

# The Effect of Teacher Feedback Type on Composition Revision by Learners of Japanese as a Second Language

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This study investigated the effect of teacher feedback on Japanese as Second Language (JSL) learners' revision of their own compositions. Eleven participants wrote a letter to an imaginary pen pal. A few days later, they revised their original composition using the given feedback. Half of the students were given form-focused feedback and the other half, content-focused feedback. The original and the revised compositions were analyzed and compared for fluency, accuracy, complexity, and topical structure. Two types of measures were used: linguistic feature analysis and teacher evaluation. It was found that, compared with the originals, revised compositions were better in terms of fluency, accuracy, and complexity, and were more highly rated by teachers. Furthermore, the two types of feedback had different effects on revision: students in the form-focused feedback condition tend to produce more accurate compositions, whereas those given content-focused feedback tend to produce more fluent and more complex compositions. Some implications are drawn for research and practice in classroom L2 writing.

**Key terms: \*revision, \*feedback, \*form, \*content, \*attention**

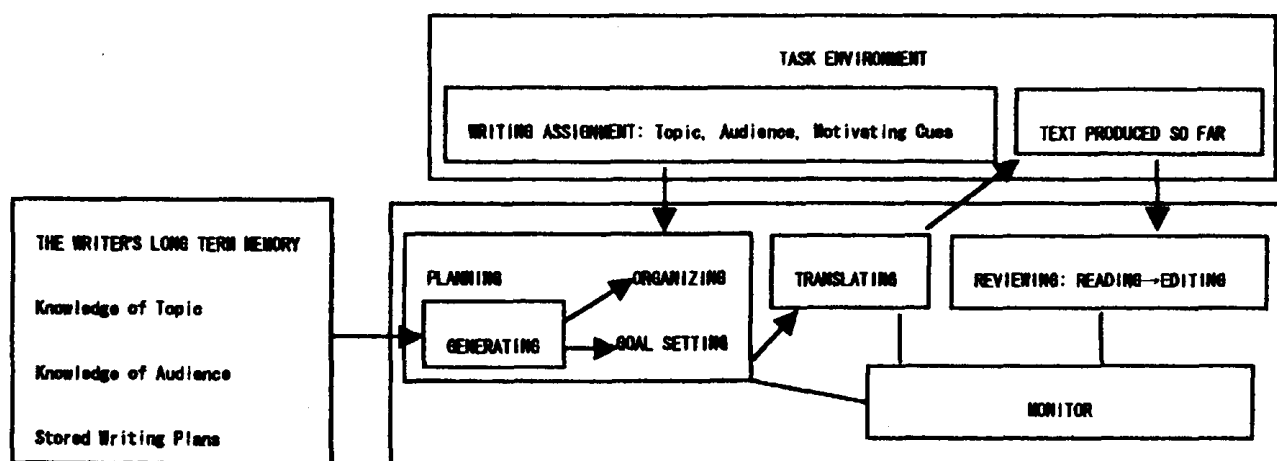
## 1. Introduction

**Writing and Revision in First Language (L1).** Writing research shifted its focus from 'product of writing' to 'process of writing' during the last few decades. Hayes and Flower (1980) proposed a cognitive model of writing which has been a most influential model of writing. The feature of the model is that "it identifies not only subprocesses of the composing process, but also the organization of those subprocesses" (Hayes and Flower, 1980: 10). In the model, presented in Figure 1, there is a cycle consisting of 'task environment', 'the writer's long-term memory', and 'writing'. The first two are the context of the writing cycle. The

言語科学研究第8号 (2002年)

task environment includes everything outside the writer's skin that influences the performance of the task (ibid.: 12). The writer's long-term memory includes knowledge about the topic (i.e., what to write about), knowledge about the audience (i.e., to/ for whom the text is written), and stored writing plans (i.e., how to write). The 'writing' consists of planning, translating, reviewing, and monitoring. At the 'planning' stage of the writing process, the information using the task environment and his knowledge about the topic, the audience, and writing plans in long-term memory, the writer generates ideas and organizes them according to his or her set goals. At the 'translating' stage, the writer translates his/ her plans to produce text. At the 'reviewing' stage, the writer needs what is already produced and edits it. Through the stage 'editing' process, the writer may find and correct form or content of the text that is produced so far. All of the three stages of writing, planning, translating, and reviewing, are connected with 'monitoring'. The writer monitors his/ her own behaviors involved in planning, translating, and reviewing. Thus, writing is described as a 'recursive' process whereby the writer moves back and forth in the cycle during writing.

[Figure 1] Structure of the writing model (Hayes and Flower, 1980: 11)



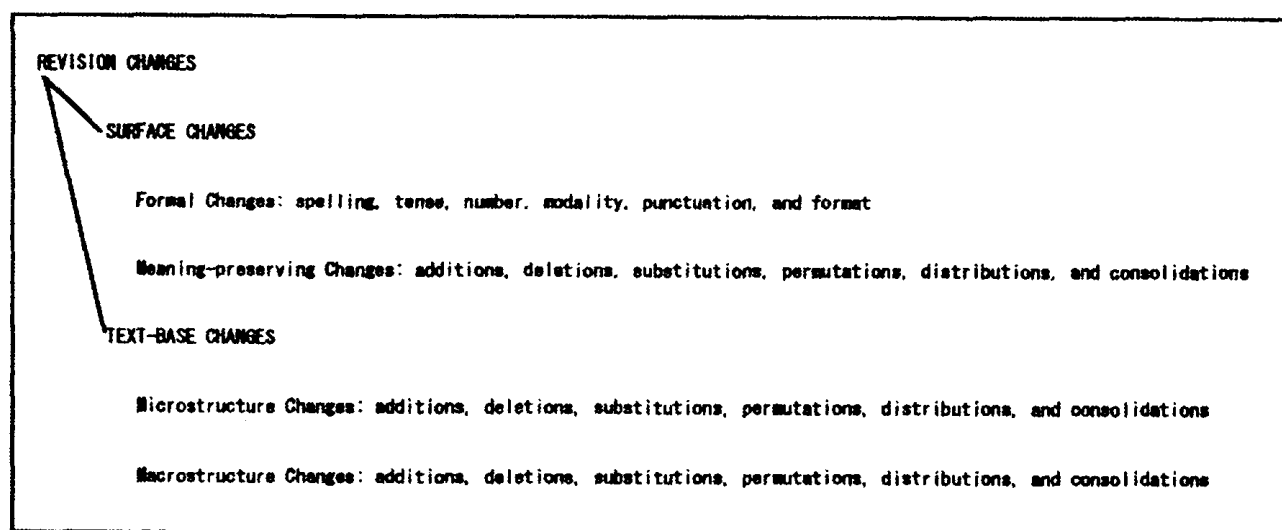
What do the writers do during the 'reviewing' stage? Faigley and Witte (1981) presented a taxonomy of changes made by the writer while revising what is

The Effect of Teacher Feedback Type on Composition Revision by Learners of Japanese as a Second Language

written so far (i.e., revision). Figure 2 shows the taxonomy. 'Surface changes' are the revision changes that do not affect the text whereas 'text-base changes' are the revision changes that do. Surface changes are divided into two subcategories, 'formal changes' and 'meaning preserving changes'. Formal changes include most, but not all, conventional copy-editing operations. Meaning preserving changes include changes that "paraphrase" the concepts in the text but do not alter them (pp.402-403). Text-base changes are also divided into two subcategories, 'microstructure changes' and 'macrostructure changes'. Microstructure changes are meaning changes that would not alter a summary of a text, whereas macrostructure changes are meaning changes that would.

Faigley and Witte (1981) investigated how six inexperienced students, six advanced students, and six expert writers revise their own texts using their taxonomy. They found that inexperienced students rarely reviewed their texts in progress and their revisions were not effective to improve their texts. They concluded that successful revision depends on how suitable the writer's decision is for the writing process, and the writer's planning and reviewing.

[Figure 2] A Taxonomy of Revision Changes (Faigley and Witte, 1981: 403)



## 言語科学研究第8号（2002年）

**Writing and Revision in Second Language (L2).** L1 writing and L2 writing share certain similarities. Like L1 writing process, L2 writer's writing process is recursive. Effective L2 writers and ineffective L2 writers have characteristics similar to the L1 counterparts. However, L2 writing differs from L1 writing in that the writer's linguistic and rhetorical knowledge is poor (Ferris et al., 1997; Leki, 1990). If the writer is an adult, it is likely that he already has some experiences in his L1 writing before he begins writing in L2 (Ishibashi, 1998).

A writer's L2 language proficiency has an important connection with his L2 writing proficiency. According to the 'writing' section of the *ACTFL Japanese Proficiency Guidelines* (1986), the quality of function, content, accuracy, and text structure depends on the writer's L2 proficiency level. The higher the writer's proficiency is, the better he can write and revise. Furthermore, the way of utilizing of feedback may vary depending on the writer's L2 proficiency (Omaggio, 1993). In other words, if the same feedback is provided on their writing, a 'superior' writer and a 'novice' writer will respond to the feedback differently. The superior writer may revise at the text level, with accuracy and complexity, while the novice writer may revise at the phrasal level, without accuracy or complexity.

To get back to the writing model (figure 1), it is necessary for the ineffective writer to enrich his knowledge in long-term memory, both in L1 and L2. In addition, he needs to promote 'monitoring' in the writing process. If he receives appropriate feedback from a teacher, it will help not only his revision but also his awareness of audience. In the next section, research on feedback in conjunction with writing will be briefly reviewed.

**Feedback and Attention.** Keh (1990) states that feedback is "a fundamental element of a process approach to writing", and defines it as "input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision"(p.294). Feedback in L2 writing can be broadly divided into three kinds: peer feedback, conference, and teacher commentary. Although peer feedback and conference are widely drawing attention, teacher commentary (i.e., teacher feedback) may be most common in L2 classroom. Feedback has several func-

## The Effect of Teacher Feedback Type on Composition Revision by Learners of Japanese as a Second Language

tions; It indicates a problem of writing, states the reasons of the problem, and makes suggestion. Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) studied how L2 writers regard teacher feedback. They found that both effective and ineffective writers expect teacher feedback not only on the content but also on the form of their composition. Ferris (1995) also found that most writers in her study regard teacher feedback as useful.

Following the growing interest in feedback on L1 writing, some experimental studies have been conducted on feedback on L2 writing (mostly in ESL). One of the most important issues in this research is the effect of the type of teacher feedback on students' writing and revision. How does the effect of form-focused feedback differ from that of content-focused feedback? This issue was examined by Kepner (1991), Fathman and Whalley (1990), and Semke (1984). However, their conclusions did not reach an agreement. This is because these studies had different designs with different writing tasks, feedback type, and participants' L2 proficiency levels. Because there were no identical compositions treated in different studies, the feedback given to the compositions naturally varied across the studies. We cannot easily draw a consistent conclusion from studies using different experimental designs.

Nevertheless, a common finding did emerge from the studies mentioned above. Form-focused feedback and content-focused feedback had a different influence on the L2 writing. This finding has something to do with the notion of 'attention'. The purpose of form-focused feedback is to have the writer attend to the form of his composition. Thus the writer may correct errors in his composition, resulting in an increase in accuracy. The purpose of content-focused feedback is to have the writer attend to the content of his writing. Thus the writer may add, delete, or refine information in his composition, resulting in an increase in fluency or complexity. In short, what aspects of his composition the writer attends to depends on the type of teacher feedback he receives. Writers revise their compositions using their monitoring, and monitoring requires them to control their attention (Kormos, 2000). Since people have a limited amount of atten-

## 言語科学研究第8号 (2002年)

tional resources, a trade-off between accuracy and fluency will occur during writing (Hamp-Lyons, 1991). Thus it is presumed that a writer who has received form-focused feedback will improve his composition in accuracy but not in fluency, whereas a writer who has received content-focused feedback will improve his composition in fluency but not in accuracy.

In the field of Japanese-as-L2 (JSL) writing research, the effect of teacher feedback on revision has not been investigated except a few studies (Ikeda, 1999; Komiya, 1991; Uehara, 1997). Ikeda (1999) investigated the effect of three different sources of feedback, teacher feedback, self feedback, and peer feedback on 20 JSL students' revision. It was found that there were different effects of feedback sources on the number of clauses in students' compositions and teacher evaluation. Komiya (1991) studied how 9 JSL learners revise their own compositions at the three stages: 1) revision by self, 2) revision by self with revision guideline, and 3) revision with teacher feedback. It was found that the students could revise by themselves (revision at stage 1 and 2), and that over 70% of the errors in their compositions were pointed out by teacher feedback. Uehara (1997) studied how 48 teachers of Japanese give feedback on students' compositions and found that there were some common characteristics and tendencies among teachers. Although these studies' findings are of importance, the effect of teacher feedback type on JSL writing has not been directly investigated.

Thus, the present study was designed to investigate whether the type of teacher feedback, form-focused and content-focused, will influence JSL students' revision. To answer this research question, two main hypotheses and seven sub hypotheses were tested.

**Hypothesis 1:** The type of teacher feedback (form-focused (FF) and content-focused (CF)) will influence the linguistic features (fluency, accuracy, complexity, and topical structure) of a revised composition by a L2 writer.

**Hypothesis 2:** The type of teacher feedback will influence teacher evaluation (holistic and analytic) of the revised composition.

## The Effect of Teacher Feedback Type on Composition Revision by Learners of Japanese as a Second Language

## 2. Methods

The above hypotheses were tested by analyzing and comparing the students' original and revised compositions by means of linguistic analysis and teacher evaluation.

**The writing task.** In the original writing task, the students were asked to write a letter to an imaginary pen pal about their summer vacation using a set of eight pictures (e.g., riding a horse). The selected pictures were believed to be culturally non-specific and not too difficult for their Japanese proficiency level. This writing task was chosen for the following reasons: writing a letter to a Japanese friend was considered to be appropriate to these students; and their Japanese writing proficiency in a communicative context can be analyzed. In the revising task, the students used the same set of pictures and worked on their own original composition with the written feedback. Students were not allowed to use a dictionary nor a textbook.

**Feedback.** The feedback was given on all the original compositions by the researcher. There were two types of feedback: one is form-focused and the other is content-focused. In form-focused feedback, every local and formal error in orthography, grammar, and vocabulary in the compositions were marked without correction. In content-focused feedback, comments required further information about the content of the composition, and they were given to every other sentence. Students were randomly divided into either the form-focused or the content-focused group. Though there was some range in the number and sub-types of the feedback because of the different amount of sentences and errors in students' compositions, careful consideration was given to the provision of feedback task.

**Participants.** Eleven individuals<sup>1</sup> (6 males and 5 females; age of 20 to 32) participated in the study. They were enrolled in two schools (four from School 1 and seven from School 2) and their Japanese proficiency levels ranged from novice to intermediate according to the *ACTFL Japanese Proficiency Guidelines* (1986)<sup>2</sup>. Eight of them were native speakers of English, two Portuguese, and one

## 言語科学研究第8号 (2002年)

Thai.

According to the data obtained from a questionnaire, the participants had studied Japanese for 2.4 years on average (range = 1-5 years). The average length of their residence in Japan was 1.6 years (range = 1 month-5 years). The average length of study of Japanese is longer than that of living in Japan because some participants had started studying Japanese before coming to Japan. No participants had studied foreign languages that have non-alphabetical characters<sup>3</sup>. They reported that speaking and listening to Japanese was more frequent than writing and reading in their daily life. Only three participants (27%) had written compositions in Japanese, while nine participants (82%) had written compositions in their L1. Six participants (55%) liked composition.

In addition, eight instructors from their Japanese language schools answered another questionnaire. The response rate was 75%. According to their responses, a half of them had taught composition, and the time spent on composition ranged from 15 to 45 minutes per class<sup>4</sup>. In both programs, the main objective of the courses was to help students become fluent in speaking, and writing was not emphasized.

**Procedure.** The data were collected at two phases within in two to seven days during July through September, 2000. The participants received no formal instruction between the first and second phase of the experiment.

Firstly, the purpose and procedure of the experiment was generally explained to the participant students by the researcher. Then the students did a practice task to get accustomed to writing by using pictures. All the pictures used in the practice task were different from those used in the experiment task. After finishing this task, they began the first writing.

In the first writing, the task instruction was given to the participants in a written form<sup>5</sup>. A set of eight pictures for the topic of the composition and a sheet of paper were distributed to each participant. The researcher announced that they had 30 minutes to do the task. When the task was finished, the participants returned their compositions and the pictures to the researcher, and answered a



## The Effect of Teacher Feedback Type on Composition Revision by Learners of Japanese as a Second Language

questionnaire about their backgrounds. As mentioned above, either form-focused or content-focused feedback was given on each composition by the researcher.

A few days later, the participants did a revision task. After receiving the task instruction, the participants revised their original compositions using the same pictures and the given feedback for 30 minutes. When finished, a questionnaire about self-evaluation of their compositions was distributed to them. A retrospective interview or questionnaire was also included<sup>6</sup>.

**Data analysis.** In this study, two kinds of data were analyzed: (1) linguistic features of the students' compositions and (2) teacher evaluation ratings of the students' compositions.

The original and revised compositions were analyzed in terms of their linguistic features and topical structure. In the linguistic analysis, there were three main categories:

**Fluency:** Using a number of words or structures in a time-limited writing.

**Accuracy:** Avoiding making graphic, morphological, and syntactical errors in writing.

**Complexity:** Using expressions which contain complex structures in writing.

To measure those categories, 10 linguistic units were used as indices: sentence, T-unit, accurate T-unit, C-unit, accurate C-unit, subordinate clause, idea-unit, accurate idea-unit, total words, and different words. An example sentence with its resulting linguistic features analysis is given below.

**Example:** このほんはわたしのちちがかったほんです。

(1 sentence, 1 accurate T-unit, 2 accurate C-unit, 1 subordinate clause, 6 accurate Idea-unit, 5 total words, and 4 different words)

Each of the three main categories, fluency, accuracy, and complexity, was measured in two ways, by frequency and by ratio. The application of the 11 indices to the categories is shown below (see Kobayashi, 2001 for detail examples).

**Fluency:** Fluency-by-frequency is measured by counting the number of sentences, T-units, C-units, idea-units, total words, and different

言語科学研究第8号 (2002年)

words. Fluency-by-ratio is measured by counting the number of idea-units in T-units, total words in T-units, and different words in total words.

**Accuracy:** Accuracy-by-frequency is measured by counting the number of accurate T-units, accurate C-units, and accurate idea-units. Accuracy-by-ratio is measured by counting the number of accurate T-units in T-units, accurate C-units in C-units, and accurate idea-units in idea-units.

**Complexity:** Complexity-by-frequency is measured by counting the number of subordinate clauses. Complexity-by-ratio is measured by counting the number of C-units in T-units, idea-units in C-units, and subordinate clauses in C-units.

On those indices, 22 compositions (11 original and 11 revised) were analyzed by the researcher. After a few weeks, the compositions were analyzed again by the researcher. Then the two analyses were compared and the final decision on the analyses was made.

**Topical Structure Analysis.** In order to examine linguistic change at the text level between original and revised compositions, the Topical Structure analysis (Lautamatti, 1978) was used. The Topical Structure analysis is widely used in the analysis of the topical structure development of writing. For example, Koda (1993) used it in the analysis of compositions by students of Japanese as a foreign language. She explains it as "a means to analyze the discourse topics and sub topics produced by the writer"(p.339).

In this study, the topic of each sentence in the 22 compositions was analyzed into three topical categories: parallel, sequential, and extended parallel. Then the percentage of each topical category in each composition was calculated. When the topic was not mentioned, the decision was made based on an assumption. If one sentence contained several clauses, the topic of the main clause was counted. The definitions of the topical categories is shown below.

**Parallel:** A sentence contains the same topic as in the previous one.

## The Effect of Teacher Feedback Type on Composition Revision by Learners of Japanese as a Second Language

**Sequential:** A sentence contains a different topic from the previous one.

**Extended parallel:** A sentence contains the same topic as in the sentence before the previous one.

The researcher and one assistant independently analyzed the topical structure of the 22 compositions. The inter-rater reliability reached 83%; the final decision was made by the researcher based on another rating.

**Teacher Evaluation.** Three well-experienced teachers of Japanese (two females and one male) evaluated all the 22 compositions. An average length of teaching was six years (range = 5-6 years), and their teaching experiences were diverse, teaching at various programs, high schools to universities.

In the evaluation session, the three teachers made a holistic and analytic evaluation of each of the compositions independently. First, they were given a set of randomly ordered compositions and rank-ordered all the compositions from the best to the worst based on their holistic judgement<sup>7</sup>. The best composition was rated as 22 points and the worst as 1 point. Second, for each composition they made an analytic evaluation for four components: fluency, accuracy, complexity, and content. They were told to follow the guidelines provided by the researcher and evaluated each composition for the four components using a five-point scale (five for the best and one for the worst). Then the average evaluation scores were calculated for each composition.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Linguistic features of students' composition

Originally, the effect of feedback type on improvement of composition was examined by using one-way ANOVAs with feedback type as an independent factor and the score for each measure as a dependent factor. There were no significant differences found between the two feedback type groups, not only for the original compositions but also for the revised compositions. Therefore, repeated measure ANOVAs were used in order to examine the effect of interaction between feedback type and revision (i.e., a repetition factor). It is assumed that a significant

言語科学研究第8号（2002年）

interaction effect indicates differences in the pattern of change from the original to the revised compositions between the two feedback type groups.

**Fluency.** Table 1 contains the means and the standard deviations for each of the six fluency indices (sentences, T-units, C-units, idea-units, total words, and different words) by feedback type and stage of composition. From a descriptive perspective, the mean scores of the CF group increased more greatly than those of the FF group did for all the measures. The standard deviations of the CF group also increased more than those of the FF group did, indicating that the length of the composition varied among the students.

Table 2 shows the means and the standard deviations for fluency-by-ratio for feedback type and stage of composition. Again, the difference between the original and the revised composition was greater in the CF group. The length of T-units measured by the number of idea-units per T-unit and the number of total words per T-unit generally increased, whereas the variety of vocabulary (measured by the number of different words divided by the total of words) decreased a little.

[Table 1] Feedback type and change in fluency-by-frequency

Indices		Feedback type and stage of composition					
		Form-focused			Content-focused		
		Original (A)	Revised (B)	Difference (B)-(A)	Original (C)	Revised (D)	Difference (D)-(C)
Sentences	Mean	20.4	21	0.6	17.8	23.7	5.9
	S.D.	5.9	5.2	-0.7	8.1	9.9	1.8
T-units	Mean	24	24.6	0.6	21	28	7
	S.D.	7.9	6.2	-1.7	6.3	10.4	4.1
C-units	Mean	32.2	35	2.8	27.3	39.8	12.5
	S.D.	13.4	14.7	1.3	8.1	13.8	5.7
Idea-units	Mean	103.4	116.8	13.4	81	122	41
	S.D.	34.2	45.6	11.4	29.9	43.5	13.6
Total words	Mean	95	109.2	14.2	74.2	111.5	37.3
	S.D.	34.3	48.6	14.3	28.2	39.7	11.5
Different words	Mean	68.2	75.2	7	52.8	76.3	23.5
	S.D.	20.7	26.4	5.7	16.4	26.6	10.2

## The Effect of Teacher Feedback Type on Composition Revision by Learners of Japanese as a Second Language

[Table 2] Feedback type and change in fluency-by-ratio

Indices		Feedback type and stage of composition					
		Form-focused			Content-focused		
		Original (A)	Revised (B)	Difference (B)-(A)	Original (C)	Revised (D)	Difference (D)-(C)
Idea-units	Mean	4.33	4.67	0.34	3.89	4.51	0.62
in T-units	S.D.	0.51	0.93	0.42	0.92	1.18	0.26
Total words	Mean	3.96	4.32	0.36	3.54	4.1	0.56
in T-units	S.D.	0.55	1.04	0.49	0.78	0.96	0.18
Different words	Mean	0.73	0.72	-0.01	0.73	0.69	-0.04
in total words	S.D.	0.06	0.09	0.03	0.12	0.1	-0.02

For each of the fluency measures, a repeated measure ANOVA was conducted with feedback type as a between variable and stage of composition (original vs. revised) as a repetition variable. Table 3 shows the summary results for the fluency-by-frequency measures. Table 4 shows those for fluency-by-ratio measures. On a repetition factor in all six indices of fluency-by-frequency (Table 3), revised compositions scored significantly higher than the originals. The interaction between feedback type and repetition was significant for five out of six indices, indicating that the degree of changes from the original composition to the revised composition differed between the two feedback type groups.

As shown in Table 4, a repetition factor was significant for two out of three indices of fluency-by-ratio. However, there was no significant effect of the interaction of feedback type and repetition. Thus, these results indicate that there was a significant effect of revision on the improvement of fluency of the composition for both feedback type groups. It was also the case that there was a different pattern of the effect between the two groups (for five out of nine indices); content-focused feedback was more effective for improvement in fluency than form-focused feedback.

言語科学研究第8号 (2002年)

[Table 3] Statistical results for fluency-by-frequency

Factors	Indices					
	Sentences	T-units	C-units	Idea-units	Total words	Different words
Repetition	F=10.55 p=.01	F=7.84 p=.02	F=18.40 p=.002	F=19.40 p=.002	F=20.46 p=.001	F=17.66 p=.002
Interaction between feedback type and repetition	F=6.00 p=.04	F=4.76 p=.06	F=6.56 p=.03	F=4.53 p=.06	n.s.	F=4.66 p=.06

[Table 4] Statistical results for fluency-by-ratio

Factors	Indices		
	Idea-units in T-units	Total words in T-units	Different words in Total words
Repetition	F=5.87 p=.04	F=5.72 p=.04	n.s.
Interaction between feedback type and repetition	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.

**Accuracy.** Table 5 shows the means and standard deviations for accuracy-by-frequency. Both the FF and the CF group increased in scores for all indices.

Means and standard deviations for accuracy-by-ratio are shown in Table 6. The FF group increased in all the three accuracy-by-ratio scores whereas little change was found in the scores of the CF group.

[Table 5] Feedback type and change in accuracy-by-frequency

Indices	Feedback type and stage of composition						
	Form-focused			Content-focused			
	Original (A)	Revised (B)	Difference (B)-(A)	Original (C)	Revised (D)	Difference (D)-(C)	
Accurate T-units	Mean	7.6	10.4	2.8	7.3	10.5	3.2
	S.D.	6.9	6.7	-0.2	3.1	7.3	4.2
Accurate C-units	Mean	11.4	19	7.6	11.8	19	7.2
	S.D.	10.6	12.9	2.3	5.5	13.8	8.3
Accurate Idea-units	Mean	71.8	93.4	21.6	58.2	91.8	33.6
	S.D.	36.2	41.8	5.6	26.7	44.3	17.6

The Effect of Teacher Feedback Type on Composition Revision by Learners of Japanese as a Second Language

[Table 6] Feedback type and change in accuracy-by-ratio

Indices	Feedback type and stage of composition						
	Form-focused			Content-focused			
	Original (A)	Revised (B)	Difference (B)-(A)	Original (C)	Revised (D)	Difference (D)-(C)	
Accurate T-units in T-units	Mean	0.28	0.41	0.13	0.34	0.35	0.01
	S.D.	0.21	0.21	0	0.08	0.22	0.14
Accurate C-units in C-units	Mean	0.31	0.51	0.2	0.42	0.44	0.02
	S.D.	0.19	0.18	-0.01	0.16	0.24	0.08
Accurate Idea-units in Idea-units	Mean	0.67	0.79	0.12	0.7	0.72	0.02
	S.D.	0.13	0.07	-0.06	0.15	0.13	-0.02

To examine these observations statistically, a repeated measure ANOVA was conducted for each of the six accuracy scores. The summary results for accuracy-by-frequency and accuracy-by-ratio are presented in Table 7 and 8, respectively. Regardless of accuracy measured by frequency or ratio, two out of the three indices, those involving C-units and idea-units, had a significant repetition factor. This suggests that the students in both groups wrote more accurate composition when revising. For one index (accurate c-units ratio) there was a significant interaction between feedback type and repetition. Thus, the results suggest, in a weak manner, form-focused feedback was more effective for accuracy of composition than content-focused feedback.

[Table 7] Statistical results for accuracy-by-frequency

Factors	Indices		
	Accurate T-units	Accurate C-units	Accurate Idea-units
Repetition	n.s.	F=11.62 p=.008	F=20.09 p=.002
Interaction between feedback type and repetition	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.

言語科学研究第8号（2002年）

[Table 8] Statistical results for accuracy-by-ratio

Factors	Indices		
	Accurate T-units in T-units	Accurate C-units in C-units	Accurate Idea-units in idea-units
Repetition	n.s.	F=7.67 p=.02	F=8.45 p=.02
Interaction between feedback type and repetition	n.s.	F=6.55 p=.03	n.s.

**Complexity.** Table 9 shows the means and standard deviations for complexity-by-frequency. The CF group's improvement was much greater than that of the FF group. This result indicates that the students in the CF group added information in revising using subordinate clauses.

The mean percent scores of complexity-by-ratio are shown in Table 10. In all three indices the CF group again increased more greatly than the FF group did. This indicates that the students in the CF group revised the original composition in detail using idea-units or parallel clauses, rather than subordinate clauses. On the other hand, there was little change in the FF group's performance.

[Table 9] Feedback type and change in complexity-by-frequency

Indices	Feedback type and stage of composition						
		Form-focused			Content-focused		
		Original (A)	Revised (B)	Difference (B)-(A)	Original (C)	Revised (D)	Difference (D)-(C)
Subordinate Clauses	Mean	7.8	8	0.2	6	10.8	4.8
	S.D.	6	5.8	-0.2	3.6	5.6	2



The Effect of Teacher Feedback Type on Composition Revision by Learners of Japanese as a Second Language

[Table 10] Feedback type and change in complexity-by-ratio

Indices	Feedback type and stage of composition						
	Form-focused			Content-focused			
	Original (A)	Revised (B)	Difference (B)-(A)	Original (C)	Revised (D)	Difference (D)-(C)	
C-units in T-units	Mean	1.32	1.39	0.07	1.32	1.46	0.14
	S.D.	0.1	0.23	0.13	0.23	0.27	0.04
Idea-units in C-units	Mean	3.3	3.38	0.08	2.92	3.07	0.15
	S.D.	0.43	0.49	0.06	0.32	0.36	0.04
Subordinate Clauses in C-units	Mean	0.22	0.21	-0.01	0.22	0.27	0.05
	S.D.	0.08	0.05	-0.03	0.1	0.11	0.01

A repeated measure ANOVA was again conducted for each of these four complexity scores. Tables 11 and 12 show the results for complexity-by-frequency and by-ratio, respectively. For subordinate clauses, there was a significant repetition factor as well as a significant interaction factor. This indicates that the increase in complexity measured by the number of subordinate clauses was greater for the CF group than for the FF group. For complexity-by-ratio, there was a significant repetition for one index, but the interaction was not significant. These results overall indicate that the change from the original to the revised composition and the differences between the FF group and the CF group were small.

[Table 11] Statistical results for complexity-by-frequency

Factors	Indices
	Subordinate clauses
Repetition	F=11.57 p=.008
Interaction between feedback type and repetition	F=8.28 p=.02

言語科学研究第8号 (2002年)

[Table 12] Statistical results for complexity-by-ratio

Factors	Indices		
	C-units in T-units	Idea-units in C-units	Subordinate clauses in C-units
Repetition	F=5.75 p=.04	n.s.	n.s.
Interaction between feedback type and repetition	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.

**Topical Structure Analysis.** The mean raw scores of topical structure analysis are shown in Table 13. The increase was found only in extended parallel development for the FF group.

[Table 13] Feedback type and change in topical structure

Structure type		Feedback type and stage of composition					
		Form-focused			Content-focused		
		Original (A)	Revised (B)	Difference (B)-(A)	Original (C)	Revised (D)	Difference (D)-(C)
Parallel	Mean	0.23	0.23	0	0.35	0.32	-0.03
	S.D.	0.12	0.15	0.03	0.18	0.14	-0.04
Sequential	Mean	0.46	0.49	0.03	0.43	0.43	0
	S.D.	0.079	0.14	0.061	0.17	0.12	-0.05
Extended parallel	Mean	0.31	0.49	0.18	0.22	0.25	0.03
	S.D.	0.057	0.052	-0.005	0.075	0.11	0.035

Table 14 shows the summary results of the repeated measure ANOVAs for these topical structure scores. For each index, there was no significant effect of repetition nor interaction. This means that the original and the revised compositions were similar, and that form-focused and content-focused feedback had no differential effect on the topical structure development of the composition.

The Effect of Teacher Feedback Type on Composition Revision by Learners of Japanese as a Second Language

[Table 14] Statistical results for topical structure

Factors	Structure type		
	Parallel	Sequential	Extended parallel
Repetition	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Interaction between feedback type and repetition	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.

### 3.2 Teacher Evaluation

Table 15 shows the means and standard deviations of teacher evaluation scores, one holistic and three analytic. In all indices, the difference between the original and the revised composition was positive for both the FF and the CF feedback group. The revised compositions were rated higher than the original ones. However, the differences between the original and the revised were rather small except accuracy and complexity scores of the CF group.

[Table 15] Feedback type and change in teacher evaluation

Indices		Feedback type and stage of composition					
		Form-focused			Content-focused		
		Original (A)	Revised (B)	Difference (B)-(A)	Original (C)	Revised (D)	Difference (D)-(C)
Holistic	Mean	11.53	12.67	1.14	10.5	11.5	1
	S.D.	7.4	5.39	-2.01	6.15	6.14	-0.01
Analytic							
Fluency	Mean	3.07	3.6	0.53	2.78	3.33	0.55
	S.D.	1.16	0.98	-0.18	1.15	1.12	-0.03
Accuracy	Mean	2.47	2.93	0.46	2.39	3.06	0.67
	S.D.	1.37	1.01	-0.36	1.22	1.22	0
Complexity	Mean	2.67	3.13	0.46	2.44	3.17	0.73
	S.D.	1.18	0.69	-0.49	0.81	1.13	0.32
Content	Mean	2.87	3.4	0.53	2.72	3.28	0.56
	S.D.	1.24	1.09	-0.15	1.25	1.12	-0.13

In Table 16, the results of repeated measure ANOVAs are shown. In all analytic evaluation scores, there was a significant effect of repetition, indicating that revised compositions were rated more highly than the original compositions. However, there was no significant interaction between feedback type and repetition. These results indicate that both feedback groups had a similar increase in

## 言語科学研究第8号 (2002年)

teacher evaluation scores.

[Table 16] Statistical results for teacher evaluation

Factors	Evaluation type				
	Holistic	Analytic			
		Fluency	Accuracy	Complexity	Content
Repetition	n.s.	F=7.26 p=.03	F=11.72 p=.008	F=12.57 p=.006	F=10.81 p=.009
Interaction between feedback type and repetition	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.

#### 4. Discussion

Based on the analysis of linguistic features of students' compositions, it was found that fluency, accuracy, and complexity generally improved from the original to the revision for both the FF and the CF groups. Among the nine indices to measure fluency, eight of them (88.9%) showed a significant effect of repetition (i.e., change from the original to the revised). Four out of six accuracy indices (66.7%) and two out of four complexity indices (50%) also showed a statistically significant repetition factor.

There was not a strong interaction between feedback type and repetition found in the present study. Only 33.3% of fluency, 25% of complexity, and 16.7% of accuracy indices showed a significant interaction effect. However, as predicted from the previous research findings, content-focused feedback had a stronger effect on fluency and complexity, while form-focused feedback excelled in its counterpart accuracy. Lack of a strong effect of feedback types on revised composition may be explained by the following reasons. The nature of the task instructions in which the students were encouraged to write as much as possible may affect both groups positively. As a result, the students in both groups increased in amount of writing.

As for the analysis of topical structure, no significant effect of repetition nor interaction between feedback type and repetition was found. This may attribute to the characteristic of the feedback used in this study. In either feedback condi-

## The Effect of Teacher Feedback Type on Composition Revision by Learners of Japanese as a Second Language

tion, the students were not really expected to revise the topical structure development of their compositions. Instead they could easily write another composition using the same text structure as in the original. Furthermore, their L2 proficiency might not be high enough to make any change in the topical structure development of their own compositions.

In summary, the analysis of the linguistic features of the compositions revealed that, in revising, form-focused feedback tends to have the effect of making writers attend to the form of their compositions, resulting in an increase in accuracy. It was also revealed that content-focused feedback tends to have the effect of making writers attend to the content of their compositions, resulting in an increase in fluency and complexity.

The data from the retrospective interview with the students provide some evidence that they were controlling the direction of attention during revision. All of the students in the form-focused feedback group commented on the form of their composition, while all the students in the content-focused feedback group commented on the content of their composition. No comment on the content of the composition was made by the students in the form-focused feedback group. In contrast, some students in the content-focused feedback group made comments on the form of the composition, suggesting that they might have attended to form. This fact can partly explain why there was only a weak interaction effect on accuracy. Neither the form-focused feedback group nor the content-focused feedback group made a comment on the topical structure of their composition. This may be a supporting fact to explain why there was no statistically significant result on the analysis of topical structure.

As for the analysis of teacher evaluation scores, it was found that the revised compositions received higher ratings in fluency, accuracy, complexity, and content than the original compositions did, regardless of the type of feedback. However, holistic evaluation and analytic evaluation did not have a significant effect of repetition and feedback type interaction. Students' revised compositions were rated higher than the originals, but the patterns were similar between the two

言語科学研究第8号（2002年）

feedback type groups.

Thus, there was clearly an effect of the type of teacher feedback for the analysis of the linguistic features of the composition. In contrast, there was no significant effect of feedback type for the teacher evaluation. This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that teacher evaluation came from their overall impression of the compositions, whereas linguistic feature analysis was more objective and more precise in measurement.

## 5. Conclusion

This study investigated an insufficiently explored issue, the effect of teacher feedback on revision in the context of L2 Japanese. Based on the findings mentioned above, the following conclusions were made:

- (1) The revised composition is linguistically better in fluency, accuracy, and complexity than the original one.
- (2) The revised composition is evaluated more highly than the original one.
- (3) The two types of teacher feedback had different influence on students' revised composition. Students given form-focused feedback tend to attend to the form of their original writing and increased in accuracy, whereas students given content-focused feedback tend to attend to content and increased in fluency and complexity.

Although there are some limitations of research scope, this study's findings have some implications for L2 writing research and L2 writing classroom.

Firstly, the findings of this study are restricted to adult learners of JSL who are relatively low in proficiency and have little experience in L2 writing. The size of the sample obtained in this study was also quite small. Probably these are part of the reasons for a weak interaction between feedback type and repetition (indicating change from the original to the revised). Future studies need to increase a sample size, with consideration of participants' L1, L2 experience, and L2 proficiency. Secondly, every study's findings are influenced by the characteristic of the tasks used in the study. The findings of the present study may not applicable to

## The Effect of Teacher Feedback Type on Composition Revision by Learners of Japanese as a Second Language

other kinds of writing tasks. The selection of task should be also considered in relation to the students' proficiency level. Thirdly, the notion of feedback must be carefully considered and defined. Decision over what kind of feedback to give will certainly be helped by understanding of the characteristics of 'good' compositions and the effect of feedback. Development of L2 writing theory and improvement of L2 writing analysis methods will also contribute to that. Uehara (1997) investigated 48 teachers of Japanese to examine how they give feedback to L2 learners' compositions. The results revealed that the most popular kind of feedback among teachers was grammatical error correction. This line of study should be continued to find out what appropriate teacher feedback is. Fourthly, future research should also examine what L2 writers actually do during revision. Studies using the think-aloud method during revision will reveal 'how' students utilize teacher feedback and what strategies they use. In fact, the data from the retrospective interview of the present study revealed that some students used certain kinds of strategies when revising. The study of long-term effect of teacher feedback is also needed.

Finally, based on the present study's findings, some implications can be drawn for L2 writing classroom. Firstly it is important to provide students with a proper type of feedback. With such feedback, students will be able to write a composition more effectively utilizing their writing ability. To do so, it is required for the teachers to be able to analyze students' composition. Secondly, in the reviewing process, writers have to reread their compositions. Improvement of reading skills will help writers in that process. Thirdly, to revise a composition is an important opportunity to make it better. Much time should be spent on revising. In addition, to revise using teacher feedback brings an effect on writers to be aware of an audience. One student in the content-focused feedback group reported her awareness of audience in the retrospective interview. Lastly, teachers may find interviews with students useful in order to find what problems individuals have in writing. Peer feedback and conferencing may also be helpful for more proficient L2 writers.

言語科学研究第8号（2002年）

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## Notes

- 1 Originally, there were 13 participants. One was removed from the analysis because he is a professional writer. Another was also removed because her composition was illegible. The remaining 11 participants had no professional writing experience.
- 2 The researcher informally assessed the participants' proficiency levels based on the courses they were enrolled in with reference to the *ACTFL Japanese Proficiency Guidelines* (1986).
- 3 They had studied English (two participants), German (two), French (two), Spanish (one), and Hawaiian (one).
- 4 In School 1, one class lasts two hours, and in School 2, 90 minutes.
- 5 The instructions consisted of both L1 and L2 (Japanese) version. However, because of the limitation of means of translation, two Portuguese speakers received a Spanish version as L1, and one Thai speaker received an English version instead. All of them were found to have no problem with this condition.
- 6 In School 1, the interview was oral and recorded (failed recording of two participants). In School 2, each participant wrote down how they revised his or her original composition.
- 7 Though the interpretation of 'the best' was left to the teachers, they were told not to judge the compositions by the fineness of the handwriting or the quantity of Kanji used.

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The Effect of Teacher Feedback Type on Composition Revision by Learners of Japanese as a Second Language

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言語科学研究第8号（2002年）

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