

REFLECTIVE DIALOGIC ASSESSMENT: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO TEACHER–STUDENT FEEDBACK JOURNALS IN POSTGRADUATE ELT PROGRAMS

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Abstract. In higher education, feedback serves not only as an evaluation tool but also as a means to support active student engagement in the learning process. However, feedback practices are often one-way, leaving students as passive recipients. This study aims to explore how reflective dialogic assessment is constructed through teacher-student feedback journals and how these practices support reflective learning in a postgraduate English Language Teaching (ELT) program. The study used a qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry design involving postgraduate students in the Academic Writing course. Data were obtained through teacher-student feedback journals, written reflections, and student responses to lecturer feedback, which were then analyzed thematically and narratively. The results showed that dialogic feedback encouraged students to be more reflective, recognize their academic weaknesses, and be more active in revising their writing. The two-way interaction through feedback journals also deepened students' understanding of the academic writing process. These findings suggest that teacher-student feedback journals have the potential to support more reflective, dialogic, and student-centered learning in the postgraduate ELT context.

Keywords: Reflective Dialogic Assessment, Dialogic Feedback, Feedback Literacy, Teacher–Student Feedback Journals, Narrative Inquiry, ELT Postgraduate Students

Abstrak. Dalam pendidikan tinggi, umpan balik tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai alat evaluasi, tetapi juga sebagai sarana yang mendukung keterlibatan aktif mahasiswa dalam proses belajar. Namun, praktik umpan balik masih sering berlangsung secara satu arah sehingga mahasiswa cenderung menjadi penerima pasif. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi bagaimana penilaian dialogis reflektif dibangun melalui jurnal umpan balik guru-mahasiswa dan bagaimana praktik tersebut mendukung pembelajaran reflektif dalam program *English Language Teaching* (ELT) pascasarjana. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain inkuiri naratif yang melibatkan mahasiswa pascasarjana pada mata kuliah Penulisan Akademik. Data diperoleh melalui jurnal umpan balik guru-mahasiswa, refleksi tertulis, dan respons mahasiswa terhadap umpan balik dosen, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik-naratif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa umpan balik dialogis mendorong mahasiswa untuk lebih reflektif, mengenali kelemahan akademiknya, serta lebih aktif dalam merevisi tulisan. Interaksi dua arah melalui jurnal umpan balik juga memperdalam pemahaman mahasiswa terhadap proses penulisan akademik. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa jurnal umpan balik guru-mahasiswa berpotensi mendukung pembelajaran yang lebih reflektif, dialogis, dan berpusat pada mahasiswa dalam konteks ELT pascasarjana.

Kata Kunci: Penilaian Dialogis Reflektif, Umpan Balik Dialogis, Literasi Umpan Balik, Jurnal Umpan Balik Guru-Siswa, Penyelidikan Naratif, Mahasiswa Pascasarjana ELT

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INTRODUCTION

In higher education, assessment is no longer viewed merely as a tool for measuring learning outcomes but as an integral part of the learning process that supports students' active engagement and continuous development. Within this perspective, feedback plays a central role in helping students understand their strengths and weaknesses and improve their academic performance. However, feedback practices in higher education are still frequently characterized by a transmissive approach, in which lecturers provide comments and students act as passive recipients (Hill & West, 2020). As a result, feedback often functions as post-assessment information rather than as a meaningful learning process.

This issue is particularly evident in English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts, where feedback is essential for developing academic writing skills. Previous studies have shown that students often struggle to engage actively with feedback and tend to view it merely as corrective information (Wang et al., 2022). According to Carless (2020), the effectiveness of feedback depends not only on the quality of comments provided by lecturers but also on students' ability to interpret, reflect upon, and use feedback constructively. This capability is commonly referred to as *student feedback literacy*. Similarly, Gravett (2020) argues that feedback should be understood as a social practice involving interaction, participation, and shared meaning-making rather than a one-way transmission of information.

To address these limitations, scholars have increasingly promoted dialogic feedback approaches that emphasize interaction and collaboration between teachers and students. Steen-Utheim and Wittek (2017) explain that dialogic feedback enables students to negotiate meaning, ask questions, and clarify misunderstandings, thereby transforming feedback into an interactive learning process. Likewise, Er et al. (2020) highlight the importance of collaborative dialogue in supporting students' learning development. In ELT settings, dialogic feedback has been found to enhance learner engagement, writing development, and reflective learning (Susanti et al., 2025; Zhao et al., 2023; Li & Qian, 2024). Nevertheless, the implementation of dialogic feedback remains challenging due to time constraints, classroom structures, and varying levels of student readiness to participate actively in feedback processes (Hill & West, 2022).

One promising strategy for facilitating sustained dialogue is the use of teacher–student feedback journals. These journals provide a structured space where students can reflect on feedback and lecturers can respond to students' reflections, creating an ongoing dialogue. Chinpakdee (2025) found that dialogic feedback practices can strengthen students' feedback literacy when learners are actively involved in reflective processes. Similarly, Jwa (2024)

demonstrated that written feedback dialogue promotes deeper engagement through repeated interactions between teachers and students. Furthermore, Le and Pham (2025) emphasized that reflective dialogue helps students connect feedback with their learning experiences, leading to more meaningful and self-regulated learning.

Although dialogic feedback has been widely discussed in the literature, several gaps remain. Existing studies have primarily focused on peer feedback practices, writing revision processes, and general feedback engagement (Banister, 2020; Tam, 2020; Zhao et al., 2023). Research investigating lecturer–student feedback interactions has received comparatively less attention, particularly regarding how reflective dialogic assessment develops through sustained written exchanges. Furthermore, while Enita and Sumardi (2022) explored postgraduate students' engagement with dialogic feedback, their study did not specifically examine teacher–student feedback journals as a medium for fostering reflective assessment. Consequently, little is known about how reflective and dialogic learning processes emerge through continuous written interactions between lecturers and postgraduate students.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the formation of reflective dialogic assessment through teacher–student feedback journals in a postgraduate ELT context. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined peer feedback or general dialogic feedback practices, this research specifically explores how reflective dialogue develops through sustained lecturer–student interactions and how these interactions support students' reflective learning during the academic writing process. By examining students' lived experiences within feedback journals, this study provides a deeper understanding of the micro-level processes through which dialogic assessment is constructed in higher education.

Therefore, this study aims to explore how reflective dialogic assessment is formed through teacher–student feedback journals in postgraduate ELT classrooms and how these journals support students' reflective learning in academic writing. Specifically, the study investigates the nature of dialogic interactions that emerge through written feedback exchanges between lecturers and students, as well as the ways these interactions encourage reflection, engagement, and revision practices. By examining students' experiences with feedback journals, this research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how dialogic feedback can facilitate reflective learning and strengthen students' feedback literacy. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of research on dialogic assessment and offer practical insights for implementing more reflective, student-centered feedback practices in postgraduate ELT education.

METHOD

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry design to understand students' learning experiences through reflections and narratives that they write during the learning process. This approach allows researchers to explore how students interpret their experiences in receiving and using feedback in the academic writing process. The research participants were about 6–10 postgraduate students in the ELT program who took the Academic Writing course. Participants will be selected purposively based on their involvement in academic writing activities as well as the use of feedback journals during the learning process.

The main instrument of this research is teacher-student feedback journals which are used as a medium of reflective interaction between lecturers and students. To support the depth of student reflection, this study also uses reflective question guides that help students write down their learning experiences in a more targeted way. The data obtained will then be analyzed using thematic narrative analysis to identify students' reflection patterns, their responses to the feedback given, and possible changes in the way they understand the academic writing process.

Data Source/Object of Study

The data source in this study is graduate students who take Academic Writing courses in the English Language Teaching (ELT) program. This research focuses on the feedback interaction that occurs between lecturers and students during the academic writing process.

The main data of the research will be obtained from teacher-student feedback journals, which are reflective journals that contain student writings about their experiences in the writing process and lecturers' responses to the reflections. Through this journal, students can reflect on the difficulties they face, their understanding of the feedback given, and the changes they made in the revision of their writing.

Research Instrument

The instruments in this study were developed based on the concept of feedback literacy which emphasizes the active involvement of students in understanding and using feedback as part of the learning process. As explained by (Carless & Boud, 2018) feedback literacy includes the ability of students to appreciate the value of feedback, interpret the meaning contained in it, and take action based on that feedback. Furthermore, (Carless, 2020) emphasized that the role of students in the feedback process needs to be activated so that they not only become

recipients of information, but also agents who actively build understanding of feedback. In line with that, (Malecka et al., 2020) stated that the feedback process involves three main mechanisms, namely eliciting, processing, and enacting feedback, which shows that students not only receive feedback, but also process and implement it in learning. Therefore, the instruments in this study are designed to capture how students understand, evaluate, and use feedback in the context of their learning.

In addition, the development of this instrument also refers to the concept of dialogic feedback which emphasizes the importance of two-way interaction between lecturers and students in the feedback process. (Nicol, 2010) explained that effective feedback should be dialogical, where students are given the opportunity to respond, clarify, and discuss the feedback they receive. In a broader framework, (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) emphasizes that good feedback should support self-regulated learning, where students actively monitor and evaluate their learning process. Based on this theoretical framework, this research instrument is realized in the form of teacher-student feedback journals equipped with reflective prompts. This instrument is used to identify feedback interaction patterns, student responses to feedback, and reflection processes that occur during learning, thus allowing researchers to understand how reflective dialogic assessment is formed in the context of postgraduate level ELT

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this study was carried out through teacher-student feedback journals used during the Academic Writing learning process in the postgraduate ELT program. The main data of the research were obtained from lecturers' written comments or feedback on student writing drafts, student revision responses, and students' written reflections on their experiences in receiving and understanding feedback during the academic writing process.

The data collection process is carried out in stages following the development of students' academic writing. The researcher collected several drafts of student writings that had received feedback from lecturers, especially in the discussion and conclusion section which showed a more in-depth feedback interaction. In addition, students were also asked to fill out a written reflection through a Google Form to explain their experience in understanding feedback, the difficulties they faced during revision, and how the feedback affected their academic learning and writing process. To gain a deeper understanding of the practice of reflective dialogic assessment, this study also pays attention to the forms of two-way interaction that arise in the feedback process, such as student responses to lecturers' comments, revisions made by students, and students' efforts in understanding the meaning of the feedback given. All data that has been

obtained is then documented and organized systematically before being analyzed using thematic narrative analysis

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using thematic narrative analysis to explore how reflective dialogic assessment was constructed through teacher–student feedback journals. The analysis followed three main stages. First, all feedback journals, students’ written reflections, and responses to lecturer feedback were read repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants’ experiences. Second, the data were coded by identifying meaningful segments related to feedback engagement, reflective learning, dialogic interaction, and students’ responses to feedback. Similar codes were then grouped into broader categories and developed into themes. Third, the identified themes were interpreted by relating them to the concepts of dialogic feedback, feedback literacy, and reflective learning within the context of postgraduate ELT. The findings were subsequently presented in a narrative form to illustrate how feedback interactions supported students’ reflection and engagement in academic writing.

Data Validity

To ensure trustworthiness, this study employed data triangulation and member checking. Triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from multiple sources, including teacher–student feedback journals, students’ written reflections, and responses to lecturer feedback. Member checking was carried out by asking selected participants to review and confirm the researchers’ interpretations of the data. These procedures helped enhance the credibility and accuracy of the findings.

RESULTS

Based on the results of students’ reflection on lecturers’ feedback in the academic writing process, this study found that the practice of reflective dialogic assessment is formed through feedback interaction that encourages students to understand, revise, and reflect on their writing process. From the results of the data analysis, four main themes were found that describe students’ experiences in receiving and using lecturer feedback in academic writing learning in the ELT program at the graduate level.

Theme : Lecturer Feedback as a Guide in Improving Academic Writing

The results of the study show that most students view lecturer feedback as an important guide in improving the quality of their academic writing. The feedback provided is not only related to grammar errors, but also includes article structure, coherence, use of theory, academic style, APA citations, and the development of arguments in the discussion section. One of the participants, Participant 3, explained that the lecturer's feedback helped him understand the importance of the relationship between the results of the research and the previous theory.

"I learned that discussion should not only explain the results, but also relate findings to previous theories and research."

The same thing was also conveyed by Participant 7 who stated that lecturer feedback made him pay more attention to the use of academic language in writing articles.

"I became aware that academic writing must be formal and clear. Many parts of my writing are still too generic and unacademic."

In addition, some students also explained that lecturer feedback helped them understand the weaknesses of the writing that they were not aware of before. Participant 12 revealed that the revisions made after receiving feedback made her writing more structured and systematic.

"After the revision, I felt that my writing was much neater because I knew which parts were less clear and needed to be corrected."

These findings suggest that feedback not only serves as a final evaluation, but also as a learning direction that helps students develop the quality of their academic writing in more depth.

Theme 2: Student Reflective Engagement with Feedback

The second theme shows that students not only passively receive feedback, but also engage reflectively in understanding and evaluating their own writing. Many students admitted to re-reading lecturers' comments repeatedly to understand the meaning of feedback and relate it to the weaknesses of their writing. Participant 5 explained that the revision process made him more reflective of the way he structured his ideas and arguments.

"Feedback makes me more careful in writing. I have been checking more often to see if my idea is clear or not."

Meanwhile, Participant 2 stated that feedback helped her realize mistakes that she hadn't noticed before.

"From that feedback, I realized that there were still many errors in my writing that I previously thought were correct."

In addition, some students also started to change their writing habits after receiving feedback. Participant 1 explained that he started making an outline first before writing a draft article.

"Now I always make an outline before I start writing so that my ideas are more directed."

These findings show that feedback encourages students to reflect on their own learning process. In this context, feedback not only results in revisions of writing, but also shapes students' awareness of the way they learn and write academically.

Theme 3: Students' Challenges in Understanding and Applying Feedback

Although feedback provides many benefits, the results of the study also show that students still experience various difficulties in understanding and applying lecturer feedback. These difficulties mainly arise in the discussion, critical analysis, coherence, and development of academic arguments. Participant 4 revealed that she felt confused when the lecturer asked for a more in-depth analysis.

"When the lecturer said that my analysis was still too shallow, I was confused about which part to improve and what the deeper analysis example looked like."

A similar thing was also experienced by Participant 9 who found it difficult to relate the findings to previous research.

"The hardest part is the discussion because you have to explain the results more critically, not just describe the data."

In addition, some students also admitted that they had difficulty writing using a formal academic style and reduced the use of AI-detected language. Participant 11 explained that he often had difficulty composing academic sentences in his own language.

"Sometimes I have trouble stringing together academic sentences myself, so the revision process is quite challenging."

These findings suggest that although students understand the importance of feedback, they still need more specific direction and more in-depth dialogue to be able to optimally apply feedback in their academic writing.

Theme 4: Dialogic Feedback as an Interactive Learning Process

The last theme shows that feedback is not only seen as a correction of writing, but also as an interaction process that helps students understand their learning more deeply. Many students expressed a desire to discuss further with lecturers regarding the feedback given. Participant 1 stated that he wanted to ask for concrete examples from the lecturer regarding good analysis in the discussion section.

"I want the lecturer to show a good example of discussion so that I can better understand how to write a more critical analysis."

Meanwhile, Participant 6 revealed that feedback made her more confident in improving her academic writing.

"Feedback helps me understand the weaknesses of my writing and gives me a clear direction for revision."

In addition, some students also view feedback as an important part of the learning process, not just an assignment assessment. Participant 15 explained that lecturer feedback provides a new learning experience in understanding the structure of good academic articles.

"I learned a lot about how to write academic articles more professionally."

These findings show that dialogical feedback practices are able to create a more interactive and reflective learning process. Through feedback, students not only receive corrections, but also build a new understanding of the academic writing process and the development of their abilities as academic writers.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that the practice of reflective dialogic assessment is formed through feedback interaction between lecturers and students that takes place in a reflective and sustainable manner. Students in this study not only view feedback as a correction to writing errors, but also as a learning process that helps them understand academic weaknesses, improve the quality of writing, and develop awareness of their own learning process. This finding is in line with the view of (Carless, 2020) who emphasizes that feedback should no longer be understood as a process of transmitting information from lecturers to students, but as a process that activates the role of students in understanding and actively using feedback. In addition, (Hill & West, 2020) explain that the dialogic feed-forward approach is able to improve students' learning experience because feedback is positioned as part of a continuous learning process, not just a final evaluation.

The findings of the first theme show that lecturer feedback serves as an important guide in helping students improve their academic writing, especially in the aspects of coherence, use of theory, argumentation structure, and academic style. Students show that they begin to understand how to build more systematic academic writing after receiving feedback from lecturers. These results support the research of (Yu & Liu, 2021) who explain that feedback literacy develops when students are able to understand the purpose of feedback and use that feedback to improve the quality of their academic writing. In addition, (Wu & Lei, 2023) found that dialogue that takes place through a multi-draft writing process can help graduate students develop a deeper understanding of feedback and the academic writing process. Thus, the feedback in this study not only serves to show students' mistakes, but also helps students build a new understanding of academic writing practices.

In the second theme, the results of the study showed that students were involved in responding reflectively to the feedback they received. Students reread the lecturer's comments, evaluate the weaknesses of their writing, and begin to change their writing strategies after the revision process. These findings show the development of reflective awareness and self-regulated learning in the academic writing process of students. (Yang & Zhang, 2023) explain that student involvement in feedback is greatly influenced by students' self-regulation ability to monitor and evaluate their own learning process. In addition, (Manepakathorn, 2023) found that the practice of reflective dialogue journal writing can help EFL students reflect on their learning experiences more deeply through a continuous process of written dialogue. In the context of this research, feedback journals are a reflective space that allows students to understand their learning process more consciously and personally.

However, the results of the study also show that students still have difficulties in understanding and applying lecturer feedback, especially in the discussion, critical analysis, and development of academic arguments. Some students admitted that they needed additional explanations and more concrete examples to be able to understand the meaning of feedback more clearly. These findings show that written feedback alone is not always enough to help students understand the needs of revision optimally. (Nedrehagen et al., 2025) in their scoping review explained that the practice of dialogic formative feedback in higher education still faces challenges in creating interactions that truly support students' understanding of feedback. In addition, (Susanti et al., 2025) also showed that the implementation of dialogic feedback in the context of ELT is still influenced by student readiness, the form of interaction, and the quality of communication between lecturers and students. Thus, the results of this study show that

students still need a more explicit dialogue space so that the feedback process can run more effectively.

Another important finding in this study is the emergence of students' need for more intensive two-way interaction with lecturers during the feedback process. Some students showed a desire to discuss further, ask for clarification, and obtain concrete examples related to the comments given by the lecturer. This shows that students no longer view feedback as a one-way comment, but as an academic communication process that helps them understand learning more deeply. These findings are in line with (Jwa, 2024) research which developed a written feedback dialogue model as a cyclical process that involves providing feedback, student response, revision, and follow-up interaction repeatedly. In addition, (Chinpakdee, 2025) explained that a dialogical approach in feedback can help improve student feedback literacy because students are given space to actively ask, respond, and reflect on the feedback received. In the context of this research, the process can be seen through the desire of students to understand feedback more deeply and use that feedback to improve their writing.

Overall, this study shows that the use of teacher-student feedback journals has the potential to support students' reflective learning at the ELT postgraduate level. Through the feedback journal, students not only receive comments from lecturers, but also build reflections on their own learning experiences. These findings support the research of (Le & Pham, 2025) who explain that dialogic reflection can be a bridge between lecturer feedback and the development of students' understanding of their learning process. In addition, (Enita & Sumardi, 2023) also found that postgraduate students view dialogic feedback as a process that helps them understand academic expectations and develop thesis writing skills more deeply. Therefore, this study shows that the practice of reflective dialogic assessment through teacher-student feedback journals can create a more reflective, interactive, and academic development oriented learning process

CONCLUSION

This study shows that reflective dialogic assessment is formed through feedback interactions that take place in a reflective and dialogical manner between lecturers and students in the academic writing process in the ELT program at the graduate level. The results of the study show that feedback is not only understood as a correction to students' writing, but also as part of the learning process that helps students understand their academic weaknesses, reflect on the learning process, and gradually improve the quality of writing. Through teacher-student

feedback journals, students show active involvement in reading, understanding, and responding to feedback provided by lecturers.

In addition, this study also found that dialogical feedback practices are able to encourage the development of students' reflective learning. Students not only revise their writing, but also begin to evaluate writing strategies, understand previously unrealized mistakes, and develop an awareness of their own academic learning process. In this context, feedback journals serve as a space for reflection that allows students to build a deeper understanding of their learning experiences during the academic writing process. However, this study also shows that students still experience several challenges in understanding and applying feedback, especially in the aspects of critical analysis, coherence, and academic argumentation development. Some students still need clarification and more concrete examples in order to understand the meaning of feedback more optimally. These findings show that the effectiveness of dialogic feedback is not only influenced by the quality of lecturers' comments, but also by the existence of two-way interactions that support students' understanding of the feedback given.

Overall, this research contributes to the development of dialogic feedback and feedback literacy studies in the context of postgraduate level ELT, especially through the use of teacher-student feedback journals as reflective and dialogical media in academic learning. This study also has limitations because it only involves a limited number of participants and focuses on one specific learning context. Therefore, further research can explore the practice of reflective dialogic assessment in other learning contexts or by involving more diverse forms of feedback interaction to gain a broader understanding of the dialogical feedback process in higher education.

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