

Effects of Applying Multi-feedback Model in Chinese Senior High School English Teaching on Students' Writing Competence

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[**Abstract**] This paper reviews the research on the influence of the multi-feedback model in English writing teaching in Chinese senior high schools. The study finds: 1) The multi-feedback model integrates the advantages of teacher feedback, peer feedback, and self-feedback in teaching; 2) The multi-feedback model not only makes the writing learning process more active, enhancing students' writing enthusiasm, but also helps them form a deeper cognition in the writing process, thus promoting their writing strategy and aesthetic ability; 3) The multi-feedback model contributes to improving the accuracy, fluency, and complexity of students' English writing, allowing students' English writing skills to be comprehensively enhanced.

[**Key words**] multi-feedback model; Chinese senior high school English; writing teaching; influence research

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“Multi-feedback” refers to the inclusion of feedback from multiple subjects. American scholar Patton (1986) first proposed the concept of “diversified subject participation”. He believed that all parties needing to use evaluation information should be invited to participate in the evaluation process.

In addition, domestic literature also defines the concept of “multi-feedback”. The “General High School English Curriculum Standards” (2017 edition, revised in 2022) provides a clear explanation of “multi-feedback”: when students complete a learning task, they should communicate with each other and conduct peer evaluation. Teaching evaluation is an important tool to motivate teachers and students to improve teaching quality. In addition to emphasizing teacher feedback, it should highlight students as the primary source of feedback, promoting multidimensional interactive feedback. Therefore, the term “multi-feedback” in this study refers to the combination of feedback from teachers, peers, and students themselves.

1 Related research on the multi-feedback model in English writing at home and abroad

First, taking teacher's feedback as the guide, this paper explores the content, method, and effect of teacher feedback from three aspects. Ferris' (2005) early research shows that in the process of essay correction, teachers often correct the errors found in students' written expressions. Later, their work focuses more on content, structure, ideas, etc. Through direct or indirect, written or oral, affirmative or negative feedback, students will not repeat the same mistakes in their future essays. The research results show that the effectiveness of teacher feedback mainly depends on two factors: the appropriateness of the feedback given by the teacher and the degree to which the students value the feedback. Research has proven that students are more willing to receive clear and specific feedback from teachers in English writing; at the same time, they are more willing to communicate with teachers immediately to avoid any misunderstandings.

Chinese scholars have conducted research on the effectiveness of teacher feedback. Zhu Xinhua (2011) from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University emphasized that teacher feedback should not only focus on content specificity and external form, but also recognize that it is a continuous process involving both positive and negative factors. In

order to provide effective feedback to students, teachers must first embody the concept of “feedback promoting learning”, and meet the following criteria: concentration, interaction, timeliness, goal orientation, and depersonalization. Li Yong and Deng Hongxia (2012) propose that when students receive feedback from teachers and undertake rewriting exercises for 16 weeks, significant improvement will be seen in the use of advanced vocabulary and lexical complexity in their writing. Wang Ying and Liu Zhenqian (2012) believe that students should attach importance to teacher feedback as it can help them improve their English writing level. These researchers have also found that receiving feedback and making immediate revisions can have a significant impact on improving students’ language accuracy and writing scores. This proves that teachers are the main source of feedback and play a key role in English writing teaching.

In English writing, whether teacher feedback is effective remains a controversial issue. Regarding this issue, foreign scholars have different opinions. Cohen & Cavalcanti (1990) discovered that teachers often provide a large number of critical and negative comments to students. The two scholars criticize educators for giving ambiguous, arbitrary, unclear, contradictory, and even hard-to-understand feedback when evaluating students’ writing processes, which hinders students from making effective revisions. Leki (1990) pointed out that students dislike teachers guiding their thinking, which causes them to lose interest in teacher feedback and be unwilling to understand its meaning. Shepard (1992) also confirmed the ineffectiveness of teacher feedback.

Secondly, peer feedback was first applied in classrooms for students learning English as their first language. Later, it was regarded as a valuable complement to teacher feedback in English writing teaching, especially when teaching English as a second language to learners. The aim is to improve students’ English writing skills and achievements.

In recent years, with the implementation of a process-oriented approach in English writing, peer feedback has become a widely adopted feedback model in many English writing classrooms.

Some domestic researchers believe that peer feedback is very useful for evaluating writing. Ye Luqing (1999) points out that students participating in peer feedback activities have improved their audience awareness and made them more active. By reading others’ articles, students can reduce the chances of making mistakes during the writing process. Wang Ying (2006) believes that peer feedback can help students improve their self-correction awareness. A survey conducted by Zhou Yishu (2013) shows that peer feedback plays a significant role in improving student composition content and languages, reducing anxiety, and cultivating students’ interest in writing. Gao Ge (2010) believes that although students’ writing abilities did not improve significantly at the beginning, they demonstrated better performance in their later writing through adjustment, rewriting, and internalizing peer feedback.

However, some researchers are concerned about peer feedback. Yu Jie (2004) concluded from her study that peer feedback is not effective and does not provide students with constructive advice on their writing. Bai Liru (2013) has conducted a series of empirical studies on the professional curriculum of English to explore the effectiveness and feasibility of the peer feedback model in Chinese college English writing teaching. The results show that; while the peer feedback model may be theoretically feasible, it is not entirely feasible or effective in English writing teaching practice. The “peer feedback + teacher feedback” model can help English major students acquire more English knowledge and improve their writing abilities.

Regarding the effects of peer feedback, researchers abroad have drawn different conclusions. On the one hand, many examples support the positive effects of peer feedback. Mendoza & Johnson (1994) believe that students play a positive role in peer feedback and are able to revise their writing based on the feedback. Tsui & Ng (2000), after studying 27 high school students in Hong Kong, found that peer feedback is beneficial in helping students identify their strengths and weaknesses in English writing and improving their writing autonomy. On the impact of peer feedback and teacher feedback, many scholars have conducted some comparative studies (Paulus, 1999; Yang et al., 2006; Zhao Huahui, 2010). For example, Yang et al. (2006) compared 79 college students

and found that, compared to teacher feedback focusing on surface corrections, peer feedback was more likely to lead to meaningful revisions. Through meaning negotiation in peer feedback, students' mutual understanding is enhanced, which helps them avoid misunderstanding text content in the revision process.

On the other hand, some researchers point out that many English major students worry about the effects of peer feedback. First, students overemphasize surface errors, making it difficult for them to evaluate the reliability of their peers' feedback (Leki, 1990). Second, when students receive feedback, they may feel displeased. They may harbor hostility, criticism, or unfriendliness towards their classmates' writing. Therefore, peer feedback cannot provide meaningful commentary on each other's writing or be integrated into students' final writing pieces (Nelson & Murphy, 1992).

Self-feedback is an internal feedback model that refers to the process whereby individuals assess their own behavioral performance (Liu Miao, 2010). This means that the sender of the feedback is also the recipient of the feedback, with feedback information coming from the individual's internal cognitive processing. From this description, the concept of self-feedback is usually interpreted as an internal cognitive process. Therefore, in this study, self-feedback is defined as the feedback sender, who is also the recipient of the feedback information, extracts valuable feedback information through cognitive processing.

In China, research on self-feedback is mostly control trials to teacher and peer feedback. For example, Zhao Minghui (2017) compared two feedback methods to explore the impact of different forms of feedback on the level of English writing of senior high school students. Han Cuina (2011) compared the advantages and disadvantages of teacher feedback, peer feedback, and self-feedback, and studied the factors affecting non-English major students' second-language writing. Li Xuelian (2017) examined the differences between self-feedback and peer feedback on three levels in students' English oral learning: process, self-regulation, and task learning. Some researchers have also proposed that learners, relying too much on social feedback, often overlook the essential information provided by self-feedback. Results show that their ability to correct errors is difficult to improve (Li Le, 2013).

Meanwhile, some foreign scholars have explained the concept of self-feedback from the perspective of metacognition. For instance, Lee (2009) proposes that when learners receive metacognitive feedback, they are more likely to adopt knowledge comprehension strategies and self-regulation strategies in subsequent tasks.

However, foreign scholars have more often investigated the target of self-feedback from different perspectives. For example, Shih & Alexander (2000) view self-feedback as a process of obtaining feedback through comparing past performance. In this study, different feedback strategies are examined in terms of their effects on students' self-efficacy and cognitive ability.

Finally, the multiple-feedback model, as a combination of various feedback models, has evolved progressively with the continuous development of writing feedback theories and experiments. Researchers have gradually found that relying on a single subject or form of feedback model (Lo & Hyland, 2007) has its shortcomings. Considering the interactive nature of feedback and that different forms of feedback can intertwine, the combination of multiple feedback models is adopted.

In recent years, domestic and international researchers have discussed various aspects of multi-feedback, integrating teacher feedback with other feedback models. From the domestic research perspective, Zhu Min et al. (2018) discussed the reform of English writing teaching and feedback. They employed modern educational science and technology to show ten characteristics in the "multi-feedback mechanism". Huang Jing and Zhang Wenxia (2014) provided a comprehensive analysis framework to assess the effect of multi-feedback on revisions by second-language learners in task-related writing quality. Their research aimed to enhance the feedback-based teaching and assessment capabilities for Chinese second-language writing.

Additionally, Cao Yu (2017) proposed an integrated English writing teaching model based on multiple feedback patterns, combining an online automatic scoring system, teacher feedback, and peer feedback at the 2nd

International Education Conference. He pointed out that such a multi-feedback model enables learners to engage in genuine writing revision processes, greatly reducing their writing anxiety and inspiring their enthusiasm for English writing. Huang Jing and He Huaqing (2018) explored the effect of the multi-feedback model on students' English writing performance. A conclusion was drawn through textual analysis of the revision scores of 25 students in task-related writing quality. Based on the result analysis, the integration of teacher feedback, peer feedback, and self-feedback is discussed.

From the perspective of foreign academia, Carless et al. (2010) pointed out that feedback is not unidirectional or linear development but a sequential and progressive process. The multi-feedback model is a multidimensional interactive development process where teachers provide top-down feedback, while learners carry out inside-out self-feedback. At the same time, learners evaluate each other's works. Tsui & Ng (2000) found significant differences between teacher feedback and peer feedback in writing characteristics, content, structure, grammar, vocabulary, and writing practices after researching their results. Allwright (2003) pointed out that, on the one hand, peer feedback can reduce teachers' workload and break through rigid institutional restrictions in some schools. On the other hand, considering the limitations of students' language and cognitive levels, teachers can adopt selective feedback strategies or organically combine peer feedback with teacher feedback. This classroom teaching method is ideal for high school students. Simultaneously, it creates an excellent classroom environment for fully leveraging individual strengths, reducing feedback anxiety, and enhancing feedback motivation. It also helps students understand writing skills from the perspectives of both authors and readers. Many teachers hope to benefit from the feedback they provide to their students. The combination of teacher feedback and peer feedback effectively creates a positive learning atmosphere of teacher-student interaction and mutual promotion.

2 Theoretical basis for the research on English writing feedback

In the previous section, we discussed cooperative learning and constructivist theories, both of which emphasize a student-centered approach. In English writing feedback, students learn by collaborating with peers and teachers. Teachers act as organizers, guides, helpers, and promoters during the feedback, stimulating students' interest and motivation to learn.

Cooperative learning originated in the early 1970s in the United States and was influenced by constructivism. Cooperative learning emphasizes communication and collaboration among group members, and solving problems independently in learning activities within the group.

Scholars from various countries have put forward unique perspectives on the specific connotations of cooperative learning.

American professor Slavin (1996) proposed that cooperative learning is a process that invites students to participate in group learning activities. By the end of the process, all group members' performance is improved, and they even gain recognition and approval from their peers in the cooperative learning.

Canadian educational psychologist Winzer explained the definition of cooperation from a psychological perspective. He believes that cooperative learning should be structured and coordinated by teachers, grouping students into teams according to specific principles. Cooperation among team members contributes to individual development.

A prominent Chinese scholar and head of the Shandong Institute of Education Sciences, Wang Tan (2004), believes that: "Cooperative learning is a set of teaching strategies designed to encourage students to collaborate and achieve shared learning goals. Students should be rewarded based on the group's overall performance." In summary, high school English teachers should carry out cooperative English writing activities more frequently in class.

Peer feedback on writing issues is a form of cooperative learning as well. Peers read each other's writing, provide feedback, and make revisions to complete the necessary writing tasks. Teachers provide training on the significance of cooperative learning for students in advance, informing them of important matters to pay attention to.

The guiding role of teachers in the process of collaboration should not be overlooked; they should actively participate in the process and provide timely and effective guidance. Storch (2005) believes that peer feedback enables learners to obtain more useful information and materials in group work and promotes their development.

Constructivism was first introduced by Swiss psychologist Piaget, and its core idea is that learners construct knowledge and understand reality based on their own experiences. The two main principles of constructivism are individual self-construction and social construction of all knowledge. Constructivism contends that learning is an active construction process, and the formation of internal mental representations is based on students' prior knowledge, not just knowledge transmission. Students are not passive recipients of knowledge but active constructors. The construction process includes both the transformation and reorganization of prior experiences and the creation of meaning from new information. In short, constructivism believes that learning should be an active, contextual, cooperative, and creative process.

English writing instruction should be an active construction process rather than a passive process of receiving and absorbing information. Traditional single feedback models focus mostly on teacher feedback, neglecting that students are the primary subjects of writing and their cognitive processes. This oversight makes it difficult to foster students' critical thinking abilities in writing and hinders the goal of improving writing strategies. The multi-feedback model fully embodies student-centered thinking, with teachers playing the roles of organizers, guides, helpers, and promoters. It focuses on the learning process and enhances students' learning initiative through teacher feedback, peer feedback, and self-feedback.

3 Shortcomings in the research on English writing feedback in China

From the current research on English writing feedback in China, it can be observed that most researchers focus on the effectiveness of specific feedback models or conduct comparative studies among these three feedback models. Research on the multi-feedback model is relatively scarce, which has led to the following issues: (1) the main objects of the study are university students, which are relatively narrow; (2) there is less research on senior high school students' English writing feedback; (3) there are even fewer studies on the application of the multi-feedback model in high school English writing instruction.

Therefore, it is necessary to research the multi-feedback model that combines teacher feedback, peer feedback, and self-feedback in senior high school English writing teaching. This is one of the aims and significance of this study.

4 Conclusion

We focused on the study of the impact of the multi-feedback model in senior high school English writing teaching. However, some important issues in the current research still need further exploration and resolution. We found that in senior high school English writing teaching, the research on the multi-feedback model tends to focus on the improvement of students' English writing, students' attitudes towards the multi-feedback model, and the impact of its efficacy on students with different English proficiency levels. However, little attention has been given to the different effects it has on students with different writing levels. Considering that the current research on Chinese senior high school students is not specific and in-depth enough, this study will focus on the effects of the multi-feedback model on mobilizing students' emotional motivation and its combination with modern information technology in future work, aiming to develop senior high school students' English writing abilities.

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