

The Impact of Feedback on First-Year University Students' Writing Development: A Study at A University in Hanoi, Vietnam



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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the impact of feedback on the writing development of first-year university students, employing a mixed-methods approach to provide a comprehensive analysis. The quantitative phase involved pre- and post-tests of 118 students, revealing significant improvements in coherence, clarity, grammar, and overall writing quality. The paired samples test results showed mean differences of -2.076 for coherence, -1.983 for clarity, -0.441 for grammar, and -2.119 for overall quality, all with p-values of 0.000, indicating substantial enhancements due to the feedback intervention.

The qualitative phase explored students' perceptions of feedback through surveys and semi-structured interviews with 20 students. Findings indicated that detailed, constructive, and timely feedback positively influenced students' motivation, engagement, and reduced writing anxiety. Conversely, vague or overly critical feedback had detrimental effects on these aspects.

This study provides valuable insights into the feedback mechanisms that best support first-year students' writing development, offering evidence-based recommendations for educators to enhance teaching strategies and improve academic outcomes.

KEY WORDS: Writing development, formative feedback, summative feedback, peer feedback, instructor feedback

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Importance of writing skills in academic success

Writing skills are fundamental to academic success for several reasons. First, writing is a primary means of communication in academia, enabling students to convey their understanding of subject matter, articulate arguments, and present research findings. Effective writing skills allow students to demonstrate critical thinking and comprehension, which are essential for excelling in academic assessments (Graham, 2019).

Moreover, writing is integral to many forms of academic work, including essays, research papers, and reports. These tasks require students to organize their thoughts coherently, support their arguments with evidence, and adhere to academic conventions. As such, proficiency in writing can significantly influence a student's grades and overall academic performance. According to a study by Kellogg and Raulerson (2021), students who exhibit strong writing skills tend to achieve higher academic results compared to their peers who struggle with writing.

In addition to influencing grades, writing skills are crucial for academic development. Writing assignments often involve critical analysis, synthesis of information, and reflection, all of which contribute to deeper learning and retention of knowledge (Flower & Hayes, 2020). By engaging in the writing process, students enhance their ability to think critically and develop their own viewpoints, which is essential for academic growth and intellectual maturity.

Furthermore, writing skills are not only important for academic success but also for future professional endeavours. Many professions require clear and effective written communication, whether for drafting reports, creating presentations, or writing emails. Employers highly value these skills, as they are indicative of an individual's ability to convey information clearly and persuasively (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2022). Therefore, developing strong writing skills during university education can provide students with a competitive advantage in the job market.

Additionally, writing is a tool for personal expression and intellectual engagement. Through writing, students can explore their ideas, reflect on their experiences, and engage with the broader academic community. This engagement can foster a sense of belonging and purpose, which is vital for motivation and persistence in academic pursuits (Bazerman, 2018).

In conclusion, writing skills are essential for academic success because they facilitate effective communication, enhance learning and critical thinking, and prepare students for professional success. Given their importance, it is crucial for educational institutions to prioritize the development of writing skills through targeted instruction and support (Graham & Perin, 2020).

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1.2. Challenges faced by first-year university students in writing

First-year university students often encounter several challenges when it comes to writing, which can hinder their academic performance and development. One of the primary challenges is the transition from high school to university-level writing. Many students find the expectations for academic writing in higher education to be significantly more demanding than those in secondary education (Krause, 2019). They must adapt to new styles of writing, increased complexity of assignments, and the need for critical analysis and synthesis of information.

Another significant challenge is a lack of proficiency in basic writing skills. Studies have shown that many first-year students struggle with grammar, punctuation, and proper sentence structure, which can affect the clarity and coherence of their writing (Perin, 2020). This deficiency often stems from inadequate preparation during their earlier education, where the focus may not have been sufficiently placed on developing strong writing foundations.

Time management is also a critical issue. First-year students frequently face difficulties balancing their academic workload with other responsibilities, such as part-time jobs or extracurricular activities. This can lead to insufficient time devoted to planning, drafting, and revising their writing assignments, resulting in lower-quality work (Bruffee, 2020).

Moreover, first-year students often experience anxiety and lack of confidence in their writing abilities. The pressure to perform well in a new and challenging academic environment can be overwhelming, leading to writer's block and procrastination (Harris, 2018). The fear of negative evaluation and unfamiliarity with the academic standards further exacerbate these issues, making it difficult for students to produce their best work.

Additionally, many students face challenges related to understanding and applying academic conventions, such as citation and referencing styles. Properly integrating sources and avoiding plagiarism require careful attention to detail and a thorough understanding of academic integrity, which many first-year students are still developing (Howard, Serviss, & Rodrigue, 2018).

In conclusion, first-year university students face a range of challenges in writing, including adapting to higher academic standards, improving basic writing skills, managing their time effectively, overcoming anxiety and lack of confidence, and mastering academic conventions. Addressing these challenges through targeted support and instruction can help students develop the necessary skills for academic success.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

First-year university students often struggle with the transition to higher academic writing standards, which significantly impacts their overall academic performance. Despite the critical role that effective writing plays in academic success, many students enter university with insufficient writing skills, including issues with grammar, punctuation, coherence, and clarity. Furthermore, these students frequently experience high levels of writing anxiety and lack confidence in their writing abilities, which can hinder their motivation and engagement in the learning process.

Feedback is widely recognized as a powerful tool for improving writing skills. However, there is a lack of clarity regarding which types of feedback (formative, summative, peer, or instructor) are most effective in enhancing different aspects of writing development for first-year students. Additionally, students' perceptions of the feedback they receive and how these perceptions influence their motivation, engagement, and writing anxiety are not well understood.

Addressing these issues is crucial for developing targeted interventions that can support first-year students in their writing development. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the impact of different types of feedback on the writing skills of first-year university students and to explore their perceptions of the feedback they receive. By doing so, the study seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations for improving writing instruction and feedback practices in higher education.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the impact of different types of feedback on the writing development of first-year university students. Specifically, the study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of various forms of feedback, including formative, summative, peer, and instructor feedback, in improving the writing skills of first-year students. By assessing these different feedback types, the research seeks to identify which strategies are most beneficial for enhancing key aspects of writing, such as clarity, coherence, grammar, and overall quality.

Additionally, the research aims to understand how first-year students perceive and react to the feedback they receive, exploring how these perceptions influence their motivation and engagement in the writing process. Another crucial aspect of the study is to examine the relationship between feedback and students' writing anxiety, with the goal of identifying feedback practices that can help reduce anxiety and foster a more positive writing experience.

Ultimately, the research seeks to provide practical recommendations for instructors on how to deliver constructive and impactful feedback that supports the writing development of first-year students. By addressing these objectives, the study aims to contribute to the improvement of writing instruction practices and enhance the academic success of first-year university students.

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1.5. Research Questions

In order to understand the impact of feedback on the writing development of first-year university students, it is essential to explore both the effectiveness of various feedback types and the students' perceptions of the feedback they receive. This dual focus will provide a comprehensive understanding of how feedback can be optimized to support students' academic growth and address the challenges they face in their writing development. With this in mind, the following research questions are proposed:

1.5.1. How do different types of feedback (formative, summative, peer, and instructor) affect the writing development of first-year university students in terms of clarity, coherence, grammar, and overall quality?

1.5.2. What are the perceptions of first-year university students regarding the feedback they receive, and how do these perceptions influence their motivation, engagement, and writing anxiety?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to offer valuable insights into the role of feedback in enhancing first-year students' writing skills and contributing to their overall academic success.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.6. Theories of Writing Development

The development of writing skills is a complex process influenced by various cognitive, social, and pedagogical factors. Several key theories provide a framework for understanding how writing skills are acquired and developed.

The Cognitive Process Theory of writing, proposed by Flower and Hayes (1981), posits that writing is a complex cognitive activity involving a series of processes: planning, translating, and reviewing. According to this theory, skilled writing requires the ability to manage these processes effectively. Planning involves generating ideas and organizing them into a coherent structure. Translating is the process of converting ideas into written text, while reviewing involves evaluating and revising the text to improve its quality. This theory highlights the iterative nature of writing and the importance of cognitive strategies in producing effective written communication (Flower & Hayes, 2020).

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural tools in the development of cognitive abilities, including writing skills. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning to write is a socially mediated process that occurs through interactions with more knowledgeable others, such as teachers and peers. This theory suggests that writing development is influenced by the social context in which it occurs, and that collaborative writing activities and feedback can play a significant role in enhancing writing skills (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf & Thorne, 2020).

Genre Theory focuses on the understanding and production of different types of texts, or genres, within specific social contexts. This theory argues that writing is not linguistic proficiency but also about understanding the conventions and purposes of different genres. According to Swales (1990), genres are socially recognized ways of using language that are shaped by the communicative goals and contexts in which they are used. Teaching writing through a genre-based approach can help students understand the structural and rhetorical features of various genres, thereby improving their ability to produce effective texts (Swales, 1990; Hyland, 2019).

The Process Writing Approach emphasizes the importance of the writing process itself, rather than just the final product. This approach encourages students to engage in multiple drafts and revisions, with a focus on developing their ideas and improving their writing through feedback and reflection. Graves (1983) advocated for this approach, suggesting that writing should be taught as a recursive process that involves prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. This method helps students to see writing as a developmental process and fosters their ability to self-regulate and improve their writing over time (Graves, 1983; Graham & Sandmel, 2019).

Self-Regulated Learning Theory, as described by Zimmerman (2000), emphasizes the role of metacognition, motivation, and behavior in learning. In the context of writing, self-regulation involves setting goals, monitoring progress, and employing strategies to improve writing skills. This theory suggests that students who are able to self-regulate their writing process are more likely to develop effective writing skills. Teaching students self-regulation strategies, such as goal setting and self-assessment, can enhance their ability to manage the writing process independently (Zimmerman, 2000; Harris, Graham, & Mason, 2020).

In conclusion, these key theories - Cognitive Process Theory, Sociocultural Theory, Genre Theory, Process Writing Approach, and Self-Regulated Learning Theory - provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of writing skills acquisition. Understanding these theories can inform effective teaching practices and support the development of students' writing abilities in higher education.

1.7. The Role of Feedback in Writing Development

Feedback plays a crucial role in addressing the various challenges that first-year university students face in their writing development. Effective feedback can guide students through the transition to higher academic writing standards, improve their basic writing skills, help them understand and apply academic conventions, reduce writing anxiety, enhance revision practices, expose them to diverse writing genres, and support better time management.

Transition to academic writing standards

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First-year students often struggle to meet the more rigorous academic writing standards expected at the university level. Feedback from instructors can help bridge this gap by providing clear, specific, and constructive guidance on how to structure their writing, develop arguments, and use evidence effectively. For instance, formative feedback that highlights both strengths and areas for improvement can help students understand what is expected and how to achieve it (Graham, 2019).

Improvement of basic writing skills

Many first-year students lack proficiency in basic writing skills, such as grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. Detailed feedback on these elements can help students identify their weaknesses and provide them with concrete examples of correct usage. Over time, this can lead to significant improvements in their writing mechanics, making their work clearer and more professional (Perin, 2020).

Understanding and applying academic conventions

Academic writing involves specific conventions, including proper citation and referencing. Feedback that includes examples of correct citation methods and explanations of why these conventions are important can help students learn to incorporate sources appropriately and avoid plagiarism. This type of feedback is essential for developing the skills necessary for academic integrity (Howard, Serviss, & Rodrigue, 2018).

Reducing writing anxiety

Writing anxiety is a common issue among first-year students, often stemming from a lack of confidence in their writing abilities. Positive and supportive feedback can help alleviate this anxiety by building students' confidence. Constructive feedback that focuses on improvement rather than merely pointing out flaws can encourage students to view writing as a process and reduce the fear of making mistakes (Harris, 2018).

Enhancing revision practices

Effective writing involves multiple drafts and revisions. Feedback that provides specific, actionable suggestions for improvement can guide students through the revision process. This helps them to see writing as iterative and encourages them to make meaningful changes to their work rather than superficial edits. Detailed feedback on drafts can significantly enhance the quality of final submissions (Graham, 2019).

Exposure to diverse writing genres

First-year students often have limited experience with different writing genres required in university. Feedback that includes examples and explanations of genre-specific conventions can help students adapt their writing to various academic contexts. This exposure is crucial for developing versatile writing skills that can be applied across different subjects and assignments (Flower & Hayes, 2020).

Supporting time management

Time management is a critical skill for academic success. Feedback that includes guidance on planning and organizing writing tasks can help students manage their time more effectively. For example, instructors can provide timelines for drafting, revising, and finalizing assignments, which can help students allocate sufficient time for each stage of the writing process (Bruffee, 2020).

1.8. Types of Feedback

Feedback is an essential component of the learning process, particularly in the context of writing development. It can be categorized into several types, each serving distinct purposes and contributing to students' learning in different ways. The main types of feedback include formative, summative, peer, and instructor feedback.

Formative feedback

Formative feedback is provided during the learning process and aims to improve students' writing skills by identifying strengths and areas for improvement before the final submission of an assignment. This type of feedback is often detailed and specific, focusing on various aspects of writing such as content, organization, grammar, and style. The goal of formative feedback is to guide students in their writing development and help them make incremental improvements (Brookhart, 2017). Research has shown that formative feedback is particularly effective in enhancing students' writing skills as it promotes continuous learning and revision (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Summative feedback

Summative feedback is provided after the completion of an assignment and is typically used to evaluate the overall quality of the work. This type of feedback often comes in the form of grades or scores, accompanied by brief comments that justify the evaluation. Summative feedback is used to assess students' performance against predefined criteria and learning outcomes (Sadler, 1989). While summative feedback can be useful for grading purposes, it is generally less effective in promoting ongoing learning and improvement because it is delivered at the end of the learning process (Black & Wiliam, 2018).

Peer feedback

Peer feedback involves students providing feedback to each other on their writing. This type of feedback can be beneficial as it encourages collaborative learning and allows students to engage in critical analysis of their peers' work. By reviewing others' writing, students can develop a better understanding of writing standards and improve their own skills (Topping, 2018). Peer feedback also

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promotes a sense of community and shared responsibility for learning. However, the effectiveness of peer feedback can vary depending on the students' ability to provide constructive and accurate feedback (Liu & Carless, 2006).

Instructor feedback

Instructor feedback is provided by the teacher or instructor and is often considered the most authoritative form of feedback. This type of feedback is valued for its credibility and the instructor's expertise in the subject matter. Instructor feedback can be formative or summative and typically includes detailed comments on various aspects of the writing, as well as suggestions for improvement (Nicol, 2010). Effective instructor feedback is timely, specific, and constructive, helping students understand their mistakes and learn how to correct them (Shute, 2008).

Comparison and integration of feedback types

Each type of feedback has its own strengths and limitations. Formative feedback is crucial for guiding students' learning and helping them improve continuously. Summative feedback provides a final evaluation of students' work, which is important for assessment purposes. Peer feedback fosters collaborative learning and critical thinking skills, while instructor feedback offers authoritative guidance and expertise.

To maximize the benefits of feedback, it is essential to integrate these different types. For example, incorporating peer feedback sessions during the drafting stage, followed by formative feedback from the instructor, can provide students with multiple perspectives and opportunities for improvement. Summative feedback can then be used to assess the final product and highlight areas for future development.

III. METHODOLOGY

1.9. Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to investigate the impact of different types of feedback on the writing development of first-year university students. The mixed-methods approach allows for the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The quantitative component involves pre- and post-tests to measure changes in students' writing skills, while the qualitative component consists of interviews and surveys to explore students' perceptions of the feedback they receive.

1.10. Participants

The participants in this study consist of 118 first-year university students enrolled in an introductory writing course at a mid-sized university. The participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they were representative of the typical first-year student population in terms of demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and academic background.

1.11. Data Collection Methods

3.3.1 Quantitative data collection

Pre- and Post-Tests

To assess the impact of feedback on writing development, all participants completed a writing task at the beginning (pre-test) and end (post-test) of the semester. The writing tasks were designed to be comparable in terms of topic, length, and complexity to ensure consistency. The pre- and post-test essays were evaluated using a standardized rubric that measured key aspects of writing, including clarity, coherence, grammar, and overall quality.

3.3.2 Qualitative Data Collection

At the end of the semester, participants completed a survey designed to gather information about their perceptions of the feedback they received. The survey included both closed-ended questions (using Likert scales) and open-ended questions to capture a wide range of responses.

A subset of 20 students, selected to represent a diversity of experiences and perspectives, participated in semi-structured interviews. The interviews explored students' experiences with different types of feedback (formative, summative, peer, and instructor), their perceptions of the effectiveness of this feedback, and its impact on their motivation and writing anxiety.

1.12. Data Analysis

3.4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The pre- and post-test scores were analyzed using paired t-tests to determine whether there were significant improvements in writing skills over the semester. Additionally, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated to provide an overview of the students' writing performance. The effect sizes were also calculated to measure the magnitude of the changes observed.

3.4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

The survey data were analyzed using both descriptive statistics for the closed-ended questions and thematic analysis for the open-ended responses. Thematic analysis was also employed to analyze the interview transcripts. This involved coding the data to identify common themes and patterns related to students' perceptions of feedback and its impact on their writing development.

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IV. RESULTS

1.13. Quantitative results

Comparison of pre- and post-intervention writing samples

The paired samples test results (Table 1) reveal a significant improvement in the writing skills of first-year university students following the feedback intervention. The analysis showed a mean difference of -1.661 between the pre-test and post-test scores, indicating that, on average, students scored higher on the post-test. This improvement is statistically significant, as evidenced by the large negative t-value of -20.536 and a p-value of 0.000, which is well below the common significance threshold of 0.05. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference, ranging from -1.821 to -1.501, further confirms this finding, as it does not include zero and consistently suggests a positive impact of the feedback on writing skills. Additionally, the standard deviation of 0.879 suggests moderate variability in the differences between pre-test and post-test scores, while the standard error mean of 0.081 indicates a precise estimate of the mean difference. Overall, these results demonstrate that the feedback provided to first-year students significantly enhanced their writing abilities, underscoring the effectiveness of feedback as a tool for academic improvement.

Table 1: Paired Samples Test (pre-test and post-test)

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-test Post-test	-1.661	.879	.081	-1.821	-1.501	-20.536	117	.000

Analysis of the effectiveness of different feedback types

The paired samples test was conducted to measure the improvements in various aspects of writing skills among first-year university students following the feedback intervention. The results provide robust evidence of significant improvements among research participants following the feedback intervention (Table 2).

For coherence, the mean difference between pre-test and post-test scores was -2.076, indicating a substantial enhancement in students' ability to organize their ideas coherently. This improvement is statistically significant, with a t-value of -17.501 and a p-value of 0.000, confirming that the feedback had a meaningful impact on coherence. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference, ranging from -2.311 to -1.841, further supports this finding, as it does not include zero and suggests consistent improvement across the sample.

In terms of clarity, the results show a mean difference of -1.983 between pre-test and post-test scores, again indicating significant improvement. The t-value of -20.761 and a p-value of 0.000 underscore the statistical significance of this change. The confidence interval, spanning from -2.172 to -1.794, reinforces the reliability of this improvement in clarity.

Regarding grammar, the analysis revealed a smaller but still significant mean difference of -0.441. Although the change is less pronounced compared to coherence and clarity, it remains statistically significant with a t-value of -3.651 and a p-value of 0.000. The 95% confidence interval, from -0.680 to -0.202, indicates that the feedback intervention also positively affected students' grammatical accuracy.

Finally, for overall writing quality, the results showed a mean difference of -2.119 between pre-test and post-test scores. This substantial improvement is statistically significant, as evidenced by a t-value of -20.303 and a p-value of 0.000. The confidence interval, ranging from -2.325 to -1.912, further supports the conclusion that the feedback significantly enhanced the overall quality of students' writing.

In summary, the feedback intervention had a significant positive impact on multiple dimensions of writing skills, including coherence, clarity, grammar, and overall quality. These findings highlight the effectiveness of feedback in improving first-year university students' writing abilities, demonstrating that targeted and constructive feedback can lead to meaningful academic improvements.

Table 2: Effectiveness of different feedback types

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Coherence pre-test Coherence post-test	-2.076	1.289	.119	-2.311	-1.841	-17.50	117	.000

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Pair 2	Clarity pre-test	-1.983	1.038	.096	-2.172	-1.794	-20.76	117	.000
	Clarity post-test								
Pair 3	Grammar pre-test	-.441	1.311	.121	-.680	-.202	-3.65	117	.000
	Grammar post-test								
Pair 4	Overall quality pre-test	-2.119	1.134	.104	-2.325	-1.912	-20.30	117	.000
	Overall quality post-test								

1.14. Qualitative results

The qualitative phase of the research aimed to explore the perceptions of first-year university students regarding the feedback they receive and to understand how these perceptions influence their motivation, engagement, and writing anxiety. Data were collected through surveys and semi-structured interviews with a subset of 20 students, representing a diversity of experiences and perspectives.

Perceptions of feedback

Many students reported that the feedback they received was constructive and helpful in improving their writing skills. They appreciated detailed comments that provided specific guidance on how to enhance various aspects of their writing, such as coherence, clarity, and grammar. Students particularly valued formative feedback that allowed them to make revisions before final submission, as it gave them a clear direction for improvement. One student noted, "The feedback was very detailed and helped me understand where I went wrong and how I could fix it."

Some students, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the feedback they received. They felt that the feedback was sometimes too vague or general, making it difficult to understand what specific changes were needed. Additionally, a few students mentioned that the feedback was not timely, which limited their ability to use it effectively in their revisions. As one student remarked, "Sometimes the feedback was just too general, like 'needs more detail,' but didn't say where or how. That was frustrating."

Influence on motivation

Positive and detailed feedback significantly boosted students' motivation to improve their writing. When students felt that the feedback was personalized and actionable, they were more inclined to engage deeply with the revision process. This sense of progress and accomplishment fostered a greater commitment to developing their writing skills. A student shared, "Getting specific feedback made me want to work harder and see how much I could improve."

Conversely, when feedback was perceived as vague or overly critical without constructive elements, it negatively affected students' motivation. Some students reported feeling discouraged and less motivated to put effort into their writing. This was particularly evident when the feedback seemed to highlight shortcomings without offering clear paths for improvement. One student commented, "When the feedback was just pointing out mistakes without telling me how to fix them, I felt demotivated."

Influence on engagement

Students who received formative feedback reported higher levels of engagement with their writing assignments. They felt more invested in the writing process, viewing it as an opportunity to learn and grow rather than just a task to complete. Regular, constructive feedback kept them engaged throughout the drafting and revising stages, encouraging a more iterative approach to writing. A student explained, "Knowing that I would get feedback and could improve my draft kept me more engaged with the assignment."

On the other hand, students who found the feedback unhelpful or received it too late in the process felt less engaged. They were more likely to view writing assignments as obligatory tasks rather than opportunities for development. This disengagement was often linked to a lack of clear direction and support from the feedback. A student expressed, "When I didn't get useful feedback, I just did the minimum to get it done. It didn't feel worth the effort."

Influence on writing anxiety

Constructive feedback played a crucial role in reducing writing anxiety for many students. Detailed and supportive comments helped demystify the writing process, making it less intimidating. Knowing what was expected and how to improve gave students confidence, reducing their fear of failure. One student remarked, "The feedback helped me understand what I needed to do, which made me less anxious about my writing."

In contrast, vague or overly critical feedback increased writing anxiety among some students. When feedback focused primarily on what was wrong without providing constructive guidance, students felt more anxious and uncertain about their abilities. This heightened anxiety often led to procrastination and avoidance behaviors. A student noted, "When the feedback was just criticism without help, I felt more anxious and worried about my writing."

Conclusion

The qualitative findings reveal that the perceptions of feedback among first-year university students significantly influence their motivation, engagement, and writing anxiety. Constructive, detailed, and timely feedback fosters positive perceptions, enhancing motivation and engagement while reducing anxiety. Conversely, vague or overly critical feedback can have detrimental effects,

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decreasing motivation and engagement and increasing anxiety. These insights underscore the importance of providing clear, supportive, and actionable feedback to support students' writing development effectively.

V. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The study aimed to investigate the impact of feedback on the writing development of first-year university students by employing both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The combined results provide a comprehensive understanding of how different types of feedback influence students' writing skills, perceptions, motivation, engagement, and anxiety.

1.15. Quantitative findings

The quantitative analysis revealed significant improvements in various aspects of writing skills following the feedback intervention. The paired samples test results indicated substantial enhancements in coherence, clarity, grammar, and overall writing quality. Specifically, the mean differences between pretest and posttest scores for coherence (-2.076), clarity (-1.983), grammar (-0.441), and overall quality (-2.119) were all statistically significant, with p-values of 0.000. These findings demonstrate that the feedback provided had a meaningful and positive impact on the writing development of first-year students.

1.16. Qualitative findings

The qualitative phase of the research explored students' perceptions of the feedback they received and its influence on their motivation, engagement, and writing anxiety. The findings showed that students generally valued detailed, constructive, and timely feedback, which they found helpful in improving their writing skills. Positive feedback perceptions were associated with increased motivation and engagement, as well as reduced writing anxiety. Conversely, vague or overly critical feedback led to decreased motivation, reduced engagement, and heightened anxiety.

1.17. Integration of quantitative and qualitative results

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provides a nuanced understanding of the role of feedback in writing development. The significant improvements observed in the quantitative analysis are supported by the qualitative insights, which highlight the importance of the nature and quality of feedback in influencing students' learning experiences. Constructive and specific feedback not only enhances writing skills but also positively impacts students' motivation and reduces their anxiety, leading to a more engaged and confident approach to writing.

The study underscores the critical role of feedback in the academic development of first-year university students. Effective feedback practices, characterized by detailed, actionable, and supportive comments, are essential for fostering significant improvements in writing skills. Additionally, understanding students' perceptions of feedback can inform more effective teaching strategies that enhance motivation, engagement, and reduce anxiety.

1.18. Implications for teaching practice

The findings of this study have important implications for teaching practice. Instructors should strive to provide formative feedback that is specific, timely, and constructive to support students' writing development effectively. Encouraging peer feedback and incorporating multiple feedback stages can also enhance the learning process by providing students with diverse perspectives and continuous opportunities for improvement.

1.19. Recommendations for future research

Future research could expand on this study by exploring the long-term effects of feedback on writing development and examining the impact of feedback across different academic disciplines. Additionally, investigating the role of digital feedback tools and technologies in enhancing writing skills could provide valuable insights into innovative feedback practices.

In conclusion, the combined quantitative and qualitative results of this study highlight the significant positive impact of feedback on the writing development of first-year university students. Effective feedback practices are crucial for enhancing writing skills, boosting motivation, increasing engagement, and reducing writing anxiety, ultimately contributing to students' overall academic success.

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