


Chapter 9

Learner Engagement With Feedback in Essay Writing: A Multiple Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Understanding student engagement with feedback plays a significant role in differentiated instruction in language teaching and learning. This qualitative multiple case study explored the particular cases of student engagement in the specific contexts of two high schools in Binh Duong province in Vietnam. Findings from teacher and student interviews, follow-up questions, students' reflections on feedback from teachers and from Artificial Intelligence (AI) softwares, and analysis of original and revised essays indicate students' mixed responses to AI feedback compared to their active participation in classroom feedback practices through reciprocal dialogues between teacher and students. The findings suggest an in-depth investigation into effective strategies employed by teachers and students in utilizing AI feedback for individualized learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Recent developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology have brought dramatic changes in education. Particularly, in the field of language education, prior research and syntheses of literature review have documented evidence of innovations brought by AI technology ranging from pedagogy, curriculum design, assessment methods to tutoring systems and individualized learning (Latif et al., 2024; Nguyen, 2023; Phan, 2023; Tubino & Achida, 2022; Utami et al., 2023).

In actual settings, many projects such as Pennsylvania State’s program “AI-Enhanced Pedagogy: Exploring Generative AI as a Collaborative Partner” have been launched to support student use of Generative AI in learning activities, and help faculty members incorporate AI technology into their teaching (EdScoop Staff, 2024). In 2021, a large Australian university launched a pilot project in using an AI powered automated feedback tool developed by an Edutech company to “provide timely and actionable feedback on academic writing and assist teachers’ workload to focus on feedback related to higher order thinking skills” (Tubino & Achida 2022, p.2).

In the Vietnamese context, from our personal observation and teaching experience, we noticed that students have learned to interact with language learning AI chatbots and virtual conversational partners to improve their language skills. The common themes for showcase events, workshops, and conferences organized in recent years are also about the potential use of AI technology in transforming education. For example, a showcase event at Van Lang University in 2023 focused on “Technology in education: The beginning of the AI era” [News release] (Van Lang University, 2023), and the theme of the 20th International Conferences of the Asia Association of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (AsiaCALL, 2023) focused on “Artificial Intelligence and Critical Digital Literacies in Language Learning”. Many other academic events of similar themes have been organized at different educational institutions in Vietnam, which indicates interest and concerted effort in adapting to the rapid developments of AI technology.

In particular, in the field of feedback research, a growing body of research have addressed the need to transform assessment methods and practices (Jonsson & Panadero, 2018; Latif et al., 2024, Meyer et al., 2023; Steiss et al. 2023; Tubino & Adachi, 2022). Traditionally, it was time-consuming for teachers to construct assessment rubrics, establish learning goals and standards, and give feedback on students’ performance tasks. However, with the advancements of AI technology, teachers’ assessment workload can be reduced (Tubino & Adachi, 2022). For example, Chat GPT, Grammarly, and other feedback softwares have been used by EFL teachers in Vietnam to generate and modify feedback to provide students with personalized guidance on revising their writing (Personal Communication, August 16, 2024).

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