Interpretation and Utilization of Written Commentary: Views from International L2 Writers and Their Instructors

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This proposed dissertation investigates the interpretation and utilization of teacher written commentary by international L2 writers in an undergraduate composition course for multilingual writers. It seeks to uncover why these writers are successful and unsuccessful in revising written work for which they have received feedback. This qualitative multiple-case study analyzes writers’ own texts, the actual written commentary they receive from their instructor, and the revisions they make over the entire feedback and revision cycle of an essay assignment. Interviews with the case study participants and their instructors provide an emic perspective of the experience uncommon in the literature. A pilot study for this proposed empirical work found that an international L2 writer was able to understand his instructor’s written commentary despite heavy pragmatic indirectness. He was not, however, able to revise key issues in his essay at the level his instructor expected despite multiple attempts. Data suggest this was due to the learner’s lack of understanding of the target, limited language development to achieve the target, or both.