

Feedback and revisions in developing writing skills in second language learners: A systematic review

Annisa¹, Gusnawaty²

Universitas Hasanuddin^{1,2}

¹Email: annisa22f@student.unhas.ac.id¹

²Email: _gusnawaty@unhas.ac.id

Abstract - Developing writing skills include many aspects. This paper presents an analysis of a systematic review of several studies from 2014 – 2022 with a total 7 studies. This systematic review is to show what teaching methods that learners use to enhance writing skills and how feedback and revision is beneficial and necessary to improve writing skills. There are various feedback and revision techniques to enhance writing skills, especially for second-language learners such as utilizing platforms like WhatsApp and Zoom until utilizing metacognitive strategies – in order for students can actively monitor and evaluate their writing progress.

Keywords: foreign language; learning processes; writing skills; second language learners; feedback and revision

1. Introduction

Having writing skills is very crucial nowadays because it is used in academic, professional, and personal contexts, etc. English, obviously is a language of business and education, and even seen as an official language and used in documentation (Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019). Developing writing skills requires consistent practice, however, feedback and revisions play a vital role in it. Feedback has been seen as a key element of students' growing control over writing skills in genre-oriented approaches, where sociocultural theories of scaffolded instruction and learning as social practice are of consequence (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). As a kind of communication, writing permits learners to disclose their ideas and feelings through a well-devised text (Morthy & Abdul Aziz, 2020; Marmita et al, 2023; Ghafar, 2023). However, in writing, people must write it in an informative wording, so that the message is conveyed well. For this reason, feedback and revision are needed to develop writing skills – since writing is the most challenging skills to be learnt (Jusun and Md Yunus, 2018; cf. Wajdi, 2018; Ghafar, 2023; Briones et al, 2023). Several researchers have conducted research on the effectiveness of peer-feedback in writing skills. Furthermore, in this study, it is essential to know –what teaching methods that Learners use to enhance writing skills and how feedback and revision is beneficial and necessary to improve writing skills.

There is a distinguish between the features and rules of a language (Saussure, 1959). However, nowadays, Chomsky (1965) reformulated Saussure's (1959) notions of language, was influential. Chomsky (1965) believed that all people born with the ability to learn a language – the way we are built with an ability to walk. Cognitive understandings of language, seen grammar as a system that can be processed by humans – monolingually, language is conceptualized, as a stable system that is independent whoever use it. As behaviourism was challenged in the 1960s, there was a shift towards looking at how learners communicate in the target language. Corder (1967) stated the importance of examining learners' errors and error analysis was seen as an important part of the learning process Researchers examined the systematic errors produced by learners, who seemed to move through various stages of learning as their proficiency developed (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

a. Cognitive Process theory of writing

Writing is seen as form of improvised learning process. In writing performance, there are three elements which are reflected in the three units of the model: the task environment, the writer's long-term memory, and the writing processes. The task environment included all of those things outside the writer's skin, starting with the rhetorical problem or assignment and eventually including the growing text itself. The second element is the writer's long-term memory in which the writer has stored knowledge; not only the topic, but the audience and of various writing plans. The last element contains writing processes themselves, specifically the basic processes of Planning, translating, and reviewing, which are under control of a Monitor (Flower & Hayes, 1981).

b. Sociocultural theory of Writing

Vygotsky (in Holmes & Wilson, 2017) introduced the sociocultural theory of writing, which highlights the essential role of motivation, affect, and influences in shaping the writing. By means, it explains human learning as social process and how human intelligence originates in society or culture. Additionally, socializing or interaction is crucial in developing the mental action or process to acquire knowledge. The concept of the Zone of proximal Development (ZPD) was also introduced by Vygotsky, which emphasizes the importance of support and social interaction for students' development (Vygotsky 1987). As a result, learners are requiring collaboration with both their peers and teachers, along with scaffolding, to enhance their learning.

c. Social cognitive theory and self-efficacy in writing

The social cognitive theory of writing examines how cognitive, behavioral, and personal, and environmental factors interact to influence motivation and behavior

(Bandura in Yicai & Xueai, 2021). This theory highlights three key elements: observational learning, imitation, and modeling. Additionally, self-efficacy pertains to a writer's belief in their ability to successfully complete a writing task and face challenges (Bandura, 2001). According to this theory, students develop their perceptions based on their past experiences, leading them to choose tasks where they feel confident (high self-efficacy) and avoid tasks where they feel less competent (low self-efficacy). The theory emphasizes four main components: self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reaction, and self-efficacy, which contribute to the generalization of goals. Therefore, in a writing classroom, students' cognitive abilities and self-confidence play a crucial role in their ability to engage with the instruction of writing.

d. Ecological Theory of Writing

Cooper (1986) introduced the ecological theory of writing, which emphasizes that the process of writing extends beyond the individual writer and their immediate context. Within a writing class, students interact with each other to create systems in which all students and their writing products both influence and are influenced by the writing of others in their environment. One key aspect of this theory is that the characteristics of any individual writer or piece of writing are shaped by and also shape the characteristics of all other writers and writings within the system. Ecological system exhibits a fundamental flexibility, where although structures and contents may be defined at a specific time, they continually evolve in real time. However, a limitation of this theory is that it changes over longer periods of time (Cooper, 2013).

Factors Influencing Second Language Writing Skill Acquisition

a. Writing at School

In developing reading and writing skills, schools play an important role for students. Hart (1995: 118) states that English as a Second Language (ESL) learners rarely utilize English in their everyday activities, and their learning and teaching environment is characterized by overcrowded classrooms and inadequate facilities. Teachers or tutors should play a crucial role in facilitating the acquisition of English, specifically in writing skills. For example, they can incorporate reading and writing activities that complement each other – allowing them apply their language skills in a holistic manner (Chokwe, 2013).

b. Writing as a Product of Reading

Jurecic (2006) contends that the teaching writing in high school or college is challenging – reading culture has been eroded by movies, television, videos and games. He argues that learners should practice a lot in writing as a tool for exploring ideas, formulating positions, discuss issues and paradoxes, arguing, and think creatively about the world. Additionally, Zamel (1992) said that writing provides students with an opportunity to enhance their reading skills through the act of writing itself. Further, reading and writing have many similarities – can be seen as an act of composing as well (Chokwe, 2013).

Numerous researchers have pointed out that tutor's or teacher's feedback of any type is more likely to benefit learners. Several studies have presented evidence that when learners make revisions to their papers following feedback – their level of accuracy improves, either in the short or long term (Chandler, 2003). Peer feedback can give learners an authentic audience, provide opportunities for the negotiation and elaboration of meaning. (Keh, 1990) said that peer feedback is superior to teacher feedback in that the former can be more at learner's own developmental level. Additionally, feedback allows learners to identify and correct errors – in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and even sentence structure. Being professional writing skills need to explore new techniques by virtue those feedback from teachers, mentors, or peers that provides guidance. Writing is an important verbal communication skill and has an essential role in second language learning process.

2. Method

In this study, the method adopted conducted to systematic review, based on five steps proposed by Khan et al (Khan et al., 2003). according to them, the five steps are; framing questions for a review, identifying relevant studies, assessing the quality of studies, summarizing the evidence and interpreting the findings and discussion. The data was collected using online materials from well-known website, for instance Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, JSTOR, Science Direct, SAGE, Springer, and other educational resources. Further, analyzing those selected articles and finally summarized based on the findings and discussion.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 selected studies from 2014-2022

No	Study	Number of participants	Research Design	Types of Intervention	Results
1	Using Online Peer Review as A Strategy to Improve Writing Skills (Ula and Umamah: 2022)	2 selected students	Qualitative Research	Online peer-review (WhatsApp and Zoom media)	The students shared their writing product in the form of a file to their results of the feedback by utilizing online resources or obtaining review related to grammar, writing, effectiveness, and diction errors.
2	Exploring Teacher Written Feedback and Student Revisions on ESL Students' Writing (Razali and Jupri: 2014)	28 students approximately 19 to 27 years old in Perlis, Malaysia	Mixed method, specifically convergence parallel design.	1) form focused feedback, 2) content-based feedback and 3) integrated feedback.	This study reveals that all types of teacher-written feedback encourage student revisions. In addition, findings also show that criticism type of feedback results in more successful revisions as it is more specific. The questionnaire attitude towards teacher written feedback.
3	Promoting peer feedback in Developing Students' English writing Ability in L2 Writing Class (Kuyyogsuy: 2019)	The participants were 21 third-year English majors in a university in the three southernmost border provinces of Thailand.	A mixed-methods research	-pretest and post-test -four types of feedback, teacher feedback, peer evaluation, self-assessment and cyber based revision, of which teacher feedback has been a tradition employed for many years.	The effect size was calculated at 1.97, which meant that the magnitude was large with substantial potential to improve students' L2 writing efficiency.
4	The effects of providing and receiving peer feedback on writing	185 students aged 16-19 years old, with 57%	Mixed method	A mixture of correlational, survey, interview, and experimental designs.	The number of revisions predicted growth in writing ability, and both the amount of received and provided feedback

	performance and secondary school students (Yong Wu and C. Schunn; 2020)	being female and 40% male			were associated with being more likely to make revisions. In addition, providing feedback was also directly related to growth in writing ability.
5.	The Effects of peer feedback on EFL Students' Writing Performance (Trang Huynh Nguyen: 2022)	84 English Students	Quantitative method	Experimental	The participants benefiting from peer feedback outperformed those who received conventional method although both groups had an overall higher mean score in the post-test. Most of them reached high scales of the five-point Likert scale which showed that the experimental students appreciated peer feedback provided.
6	Assessing the effect of giving and receiving written corrective feedback on improving L2 writing accuracy: does giving and receiving feedback have fair mutual benefit? (Afsar Rouhi and Minou Dibah and Hassan: 2020)	61 participants	A randomized controlled trial	Separated into a feedback giver group, a feedback receiver, and a control group.	Indicate the effectiveness of the feedback provided by peers. The participants in the feedback giver group outperformed the participants in the feedback receiver and the control groups in translation and picture description tests, underscoring the positive effect of giving feedback on learners themselves rather than learners who receive feedback.
7.	Performance, Feedback, and Revision: Metacognitive Approaches to Undergraduate Essay Writing (Riddel: 2015)	68 Undergraduate Students	Mixed method	Essay-writing	Metacognitive approach to essay writing can provide significant opportunities for students to improve their essay-writing skills.

From table above, it presented summary of past related studies in developing writing skills, in total 7 Studies. Several teaching methods were employed to enhance writing skills in those studies. Online peer-review, as identified in Ula and Umamah's study, two selected participants based on an academic writing course with an excellent score, utilized platforms like WhatsApp and Zoom for students to share their writing and receive feedback related to

grammar, writing effectiveness, and diction errors, (Ula, 2022). Teacher-written feedback, as explored by Razali and Jupri's study (2014), were involved approximately 28 ESL students aged 19 to 27 in Perlis, Malaysia. The study examined three types of teacher written feedback: form-focused, content-based, and integrated approaches – all of which encouraged student revisions, and the questionnaire also explored students' attitude towards teacher-written feedback (Razali & Jupri, 2014). Kuyyogsuy's study highlighted the effectiveness of teacher feedback, peer evaluation, self-assessment, and cyber-based revision in improving students' L2 writing efficiency. The study using mixed-methods, experimental design with a writing pretest and post-test and self-written reflections. The effect size was calculated at 1,97, which means a large magnitude with substantial potential to improve students' or learners' L2 wiring efficiency (Kuyyogsuy, 2019). Peer feedback, as examined by Yong Wu and C. Schunn, played a crucial role in fostering writing performance and encouraging revisions (Wu & Schunn, 2021). The study in Wu and Schunn (2020) involved 185 participants, using a mixed-method approach with correlational, survey, interview, and experimental designs.

Trang Huynh Nguyen's study indicated that peer feedback outperformed conventional methods, resulting in higher mean scores for students (Nguyen, 2022). Additionally, giving feedback as demonstrated by Afsar Rouhi, Minou Dibah, and Hassan, had positive effects on learners themselves, highlighting the mutual benefits of providing and receiving feedback (Rouhi et al., 2020). (Riddell, 2015) explored the use of metacognitive approaches in undergraduate essay writing. This study highlighted that employing a metacognitive approach can offer substantial opportunities for students to enhance their essay-writing skills. This approach involves developing students' awareness of their thought processes and strategies, allowing them to become more self-reflective and intentional in their writing. By utilizing metacognitive strategies, students can actively monitor and evaluate their writing progress. Additionally, feedback and revision play a vital role within this metacognitive framework, as they provide students with valuable input and opportunities for reflection, refinement, and growth in their writing.

The studies have provided an overview of various feedback and revisions techniques to enhance the writing skills, especially for second language learners. According to the sociocultural theory explained by Vygotsky (in Holmes & Wilson, 2017), the development of writing skills is influenced by society and culture. Furthermore, as a social process of human intelligence, second language learners must have motivation, and external influences in shaping the writing process. In addition, an equally important aspect in developing writing skills is cognitive understanding of a language; knowledge and comprehension of the linguistic elements, structures, and rules that govern the language being used for writing. Having a strong cognitive understanding allows learners to effectively express their ideas, thoughts, and use appropriate vocabulary and grammar.

4. Conclusion

Considering that English writing skills are important, this review article might provide new insights on how to improve writing abilities. It can be seen from several studies mentioned above, where there are some techniques which is beneficial for learners. In addition, particularly, in linguistics, writing skills involves understanding of linguistic elements – grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and the rules of writing applicable to the language. Thus, practicing writing skills means developing comprehension in using language (vocabulary) in the application of effective writing strategies. For further research, it would be better to explore other approaches in teaching writing or to develop existing techniques in different settings, for example conducting research on writing skills in learners with disabilities.

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