Anxiety and Writing Performance in Online vs. Face-to-Face Feedback Condition

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the complex interplay between feedback, anxiety, and writing performance in second language learning, with the focus on written corrective feedback. While debates persist on the efficacy of feedback, existing literature underscores its positive impact on language focus and subsequent writing tasks. Unique to this research is its exploration of less commonly taught languages such as Japanese as well as its investigation of the differential effects of online versus face-to-face feedback delivery on emotional responses and learning outcomes. Grounded in social cognitive theory, the study examines how students' beliefs and feedback sources interact with anxiety to shape writing proficiency and explores the intricate relationship between feedback, anxiety, and writing performance in different corrective feedback conditions (i.e., online versus face-to-face teacher and peer feedback). To this end, 84 JFL learners wrote Japanese essays and answerer to an anxiety questionnaire. Then, the learners' anxiety levels and Japanese writing performance under conditions of online and face-to-face teacher and peer feedback were investigated. Results revealed a significant connection between anxiety reduction and improved writing scores, with peer feedback exhibiting a stronger correlation. Moreover, students experienced lower anxiety levels with peers compared to teachers regardless of the delivery mode. Remarkably, teacher feedback significantly enhanced composition quality, outweighing the influence of anxiety. This emphasizes the pivotal role of student attitudes in shaping learning experiences. The study also highlights the importance of tailored pedagogical strategies in optimizing language learning outcomes by considering students' emotional states and preferences when designing effective feedback mechanisms.

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1. Introduction

In the realm of second language learning, the intricate interplay between feedback, anxiety, and writing performance holds a prominent position. As a cornerstone of language education, feedback plays a pivotal role in guiding students toward writing improvement. However, its effectiveness has been a subject of extensive debate within the academic community, yielding varying perspectives (Truscott, 1996, 2004, 2009). Amidst this discourse, a multitude of studies have underlined the positive influence of written corrective feedback on students' language use and subsequent writing tasks (Ashwell, 2000; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 2006; Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

While a substantial body of research in second language writing has predominantly centered on English as a second or foreign language, less commonly taught languages such as Japanese have received relatively scant attention concerning written corrective feedback and its impact on writing performance. This research gap has led to inquiries into the efficacy of feedback provision in languages with limited dedicated teaching resources.

The mode of feedback delivery has emerged as another pivotal aspect garnering attention. Whether conveyed online or face-to-face, the method of feedback delivery has the potential to shape students' reactions and emotional experiences. While some researchers emphasize the capacity of online environments to offer detachment and anonymity, potentially alleviating the anxiety associated with direct face-to-face interactions (Alibali et al., 2001), contrasting perspectives highlight the potential for students to experience feelings of insecurity in online learning contexts (Saadé et al., 2017).

The prevalence of anxiety in language learning settings and its substantial impact on individual learning outcomes underscore the importance of coming to grips with its role in language acquisition and especially how feedback sources—whether teachers or peers—influence students' emotional states and, by extension, their writing outcomes. While anxiety is a common thread among second language learners, its manifestations and implications span various components of language learning, extending beyond writing to influence broader aspects of language acquisition.

Given anxiety's pivotal role in shaping language learning experiences and particularly writing outcomes, exploring its relationship with feedback becomes paramount. To elucidate this intricate dynamic, this study draws upon social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) as its theoretical framework. Social cognitive theory asserts that individuals' self-efficacy, beliefs, and perceptions shape their behavior and learning achievements. Within this context, students' perceptions of feedback sources and their beliefs exert an influence on their responses to feedback, subsequently impacting their writing performance. In response, this study seeks to illuminate the complex interplay between online versus face-to-face teacher and peer feedback and its effects on students' writing performance, all within the conceptual framework of social cognitive theory.

By delving into the aforementioned questions, this study aims to enhance our comprehension of how feedback and anxiety synergize to mold writing outcomes, particularly in the context of Japanese as a foreign language (JFL). The findings will hold implications for designing targeted interventions that enhance students'

writing achievement while alleviating anxiety in language learning settings. As it unravels the intricacies of feedback, anxiety, and writing performance, this study will contribute to a nuanced understanding of effective language teaching practices.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Role of Feedback in Writing Performance

Feedback serves as a catalyst for students' writing development, providing guidance for improvement. While there has been a debate concerning the effectiveness of written corrective feedback (Truscott, 1996, 2004, 2009), several studies have demonstrated that written feedback benefits students as they focus on language and can be incorporated into subsequent writing tasks (Ashwell, 2000; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 2006; Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Furthermore, studies have indicated that students react positively to feedback that addresses all aspects of writing (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012) and value teacher feedback (Leki, 1999; Zhang, 1995). However, they prefer to receive comprehensive feedback that addresses almost all errors, whether spelling, grammar, and punctuation or ideas generation, content, and organization because they fear that any errors may impact their writing performance (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Lee, 2005; Leki, 1999). Moreover, although direct teacher feedback has an effect on students' writing and requires less effort on the part of students, some research suggests that the effect of indirect feedback lies in its potential to make students more actively engaged in their learning (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

When it comes to second language writing and the impact of corrective feedback on essay

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performance, studies have been extensively conducted in the context of English as a second or foreign language. However, fewer studies have been conducted on written corrective feedback and writing performance in less commonly taught languages such as Japanese as a foreign language (Ahmadi & Shekarabi, 2012, 2014; Kawamoto, 2017; Takahashi, 2022). For example, Ahmadi and Shekarabi (2012) explored the effect of teacher corrective feedback on performance in writing descriptive essays by JFL learners. The results demonstrated that feedback enhances the learners' writing performance, particularly in the use of Japanese prepositions. In another study, Ahmadi and Shekarabi (2014) investigated the impact of direct and indirect teacher feedback (e.g., underlining, coding, and translation) on JFL expository essay writing concerning prepositions, adjectives, and noun phrases, with students divided into feedback and non-feedback groups. The results revealed that compared to the non-feedback group, the feedback group exhibited higher accuracy in the use of these three linguistic categories. Notably, the study found that only direct feedback enhanced the linguistic aspects of students' essays. Kawamoto (2017) examined whether written corrective feedback (direct vs. indirect) increases the use of cohesive devices in lower-level JFL learners' writing. The results indicated that feedback had no statistically significant effect on the use of cohesive devices. However, significant increases were found within groups for referential and conjunctive cohesive devices. Moreover, more than 90% of participants in the direct feedback group successfully revised their drafts based on the feedback, suggesting the effectiveness of feedback in aiding them in error correction related to cohesive devices. Regarding JFL

learners' engagement, Takahashi (2022) investigated the roles of individual factors (e.g., proficiency level, beliefs, motivation, and attitudes towards feedback) and contextual factors (e.g., feedback types, availability of external sources, and interpersonal relationships) on learners' engagement. The results revealed that individual and contextual factors led to different levels of learner engagement with feedback. Student motivation, attitudes, and writing task types influenced whether students explored underlying language rules when revising their essays. The study also highlighted that inappropriate feedback provision could potentially harm vulnerable students such as struggling learners.

2.2 Online vs. Face-to-Face Feedback

The mode of feedback delivery, whether online or face-to-face, can influence students' responses and emotional experiences. Alibali et al. (2001) suggested that online environments may provide a sense of detachment and anonymity, potentially alleviating some of the anxiety associated with face-to-face interactions. Ostic et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of considering the different social dynamics and personal interactions between these two environments as these factors contribute to students' anxiety levels and, subsequently, their writing performance.

Some studies have investigated the association between feedback from teachers or peers and student anxiety in face-to-face versus online settings. Loreto and McDonough (2013) examined the relationship between teacher feedback and intermediate high school EFL students in face-to-face condition. Their results showed a significant negative correlation between students' perceptions of feedback and anxiety. The findings also indicated that students who have more positive perceptions of teacher feedback felt less anxious.

Abdullah et al. (2018) examined the influence of electonic peer and teacher feedback on ESL writing performance as well as writing anxiety levels. In their study, 28 masters students received feedback from both the teacher and their classmates simultaneously through a blog and live discussion. Results showed that students exhibited favorable perspectives toward engaging in group work and demonstrated a strong inclination to persist in collaborative efforts with their peers. Further, they manifested a reduction in anxiety levels related to writing subsequent to receiving electronic feedback from both peers and the teacher. The researchers concluded that the use of a blog fosters a heightened sense of comfort and self-assurance among participants, highlighting the efficacy of this feedback delivery approach in alleviating anxiety. However, since feedback was provided by both the teacher and peers, the respective impact of teacher and peer feedback could not be teased out.

2.3 Anxiety in Second Language Learning

Introducing the concept of anxiety in the context of language learning, Horwitz et al. (1986) defined anxiety as "a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system" (p. 125). This construct is notably prevalent in language learning and manifests consistently over time in a range of language learning situations (Horwitz, 2001; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Moreover, foreign language anxiety represents a distinct type of situation-specific anxiety unique to language learning and independent of other forms of anxiety (Horwitz et

al., 1986). Its significance in second language acquisition (SLA) is underscored by Kimura (2008), who highlights its substantial impact on individual differences in L2 learning success (or failure), thus making it a focal point in the field of L2 acquisition (Baralt & Gurzynski-Weiss, 2011).

Within this landscape, writing emerges as a trigger for anxiety among students. Daly and Miller (1975) explain writing anxiety as a situation-specific individual difference that reflects an individual's inclination to approach or avoid writing-related situations coupled with their perceptions of evaluation. Additionally, Hassan (2001) characterizes writing anxiety as "a general avoidance of writing behavior and of situations thought to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing" (p. 4).

Undoubtedly, anxiety significantly influences the language learning process, resulting in detrimental effects on learning outcomes. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) suggest that shifting the focus of anxious students towards positive experiences in the second language could mitigate the adverse effects of language anxiety. This concept extends to career choices as individuals with high levels of anxiety tend to select majors, courses, and careers with minimal writing requirements (Daly & Wilson, 1983). Further observations highlight how highly anxious learners write shorter essays, have lower self-confidence (Hassan, 2001), achieve lower scores (Zhang, 2011), and spend less time planning and organizing their writing (Selfe, 1984). In essence, anxiety becomes a shared experience among second language learners, potentially impacting their writing performance. Liu and Ni (2015) emphasize how anxiety places

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a psychological burden on students, hampering fluency and coherence in their writing assignments. This study corroborates the negative influence of writing anxiety on foreign language writing, diminishing learners' confidence and ability to express themselves effectively.

Yet the effects of anxiety are not limited to individual components of writing but extend to broader aspects of language learning. Pourakbari et al. (2021) note a strong negative correlation between anxiety and writing accuracy, suggesting that employing effective strategies can transform debilitating anxiety into facilitative anxiety and subsequently enhancing writing performance. Kirmizi and Kirmizi (2015) stress how writing anxiety demotivates students, fosters negative attitudes towards writing, and lowers self-efficacy. Notably, students experience less anxiety when informed that there will be no evaluation, thus emphasizing the interplay between assessment and anxiety. These observations underline the potential role of teachers in managing student anxiety during writing tests, channeling it to improve performance (Negari & Rezaabadi, 2012).

As regards English writing anxiety, Leki (1999) posits that despite its private nature, writing induces a type of writer's block in EFL learners. Similarly, Cheng et al. (1999) establish a moderate correlation between second language classroom anxiety and second language writing anxiety, suggesting related yet distinct constructs. Meanwhile, Lumakangi and Miralles (2023) delved into the relationship between second language writing anxiety, teacher communication behavior, and self-efficacy and show a moderate level of L2 writing anxiety among students coupled with a high level of teacher communication and research self-efficacy.

Finally, the intricate interplay between anxiety and writing performance merits exploration if we are to devise effective instructional strategies. Drawing from social cognitive theory, this study investigates the correlation between JFL learners' anxiety and writing performance in the context of online versus face-to-face teacher and peer feedback. Understanding how anxiety affects writing outcomes will inform tailored approaches to enhancing language learning experiences and outcomes.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework underpinning this study draws from social cognitive theory, which posits that individuals' self-efficacy and beliefs impact their behavior and learning outcomes (Bandura, 1986). Within this framework, students' perceptions of feedback sources as well as their beliefs influence their response to feedback, thus shaping their writing performance. According to Bandura, individuals' self-efficacy and beliefs affect their motivation, effort, and persistence in learning tasks. Students who possess higher self-efficacy tend to approach writing tasks with greater confidence and are more likely to engage in productive revision strategies.

In addition, the theory also emphasizes the role of observational learning, suggesting that students' perceptions of the competence and authority of feedback providers influence the value they ascribe to their feedback. In this context, students may perceive teacher feedback as more authoritative due to their perceived expertise and experience, thus influencing their inclination to integrate teachers' suggestions into their revisions. By incorporating social cognitive theory, this study aims to illuminate the intricate

interactions between feedback sources (i.e., online versus face-to-face teacher and peer feedback) and students' writing performance. Understanding these dynamics is key to designing effective interventions that will enhance students' writing abilities and reduce anxiety.

4. Research Questions

The literature review delved into the significance of feedback, anxiety, and writing performance in second language learning. It underscored the crucial role of comprehending students' perceptions of feedback sources, the implications of anxiety for writing, and the intricate interplay between online and face-to-face learning environments. However, despite limited evidence regarding the specific nature of the relationship between teacher feedback and student anxiety, it remains plausible that teacher feedback may cause demotivation or anxiety in students about their writing (Krashen, 1984; Truscott, 1996; Zamel, 1985). Furthermore, while numerous studies have explored students' perceptions of feedback in university settings and have often focused on English essay writing in the context of English as a second or foreign language, on which students' language proficiency is relatively proficient, less commonly taught languages such as Japanese present distinct challenges. In these cases, students tend to struggle to act upon feedback from teachers and engage in effective communication, which may be attributed to factors such as motivation, emotional disposition, and language proficiency (Dowden et al., 2013; Lee, 2008). Thus alternative strategies such as seeking feedback from peers may significantly impact students' attitudes. Additionally, it is noteworthy that teacher feedback is frequently

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perceived as more "trustworthy," "experienced," and "professional" in comparison to peer feedback, leading students to give greater prominence to teacher feedback during essay revision (Yang et al., 2006). This underscores the significance of comprehending students' perceptions and valuation of various feedback sources. Thus there is value in investigating the comparative impact of teacher and peer feedback in the context of Japanese writing. Such findings will establish the groundwork for addressing the research questions outlined above and contribute to our comprehension of how feedback and anxiety jointly shape writing outcomes. Consequently, this study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1. Is there a correlation between levels of anxiety experienced by JFL learners and their writing performance after receiving online and face-to-face teacher as well as peer feedback?

RQ2. Do online versus face-to-face teacher and peer feedback interventions influence the anxiety levels of JFL learners?

RQ3. Do online and face-to-face teacher and peer feedback interventions influence the writing performance of JFL learners?

5. Methodology

5.1 Participants

Eighty-four advanced learners of Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) participated in the study (18 of them male). Their average age was 23.5 years. They were randomly assigned to four feedback groups: 1) Online Teacher Feedback (OTF), 2) Online Peer Feedback (OPF), 3) Face-to-Face Teacher Feedback (FTF), and 4) Face-to-Face Peer Feedback (FPF). In the OTF group, students received feedback from their teacher through online communication. In the OPF group, students received feedback from their

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peers online. In the FTF group, students interacted with their teacher in person to receive feedback. In the FPF group, students engaged in face-to-face feedback sessions with their peers. Each group consisted of 21 participants.

To assess the essays authored by the students, two raters were selected and trained to employ predetermined rubrics. To ascertain consistency in scoring between the raters, a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated, resulting in a relatively high value of $r = .85$. This underscores the reliability and consistency of the rubric used for evaluating the essays.

5.2 Instruments

To assess students' writing anxiety, a questionnaire related to second language writing developed by Zhang (2011) was used. The questionnaire was administered at the end of the experiment to explore the relationship between JFL students' writing anxiety and its impact on their Japanese writing performance. The questionnaire was adapted to align with the objectives of the study and was translated into Persian. A five-point Likert scale offered response options ranging from "strongly agree" (1) to "strongly disagree" (5) along with an "uncertain" (3) midpoint option. The adapted questionnaire demonstrated strong internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .89 (Appendix A).

To evaluate the Japanese essays produced by participants in this study, a four-point scale rubric was derived from the scoring scales introduced by Tanaka & Abe (2014). This rubric comprises five aspects, encompassing readers' perspectives (originality and creativity), content (main idea and supporting sentences), mood (essay's alignment with the topic), organization and coherence (structure of the essay and consistency

both within and between essays), and language (grammar, accuracy in Japanese language use, and mechanics) (Appendix B).

The writing proficiency of participants underwent evaluation through an expository prewriting test conducted prior to the main experiment. Using a Japanese writing rubric, two independent raters evaluated these essays holistically. To examine the normality and homogeneity of variance within the prewriting sample, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and a Levene test were employed. The outcome indicated that the scores for the prewriting exhibited normal distribution, and homogeneity of variance was established ($p > .05$). Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1. The outcome of an ANOVA disclosed that participants demonstrated homogeneity in their writing abilities ($F (3, 80) = 3.44, p > .05$).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the pre-test

Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)
OTF (Online Teacher Feedback)	21	11.41	3.13
OPF (Online Peer Feedback)	21	11.22	3.56
FTF (Face-to-Face Teacher Feedback)	21	11.02	2.88
FPF (Face-to-Face Peer Feedback)	21	10.82	2.94

5.3 Procedure

Data collection followed a specific procedure. At the onset of the experiment, each of the four groups of participants was tasked with composing three Japanese expository essays. The initial essay served as the pre-test. Subsequent to completing the first essay, students in the Online Teacher Feedback (OTF) and Online Peer Feedback (OPF) groups received corrective feedback online from their respective teacher and peers. Meanwhile, students in the Face-to-Face Teacher Feedback (FTF) and Face-to-Face Peer Feedback (FPF) groups received in-person corrective feedback from their teacher and peers, respectively.

Students across all groups were instructed to review their initial essay, consider the feedback they had received, and identify ways to enhance their essay's quality. This process was repeated three times as the impact of the feedback might not manifest after a single interaction.

Consequently, each student experienced three rounds of corrective feedback and revised their essays based on all feedback. The third essay was considered a post-test. Upon conclusion of the experiment, students were administered a writing anxiety questionnaire.

6. Results

Research Question 1 pertains to whether a correlation exists between anxiety in JFL learners and their writing performance across different types of feedback: online and face-to-face teacher feedback versus peer feedback. A Spearman's rank-order correlation was employed to examine the relationship between students' anxiety and their writing performance in the online and face-to-face teacher feedback groups. Regarding the online feedback groups, a moderately negative correlation was observed between students' anxiety and their writing performance ($r_s(19) = -.396, p < .05$) in the OTF group. Additionally, there was a large negative correlation between

students' anxiety and their writing performance (r_s(19) = -.520, p < .01) in the OPF group. This suggests that as anxiety decreases, writing performance improves. Notably, the significant correlation within the OPF group was greater than that within the OTF group. This indicates that students experience reduced anxiety and produce better compositions when receiving feedback from their classmates online as compared to when they receive feedback from their teacher online.

As regards the face-to-face feedback groups, a Spearman's rank-order correlation revealed a moderately negative correlation between students' anxiety and writing performance (r_s(19) = -.298, p < .05) in the FTF group. Furthermore, a large negative correlation was found between students' anxiety and writing performance (r_s (19) = -.486, p < .01) in the FPF group. This also suggests that students experience lower anxiety when receiving feedback from their peers in a face-to-face setting as compared to receiving feedback from their teacher face-to-face.

Research Question 2 explored the influence of online versus face-to-face teacher and peer feedback on anxiety levels in JFL learners. A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to assess whether differences existed in students' anxiety level between teacher and peer feedback groups in the context of online feedback. Students' anxiety was found to be statistically significantly higher in the teacher feedback group (Mdn = 66) compared to the peer feedback group (Mdn = 54) (U = 116, z = -2.68, p < .001, η^2 = .16) in online feedback condition. This suggests that students experience lower anxiety levels when receiving

online feedback from their peers than from their teacher.

Another Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to determine potential differences in students' anxiety between teacher and peer feedback groups in face-to-face feedback condition. Students' anxiety was also found to be statistically significantly higher in the teacher feedback group (Mdn = 81) than in the peer feedback group (Mdn = 69) (U = 119, z = -2.52, p < .001, η^2 = .15). This similarly indicates that students' anxiety levels are lower when they receive face-to-face feedback from their peers as compared to receiving feedback from their teacher.

Research Question 3 delved into whether the writing performance of JFL learners was influenced by online versus face-to-face teacher and peer feedback. Descriptive statistics pertaining to online versus face-to-face teacher feedback and peer feedback groups are presented in Table 2. As mentioned above, each online and face-to-face peer feedback group as well as the teacher feedback group consisted of 21 participants, making a total of 42 participants in each category. A two-way ANOVA was conducted to ascertain whether differences existed in students' writing performance between peer feedback and teacher feedback groups. Results showed that the writing performance scores for each group exhibited normal distribution, which was confirmed by a Shapiro-Wilk's test (p > .05), and displayed homogeneity of variance, as determined by Levene's test for equality of variance (p > .05).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for online versus face-to-face teacher feedback and peer feedback groups

Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)

OTF (Online Teacher Feedback)	21	14.33	2.62
OPF (Online Peer Feedback)	21	12.52	3.23
FTF (Face-to-Face Teacher Feedback)	21	13.64	2.56
FPF (Face-to-Face Peer Feedback)	21	11.58	3.04

Table 2 reveals that writing performance was more positively impacted in the online teacher feedback group compared to the peer feedback group given that there was a statistically significant difference between the writing performance of the peer feedback and teacher feedback groups ($F(3, 80) = 1.98$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .61$). This indicates that students attained better scores when receiving feedback from their teacher than from their classmates in online condition.

Concerning the face-to-face peer feedback and teacher feedback groups, the ANOVA results shown in Table 2 also illustrate that writing performance was more favorably influenced in the teacher feedback group compared to the peer feedback group in face-to-face condition. Additionally, a statistically significant difference was identified between the writing performance of the face-to-face peer feedback and teacher feedback groups ($F(3, 80) = 2.23$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .70$). This suggests that students achieved higher scores when obtaining feedback from their teacher as opposed to their peers in the face-to-face context.

Furthermore, the above findings indicate that students in online teacher feedback condition ($M = 14.33$) received higher essay scores than those in face-to-face teacher feedback condition ($M = 13.64$). However, there was no statistically significant difference between the online and face-to-face teacher feedback groups.

7. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a significant relationship between anxiety and students' writing performance. As anxiety decreases, composition scores show improvement. This relationship is particularly strong within the peer feedback groups and moderate within the teacher feedback groups. In simpler terms, when students receive feedback from their peers, anxiety has a more pronounced impact on their writing performance compared to when they receive feedback from their teacher.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that students experience lower levels of anxiety when receiving online feedback from their peers as opposed to online feedback from their teacher. Similarly, students exhibit lower anxiety levels when receiving face-to-face feedback from peers compared to feedback from their teacher. This pattern persists in both online and face-to-face scenarios. In essence, students' anxiety is reduced when interacting with classmates regardless of learning mode. A plausible explanation for students experiencing less anxiety when receiving feedback from their peers may be that the learner's emotional state significantly influences the effectiveness of feedback reception (Dowden et al., 2013; Loreto & McDonough, 2013). This reduction in anxiety when receiving feedback from peers may well stem from students feeling more at ease with their peers compared to their teacher. Moreover, the observation that students feel less anxious when interacting with their classmates in both online

and face-to-face settings underscores the pivotal role played by students' emotions and moods in the learning process, surpassing the impact of the learning environment itself.

Additionally, anxiety tends to be higher in face-to-face interactions compared to online interactions. This contrasts with studies (e.g., Saadé et al., 2017) that suggest that online learning may induce anxiety among students. The findings of the current study show that students appear more anxious when receiving feedback from their teacher in face-to-face settings but less anxious when receiving teacher feedback online.

However, preceding studies have emphasized that online learning may lead to anxiety and nervousness, potentially affecting students' academic performance. Regardless of learning mode, the crucial aspect remains students' comfort level. Consequently, even in an online learning environment, creating a conducive and comfortable atmosphere should assist students in managing anxiety and engaging more effectively with the writing process. In addition, when compared to feedback from peers, students produce superior essays and achieve higher composition scores when receiving feedback from teachers. This improvement in essay quality was observed both in online and face-to-face feedback from teachers. Consequently, students may derive greater benefits from teacher feedback than from feedback provided by their peers.

Put differently, when assessing the interaction of anxiety and feedback, it is the teacher's feedback that primarily drives enhanced writing performance, outweighing the impact of students' anxiety levels. Moreover, in the case of peer feedback, it is the alleviation of anxiety that primarily contributes to improved composition

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quality, more so in fact than the feedback content itself. This observation is consistent with the findings of RQ1 in this study, where the correlation between students' anxiety and teacher feedback strength was moderate whereas the correlation between students' anxiety and peer feedback was more pronounced. In other words, when teachers provide feedback to students, the anxiety level has a moderate influence on the quality of compositions, whereas teacher comments directly contribute to enhancing the quality of the composition. This may be attributed to the positive impact of teacher feedback, as indicated in previous studies (e.g., Yang et al., 2006; Shekarabi, 2022), resulting from students' positive perceptions and confidence in the feedback received from teachers compared to that received from peers. This may be due to student's perceiving teacher feedback as more dependable, seasoned, and authoritative in comparison to feedback from their peers. Consequently, students may be inclined to integrate a greater amount of teacher feedback into their revisions. Given that students' attitudes play an important role in the learning process (Dowden et al., 2013; Shekarabi & Tajfirooz, 2022), it is likely that Iranian students will give more weight to teachers' opinions compared to those of their peers. Thus while anxiety remains a significant factor in student achievement, students' beliefs and attitudes seem to play a more critical role in enhancing the learning process.

The phenomenon of students experiencing heightened levels of anxiety during face-to-face interactions, even when receiving feedback from peers, can be attributed to various factors. In face-to-face interactions, students often experience more immediate pressure due to the direct nature of the interaction. Concerns about peer

perception leading to heightened anxiety may play a role. Additionally, receiving feedback directly from peers may involve social dynamics and personal interactions that are absent in an online setting (Alibali et al., 2001; Ostic et al., 2021). On the other hand, the online environment may provide a level of anonymity and detachment that could alleviate some of the anxiety associated with direct face-to-face interaction. Students may feel more comfortable receiving feedback without the pressure of immediate reactions or judgments (Hiltz & Turoff, 1993; Walther & Burgoon, 1992). However, the digital medium may create a sense of distance and thus reduce the perceived stakes and emotional intensity of the feedback process (Joinson, 2001). Overall, the findings of this study highlight the complex interplay between feedback, communication medium, and students' emotional experiences and aligns with the understanding that the mode of feedback delivery can have a significant impact on students' psychological reactions and the subsequent quality of their work.

In light of the findings, it can be concluded that enhancing students' writing quality involves not only creating a comfortable learning environment but also understanding their beliefs and trust —or lack thereof— in their teachers and peers. While some studies acknowledge the effective role of peer feedback in essay writing and suggest online feedback's potential effectiveness over face-to-face feedback, it is crucial to look below the surface. In particular, attention should be paid to students' beliefs and attitudes. While the above results are influenced by various factors such as feedback quality and quantity, peer relationships, student personality, preferences, and context, the learning environment should be taken into account if we are to maximize the benefits of feedback under different conditions. Further research is therefore needed to explore other factors potentially influencing the effects of both online and face-to-face teacher and peer feedback on the quality of students' writing.

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Appendix A

Writing Anxiety Questionnaire (Revised version)

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

1. I am not nervous when I write in Japanese.

2. My heart races when I compose Japanese writings within a limited time.

3. When I write Japanese compositions that I know will be assessed, I experience a sense of anxiety and unease.

4. Frequently, I opt to express my thoughts in the Japanese language.

5. Typically, I make every effort to steer clear of composing Japanese texts.

6. Frequently, my thoughts become blank when I begin working on a Japanese composition.

7. I am not concerned that my Japanese compositions are significantly inferior to those of others.

8. I experience sweating when I write Japanese compositions with a time constraint.

9. When it comes to having my Japanese composition assessed, I'm anxious about receiving an exceptionally low grade.

10. I make every effort to evade situations that require me to write in Japanese.

11. My ideas become disorganized when I compose Japanese writings with a time limit.

12. I would refrain from using Japanese to write a composition unless there were no other options.

13. I frequently experience panic when I write Japanese compositions with a time constraint.

14. I worry that my Japanese composition might face criticism from other students if they were to read it.

15. I become paralyzed when asked suddenly to write Japanese compositions.

16. I would make every effort to find an excuse to avoid writing Japanese compositions if asked.

17. I have no concerns about how other people might perceive my Japanese compositions.

18. I actively look for every available opportunity to write Japanese compositions beyond the classroom.

19. I often experience a sensation of my entire body becoming rigid and tense when I engage in writing Japanese compositions.

20. I fear that my Japanese composition might be selected as a sample for class discussion.

21. I have no fear that my Japanese compositions would be rated as extremely poor.

Appendix B

Writing Rubric (Summarized, Translated, & Revised version)

4 = Good, 3 = Adequate, 2 = Developing, 1 = Inadequate

Readers

-Is the text characterized by creativity, originality, and novelty? (Originality & Creativity)

Content

-Is the text includes main idea and supporting reasoning? (Main idea & Supporting sentences)

Mood

-Does the mood of the text align with the topic? (e.g., narrative, descriptive, etc.)

Organization & Coherence

-Is the text well-structured? (Structure of the essay)

-Is the text consistent both within and between the paragraphs?? (Consistency)

Language (Japanese language)

-Is the text written in correct Japanese grammar? (prepositions, verbs, etc.) (Grammar)

-Does the text address the accuracy of Japanese language usage? (Accuracy)

-Mechanics