



INCREASING THE OBJECTIVITY OF WRITING SKILLS ASSESSMENT: RUBRIC INTEGRATION AND CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

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ABSTRACT

Assessment of students' writing skills often faces subject-related challenges that interfere with the effectiveness and efficiency of learning. This article examines the effectiveness of using rubrics and constructivist approaches to improve the objectivity of the writing process. Through a study of the educational literature, it was concluded that the rubric provides clear and concise evaluation criteria, which can reduce teacher bias and improve evaluation consistency. Specific, well-structured feedback helps students understand their own strengths and weaknesses in writing while also providing specific guidance for improvement. The integration of feedback and rubrics creates an evaluation system that is more transparent, fair, and focused on student growth. The application of these two instruments has so far resulted in issues such as time constraints and teacher skills. Innovative strategies, such as student participation in rubric development and the use of feedback-based revision sessions, as an effective solution

Keywords: Writing Assessment, Rubric, Constructive Feedback

INTRODUCTION

Writing skills assessment is an important aspect of education because the assessment results show intellectual qualities that are indicators of students' critical thinking and creativity in learning. This assessment of writing skills often raises important questions, the extent to which teachers are not influenced by personal prejudices, preferences for writing, or subjectivity towards students. This may be in line with the research of Nababan and Lase (2023), which states that "teachers often fail to provide objective assessments due to student preferences, religious beliefs, and perceptions." Readiness and ability to evaluate writing skills objectively will improve the performance of the evaluation process and support effective teaching in the future. To answer these problems, educators need to have assessment tools that can memberikan standar yang jelas dan konsisten. Rusilowati (2013) emphasized that "to minimize the subjectivity factor, it is necessary to conduct an objective evaluation with structured instruments," while Muzaffar (2016) stated that "the scoring rubric is an assessment guideline that seeks to suppress subjectivity bias." Thus, the application of a systematic and objective assessment rubric is a strategic solution to ensure fair, accurate, and accountable evaluation results.

Instruments to improve the objectivity of assessments that are familiar with the use of rubrics. Rubrics provide structured criteria that guide teachers in assessing specific aspects of student writing, such as the organization of ideas, grammar, and coherence. Rubrics as a teacher's tool make assessments more transparent and measurable, reducing reliance on the impression of subjectivity. Silvia (2024) stated that rubrics have a clear structure and can increase objectivity in assessment, and facilitate the provision of targeted feedback to students. As a measuring tool for differentiation, using rubrics alone

is not enough if it is not accompanied by constructive feedback. Feedback helps students understand the strengths and weaknesses of their writing, while also providing direction for improvement. In a global context, Sadler (2010) also states that feedback must be clear, purposeful, and timely if it is to help learners close the gap between current and desired performance. The combination of rubrics and feedback is considered to be able to create a more holistic assessment system and oriented towards overall student development.

In its development, rubrics and feedback have been widely discussed in the educational literature and their application to learning assessment in material books. And its implementation in the learning room still faces various obstacles. Obstacles faced by teachers when preparing rubrics that take time or limit flexibility in assessing unique works. In addition to rubric, effective feedback is also very necessary and teachers must have this ability. The main challenges faced by teachers in implementing rubric-based evaluation are the lack of training and limited time in compiling instruments that are in accordance with learning outcomes. Yasni (2024) stated that although portfolios and feedback have great potential in assessing students' writing, teachers still often have difficulty delivering feedback that is formative and constructive. Dan Saba (2024) added that the use of technology can help the assessment process and provide feedback, but challenges arise when teachers do not have adequate digital skills. Individual obstacles in managing rubrics and feedback as instruments for assessing student performance are crucial problems because teachers' ability to assess must master the use of these instruments and measuring tools.

Language learning on writing skills requires appropriate assessment standards and an authentic approach to ensure objectivity and evidence of student improvement. An approach that has proven to be effective is the use of rubric-based assessment instruments combined with constructive feedback. Rubrics provide transparent and standardized criteria so that they can reduce subjectivity in assessment and clarify the success of student learning (Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010). In the context of language teaching, Wang (2017) said that rubrics not only increase transparency in evaluation but also support students' self-reflection on their work, especially when combined with relevant formative feedback. Research by Bukhari et al. (2021) explains that rubrics that are designed effectively and structured are able to provide clear direction in the academic supervision process and strengthen the validity of assessments. Rubric's cubes and constructive feedback are indispensable in building a fair and systematic learning culture in accordance with the process and expected outcomes of students.

Combining rubrics with constructive feedback can increase learning motivation and ways to improve the quality of students' writing. According to Bidna (2024), this approach increases student involvement in the evaluation process and raises independent research standards. On the other hand, Cockett and Jackson (2018), mentioned that students generally find it useful to use rubrics because they provide a clear and easy-to-understand explanation of the correct way to do things. In the context of moderate education, Li et al. (2022) also stated that rubrics can improve quality because they provide a consistent structure for analysis. Furthermore, local research by Hasan (2022) states that students who receive grades based on rubrics show a significant increase in academic writing. Thus, the integration of assessment rubrics and constructive feedback is not only an evaluation instrument, but also serves as a pedagogical strategy to form fair assessments, support sustainable learning, and encourage the achievement of more meaningful learning outcomes.



The main problem faced is that there is still the influence of subjective factors in writing assessment and the use of rubrics and feedback as an evaluation tool has not been optimal. Therefore, this study intends to answer the fundamental questions: (1) How can the rubric and feedback mechanism improve the objectivity of writing skill assessment? (2) What are the implementation challenges and solutions that can be offered to optimize the use of the two assessment instruments in diverse learning contexts?

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of rubrics and feedback in improving the objectivity of students' writing skill assessment. The focus of the study covers two main aspects: first, how the rubric can provide clear and measurable evaluation criteria; Second, the role of constructive feedback in providing specific guidance for the improvement of the paper. The research findings are expected to provide empirical evidence on the contribution of the two tools in creating a fairer and more consistent assessment system, while supporting the development of students' writing competencies more optimally.

This study also examines various practical challenges in the application of rubrics and providing feedback, ranging from technical difficulties to time constraints faced by educators. Based on the identification of these problems, this study formulates innovative strategies to address these barriers, as well as presents policy recommendations that can be implemented at various levels of education. Thus, the results of this research are expected not only to enrich academic treasures, but also provide practical guidance for educators in creating a more objective assessment environment and supporting a meaningful learning process.

METHOD

This study uses a systematic review design to comprehensively analyze the role of rubrics and feedback in improving the objectivity of writing assessment. Systematic literature review was chosen because it allows the identification, evaluation, and synthesis of empirical findings in a structured manner from various reliable sources. Data was collected from academic databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, and Scopus with strategic keywords (rubric, feedback, writing assessment, objectivity), limited to the last 5 years of publication to ensure the relevance of the findings to the current educational context. Strict inclusion criteria are applied, especially focusing on research at the primary and secondary education levels, in order to maintain the consistency of the analysis. The article selection process involves three stages: initial screening based on titles and abstracts, full-text feasibility assessment, and data extraction of studies that meet the criteria.

Data analysis was carried out through a thematic approach to identify patterns and in-depth insights from the collected literature. The findings are grouped into key themes such as the effectiveness of rubrics in reducing assessment bias, constructive feedback strategies, and optimal integration of rubrics and feedback in classroom practice. Each theme is critically analyzed taking into account the consistency of the results between studies, the research context, and the proposed practical recommendations. To ensure the validity of the analysis, crosschecking was carried out between researchers and triangulation of sources. The results of this synthesis not only map the existing empirical evidence but also identify research gaps for further study, as well as provide evidence-based recommendations for educators and policymakers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Objectivity in Writing Assessment

Objectivity in writing assessments not only serves as a fair measuring tool, but also as a bridge to build students' confidence in exploring their ideas. The systematic use of rubrics is able to suppress subjectivity and increase fairness in the evaluation process. Rubrics provide transparency in writing assessments, and students easily understand clearly what aspects of their assessment are benchmarked

In line with that, Yusuf (2023) highlighted the importance of objective assessment instruments as part of efforts to form fair and accurate evaluations. He emphasized that accuracy in assessment is not only a technical issue, but also an ethical issue (Yusuf, M., 2023).

Sundusiah et al. (2018) in their research on poetry assessment underlined the need for rubrics that are able to see the objective side of a creative work. According to them, the existence of rubrics minimizes the possibility of bias born from teachers' personal preferences (Sundusiah, S., et al., 2018). Artika and Adelia (2024) explain that the assessment of writing descriptive texts with rubrics in the independent curriculum helps students receive more accurate and constructive feedback (Artika, I.W., & Adelia, N.P.C., 2024). The use of rubrics and feedback is a measuring tool to show students the achievement of learning outcomes and abilities that have met learning goals and criteria.

Objectivity in writing assessment refers to the teacher's ability to evaluate students' work fairly and consistently, based on clear and measurable criteria, without being influenced by personal bias, subjective preferences, or irrelevant external factors. In contrast to subjectivity which tends to depend on teachers' personal impressions, feelings, or views, objective assessments prioritize transparency and clarity of standards. In this context, assessment rubrics serve as an important tool to ensure that every aspect of writing, such as structure, grammar, and depth of arguments, is assessed based on the same guidelines for all students.

The objectivity of writing skill assessment is measured by the learning process and outcomes carried out at all times, both at the beginning of learning, during the implementation of learning and at the end of learning. And this connection results in authentic assessment results. Process assessment by utilizing tools in the form of rubrics and feedback delivered to students to meet the criteria for learning success.

At the beginning of learning, the teacher has delivered instructions related to the process to become the learning goal and students understand to follow up with learning efforts to achieve the writing skill target. At this stage, the teacher explains the rubric in detail and how students meet the Rubik's Creed, here there is still a learning process of teacher-student interaction.

At the stage of implementing the learning process, teachers pay attention to student behavior in demonstrations, independently and in groups. Record the development of knowledge and skills by utilizing rubrics. This Rubik's Cube, itself contains criteria or components of authentic assessment for student performance, such as when carrying out writing, whether materials have been prepared for writing, and have made a writing framework, or scribbles in books.

In the assessment hold and reflection of learning, students are given an explanation of learning results according to the initial provisions during the instruction and agreement on the assessment rubric, students are shown in class what has been implemented and what has been achieved, at this stage the discussion is open to convey what the student is aware of his performance making feedback for the improvement of his writing skills.



Education and students openly build transparency and responsibility for the learning achievements that have been implemented. This learning condition is to prevent subjective assessment. Subjective assessments are detrimental to the student learning process. When students feel unfairly judged, their motivation to write can decrease, especially if they don't understand the basics of the grades being given. Additionally, subjective or vague feedback hinders students' ability to identify weaknesses and improve their writing skills. Inconsistent assessments also have the potential to create distrust of the evaluation system, which ultimately affects students' participation and academic development.

Rubric as an Assessment Tool: A Comprehensive Framework of Thinking

The assessment rubric is an evaluation instrument designed to measure student performance based on a set of defined criteria. Essentially, rubrics serve as an assessment map that guides teachers in systematically scoring while helping students understand learning expectations. In the context of writing assessment, rubrics serve as a bridge between curriculum standards and classroom evaluation practices, ensuring that fundamental aspects such as the organization of ideas, language correctness, and depth of analysis can be assessed thoroughly. The existence of rubrics transforms assessment from subjective activity into a measurable and accountable process.

Rubrics are divided into two main types with different characteristics. The analytic rubric separates the assessment into specific component components (e.g.: grammar 30%, structure 25%, originality 20%), suitable for complex tasks that require detailed feedback. In contrast, a holistic rubric evaluates the work as a whole with a single score, ideal for quick assessments or assignments that emphasize the unity of ideas. The selection of the type of rubric must take into account the learning objectives; For example, an analytical rubric is more appropriate for academic writing, while holistic might be used in creative writing competitions.

The three main advantages of the rubric make it a superior assessment tool. First, the transparency of criteria allows students to explicitly identify learning expectations. Second, the consistency of assessment reduces subjective variation between teachers or between periods. Third, clear criteria in the rubric facilitate focused feedback, such as "Punctuation usage is still less varied (Level 2 of 4)" instead of vague comments such as "Writing is good enough". Andrade's research (2005) shows that the consistent use of rubrics can improve the quality of students' work by up to 32% due to the clarity of the direction of improvement.

Although powerful, the rubric cannot be separated from its limitations. The rigidity of the criteria has the potential to ignore the uniqueness of the work outside the framework of the rubric, while the standardization effect can dampen the creativity of students who want to experiment with unconventional writing styles. To mitigate this, teachers can: (1) design rubrics with "flexibility" columns for creative aspects, (2) involve students in the preparation of assessment criteria, or (3) combine rubrics with narrative feedback that captures qualitative nuances. This solution creates a balance between objectivity and appreciation for individual uniqueness.

The success of rubrics as an assessment tool depends on their integration with the learning ecosystem. Ideally, rubrics should be introduced from the beginning of learning as part of assessment as learning, not just an assessment of learning. Practical examples include calibration activities where teachers and students jointly assess examples of work using rubrics, or rubric-based revision sessions where students evaluate their own drafts

prior to collection. This approach transforms rubrics from mere measuring tools into pedagogical instruments that empower students to become independent evaluators of their own work, while minimizing resistance to structured assessment mechanisms.

Constructive feedback is a critical component in the writing learning process, serving as a bridge between current performance and learning goals (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). In contrast to summative assessments that only provide scores, effective feedback guides students to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their writing, while also providing concrete direction for improvement. In the context of writing, feedback not only improves the quality of the final product but also develops students' metacognitive capacity in reflecting on their own work. A study by Hattie and Timperley (2007) shows that quality feedback can accelerate learning achievement by up to 30%, especially when focusing on task criteria and improvement strategies, rather than just error correction.

Impactful feedback must meet three key principles: specific, structured, and growth-oriented (Brookhart, 2017). Specific feedback avoids general comments like "good" by replacing the example: "The use of evidence from the journal article in paragraph 2 strengthens your argument". The structured principle refers to organizing feedback in a systematic way, for example by grouping input into aspects of content, organization, and language. Meanwhile, the growth orientation is reflected in a focus on improvement (e.g.: "Try using more synonyms for the word 'important' to increase the variety of your vocabulary"). Black and Wiliam (1998) emphasize that feedback should "open up room for improvement", not just list shortcomings.

The integration of rubrics with feedback creates a holistic grading system, where rubrics provide an objective framework, while feedback provides personalization (Andrade, 2018). An analytical rubric might score 3/5 for "paragraph coherence", and feedback complements it with a suggestion: "Transitions between paragraphs could be smoother by adding phrases like 'on the other side' or 'other side'". Sadler's (1989) research shows that this combination allows students to not only know "what" needs to be improved (through rubrics), but also "how" to fix it (through feedback). This synergy is especially effective when the rubric is designed with a specific column for teacher comments on each criterion.

An ideal model is seen in the writing workshop practice developed by Calkins (1994), in which teachers use analytical rubrics to assess the initial draft, then provide focused feedback on 12 key aspects for revision. For example, for persuasive essay assignments, teachers may prioritize feedback on "strength of evidence" and "structure of argument" based on rubrics, while mechanical aspects (e.g., spelling) are addressed later. Students then revise their work with the help of a feedback checklist derived from the rubric. This approach, as documented by Graham et al. (2015), improved the quality of student revisions by up to 40% compared to general feedback.

To maximize the integration of rubrics and feedback, teachers are advised to: (1) divide the assessment process into stages (e.g.: rubrics for initial assessment, feedback for revision, and rubrics back for final evaluation), (2) train students to use rubrics to provide peer feedback prior to collection, and (3) allocate class time for feedback-based revision sessions. As emphasized by Wiggins (2012), "Feedback that is connected to clear criteria (rubrics) but delivered as dialogue, rather than monologue, transforms assessment from something done to a student to a process done with the student." This approach not only enhances objectivity but also empowers students as active partners in learning.

Consistency of Assessment through Rubrics



The research findings confirm that rubrics significantly improve the consistency of assessment between teachers, which is in line with the problem formulation question of the mechanism of increasing objectivity. A case study in School X showed a 40% decrease in score variation when teachers used analytical rubrics to assess argumentative essays (Andrade, 2018). The theory of judgment analysis (Hammond, 2000) explains this phenomenon through the concept of cognitive structuring rubrics providing a common framework that minimizes subjective interpretation. These findings answer research questions about the role of rubrics in reducing assessment disparities, while supporting Brookhart's (2013) theory that criterion transparency is the key to objectivity.

The application of rubrics in School X reveals implementation challenges that are relevant to the formulation of the second problem. Despite improving consistency, 30% of teachers reported difficulty applying rubrics to creative works such as poetry, validating concerns about rigidity (Sadler, 2009). However, the adaptation by adding the "originality" column in the rubric succeeded in reducing this resistance. This case reinforces the theory of situated assessment (Gipps, 1999) that the effectiveness of rubrics depends on the flexibility of their design to the context of the task.

An analysis of 15 studies revealed that personalized feedback improved the quality of writing revisions 2.3 times more effectively than generic ones (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). These findings answer research questions about optimal feedback strategies, while supporting the dialogic feedback theory (Nicol, 2010) that feedback should be specific and contextual. A concrete example can be seen in Graham's (2018) research where students who received comments such as "Try comparing your argument in paragraph 3 with the sources on page 12" showed a 45% increase in evidence integration.

Systematic comparisons revealed that generic feedback (e.g., "Correct grammar") only impacted 12% of students, while personalized feedback (e.g., "There are 3 subjective errors in paragraph 1") triggered revision in 78% of cases (Bitchener, 2012). These findings reinforce the principle of feedback for growth (Hattie & Timperley, 2007) while answering the implementation challenge in problem formulation. A meta-analysis study showed that the combination of rubrics with personalized feedback increased effectiveness by up to 35% compared to separate use.

The synthesis of findings resulted in a three-stage integration model: (1) initial assessment with rubrics, (2) feedback focused on 12 key aspects, and (3) revision-based reassessment. This model was successfully piloted in 5 schools with an increase in assessment objectivity of 28% (Wiliam, 2016). This implementation answers research questions about strategies to overcome challenges through a gradual approach that is in line with formative assessment theory (Black & Wiliam, 2009).

The findings of the study enrich the theory of assessment for learning by showing that the synergy of the rubrikumpan balik creates an assessment system that is simultaneously objective and formative. In practical terms, these results support teacher training in designing flexible rubrics and differentiated feedback techniques are key recommendations that address the research objectives. The study also identified a theoretical gap about the interaction between objectivity and creativity in writing assessments, which requires further exploration.

CONCLUSION

Based on a systematic review of various literature and empirical findings, this study concludes that the use of rubrics and constructive feedback significantly improves the objectivity of writing skill assessment. Rubrics have been shown to standardize the evaluation process by reducing subjective variation between teachers, while personalized feedback plays an important role in guiding student improvement more effectively than generic feedback. However, the implementation of these two tools requires adequate assistance for teachers, especially in the face of challenges such as the rigidity of rubrics for creative works and the difficulty of compiling specific feedback. These findings strengthen the theory of assessment for learning by showing that the integration of rubrics and feedback not only guarantees objectivity but also makes assessment part of the learning process meaningful.

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Based on the findings of the research, it is suggested that: (1) further research be conducted to explore the use of technology such as artificial intelligence (AI) in rubric-based assessment systems and automatic feedback, as well as the development of adaptive rubrics that consider students' creativity; (2) regular teacher training is held to improve competence in designing flexible rubrics and compiling personalized feedback, including through calibration and community of practice activities; and (3) the government and education policy makers integrate standard guidelines for the use of rubrics and feedback into the national curriculum framework, along with providing incentives for schools that innovate in the implementation of objective assessment systems. The comprehensive implementation of these recommendations is expected to create a fairer, more consistent assessment ecosystem and support the optimal development of students' writing skills.

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