

A Comparative Analysis of Law and Japanese Language Lecturers' Feedback on Postgraduate Legal Essays

Yuki Kawarai

Nagoya University, Japan

Abstract

The legal field has unique writing styles, including a strict logical structure, the use of statutes and precedents, and a fact-finding framework. On the other hand, Japanese language lecturers understand sentence- and paragraph-level structures in legal writing and provide feedback to postgraduate students to improve their language proficiency. However, the types of feedback that law and Japanese language lecturers provide to students, and how their expertise is reflected in that feedback, have not been systematically analyzed. Against this background, comparing the feedback from both groups is important for clarifying their respective roles as law and Japanese language lecturers, how their expertise complements one another, and how they contribute to learners' improvement in academic writing proficiency. The aim of this study is to compare feedback provided by law lecturers and by Japanese language lecturers and to clarify how each form of disciplinary expertise is reflected in their feedback. The data consist of 30 law essays written by overseas postgraduate students, organized into three themes, with 10 essays per theme. Feedback from law and Japanese language lecturers was compared and categorized. The analysis revealed three main findings. First, although the two groups of lecturers focus on different aspects of the essay, their comments are not mutually contradictory. Secondly, the feedback from Japanese language lecturers enhances the clarity and coherence of the essays, thereby supporting the effective realization of disciplinary content. Third, feedback from the law lecturers provides disciplinary guidance that informs and shapes the language-focused comments.

Keywords: Academic Writing; Disciplinary Expertise; Japanese Language Education; Postgraduate Students; Written Feedback

