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Documenting Feedback during Formal Formative Reading Assessment:
Writing-in-Interaction and its Consequences for Second Language Students

（正式な形成的読解評価におけるフィードバックの文書化
ライティング・イン・インタラクションと第二言語学習者への影響について）

Educational assessments are often presented through statistics, but for students and teachers in compulsory (K-12) schooling, they are social interactions. Second language (L2) students, especially, face challenges in both language and academic learning, leading to lower reading scores and graduation rates. One way to support such students is by providing feedback on their ongoing learning, within the vehicle of formative assessment (FA). This study aims to explore how feedback is provided to L2 students during formative reading FA, highlighting the role of writing in these interactions to enhance teaching practices and support vulnerable learners.

Research on formal, or planned and discrete FA in K-12 education presents two perspectives on feedback. The first views it as a discrete event focused on discussing and evaluating past student performance. The second sees feedback as an ongoing process that occurs during the assessment, aimed at enhancing students' current performance through immediate interaction. Both approaches highlight the significance of feedback, but they emphasize different aspects of the assessment experience. Despite such research on feedback in K-12 formal FA, the role of writing in this context remains underexplored.

Writing is vital for documenting student performance and providing feedback, especially for L2 students, who often underperform in reading. Previous studies indicate that teachers use written records to shape feedback but lack detailed analysis of these writings. Writing is crucial in formal reading FA because it not only helps teachers feedback to students, but also to document student performance, thus providing a record for future teaching and accountability to stakeholders like administrators and parents.

This written feedback distinguishes formal assessments from informal ones, which offer more immediate but fleeting feedback. Without documentation, informal feedback is tied to the immediate context of the assessment. In contrast, feedback in formal assessments may be delayed, making it necessary to document it. This documentation serves as a tool for future planning and accountability in education.

However, analyzing written feedback in formal assessments can be tricky. For example, if we only examine the final written product, we miss the process that led to its creation. A simple item like a shopping list demonstrates this point; while it serves as a helpful cognitive tool to remind someone what to buy, it doesn't reveal the collaborative or individual reasoning behind its creation.

A shopping list could be the result of a discussion between two people or a dictation, but the final product offers no clues about these interactions. This becomes important when misunderstandings arise (e.g. a missing item on the list) because the list itself doesn't explain how it was created or why certain items were left off.

This concept also applies to written feedback in formal reading FA. If we can't understand the process that led to the feedback which is documented in writing, we risk misinterpreting its purpose or failing to address the real needs of the student. Written documentation can be a powerful tool, but it needs to be studied with attention to both the material and interactional aspects of the writing process. This study proposes a new approach by focusing on writing as an interactional activity, using multimodal analysis to explore both the content and the context of written feedback during formal reading FA. Understanding how feedback is organized through writing is crucial for improving literacy outcomes and tailoring instruction for L2 students.

The current study applies the methodology of multimodal Conversation Analysis (CA). CA focuses on interaction as an orderly process shaped by shared practices. CA is fundamentally qualitative scientific method for studying social interaction, prioritizing detailed observation and the analysis of individual cases as well as collection-based analysis. It defines interactional phenomena empirically, aiming to clarify behavioral patterns and their normative origins. Talk-based, embodied and material resources are analyzed.

The research questions that guided the dissertation study are listed below:

1. How do K-12 teachers and student accomplish feedback after performance and its written documentation within formal formative reading assessment?
2. How do K-12 teachers and student accomplish feedback during performance and its written documentation within formal formative reading assessment?
3. How might the interactional and material organizations of both types of feedback affect the purposeful participation of L2 students in formal formative reading assessment?

The data analysis began by revealing a specific feedback interaction between a teacher and a student, where the teacher faced difficulty helping the student correct what appeared to be an incorrect response to a comprehension question. Writing, feedback, and language learning were critical not just for structuring the interaction, but also for how the participants understood and communicated their experiences.

This discovery was both enlightening and perplexing. It became evident that the teacher's structured approach to addressing the student's language abilities might have actually obscured her understanding of his comprehension. A key question that emerged was why these methods seemed to blur the student's proficiency, and how this confusion might be rooted in shared interactional practices.

To explore this, I broadened the analysis to understand the practice more generally, examining multiple instances in the data before returning to the specific case. While general insights are useful, they should be interpreted cautiously. Understanding how a practice works helps identify the challenges participants face and the strategies they use, but it doesn't establish a fixed framework for every situation. Each case is shaped by its own interactional history and can influence future interactions, so it was important to consider the case within the broader context.

The analysis was structured to achieve a balance of specificity, generality, and significance. It began with a chronological analysis, followed by a collection-based analysis, and finally, the single-case analysis. This reverse order helped readers understand the broader context before focusing on the details of the individual case of feedback interaction. The result of the analysis is an analytic account for a practice I term *documenting feedback*.

The analysis explores the complex relationship between writing and feedback in formal formative reading assessments for L2 students. It highlights that written documentation aids feedback during performance but can lead to selective focus, often neglecting comprehension in favor of correcting language issues. While past writings inform later feedback, this can limit meaningful negotiation. The findings suggest re-evaluating feedback structures to better represent L2 students' capabilities and foster a more inclusive learning environment.

This study significantly enhances our understanding of feedback during formal reading assessments for L2 students. It highlights that feedback involves not just spoken words but also physical actions and materials, such as gaze and assessment sheets. The research emphasizes collaboration, showing that student responses are shaped by teacher support through various cues. It also reveals how documentation can lead to misdiagnoses of student difficulties, reinforcing deficit mindsets. Overall, it illustrates the complex interplay of interaction, materiality, and multimodal communication in K-12 settings.