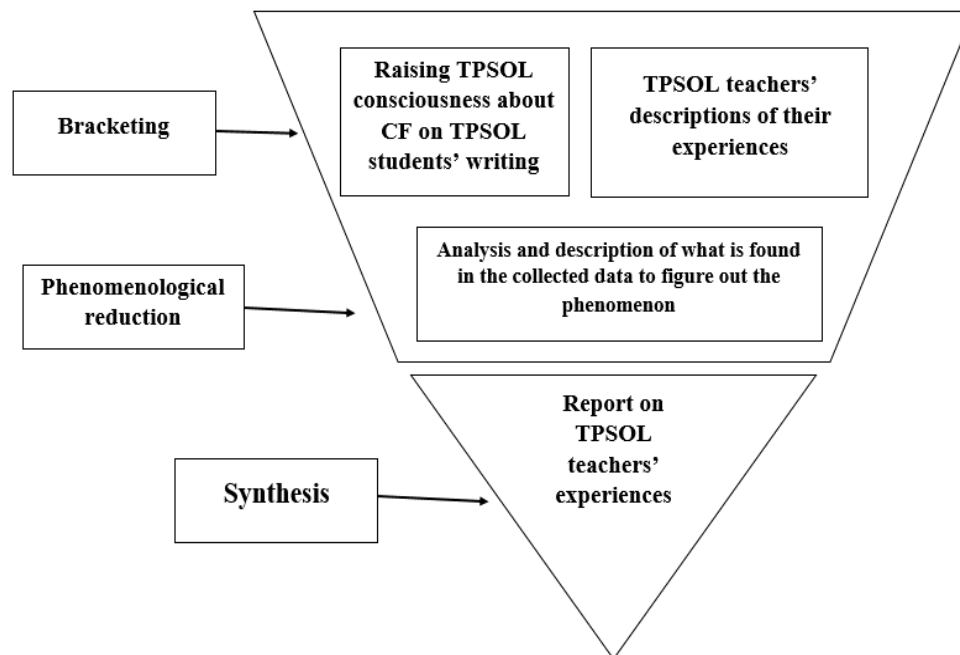
### Research Design and Researcher Role

A transcendental phenomenological design was used to address TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF on TPSOL students' writing performances. The reason behind selecting such a design was that by using the transcendental phenomenological design (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2016) in this study, the researcher would be able to uncover the lived experiences of the TPSOL teachers. Such experiences were rooted in TPSOL teachers' classroom practices that could lead the researcher to their beliefs (Bai & Yuan, 2019). The transcendental phenomenological design pays greater attention to the participants' descriptions than the researcher's descriptions. Thus, in the current study, the researcher "bracketed" himself out of the study to focus on the phenomenon through the TPSOL teachers' experiences and practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To do so, he did not include his own experiences in teaching writing and providing CF. The researcher then developed a textual description of TPSOL teachers' experiences concerning providing CF on TPSOL learners' writing performances and a structural description of these teachers' experiences regarding the conditions, contexts, and situations. Finally, the researcher combined structural and textual descriptions to obtain the overall experiences of the TPSOL teachers.

The design of the current study (Figure 2) was based on some steps and sub-steps. First, by inviting the TPSOL teachers to the study and discussing the study's aim, the researcher raised their consciousness about their experiences of providing CF on TPSOL students' writing performances.

**Figure 2**

*Research Design: Transcendental Phenomenology (Adapted from Edmonds & Kennedy, 2016)*



Then, by conducting a series of phenomenological interviews, the researcher delved into their experiences. Moreover, he collected their practices concerning providing CF on students' writing to find a more comprehensive overview of teachers' experiences. In the next step, the



researcher “bracketed” out himself from the study and tried to provide textual and structural descriptions of the phenomenon. Later, the phenomenological reduction was made by using Fives and Buehl's (2012) model of teachers' beliefs to obtain the main themes concerning TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF on TPSOL students' writing performances. A synthesis step was then done to enhance the rigor of the study before preparing the final report. To do so, the researcher asked the TPSOL teachers to deliver TPSOL students' writing samples that were commented on and corrected by TPSOL teachers. Ultimately, the final report was obtained in that the researcher reached TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF on TPSOL students' writing based on their experiences and exact practices in this regard. Figure 2 indicated the design of the study.

## Participants

The participants of this study were six TPSOL teachers (four male and two female teachers) who were teaching Persian to students of different nationalities, studying in different fields at Iranian universities. These teachers were recruited for this study through snowball sampling. The researcher asked the first and second teachers to introduce other TPSOL teachers who taught Persian writing to TPSOL students. The researcher used snowball sampling to recruit potential respondents who were not centrally located but worked in different TPSOL centers across the country. By so doing, the researcher could obtain information about TPSOL teachers working in different contexts. Although the TPSOL teachers were selected through snowball sampling, they have different background characteristics concerning years of experience in teaching TPSOL and writing skills.

Since the study was a transcendental phenomenology aiming to delve deeply into the TPSOL teachers' experiences to reach their beliefs, six teachers were thought to help the researcher reach data saturation (Ary et al., 2014). The data analysis showed data saturation with the six TPSOL teachers, assuring the researcher that no more participants needed to be interviewed. Table 1 indicates the background characteristics of the participants.

**Table 1**

*Background Characteristics of the Participants*

Pseudonym	Gender	Years of experience in teaching TPSOL	Years of experience in teaching writing skills
Reza	Male	9	6
Ali	Male	8	6
Hadi	Male	7	5
Amir	Male	5	3
Nahid	Female	4	2
Fateme	Female	3	2

## Data Collection Procedure

### *Phenomenological Interviews*

The researcher aimed to reach the TPSOL teachers' experiences and practices concerning their beliefs about providing CF on TPSOL students' writing performances through conducting phenomenological interviews. It should be noted that one round of interview with each participant was done, taking about 45 minutes. Moreover, it should be stated that the interviews were conducted in Persian. However, the researcher translated them into English.

To see the reliable correspondence between his translation and the Persian correspondence, he asked the second coder, a Ph.D. candidate in applied linguistics helping in the process of codification, to reverse the translations from English to Persian. Then the researcher examined the degree of correspondence by putting the authentic interview data produced by the participants and the reversed translated interviews produced by the second coder. There was a high agreement between the Persian interviews and the translated ones. The researcher asked a Ph.D. candidate in applied linguistics, the same one who helped him with codification, to see how translated interviews were in line with their Persian equivalents. She checked them and provided some comments to make the ambiguous parts clearer. The essential issue in conducting phenomenological interviews is the criticality of asking appropriate questions to elicit the meaning of the phenomenon on the part of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Given that, in the current study, the researcher, according to the research design (Figure 2), raised TPSOL teachers' consciousness about CF to help them direct their responses. To do so, before conducting the interviews, the researcher started to provide a summary of CF in language pedagogy. Then, the phenomenological interviews were designed, so TPSOL teachers described their experiences and their practices regarding providing CF on TPSOL students' writings (Figure 2). The participants took part in one round of phenomenological interviews. Four participants were interviewed more than once to provide information on critical points mentioned in their first interview, each took about an hour.

### ***TPSOL Students' Writing Samples***

To triangulate the phenomenological interviews' findings, the researcher asked the participants to provide the researcher with TPSOL students' writing samples that they had provided CF. The reason to do so was twofold. First, the researcher wanted to use the exact data from teachers' writing classrooms to synthesize the interview data. Second, the researcher wanted to compare what TPSOL teachers mentioned in their phenomenological interviews concerning providing CF with their exact practices. Finally, the participants delivered some samples to the researcher. Such samples helped the researcher better understand TPSOL teachers' beliefs regarding providing CF on TPSOL learners' writing performances.

### **Data Analysis and Synthesis**

The phenomenological interviews have been analyzed and synthesized using Giorgi's (2009) five-step framework to analyze/synthesize phenomenological data. The steps are shown below:

- Complete familiarizing with the descriptions.

In this step, the phenomenological interviews were organized and read several times so that the researcher obtained a sense of the description.

- Recognizing and identifying meaning units (MUs).

In this step, the researcher identified MUs based on the semantic descriptions of the participants. It means that the researcher read the descriptions and categorized them into MUs based on the semantic meanings of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Phenomenological reduction (Figure 2) was addressed in this step by eliminating the unrelated units.

- Identifying focal meanings (FMs).

This step is the heart of the whole process in which the researcher linked the MUs to higher-order discourse. It means that at this level, the semantic meaning was turned to discourse meaning. To do so, the researchers need theoretical or analytical frameworks. In the current study, the researcher used Fives and Buehl's (2012) model of teachers' beliefs to obtain FMs concerning TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF on TPSOL students' writing performances.

- Synthesizing the situated structural descriptions (SSD).

The fourth step is to obtain a situated structural description for each participant (Giorgi, 2009). Consequently, in this step, the researcher tried to synthesize the FMs of each TPSOL teacher based on the situations they had in the TPSOL context.

- Synthesizing a general structural description (GSD).

The final step goes through the previous steps to obtain the general meaning of the experiences that individuals have regarding a particular phenomenon. Through this step, the researchers can finalize the ultimate categories. In the current study, the researcher addressed this stage to obtain TPSOL beliefs about providing CF on TPSOL students' writing performance by evaluating and investigating SSDs and FMs with Fives and Buehl's (2012) model of teachers' beliefs.

The whole process is a complex one that needs a thorough understanding of each step on the researcher's part; however, addressing these steps helped the researcher delve into the teachers' experiences to obtain their beliefs. MAXQDA 20 was used to help the researcher go through each step and finalize the analyses and syntheses of the data in a stepwise manner and concordantly.

To triangulate the findings of the phenomenological interviews with TPSOL teachers' practices, the researcher asked TPSOL teachers to provide TPSOL students' writing samples which they had provided CF on them. To analyze the types of CF, direct and indirect CF, provided on TPSOL students' writings, the researcher used the typology of written corrective feedback proposed by Ellis (2009). Moreover, to analyze types of errors, local and global errors, addressed by the TPSOL teachers, the researcher used the Jacobs et al. (1981) framework.

### **Rigor of the Study**

Four rigor indexes of qualitative research, including credibility, transferability, trustworthiness, and confirmability (Ary et al., 2014), were addressed in this study. To ensure the credibility (internal validity) of the findings, the researcher used structural corroboration based on which the researcher collected multiple data sources (phenomenological interviews and TPSOL students' writing samples). The researcher assured the transferability, and external validity, through cross-case comparison in which more than one case was being investigated. Moreover, the participants were TPSOL teachers at different universities, which enhanced the transferability index. The trustworthiness/dependability index, equal to reliability in quantitative studies, was addressed through an inter-coder agreement strategy. To do so, the researcher asked another coder to go through 50% of the data analyses and syntheses in MAXQDA 20. The researcher provided some instructional sessions to the second coder who had a PhD degree in applied linguistics. Then, the second coder addressed 50% of the data. The result of the inter-coder agreement between the two coders was satisfying, around 85%. Finally, to assure the confirmability of the findings, the researcher used an audit trial strategy.

To do so, the researcher provided a complete audit trail to the second coder, who had already helped the researcher with the inter-coder agreement, to see whether she arrived at the same findings and conclusions.

## Findings

The analyses and syntheses of phenomenological interviews indicated five central beliefs of TPSOL teachers regarding the provision of CF on TPSOL students' writing performances. These beliefs were (1) providing CF is a pedagogical responsibility of TPSOL teachers, (2) providing CF on local errors is more crucial than global errors, (3) providing direct CF is more beneficial rather than providing indirect and oral CF, (4) peer feedback is not applicable in TPSOL context, and (5) providing CF in the process is more beneficial compared to providing CF as a product.

### Providing CF is a Pedagogical Responsibility of TPSOL Teachers

TPSOL teachers who participated in this study believed that providing CF on students' writing performance is a pedagogical responsibility that every teacher should address. The students' writing samples supported this belief since all the samples were provided with CF. The following extracts (1 and 2), which are parts of Ali and Reza's interviews, show this belief:

... this is [providing CF] *part of our teaching profession*, and I think *if we do not provide CF* on students' productions, *including students' writings*, we *will not fulfill our teaching responsibilities* ... (Extract 1, Ali)

Ali believed that part of their "teaching profession" is to "provide CF [on] ... students' writings" and "if they do not provide CF," then their "teaching responsibilities" will not be complete. In a similar vein, Reza considered the provision of CF on TPSOL students' writing as a prerequisite to the "mission done" of the writing instruction:

...I am with those who are *for providing CF*, not those who are against it ...since I think the *teachers are responsible for providing CF* on their learners' production to *reach the mission done* with their writing instruction ... (Extract 2)

Reza, firstly, indicated that he is "for providing CF" because he believed that "teachers are responsible for providing CF"; otherwise, they would not be able to reach the "mission done" in their writing instructions.

### Providing CF on Local Errors is more Crucial than Global Errors

TPSOL teachers mentioned in their pedagogical interviews that their experiences and practices were in line with providing CF on local rather than global errors. Thus, it can be said that TPSOL teachers believed that providing CF on local errors is more crucial than global errors. The results of frequency analyses done on the students' writing samples which were provided by CF by the TPSOL (Table 2), supported this belief. The following extracts (3 and 4) show how TPSOL teachers believed that providing CF on local errors is more crucial than global errors:

... I have tried to *pay due attention to grammar, punctuation, and spelling* in my corrective feedback ... later, they [TPSOL students] can learn how *to avoid content-related errors* ... (Extract 3, Hadi)

Hadi asserted that the experiences and practices that he had with the TPSOL students' writing were more to address local errors such as "grammar, punctuation, and spelling" rather than global errors since TPSOL students would learn how "to avoid content-related errors" (global errors) in the future:

... I can say my students' writing ideas and content do not have many problems since these issues *can be corrected in other courses they have*; however, when talking about grammar, and sentence structure, ... they *need to be corrected in writing courses* so that they *can learn from the provided CF* ... (Extract 4, Nahid)

As can be seen in this extract, Nahid believed that global errors "can be corrected on other courses [TPSOL students] have" while they "need to be corrected in writing courses" so they can learn from the provided CF. Thus, for Nahid, the whole process of providing CF in writing courses is a kind of learning arena. Table 2 indicates the frequencies of TPSOL teachers' actual practices regarding the CF that they had provided on TPSOL students' writing samples.

**Table 2**

*TPSOL Teachers' Global/Local CF Frequency on One Sample of Students' Writing*

Pseudonym	Sample Length (Words)	Global Issues		Local Issues			Total
		Content	Organization	Grammar	Vocabulary	Mechanics	
Reza	120	2 (7%)	1 (4%)	8 (26%)	9 (30%)	10 (33%)	30(100%)
Ali	140	3 (9%)	2 (6%)	10 (30%)	10 (30%)	8 (25%)	33(100%)
Hadi	130	1 (4%)	3 (10%)	8 (26%)	7 (23%)	11 (37%)	30(100%)
Amir	100	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	9 (25%)	11 (31)	12 (34)	36(100%)
Nahid	110	2 (6%)	4 (12%)	10 (28%)	9 (26%)	10 (28%)	35(100%)
Fateme	115	1 (3%)	3 (12%)	8 (28%)	7 (25%)	9 (32%)	28(100%)

Table 2 indicated that the frequency of the CF provided by TPSOL teachers on local issues of TPSOL students' writing performances was more than the frequency of the CF provided on global issues of TPSOL students' writing performances. Thus, Table 2 can be regarded as support of what has already been obtained in the interviews.

### **Providing Direct CF is More Beneficial than Providing Indirect and Oral CF**

The TPSOL teachers who participated in this study believed that providing direct CF is more beneficial for developing TPSOL students' writing than providing indirect and oral CF, where the teachers underlined the problematic parts and asked students themselves to rectify them. The analyses and syntheses of the interviews about TPSOL teachers' experiences and practices and the frequency count (Table 3) of the direct/indirect CF provided by them on students' writing approved this belief. The following extract (5 and 6) indicate this belief:

... I believe to save time in the process of instructing writing skills to TPSOL students, *we should act directly*, meaning that we have to *provide direct CF* on students' writings ...[moreover] providing *indirect CF lead to students' confusion and misunderstanding* ... (Extract 5, Amir)

Amir stated explicitly that TPSOL teachers "should act directly" and "provide direct CF on students' writings" if they want to come up with the time-consuming problem of writing instruction. He believed that if teachers provided indirect CF, "students' confusion and misunderstanding" would happen, which needed much more time to resolve. Fateme, another TPSOL teacher, believed that direct CF would help novice and experienced TPSOL students develop their writing knowledge:

... *I provide direct CF on my students' writings* since I think *direct CF can help them develop their knowledge* about writing ...this *can be facilitative* for *both novice and experienced students* ... (Extract 6, Fateme)

To delve into TPSOL teachers' actual practices concerning providing direct or indirect CF, the researcher examined the frequency of direct and indirect CF that TPSOL teachers provided on the students' writing samples. Table 3 indicates the frequency of direct and indirect CF provided by TPSOL teachers on TPSOL students' writings. In addition, Table 3 shows that they provided more direct CF compared to indirect CF. Thus, this can approve the information obtained through the interviews.

**Table 3**

*TPSOL Teachers' Direct/Indirect CF Frequency on One Sample of Students' Writing*

Pseudonym	Sample Length (Words)	Direct feedback	Indirect feedback		Total
		Providing the correct form	Indicating + locating the error	Indicating the only	
Reza	120	24 (80%)	3 (10%)	3 (10%)	30(100%)
Ali	140	30 (91%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)	33(100%)
Hadi	130	29 (97%)	-	1 (3%)	30(100%)
Amir	100	30 (83%)	5 (14%)	1 (3%)	36(100%)
Nahid	110	33 (94%)	2 (6%)	-	35(100%)
Fateme	115	28 (100%)	-	-	28(100%)

### Peer Feedback is not Applicable in the TPSOL Context

The analyses and syntheses of the phenomenological interviews revealed that TPSOL teachers believed that it is not applicable to address peer feedback in the TPSOL context. Extracts 7 and 8 show the experiences and practices of TPSOL teachers making such a belief in them:

... I had the experience of using peer feedback in my classes, *but it was not an effective strategy* ... since the *students have different proficiency levels* and *different nationalities, it is not easy to ask them to work with peers and provide peer feedback*... (Extract 7, Ali)

Ali believed that peer feedback is not "an effective strategy" in TPSOL writing classes "since the students have different proficiency levels and with different nationalities." Such reasons make it difficult to "ask them to work with peers and provide peer feedback." Moreover, in the following extract (8), Amir mentioned that the "considerable amount of writing contents" to be instructed and "the difficulty in asking students to work in a group" would create a challenge to think about any other types of CF except teacher feedback:

... in our writing classes, we need to *teach a considerable amount of writing content*... [moreover], *the difficulty in asking students to work in a group* makes it a *very difficult task to think about any other individuals except the teacher* to provide CF ... [moreover] *my students are not confident enough* to put the *responsibility of peer feedback on their shoulders* ... (Extract 8, Amir)

Furthermore, Reza believed that his students "are not confident enough" to accept the role of CF provider in their classmates' writings. Such a reason led Reza not to "put the responsibility of peer feedback on their shoulders" since he did not believe peer feedback could be applied in the TPSOL context.

### **Providing CF in Process is more Beneficial Compared to Providing CF as a Product**

Finally, TPSOL teachers stated that providing CF in the process is more beneficial than providing CF as a product. However, it should be noted that, in line with the previous belief, TPSOL teachers believed that the process of providing CF should be the one that happens between the teachers and the learners. This was due to the problems which had already been mentioned with peers or group CF. Extracts 9 and 10 indicate how TPSOL teachers addressed process-based CF in their classes:

...I try to ask *my students to revise their writings* and *deliver them back to me* so that they can *learn the instructional aspects of the CF* in a *process established between the learners and I* ... (Extract 9, Nahid)

Nahid believed that the provided CF has some "instructional aspects" that the learners benefit provided that they would be "in a process established between the learners and [the teacher]."

... I provide CF on my learners' writing through pushing them to *participate in the process of writing, revising, and rewriting in which CF is provided*... this way, they can *develop their procedural knowledge about writing* ... (Extract 10, Reza)

Reza practiced a procedural methodology to provide CF on his learners' writings. He believed the "process of writing, revising, and rewriting in which CF is provided" on the writings of TPSOL teachers can "develop their procedural knowledge."

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study are in line with the overall findings of the previous studies Lee (2008), Mao and Crosthwaite (2019), and Montgomery and Baker (2007) in that all these research findings indicated that teachers' beliefs about providing CF on learners' writing performances have significant effects on their CF practices. Thus, the main argument one can

make is that regardless of what language is taught by the teachers (Persian, English, etc.), teachers' beliefs about providing CF on learners' writing performances create their teaching practices. However, there are some mismatches between the current study's findings and that of the previous ones (e.g., Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019), showing the differences in providing CF by TPSOL teachers and teachers of other languages, for example, English. One argument for such mismatches in the findings of this study and the previous ones might be due to the differences in the contextual factors (Lee, 2008).

The findings indicated that TPSOL teachers believed that providing CF on students' writing is a pedagogical responsibility. The findings are consistent with Al-Bakri's (2016) findings in that both findings highlighted the responsibility of L2 teachers to provide CF on their learners' writing performances. Considering CF provision as a kind of responsibility among L2 teachers may drive their practices toward helping students develop their writing skills (Bitchener, 2012). However, the critical issue is learners' autonomy, which may be affected by the teachers' mere correction. Sometimes, teachers' preference to provide CF by themselves and do not allow students to follow a discovery learning to correct their manuscript would decrease students' autonomy. Thus, TPSOL teachers, like other L2 teachers, must help learners become independent and responsible learners (Al-Bakri, 2016). If TPSOL teachers' responsibility to provide CF on learners' writings will be conjoined with learners' sense of responsibility to become autonomous learners, then the whole CF provision process can enhance TPSOL learners' writing skills.

TPSOL teachers also believed that providing CF on local issues was more important compared to global issues. Such a finding agreed with the earlier study conducted by Mao and Crosthwaite (2019) in that the teachers who participated in their study practiced and provided CF on local issues. Such underestimating of the global issues, found in this study, was also reported in Lee's (2008) study and Montgomery and Baker's (2007) investigation. One reason for obtaining the same results concerning the provision of CF on local rather than global issues in this study might be due to the high numbers of local issues in TPSOL students' writing performances (Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019), leading the teachers to provide more corrections on local issues. As stated earlier, teachers' practice can lead to teachers' beliefs (Bai & Yuan, 2019). Hence, TPSOL teachers' belief to provide more CF on local rather than global issues may be due to their over-practicing in providing CF on local issues of TPSOL students' writings.

The current study's findings also indicated that TPSOL teachers believed that providing direct CF on students' writing would be more beneficial than indirect CF since such a type of CF would reduce students' misunderstandings and confusion (Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). Such results are in line with the study conducted by Lee (2008). The reason for providing more direct CF on students' writing by TPSOL teachers might be due to students' low proficiency (Lee, 2004) in Persian writing. One more reason might be that by providing direct CF on students' writing, teachers can help them self-edit their writings (Al-Bakri, 2016). Moreover, since many L2 teachers have heard about direct CF's capability to help learners "notice" (Schmidt, 1990) their errors, they focus more on direct CF to develop their students' writing skills.

Although peer feedback is believed to be a valuable technique to improve L2 learners' writing skills (Harmer, 2004), TPSOL teachers in the current study believed that peer feedback is not applicable in the TPSOL context. Some criteria should be met so that L2 teachers are able to apply peer feedback in their classes. Those criteria consist of students' high proficiency in language skills, high confidence in providing CF, and students' trust in peer feedback (Kangni, 2015). Based on the evidence obtained through the phenomenological interviews with TPSOL teachers, those criteria are missing in the TPSOL context. However, it is believed that TPSOL teacher education programs should help TPSOL teachers to use different techniques



and strategies to enhance students' confidence in providing CF, create reasonable groups to develop students' trust and give due attention to positive and negative feedback (Kangni, 2015).

### **Conclusion and Implications**

This study was an attempt to investigate TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF on their students' writing performances. The findings revealed that TPSOL teachers believed that since providing CF was one of their pedagogical responsibilities, they had to provide direct CF on local issues. Moreover, they believed that peer feedback was not applicable in the TPSOL context, but CF provision could be addressed through a process between the teachers and students. Thus, it can be concluded that TPSOL teachers believed in the effectiveness of providing CF on their students' writings; however, they had different pedagogical beliefs concerning the types and methods of providing CF.

The current study's findings showed that TPSOL teachers believed that if CF would be provided in process, formative CF, it would be more effective compared to CF as a product, summative CF. Different techniques, such as portfolio-based writing instruction, can help teachers provide CF on their students' writing in the process (Meihami et al., 2018). Furthermore, providing CF in a process will develop students' autonomy since they need to use their interactive and critical thinking abilities (Esfandiari & Meihami, 2017) to apply the provided CF to their revised writings. Accordingly, it can be pointed out that if TPSOL teachers use techniques and methods such as portfolio-based writing instruction in their writing classes, they can develop the writing skills of their students.

When addressing the current study's findings with a narrower lens to associate them with the research question, it can be concluded that TPSOL teachers' beliefs have principal impacts on providing CF in their writing classes. However, the differences found in the TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF on TPSOL students' writing performances and teachers of other languages might highlight the role of contextual factors in creating such differences in their beliefs. These contextual factors are related to specific communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) which have their specific characteristics. Thus, overall, it can be concluded that the role of the community of practice in which TPSOL teachers are involved might have potential effects on developing their beliefs and, consequently, their practices.

The findings of this study can have some implications for TPSOL teacher education programs. First, TPSOL teacher education programs need to highlight the theoretical and practical aspects of providing CF (Al-Bakri, 2016) for TPSOL teachers. It can be concluded that some of TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF, such as only addressing local issues, might change by developing their knowledge about the theoretical and practical issues of CF in TPSOL teacher education programs. Furthermore, constant in-service TPSOL teacher education programs are conducive to addressing TPSOL teachers' professionalism concerning how to provide CF on students' writing in different contexts. Providing opportunities such as teachers' meetings can be beneficial since such meetings will help TPSOL teachers collaborate with their critical colleagues and reflect upon how they provide CF.

Future studies need to address TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF with more participants. Although the researcher reached data saturation while collecting data, it seems that generalization concerning TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF needs addressing more TPSOL teachers' beliefs. Furthermore, the role of contextual factors in creating TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF needs to be investigated. Due to the lack of empirical studies on the effectiveness of providing different CF types on TPSOL students' writings, it will be appreciated if the researcher's pay attention to this gap in the literature. The current study was limited in terms of the participants since they were TPSOL teachers at universities. Further studies can be done with TPSOL teachers who are working in other educational

contexts. Moreover, mixed-methods studies can be done to help researchers understand other aspects of TPSOL teachers' beliefs about providing CF, such as the role of knowledge and cognition in constructing their beliefs and vice-versa.

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