

The Impact of Teacher Feedback on Junior High School Students' Writing Skills

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Abstract:

This study investigates the impact of teacher feedback on the writing skills of junior high school students. The participants were divided into two groups: the experimental group, who received teacher feedback on their writing, and the control group, who did not receive any feedback. The writings by the students were subsequently assessed to measure their writing language, content, discourse structure, and technical specifications. The findings of the study show that students who received teacher feedback exhibited significant improvements in their writing skills when compared to their counterparts who did not receive any feedback. By providing students with feedback on their writing, teachers can help them improve their writing skills. This study highlights the importance of providing students with detailed and constructive feedback on their writing assignments to help them develop their writing skills.

Keywords:

Teacher Feedback, Junior High School Students, Writing Skills

1. Introduction

1.1. Background information

Writing is a crucial skill that students must cultivate to effectively communicate and achieve academic success. As a kind of English output, writing can embody a learner's English ability [18]. Junior high school students often encounter difficulties in writing, leading to challenges in effectively expressing their thoughts and ideas. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to explore innovative and effective strategies to enhance students' writing skills.

One promising approach to improving students' writing abilities is through the use of teacher annotations. Teacher annotations involve providing students with feedback on their writing, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement [11]. The efficacy and importance of feedback for students' improvement of performance and learning is well recognized [16,18]. Effective teacher feedback can continuously enhance students' self-confidence, so that they can know their own ability, and avoid gradually losing their original interest in learning in the subsequent learning [13]. By providing students with personalized feedback and guidance on their writing assignments,

teachers can help students identify areas for improvement and develop their writing skills in a targeted manner.

In general, the findings of this study could have significant implications for educators and curriculum developers seeking to enhance writing instruction for junior high school students. Through the provision of detailed and constructive feedback, teachers can assist students in developing their writing skills.

1.2. Research objectives

The objective of this study is to examine the impact of teacher feedback on the writing abilities of junior high school students. By dividing participants into an experimental group receiving teacher feedback and a control group receiving no feedback, this study aims to determine whether teacher feedback can result in improvements in skills, such as language, content, discourse structure, and technical specifications, in student writing, and it aims to provide valuable insights into the role of teacher feedback in supporting students' writing skills development and promoting academic success. Through a comprehensive analysis of the impact of teacher feedback, educators can refine their instructional practices and better support students in their writing endeavors. This study addresses the following two primary questions:

(1) What are the differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of language, content, discourse structure, and technical specifications?

(2) Can teacher feedback contribute to the enhancement of writing ability among junior high school students during the writing process?

1.3. Framework of the paper

This paper consists of five sections. Section 1 serves as the introduction, providing a concise overview of the background, purpose, and framework of the paper. Section 2 undertakes a comprehensive review of pertinent studies. Section 3 is the introduction of the methodology, including the participants, the research instruments, and the research procedures. Section 4 engages in the results and discussion of the analysis, and the final section presents a summary of the entire text.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Teacher feedback

Foreign scholars use the term “feedback” as an umbrella term, such as Penny Ur [9] who believes that teachers' feedback consists of two parts: evaluation and correction. Through evaluation, learners can know whether their own performance is good or bad. Feedback used in educational contexts is generally regarded as crucial to improving knowledge and skill acquisition [1]. Narciss and Huth (2004) held that feedback is depicted as a significant factor in motivating learning.

Besides, Winne and Butler [2] claimed that “feedback is information with which a learner can confirm, add to, overwrite, tune, or restructure information in memory, whether that information is domain knowledge, meta-cognitive knowledge, beliefs about self and tasks, or cognitive tactics and strategies”. Furthermore, Wiseman and Hunt [4] define teacher feedback as a verbal or written assessment by the teacher to help students understand the current stage of their learning, and the more detailed the teacher's feedback is, the better the feedback is to the learners.

In China, scholars define “feedback” from the perspective of teaching evaluation. According to Li [16], classroom feedback refers to teachers’ behavioral performance in teaching activities in response to students’ “question and answer” process or real learning activities. From the perspective of teaching language, Tong [17] believes that classroom feedback is the teacher’s evaluation and summary of students’ classroom performance and answers.

Besides, He Jun [15] argues that teacher feedback is a series of verbal responses that teachers make in response to students’ answers in the foreign language classroom. In addition, teacher feedback is “the teacher’s assessment of the accuracy of the students’ language output, providing criteria for students’ self consistency, self-evaluation and self-improvement” [21].

To sum up, teacher feedback refers to the verbal or written evaluation, response and information provided by the teacher in response to students’ performances during teaching. In this paper, teacher feedback will be presented in written form and used in students’ writing performance, so as to explore the impact of teacher feedback on students’ writing skills.

2.2. Studies related to teacher feedback

In terms of teacher feedback, many foreign scholars have carried out a lot of research. Lyster [7] explores the role of negotiation in teacher-student interaction and argues that meaning negotiation is a series of conversational actions designed to promote mutual understanding. Smith and Higgins [10] conducted an analysis of the connection between student acquisition and teacher correcting in classroom context and found that when a teacher reduces the correction of student errors and raises the pitch of questions, then the rate at which students answer questions correctly also increases. Gass and Mackey [3] suggest that classroom interaction is important because learners receive correct information after answering questions through the interactive process. They also point out that teacher feedback plays a vital role in classroom interaction. Hattie & Timperley [5] clarify the concept of feedback and review the evidence relating to the impact of feedback on learning and achievement; this evidence suggests that although feedback is one of the main influences, the type of feedback and the way in which it is given may have different effects. Suggestions are also made on how feedback can be used to improve classroom outcomes. Vatney & Gamlem (2020) [12] explored the quality of teacher-student interaction and feedback in teaching English as a foreign language; results showed an interdependence between the quality of feedback and instructional dialogue, but difficulties in supporting internal student feedback and self-regulation.

Researchers have shown a keen interest in the study of teacher feedback in terms of published research findings in domestic English journals. In recent years, theoretical research on teacher feedback in China has focused on the problems of teacher feedback in the classroom and proposed corresponding measures. Zhang Boyong [19] explored the common problems of teachers’ feedback in terms of language, objectives, methods and content and proposed corresponding strategies for optimization. Founded on the three-dimensional analysis model of Fairclough, Gu Yuping [14] analyzed the intonation, form and function of two junior high school English teachers’ feedback, as well as the intertextuality and discourse order embodied in the feedback, and found that the influence of teachers’ feedback on students’ English language ability and thinking quality development should not be underestimated. Based on the basic

requirements for teacher evaluation in the new English curriculum reform, Zhao Yahan et al. [20] suggest that primary school English teachers should choose feedback strategies wisely, use feedback purposefully as well as learn feedback techniques.

In this paper, teacher feedback, including underlining, wavy lines, and comments, is used in junior high school students' writings to explore whether it is helpful to improve junior middle school students' writing skills. The results of this study may offer valuable insights into the importance of teacher feedback in shaping the writing capabilities of junior high school students.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

20 ninth-grade students from the Xuancheng No.6 Middle School were invited as participants in this study, which lasted for one month. In mid-June of 2026, they will be having the high school entrance examination, so their motivation to learn is expected to be high as they want to improve their English skills.

The participants were randomly divided into an experimental group (EG) and a control group (CG), with each group consisting of 5 male and 5 female students. At the beginning of the experiment, a pre-test was conducted in order to test that the English writing proficiency levels of the two groups were similar.

Additionally, both groups were from the same class, taught by the same English teacher, and used the same textbooks for their English classes. In other words, their English proficiency levels were approximately equal, which helps to minimize the influence of extraneous variables. The participants in EG received teacher feedback on their writing, whereas the students in CG did not receive any feedback.

3.2. Research instruments

The instruments in this study are made of pre-test and post-test, and questionnaires. Both research instruments are used to obtain research data and to explore the impact of the teacher feedback in junior high students' English writing. The data from the questionnaires were analyzed by SPSS 26.0.

3.2.1. Tests

At the beginning of the experiment, students from EG and CG were invited to have a pre-test. Following the completion of the experiment, both groups of students were given a post-test to assess their mastery of English writing skills. The content of both tests consisted of entirely new simulated composition questions for the senior high school entrance examination, ensuring the accuracy and the effectiveness of the experimental results. According to the latest scoring criteria for composition, the scores of students' writing were scored by two experienced English teachers, with a total score of 20 points. Additionally, in order to obtain objective scores and ensure the validity of the study, the writing scores were also assessed by the Iwrite system, which evaluates students' writing proficiency in four dimensions: language, content, discourse structure, and technical specifications, with a maximum score of 100 points for each dimension.

3.2.2. Questionnaire

In this study, the questionnaire is modified and designed according to Wang Wenyu and Yu Xi's research (2008) on students' writing attitude and skills. The questionnaires are given out before and after the test in the two groups. The purpose of questionnaire is to see students' attitudes towards writing, and to see whether teacher feedback affect the English writing skills of students or not. The questionnaire adapts Likert-type scale, 1 to 5 scores.

The questionnaire consists of 16 items which are divided into four parts. Item 1 to item 4 comprise the first part, in order to know the students' interest and their attitudes towards English writing and writing method. The higher the students' scores in the first part, the higher their attitude and interest in English writing. The following three parts are to examine students' writing skills: respectively, language, content, discourse structure, and technical specifications. The lower the students' scores in the latter three parts, the higher their mastery of English writing skills.

3.3. Research procedures

Before the experiment started, two groups of students were arranged to take a pre-test, which they had to complete within 30 minutes. After the test, they were required to fill out a pre-questionnaire to assess their attitudes towards writing and their mastery of writing skills.

During the one-month experiment, both groups of students attended two English classes per week. After each class, they were instructed to write an English composition, which they had to submit the following day. On the other hand, the EG received feedback and guidance from the teacher during the process of correcting their compositions, in order to help them improve their writing skills. CG, however, did not receive any feedback; their compositions were only evaluated by the teacher without providing specific feedback.

The post-test was scheduled after the last class, and the students were again given 30 minutes to complete a composition. After the test, both groups of students were required to fill out a post-questionnaire. A comparison was made between the data from the pre and post questionnaires to determine if there were any differences in the attitudes towards writing and mastery of writing skills between the two groups after the one-month experiment.

4. Results and Discussion

This part analyzes the experimental data and discusses the research results corresponding to the research questions. The data of questionnaires was analyzed by SPSS 26.0.

4.1. Analysis and discussion of the pre and post-test

4.1.1. Analysis of the pre-test in EG and CG

Table 1. Average scores of students' writing in the pre-test.

Group	Average score by teachers	Average score by Iwrite system				
		language	content	discourse structure	technical specifications	Average score
EG	10.1	68.3	76.6	73.9	84	75.7
CG	10.2	69.8	75.2	73.1	84.3	75.6

From the table above, it can be observed that in the pre-test of writing, students in EG obtained an average score of 10.1 from the teacher, while the CG's average score was 10.2. Based on the scoring from the Iwrite system, the EG had an average score of 75.7, while the control group had an average score of 75.6. At the same time, it is evident that there is little difference between the two groups in the four dimensions scores provided by the Iwrite system. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is almost no difference in the average scores of these two groups, indicating that both groups of experimental subjects have a similar level of English proficiency.

4.1.2. Analysis of the post-test in EG and CG

Table 2. Average scores of students' writing in the post-test.

Group	Average score by teachers	Average score by Iwrite system				
		language	content	discourse structure	technical specifications	Average score
EG	12.1	74.6	80	81.9	91.5	82
CG	10.6	72.8	77.8	74.3	85.1	77.5

From the Table 2 above, it can be seen that in the post-test of writing, the students in EG obtained an average score of 12.1 from the teacher, while the CG's average score was 10.6. Based on the scoring from the Iwrite system, the EG had an average score of 82, while the CG had an average score of 77.5. Therefore, it is evident that the writing scores of EG students post-test surpass those of CG students, regardless of whether the grades was provided by the teacher or the Iwrite system. This highlights the fact that EG students exhibit notable improvement in their writing scores on account of the teacher feedback.

4.1.3. Analysis of the pre-test and post-test in EG

Table 3. Average scores of EG's writing in the pre-test and post-test.

Group	Average score by teachers	Average score by Iwrite system				
		language	content	discourse structure	technical specifications	Average score
pre-test	10.1	68.3	76.6	73.9	84	75.7
post-test	12.1	74.6	80	81.9	91.5	82

Table 3 shows that in the pre-test the students in EG obtained an average score of 10.1 from the teacher, while in the post-test the average score was 12.1. Based on the scoring from the Iwrite system, the EG had an average score of 75.7 in the pre-test, while they had an average score of 82 in the post-test. At the same time, it is evident that the average scores in EG are higher than those in CG in the four dimension scores provided by the Iwrite system. According to the results, the students under teacher feedback had made remarkable improvements.

4.1.4. Analysis of the pre-test and post-test in CG

Table 4. Average scores of CG's writing in the pre-test and post-test.

Group	Average score by teachers	Average score by Iwrite system				
		language	content	discourse structure	technical specifications	Average score
pre-test	10.2	69.8	75.2	73.1	84.3	75.6
post-test	10.6	72.8	77.8	74.3	85.1	77.5

Table 4 shows that in the pre-test the students in CG obtained an average score of 10.2 from the teacher, while in the post-test the average score was 10.6. Based on the scoring from the Iwrite system, CG had an average score of 75.6 in the pre-test, while they had an average score of 77.5 in the post-test. As can be seen from the teachers' ratings, there is no significant difference in the scores achieved by CG students on the pre and post-tests. On the other hand, according to the Iwrite system, CG students scored 1.9 points higher on the post-test than on the pre-test. Specifically, CG students have improved mainly in terms of language and content, but there is not much difference in terms of language structure and technical specifications.

A reasonable explanation is that CG students had learned new vocabulary and sentence patterns in class, and used them in post-test compositions. However, without teacher feedback on their writings, CG students were less aware of what language structure and technical specifications they had on their writings, resulting in minimal changes in these two aspects. Overall, there was no significant difference between the scores that CG students obtained in the pre-test and post test.

Through analyzing the pre-test and post-test in EG, it can be concluded that after 1 month of experimental research, students in EG had made significant progress in English writing as a result of teacher feedback. Meanwhile, by analyzing the pre-test and post-test in CG, the result indicates that students in CG did not have made significant progress in English writing. The group that received teacher feedback showed better scores than the group that didn't receive any feedback. Overall, the results indicate significant differences and improvements between the two groups.

4.2. Analysis and discussion of the pre and post-questionnaire

4.2.1. Analysis and discussion of the pre-questionnaire in EG and CG

Table 5. Group statistics of the pre-questionnaire in EG and CG.

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pre-questionnaire	EC	10	52.40	3.098	.980
	CG	10	52.10	2.923	.924

Table 6. Independent Samples T-test for pre-questionnaire in EC and CG.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error difference	95% confidence Interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.409	.531	.223	18	.826	.300	1.347	-2.530	3.130
Equal variances not assumed			.223	17.939	.826	.300	1.347	-2.531	3.131

As is shown in Table 5, the mean scores of writing attitude and skills for two groups are 52.40 and 52.10. The mean score in EG is a little higher than that in CG. From

Table 6, it also can be found that the F value is 0.409, and the corresponding significance probability is 0.531, which is higher than 0.05.

Therefore, it can be concluded that at the beginning of the experiment, the students in EG and CG have a similar attitude and skills of English writing.

4.2.2. Analysis and discussion of the pre and post-questionnaire in EG

Table 7. Group statistics of pre and post-questionnaire in EG.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pre-questionnaire	52.40	10	3.098	.980
	post-questionnaire	41.00	10	2.828	.894

Table 8. Paired samples test of pre and post-questionnaire in EG.

		Paired Difference					t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pre- questionnaire post- questionnaire	11.400	1.647	.521	10.222	12.578	21.894	9	.000

As is shown in Table 7, the mean of questionnaire of the EG decreased from 52.40 to 41.00. The mean score of the post-questionnaire is much lower than that of pre-questionnaire, which means that the students in EG have a better mastery of English writing skills than before. At the same time, it can be indicated that from Table 8, the significance value in is 0.000, which is far below 0.05.

Therefore, according to the comparisons mean scores and significance values above, it can be concluded that feedback has a significant impact on the students' writing attitude and skills.

4.2.3. Analysis and discussion of the pre and post-questionnaire in CG

Table 9. Group statistics of pre and post-questionnaire in CG.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pre-questionnaire	52.10	10	2.923	.924
	post-questionnaire	50.90	10	3.542	1.120

Table 10. Paired samples test of pre and post-questionnaire in CG.

		Paired Difference					t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pre- questionnaire post- questionnaire	1.200	1.989	.629	-.223	2.623	1.908	9	.089

As is shown in Table 9, the mean scores of writing attitude and skills in the pre and post-questionnaire are 52.10 and 50.90. The mean score of the post-questionnaire is slightly lower than that of pre-questionnaire. From Table 10, it also can be indicated that the significance value is 0.089 ($t=1.908$), which is above 0.05.

Therefore, according to the comparisons of mean scores and significance values, it is clear that students in CG do not make significant improvements in their writing attitude and skills.

4.2.4. Analysis and discussion of the post-questionnaire in EC and CG

Table 11. Group statistics of the post-questionnaire in EG and CG.

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
post-questionnaire	EC	10	41.00	2.828	.894
	CG	10	50.90	3.542	1.120

Table 12. Independent Samples T-test for post-questionnaire in EC and CG.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error difference	95% confidence Interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.521	.480	-6.907	18	.000	-9.900	1.433	-12.911	-6.889
Equal variances not assumed			-6.907	17.160	.000	-9.900	1.433	-12.922	-6.878

In Table 11, it can be seen that the mean scores of writing attitude in the EG and the CG are 41.00 and 50.90. The results in Table 12 show that the significance value ($t=-6.907$, $p=0.000$) is far below 0.05, which shows that there are significant differences between EG and CG in the aspect of students' writing attitude and skills.

From the discussions above, it can be concluded that there are significant differences between the EG and CG in the aspect of writing attitude, language, content, discourse structure, and technical specifications.

5. Conclusions

This paper investigates the impact of teacher feedback on the writing skills of junior high school students. The results clearly demonstrate that teacher feedback plays a significant role in enhancing students' writing skills, including writing attitudes, language, content, discourse structure, and technical specifications. Compared with those who did not receive any feedback, students who received personalized feedback from their teachers exhibited significant improvements in both their writing attitude and skills.

The analysis of the pre-test and post-test results shows a significant improvement in the writing performance of students in EG, as indicated by both scores from teachers and Iwrite system. This suggests that teacher feedback positively influences students' writing skills. Conversely, students in CG exhibited minimal progress in their writing skills according to teacher ratings. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the scores from the Iwrite system reveal some improvement in the writing performance of CG, particularly in terms of language and content; however, students in CG did not show significant advancements in language structure and technical specifications. The

reasonable explanation is that students in CG acquired some vocabulary and sentence patterns during the learning process, but the absence of feedback from teachers hindered growth in their language structure and technical specifications. Consequently, this further shows the significance of teacher feedback in guiding students towards enhancing their writing performance.

Furthermore, the analysis of questionnaires reveals significant differences in attitudes and skills between students in EG and CG. Students who received teacher feedback exhibited a more positive attitude towards writing and showed improvement in their mastery of writing skills, highlighting the impact of teacher feedback on students' writing development.

In conclusion, the results of this study emphasize the importance of providing detailed and constructive feedback on students' writing assignments to facilitate their improvement in writing skills. This research provides valuable insights into the role of teacher feedback in shaping the writing abilities of junior high school students and underscores the significance of feedback in promoting success in writing.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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