Japanese Students' Reflections and Perceptions on Video Screen Capture Feedback

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One area English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers struggle with is providing written corrective feedback (CF) to their students. Additionally, written CF often comes in for criticism from both teachers and students. For example, students complain it lacks quality, is too brief, and often ambiguous. Similarly, teachers are frustrated that written CF is either ignored or misinterpreted by students as recurring mistakes are frequently observed. Recently, an alternative form of multimodal feedback, video screen capture (VSC) feedback, that has the potential to address these criticisms has slowly been gaining attention. Integrating the Zoom and Google Classroom platforms to deliver VSC feedback, this study examined 50 Japanese university students' attitudes towards this feedback method. Specifically, students were asked to identify the perceived benefits of written and VSC feedback and state their preference. The results indicate that a slight majority of students preferred VSC feedback.

EFL教員の主要な役割の一つに、学生への手書きの修正フィードバック（Corrective Feedback = CF）の提供が挙げられるが、残念ながら手書きのCFは、しばしば教員と学生の両方から批判を受ける。学生は手書きのCFが質と簡潔性に欠け、曖昧であることを不満に思う一方、教員は手書きのCFが、無視や勘違いをされて同じミスが繰り返されることに落胆する。近頃は代替案として、ビデオを用いたフィードバック（Video Screen Capture Feedback＝VSCフィードバック）が、教員と学生の批判に対応する可能性を持つとして暫定的に注目を集めている。本研究はZoomとGoogle Classroomを用いて50人の日本人学生のVSCフィードバックに対する意見を調査した。具体的には、学生たちへ手書きとVSCフィードバックそれぞれの利点を識別し、どちらを好むか質問した。結果は若干多数の学生がVSCフィードバックを好むことが明らかになった。

Corrective feedback (CF), described by Sheen and Ellis (2011, p. 593) as "feedback that learners receive on the linguistic errors they make in their oral or written production in a second language (L2)," is a central tenet of English as a foreign language (EFL) pedagogy. An important part of the teacher's job is to provide students with comprehensive feedback on language output with the goal of future linguistic improvement. Similarly, there is an expectation among students for specific commentary on language performance, with Bitchener and Ferris (2012) pointing out that studies strongly indicate students demand detailed feedback from their teachers, especially concerning grammar. Despite the demand for written CF, Stern and Solomon (2006) reported that grading papers is one of the most stressful and least rewarding parts of their job.

Within language teaching, the underlying assumption among educators is that written CF aids students in developing their accuracy (Bitchener, 2008; Ferris, 1999). However, Truscott's (1996) controversial paper challenged the efficacy of direct feedback by proclaiming, "grammar correction has no place in writing courses and should be abandoned" (p. 328). In response to this claim, researchers began to undertake studies of the actual merits of providing written CF. Despite their best efforts to refute Truscott's (1996) claims, Bitchener's (2008) synopsis of relevant studies found that most of these studies had flawed methodologies and produced inconsistent findings, thus making it difficult to validate the exact benefits of written CF conclusively.

While debates persist over CF's value in language learning, one constant criticism of written CF is its inability to position students as active participants negotiating their learning process. Unlike other innovations in second language learning, such as task-based learning (TBL) and communicative language teaching (CLT), which encourage the teacher to be more of a facilitator of language learning, written CF lacks self-regulation and is primarily teacher-centered. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) lamented that feedback still seems to be a transmission process from teacher to student and identified four constraints of one-way feedback:

1. It lacks self-regulation or engagement of the student.
2. Feedback messages can be complex and challenging to understand.
3. It can have a negative influence on motivation.
4. It places a heavy burden on a teacher of larger classes.

In sum, written CF lacks the ability to cognitively engage both the teacher and student. Therefore, teachers must initiate transparent and motivational processes that appease this appetite for extensive feedback for all the stakeholders.

Recently, an innovative alternative to written CF that can possibly address some of these constraints has been gaining traction in today's digital age. Video screen capture (VSC) feedback, described by Hamel and Séror (2016, p. 138) as software that allows the user to record a movie of on-screen actions as they interact with a computer, presents opportunities for educators to personalize feedback to students. For example, teachers can record their commentary and feedback on a student's work as they highlight different parts on the screen. The recent tendency of university students to be more proficient with technology than previously opens up other pedagogical opportunities for the language teacher. VSC technology enables the teacher to asynchronously record audio and visual comments on a student's paper before returning it to the student. When students watch the video, they can see their paper as the teacher is providing feedback. This means the feedback can be highlighted or zoomed in on to help students follow along.

Despite the infancy of EFL research into VSC feedback, initial studies have indicated capabilities and limitations for both the teacher and the student. The use of audio and visual modalities allows for more significant language input from the teacher, with Stannard (2008) estimating the possibility of providing 200 words of feedback per minute. Resulting from this ability to convey greater amounts of feedback, VSC feedback can be richer and more detailed than written CF (Jones et al., 2012). In the studies that have been conducted so far, student response to screencast technology has been positive. Among the benefits of these technologies, students believed they provided a more individualized experience between teachers and students, and they enabled students to view the evaluation procedure of the teacher (see Ali, 2016; Anson et al., 2016; Crews & Wilkinson, 2010; McGarrell & Alvira, 2013). A study by Jones et al. (2012) focused on student and staff experiences with screen capture technology and feedback. It found that MBA and undergraduate students at a university in Wales enjoyed screen capture digital feedback more than written feedback. Similar results were reported by Cunningham (2017), who found that while EFL students appreciated both written and video feedback, they endorsed video feedback because it was more user-friendly, clear, and understandable than written comments. Jones et al. (2012) commented on the following qualities:

- Video feedback (VF) is easier to understand.
- VF feels more like a step-by-step process.
- VF feels more personal, and the students feel like they are in the room with the teacher.
- VF makes it easier to match the feedback with issues on writing/assessment.
- VF is more useful and efficient.

Teachers commented on many of the same points but also elaborated on the following:

- Intonation is important when giving VF. It can help prevent misunderstanding and be more encouraging for students.
- VF seems to better match the students' technological experience.
- VF saves time, and students are more engaged with it.

As the teacher reads through a student's writing, they can personalize the experience with their voice, which allows for a more direct, conversational style of feedback.

In an extensive review of the literature exploring student perceptions on video feedback, Bahula and Kay (2020) revealed favorable attitudes towards video-based feedback among students. However, a noticeable absence from the almost 70 peer-reviewed articles examined by Bahula and Kay's (2020) was the Japanese perspective. While some research has addressed the use of screencast technology in the Japanese EFL context (see Irwin, 2019; Lambacher, 1999), surprisingly none has researched student preferences for WCF or VSC feedback.

This paper addresses the dearth of information by investigating the opinions of a group of Japanese EFL students' attitudes towards VSC feedback. The question guiding this study was: Do students have a preference for traditional written CF or this new medium?

Method

Participants

The study participants were 50 1st-year undergraduate students (N = 50) studying in three different classes at a private university in central Japan. Each class met for two 90-minute periods each week. All classes were mandatory 1st-year courses, and the material was an in-house publication that focused on a communicative approach to

teaching the four basic skills of English. Classes were not streamlined based on students' language ability but had a mixture of proficiency levels ranging from elementary to advanced. These students did not take English writing courses, so the feedback they received in other classes was mostly limited to written CF and general verbal feedback on assignments. We were also unable to establish the mode and extent of feedback students had received prior to entering university. All participants gave informed consent, and the study followed the standards of the university's ethics committee.

Procedure

As part of their studies and assessment, students had to write imaginary dialogues based on the eight units contained within the coursebook (see Appendix A for an example imaginary dialog). The purpose of the imaginary dialogues was to replicate a conversation that could be had between two native speakers of the language. Students were required to include at least five vocabulary items and two conversation strategies introduced and studied in that unit when creating the dialogue. Additionally, the conversation needed to be coherent and natural throughout. Therefore, the grading for each imaginary dialogue focused on three areas: vocabulary usage, conversation strategy usage, and dialogue coherence. All of the feedback for these three classes was indirect, primarily because our view is rooted in sociocultural theory and consistent with that of Scrivener (2005) insofar as "people learn more by doing things themselves rather than being told about them" (p. 3). For this study, this meant that errors were highlighted with commentary rather than explicitly corrected. To allow comparisons to be made, two of these dialogues were corrected using written CF, while two others were corrected using VSC feedback.

Data Collection

This study employed a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected via a Google Forms questionnaire (see Appendix B) distributed in the final class of the semester. Google Forms allows responses to be viewed collectively and individually. Thus, despite the anonymity, responses to separate items could be attributed to an individual participant.

Students responded to seven statements on a Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", one multiple-choice question, and one open-ended short answer question. Qualitative data were elicited via the open-ended question that allowed students to provide explanatory feedback and validate the responses from the quantitative study. The questionnaire was administered in English that was tailored to the level of the students. Using MAXQDA11, the researchers were able to analyze the responses and code them for themes.

Results and Discussion

The results have been separated and discussed according to the item style (quantitative and qualitative). The quantitative results section explores seven items that asked students to rate their experience with written CF and VCF and one multiple-choice item. The qualitative results section looks at the students' answers to the open-ended question, which was used to gain insight into why students responded the way they did to the quantitative items.

Quantitative Results

Students responded to the first seven statements of the questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." There were three statements given for both video feedback and written feedback (six in total). These results were used to understand student perceptions of each type of feedback. The statements were:

1. The video/written feedback for the imaginary dialog was useful.
2. The video/written feedback helped me improve my English.
3. The video/written feedback for the imaginary dialogues was easy to understand.

Concerning the first statement, students perceived both forms of feedback to be useful. In both instances, most students (n = 44, 88%) agreed or strongly agreed that the feedback was useful. A minority of students (n = 2, 4%) disagreed that the written feedback was useful while there were no negative responses to the video feedback.

When asked about whether the type of feedback helped them improve their English, again the students responded positively. Forty-six students (92%) agreed or strongly agreed that video feedback helped them improve their English. The results for the written feedback was nearly identical to the first statement.

The third statement concerned how easy it was to understand the types of feedback. Again, the results were overwhelmingly positive with slightly more students (n = 45) finding video feedback easy to understand compared to the written feedback (n = 42).

These results were not surprising as they are in line with previous research findings,

especially that students appreciate both types of feedback (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Cunningham, 2017). In planning the questionnaire, we were concerned that students might respond positively to both kinds of CF, leaving little insight into students' preferences. Thus, the next statement directly compared the two types of feedback: "The video feedback for the imaginary dialogues was better than the written feedback." 31 students agreed (n = 17, 34%) or strongly agreed (n = 14, 28%) that the video feedback was better. While 15 students (30%) did not offer any preference, only four students (8%) disagreed with the statement. While the earlier statements seemed to suggest that students perceived both forms of feedback nearly equally, here the majority of students demonstrated a clear preference for video feedback. This response also echoes previous research claiming that video feedback is preferred (Bahula & Kay, 2020; Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Cunningham, 2017; Jones et al., 2012).

The multiple-choice question asked students which type of feedback they preferred, video or written. This question was asked to confirm the results of the previous statement. While the numbers were not identical, more than half of the students (n = 28, 56%) preferred video feedback. The jump in the number of students who preferred written feedback might be attributed to those who did not offer any preference on the previous statement.

Qualitative Results

The final item on the questionnaire was an open-ended short-answer response to the question "Why did you prefer your answer to the question above? Explain in detail." The answers to this question provided a clearer understanding of which type of feedback students preferred and why they felt that way. The students' responses were copied into one document and then imported into MAXQDA11 for data analysis. The answers to the question were analyzed individually and coded. After that, we confirmed similar findings and reanalyzed them until the codes could be reduced to themes. Through this process, three key themes emerged concerning students' preference for video feedback: (1) it is easier to understand, (2) it can help foster a connection between the student and teacher, and (3) it provides authentic listening practice.

Eighteen of the 28 participants who preferred video feedback commented that it was easier to understand than written feedback. The following comments represent the majority of these responses: "I like written feedback and video feedback. But video feedback was easier to understand where I made mistakes." "Because I could know more why I get that score. And it was easy to understand why I get that score." "I could know better expressions and understand my grammatical mistakes more easily."

One explanation for the common opinion above is the number of words per minute that can be provided through video feedback compared to written feedback is greater. Going by Stannard's (2008) estimate of 200 words per minute, a 6-minute video could offer over 1,000 words of feedback. Even with fewer words per minute, the opportunity for more detailed feedback is evident. Furthermore, with more detail comes more opportunities to explain why a particular grade was given. When this happens, students no longer need to guess what the teacher is trying to convey. In addition, prosody plays an important role in expressing meaning. This may alleviate some miscommunication that may be present with written feedback. For example, students may interpret a teacher's written CF as cold or angry, especially when there are several corrections on one assignment. With VCF, the same CF can be expressed in a caring and helpful manner, and thus helping reduce misinterpretation.

While most of the participants commented that video feedback was easier to understand, several students (n = 6) added that it also benefits listening practice. The following comments express this opinion: "I can listen to English and study, and I can see that the teacher can read my imaginary dialogue." "My listening skills improved and it doesn't take a lot of time to understand feedback than written feedback." "I felt video feedback is easier to understand than written feedback. And I just think sounds are better for studying English than letters."

Some of the comments overlap with the recognition of video feedback being easier to understand, reinforcing the importance of prosody in expressing meaning. Because so much meaning is expressed in intonation and stress, prosody is also essential for listening practice. The last example above also illustrates learning preferences. Some students may be visual learners, while others may be auditory learners. The benefit of video feedback is that it can accommodate both of these preferences. On the other hand, written feedback can only support visual preference.

Five students commented that video feedback helped foster a connection between the student and teacher. The following examples support this theme: "The video feedback was good to review one as if we get advised by you directly." "I felt like the teacher was teaching next to me, and I thought it was easy to understand." "Because I can feel that my teacher take time to feedback on my imaginary dialogs. It make students feel happy."

The examples above echo previous research that video feedback feels more personal, as if the teacher were in the room with the students (Jones et al., 2012). Positive relationships between students and teachers are essential for successful learning environments and improving motivation. When classes are held online, more effort is required to foster such relationships. The last example demonstrates two key

characteristics of video feedback: it shows students that the teacher (1) cares about them, and (2) is carefully reading and grading their work. For teachers who are concerned about student-teacher dynamics, video feedback offers an additional means of building rapport.

Alternatively, some students preferred written feedback. Analysis of these responses revealed two key themes: (1) written feedback was easier to understand and (2) more convenient to access. Because students' listening skills vary, it is predictable that some students would prefer written feedback. More than half of the students who preferred written feedback (n = 12) commented on this point: "I like learning while thinking about the meanings and rules of words and grammar. So the written feedback was easy for me to understand." "I felt that text feedback was easier to understand. I am not good at listening." "It's because I couldn't catch what my teacher said on video feedback. But on written feedback I could read correctly and understand."

The first example comments on an analysis focused on grammar and vocabulary. In this study, we avoided giving explicit CF. Thus, learners looking for such feedback may have to pause the video and review it multiple times to understand. With written feedback, it is always accessible. The second and third comments specifically attribute their preference to listening ability. Whether it is the ability or a confidence issue, this should factor in a teacher's decision to use video feedback. However, teachers can add written comments while recording.

Additionally, seven students commented that written feedback was more convenient to access as seen in the following examples: "It can be printed and reviewed. And I think it would be hard for the teacher to return the video one by one." "Because video feedback takes some time. And I can quickly find the part and see the detail I want to review." "I can see the explain whenever I want such as in the train." The comments about time are realistic. With so many Japanese students commuting to school and working part-time jobs, time management is an issue that should not be overlooked. Ease of access, even on the train, is important. Moreover, students cannot skip through video feedback to catch the most critical points. Instead, students will have to listen to the whole video carefully. Reviewing video feedback comments is not necessarily easier.

While students' concerns about video feedback are worthy of consideration, solutions are more readily available via video feedback than written feedback. Teachers can add written feedback while recording. Language is not a set of isolated skills despite being often taught that way. Thus, video feedback offers a multimodal approach that can accommodate multiple learning preferences while reinforcing the integrated aspect of language learning.

Limitations

While offering an insight into the attitudes of Japanese students to VSC feedback, this study does have limitations. First, on reflection, some of the statements written in English in the questionnaire were ambiguous and therefore subject to student interpretation. Future work should include more precise explanations or Japanese translations. Second, the questionnaire failed to establish the nature and extent of CF students received prior to entering university. The addition of a question on their experience of feedback would help indicate whether, similar to other research, this feedback medium was innovative and new to the students. If so, VSC may have had a novelty effect that piqued students' interest resulting in them perceiving it as better than written CF. To gain a clearer interpretation, longitudinal studies are strongly recommended that follow a greater number of teachers and students over an extended period. Finally, this study did not attempt to measure students' language improvement after both forms of feedback and subsequently, so it cannot argue for one form of feedback over the other based on either form's effectiveness. Despite these limitations, the present study offers an insight into students' receptiveness to VSC feedback as an alternative to written CF in a Japanese university context and informed the researchers at least of an alternative form of CF, thus expanding teachers' toolkits for providing feedback.

Conclusion

As more teaching institutions incorporate technology into their lesson delivery, an area that has the potential to benefit both students and teachers is the use of VSC feedback. Many studies carried out globally indicate that students are receptive to this mode of feedback, as they find it conversational and thus more personal. However, until the present study there was a dearth of research on this topic in a Japanese context. In addressing the research question about which medium of feedback students prefer, written CF or VSC feedback, this research found that many students in a Japanese 1st-year university course preferred VSC feedback because it was easier to understand, helped foster a connection between the student and teacher, and provided authentic listening practice. Subsequently, VSC feedback may be able to deepen the relationship between the students and teachers which is ever more important if education is going to continue online. Despite some minor issues with understanding how to use the technology, the researchers found this type of feedback to be richer than written CF due to its ability to enhance both negative and positive commentary with intonation, word

stress, and tone. However, VSC feedback in this study resembled written CF insofar as it failed to create a two-way dialogue between the teacher and student and followed a one-way transmission from the feedback provider. Furthermore, the degree between those who preferred VSC and written feedback was not overwhelming. While the technology does offer another CF tool for teachers, further areas of research are required into VSC feedback to better understand its value. First, what factor does novelty play in students' positive appraisals of this feedback? Second, in comparison to written CF, to what extent do students engage with VSC feedback. Finally, and most importantly, does this mode actually improve EFL students' writing competency? Once these issues are addressed and explored in greater detail, educators can begin to structure effective feedback strategies that target students' writing skills.

Bio Data

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Appendix A

Example Imaginary Dialogue

Unit 6 Imaginary Dialogue
Marriage & Relationships

Create a conversation about marriage and relationships.

- Include at least 5 vocabulary from the unit (change the text color to **red**)
- Include conversation strategies from the unit (change the text color to **blue**)
- Use unit content, project information, or other information about marriage and relationships.
- Start and end the conversation smoothly.

Vocabulary Used:	**Conversation Strategies Used:**
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2.

You need at least 20 lines of dialogue. Please start each speaker with **A:** or **B:** or a name (e.g. **John:**).

A:
B:
3
4
5
6
7
8
9

Appendix B

Questionnaire

1. The video feedback for the imaginary dialogues was useful.
2. The video feedback for the imaginary dialogues helped me improve my English.
3. The written feedback for the imaginary dialogues was useful.
4. The video feedback for the imaginary dialogues helped me improve my English.
5. The video feedback for the imaginary dialogues was easy to understand.
6. The written feedback for the imaginary dialogues was easy to understand.
7. The video feedback for the imaginary dialogues was better than the written feedback.
8. Which type of feedback did you prefer?
9. Why did you prefer your answer to the question above? Explain in detail.