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MAPPING THE UNDEREXPLORED TERRAIN: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF DIALOGIC FEEDBACK IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL EFL CLASSROOMS

by

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Abstract:

Despite growing scholarly interest in dialogic feedback as a pedagogical strategy, no bibliometric study has systematically mapped its research landscape specifically in relation to senior high school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms (a context that remains substantially underrepresented in the global literature). This study addresses that gap by mapping research advancements and synthesizing the prospects and challenges of dialogic feedback in senior high school EFL settings. Scopus-indexed papers published between 2020 and 2026 were subjected to a combination of bibliometric analysis and qualitative thematic synthesis. After applying inclusion criteria, 368 pertinent publications were analyzed to identify prevailing research themes, publication trends, and pedagogical implications. The findings reveal a steady expansion of dialogic feedback research, with dominant concentration in higher education and technology-enhanced learning environments. Senior high school EFL contexts, particularly in non-Western countries such as Indonesia, are critically underrepresented. Enhanced student autonomy, feedback literacy, and learner engagement are identified as key opportunities, while curricular demands, time constraints, and insufficient teacher preparation represent persistent obstacles. These results indicate that more context-specific bibliometric and empirical research is needed to support effective dialogic feedback strategies in secondary EFL classrooms.

Keywords: Bibliometric analysis, dialogic feedback, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Feedback literacy, and senior high school

Abstrak:

Meskipun minat akademik terhadap umpan balik dialogis sebagai strategi pedagogis terus meningkat, belum ada kajian bibliometrik yang secara sistematis memetakan lanskap penelitiannya secara khusus dalam konteks kelas Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) di tingkat sekolah menengah atas (sebuah konteks yang masih sangat kurang terwakili dalam literatur global). Penelitian ini mengisi celah tersebut dengan memetakan perkembangan penelitian dan merangkum peluang serta tantangan umpan balik dialogis dalam konteks EFL sekolah menengah atas. Jurnal-jurnal yang terindeks Scopus dengan rentang waktu 2020 hingga 2026 dianalisis menggunakan kombinasi analisis bibliometrik dan sintesis tematik kualitatif. Setelah menerapkan kriteria inklusi,

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sebanyak 368 publikasi relevan diperiksa untuk mengidentifikasi tema penelitian dominan, tren publikasi, dan implikasi pedagogis. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa penelitian umpan balik dialogis terus berkembang, dengan konsentrasi utama pada pendidikan tinggi dan lingkungan pembelajaran berbasis teknologi. Konteks EFL sekolah menengah atas, khususnya di negara-negara non-Barat seperti Indonesia, sangat kurang terwakili. Peningkatan otonomi siswa, literasi umpan balik, dan keterlibatan pelajar diidentifikasi sebagai peluang utama, sementara tuntutan kurikulum, keterbatasan waktu, dan persiapan guru yang tidak memadai merupakan hambatan yang terus-menerus terjadi. Hasil ini mengindikasikan perlunya penelitian bibliometrik dan empiris yang lebih konteks-spesifik untuk mendukung strategi umpan balik dialogis yang efektif di kelas EFL sekolah menengah atas.

Kata kunci: Analisis Bibliometrik, Umpan Balik Dialogis, Bahasa Inggris Sebagai Bahasa Asing, Literasi Umpan Balik, dan Sekolah Menengah Atas

INTRODUCTION

This bibliometric review addresses a significant gap in the applied linguistics literature: while dialogic feedback has attracted considerable scholarly attention in higher education contexts (Carless & Winstone, 2023a; Hill & West, 2020) no systematic bibliometric mapping has specifically examined its research landscape in relation to senior high school EFL classrooms. This gap is particularly acute in non-Western contexts such as Indonesia, where secondary EFL education presents unique pedagogical challenges that remain underexplored (Purwandari, 2023; Syahrianti et al., 2023).

Feedback is a central practice in educational settings and a defining element of effective language instruction. Defined as information provided in response to a learner's performance, feedback serves to identify strengths and weaknesses, guide self-correction, and direct future learning actions (Puspita & Aryanika, 2024). Its significance in language acquisition has been established across decades of research, with scholars consistently demonstrating its role in improving students' comprehension, linguistic performance, and learning regulation (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Shute, 2013). In EFL classrooms specifically, feedback is indispensable: students depend heavily on instructional input to develop communicative competence, accuracy, and fluency, making the quality and nature of feedback a direct determinant of learning outcomes (Nurhayati & Apoko, 2024).

Despite its pedagogical value, feedback in EFL classrooms at the senior high school level frequently follows a one-directional pattern. Teachers tend to provide comments verbally or in writing without encouraging substantive dialogue with students (Rahmat & Munir, 2018). Consequently, learners are positioned as passive recipients rather than active agents of their own learning (Putri et al., 2021). This pattern limits the transformative

potential of feedback: students who cannot process, interrogate, and act upon feedback meaningfully are unlikely to develop the metacognitive awareness required for autonomous language development (Zepeda et al., 2023). In EFL contexts, these challenges are compounded by students' limited linguistic proficiency, which may further impede their ability to engage critically with feedback (Lee, 2017).

In response to these limitations, dialogic feedback has emerged as an alternative paradigm that prioritizes interactive, negotiated exchange between teachers and students. According to (Vattøy & Gamlem, 2024), dialogic feedback is a collaborative process through which teachers and students co-construct meaning by asking questions, seeking clarification, and negotiating interpretations of performance. Grounded in Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), this approach conceives of learning as inherently social, occurring through interactions that scaffold learners within their Zone of Proximal Development. Research has shown that dialogic feedback promotes learner engagement, fosters greater autonomy, and develops metacognitive awareness (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020; Dann & O'Neill, 2020; Hill & West, 2020).

Evidence from EFL contexts affirms the value of dialogic feedback across several interconnected domains, and these four thematic strands form the empirical backbone against which the present bibliometric mapping is later discussed. Studies examining dialogic feedback and feedback literacy suggest that when students understand the purpose and criteria of feedback, they are better positioned to use it productively (Carless & Winstone, 2023; Susanti et al., 2025). Research linking dialogic feedback to learner autonomy demonstrates that sustained dialogue around performance enables students to take greater ownership of their language learning trajectories (Alqefari, 2022). In digital and hybrid learning environments, technology-mediated dialogic feedback has opened new channels for interactive exchange beyond the traditional classroom (Prasetya & Syarif, 2022; MA et al., 2024). In secondary education more broadly, corrective feedback practices (whether oral or written) continue to feature prominently, though their dialogic dimension remains undertheorized at the high school level (Alfayed et al., 2024; Merizawati et al., 2025).

Despite this growing body of evidence, the literature on dialogic feedback exhibits several notable gaps. First, an empirical gap exists: bibliometric evidence specifically focused on senior high school EFL classrooms is extremely limited, with the majority of studies

concentrated in university settings (Boud & Molloy, 2013; Syahrianti et al., 2023). Second, a methodological gap is apparent: previous studies tend to employ empirical classroom research designs, while systematic bibliometric mapping of dialogic feedback trends, particularly across educational levels, remains scarce. Third, a practical gap persists: teachers in Asian secondary contexts lack synthesized, context-sensitive evidence to guide the implementation of dialogic feedback amid real constraints such as large class sizes, strict curriculum demands, time limitations, and inadequate professional preparation (Purwandari, 2023; Carless & Winstone, 2023; Paris, 2022).

The present study addresses these gaps through a mixed bibliometric-thematic review design. Unlike previous bibliometric studies that have examined feedback broadly or focused on higher education, this review concentrates specifically on dialogic feedback as a distinct construct and foregrounds the secondary EFL context as the analytical lens. It contributes three distinct forms of novelty: (1) it is the first bibliometric mapping to center senior high school EFL classrooms in dialogic feedback research; (2) it combines bibliometric analysis with qualitative thematic synthesis to yield both quantitative trends and interpretive insights; and (3) it provides region-sensitive commentary on the underrepresentation of non-Western, particularly Indonesian, contributions to the global literature.

This study is underpinned by an integrated conceptual framework that brings together three key constructs: dialogic feedback, feedback literacy, and sociocultural theory. Dialogic feedback, as conceptualized by Vattøy & Gamlem (2024), refers to a cooperative, meaning-making process in which teachers and students engage in sustained dialogue about performance, criteria, and improvement. Unlike monologic or evaluative feedback, dialogic feedback is iterative and relational, positioning students as active participants rather than passive recipients. This construct stands in contrast to traditional corrective feedback paradigms dominant in many Asian EFL classrooms, where one-directional comment patterns prevail (Rahmat & Munir, 2018; Ha et al., 2021).

Feedback literacy, as theorized by Carless & Winstone (2023a), refers to the capacity of both teachers and students to understand, engage with, and act upon feedback productively. Teacher feedback literacy encompasses the skills to design and deliver feedback that promotes dialogue and learning, while student feedback literacy involves the ability to interpret, evaluate, and apply feedback to future performance. In secondary EFL contexts,

where language proficiency gaps may limit students' ability to engage with feedback, developing feedback literacy is particularly critical.

These constructs are situated within Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which posits that learning is fundamentally social and mediated through interaction. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) provides the developmental rationale for dialogic feedback: when teachers scaffold learners through dialogue rather than simply correcting errors, they support development within students' current learning frontier. This theoretical lens explains why dialogic feedback, as a form of social, interactive scaffolding, can be more developmentally productive than unidirectional error correction, particularly for adolescent EFL learners whose linguistic and metacognitive capacities are still developing. In sum, the relationships among these constructs can be conceived as follows: dialogic feedback functions as a pedagogical practice that activates feedback literacy in both teachers and students; this process is mediated through sociocultural scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development; and it is hypothesized to yield greater learner engagement and autonomy, ultimately contributing to improved language learning outcomes. This integrated framework guides the thematic synthesis component of the present study and provides the interpretive lens through which the bibliometric clusters reported below are analyzed.

Accordingly, this review addresses the following research questions: which journals contributed most prominently to dialogic feedback research between 2020 and 2026; which countries produced the greatest volume of dialogic feedback research during the same period; and what thematic clusters and research foci characterize the dialogic feedback literature as revealed by keyword co-occurrence analysis.

METHOD

Design

This study employs a mixed bibliometric-thematic review design. The primary analytical approach is bibliometric analysis, which uses quantitative methods to measure and visualize research output, citation patterns, author collaboration networks, and thematic clusters within a defined body of literature (Donthu et al., 2021). Bibliometric analysis is supplemented by qualitative thematic synthesis, which enables interpretive analysis of the conceptual content, research foci, and contextual implications of the identified studies. This

combined approach allows for both a quantitative panorama of the field and a qualitatively grounded interpretation of emerging themes and gaps.

Data Source

Peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in the Scopus database served as the sole data source for this study. Scopus was selected on the basis of its comprehensive and systematic coverage of top-tier international journals in applied linguistics, educational research, and language teaching, including all major journals in which dialogic feedback research is likely to appear. While Scopus does not capture all published research on dialogic feedback, it provides a rigorously indexed and internationally recognized dataset appropriate for bibliometric analysis. The exclusion of non-Scopus databases such as Web of Science, ERIC, or Google Scholar constitutes a limitation acknowledged in the Limitations section.

Subject and Data Units

The data units in this bibliometric study are peer-reviewed journal articles, not human participants. No human subjects were involved in data collection or analysis, and no ethical clearance was required. The study adheres to standard ethical principles for bibliometric research, including accurate citation of all sources, transparent reporting of search and screening procedures, and avoidance of data manipulation.

Search strategy and data collection

A systematic search was conducted on January 18, 2026, using the Scopus database. The search term "dialogic feedback" was entered as a title, abstract, and keyword (TIAB-KW) query. The initial search returned 588 documents.

The following inclusion and exclusion criteria were then applied sequentially. Inclusion criteria comprised publications from 2020 to 2026, document type restricted to journal articles, language restricted to English, subject area limited to Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities (covering applied linguistics and education), and source type restricted to journals. Exclusion criteria removed conference proceedings, book chapters, and editorial materials; non-English publications; and documents published outside the 2020–2026 window.

After applying the language filter, 565 articles were retained. After applying all remaining inclusion criteria, a final dataset of 368 articles was obtained and used for both bibliometric and qualitative thematic analysis. The complete screening process is represented in the PRISMA-style flowchart in Figure 1.

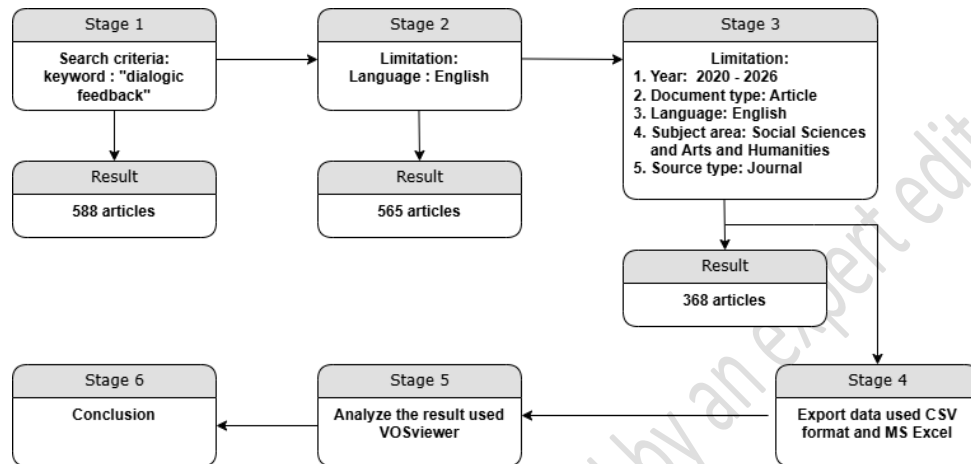


Figure 1. PRISMA-style data collection, screening, and analysis flowchart (2020–2026)

Bibliometric Analysis Procedures

All bibliographic records were exported from Scopus in CSV format for subsequent processing. Bibliometric analysis was conducted using two primary tools:

1. VOSviewer (version 1.6.20): used to generate keyword co-occurrence networks, thematic cluster maps (density overlay), and country-level co-authorship visualizations. A minimum threshold of three co-occurrences was applied to keyword co-occurrence analysis, yielding 255 keywords organized into seven thematic clusters.
2. Microsoft Excel: used for descriptive statistical analysis of publication frequency by year, country-level publication counts, and citation trend data.

The bibliometric analysis addressed three analytical dimensions: (1) publication output patterns from 2020 to 2026; (2) geographical distribution of research contributions; and (3) thematic clusters derived from keyword co-occurrence.

Qualitative thematic synthesis

To complement the bibliometric analysis, a qualitative thematic synthesis was conducted by systematically examining the abstracts and author keywords of the 368 articles. The synthesis focused specifically on identifying how dialogic feedback is conceptualized,

what implementation challenges are documented, and what opportunities are noted, particularly in secondary EFL contexts. Thematic categories were derived inductively from the data and verified against the bibliometric cluster output to ensure convergence.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The current study answers the research questions: (1) which journals contributed most prominently to dialogic feedback research between 2020 and 2026; (2) which countries produced the greatest volume of dialogic feedback research during the same period; and (3) what thematic clusters and research foci characterize the dialogic feedback literature as revealed by keyword co-occurrence analysis.

Trends in dialogic feedback research publications (2020–2026)

The bibliometric analysis of the Scopus database identified 368 articles on dialogic feedback published between 2020 and 2026. As illustrated in Figure 2, the overall publication trajectory shows a consistent upward trend over the seven years, despite some year-to-year variation. During the initial period (2020–2021), publication volume was comparatively modest, with 25 articles in 2020 and 21 articles in 2021. From 2022 onward, publications increased: 28 articles in 2022, 30 in 2023, 48 in 2024, and a peak of 86 in 2025, followed by 5 articles recorded in 2026 at the time of data collection.

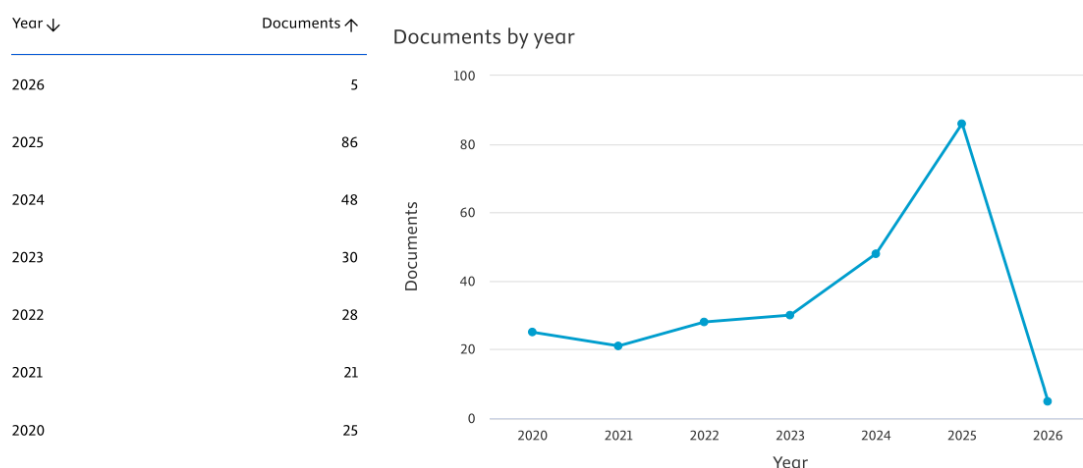


Figure 2. Publication volume by year 2020 and 2025

Countries Contributing Most to Dialogic Feedback Research

The VOSviewer co-authorship network analysis, applying a minimum threshold of three documents per country, identified 46 countries meeting the inclusion criteria. Publication output is concentrated among a small number of countries: the United States leads with 47 documents, followed by the United Kingdom (44) and China (38). Australia (20) and Hong Kong (16) represent the next tier of contributors. Indonesia ranks 20th with four publications. Table 1 presents the complete distribution of publications by country.

Table 1. Country/Territory Publications Distribution (2020–2026)

<i>Country / Territory</i>	<i>Documents</i>
<i>United States</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>China</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Australia</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Hong Kong</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Spain</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Malaysia</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Norway</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>South Korea</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Canada</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Iran</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Japan</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Chile</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>New Zealand</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Singapore</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Taiwan</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Turkey</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Denmark</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Ethiopia</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Sweden</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Thailand</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Germany</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>South Africa</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Vietnam</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Others</i>	<i>19</i>

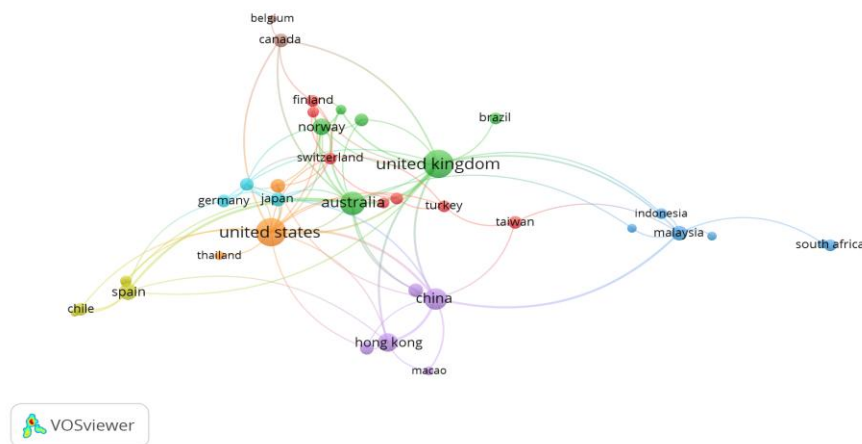


Figure 3. Country-level co-authorship network visualization (VOSviewer)

Most frequently investigated research topics and keywords

Keyword co-occurrence analysis using VOSviewer, applying a minimum threshold of three co-occurrences, identified 255 keywords organized into seven thematic clusters (Figure 4). The central node is 'feedback,' confirming its status as the primary conceptual anchor of the literature. The seven clusters identified are: (1) formative assessment, (2) student engagement, (3) higher education contexts, (4) technology-enhanced feedback, (5) dialogic interaction and peer feedback, (6) EFL and language learning, and (7) teacher feedback literacy and professional development. The EFL and language learning cluster is present but comparatively peripheral within the overall network, and keywords referring explicitly to secondary education or senior high school occur with low frequency.

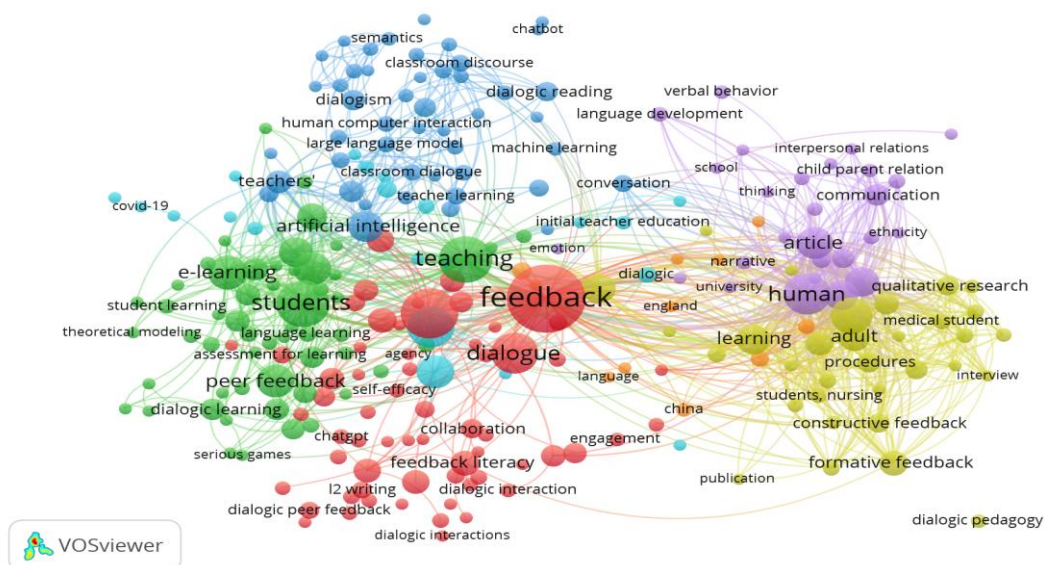


Figure 4. Keyword co-occurrence density map (VOSviewer, min. threshold = 3)

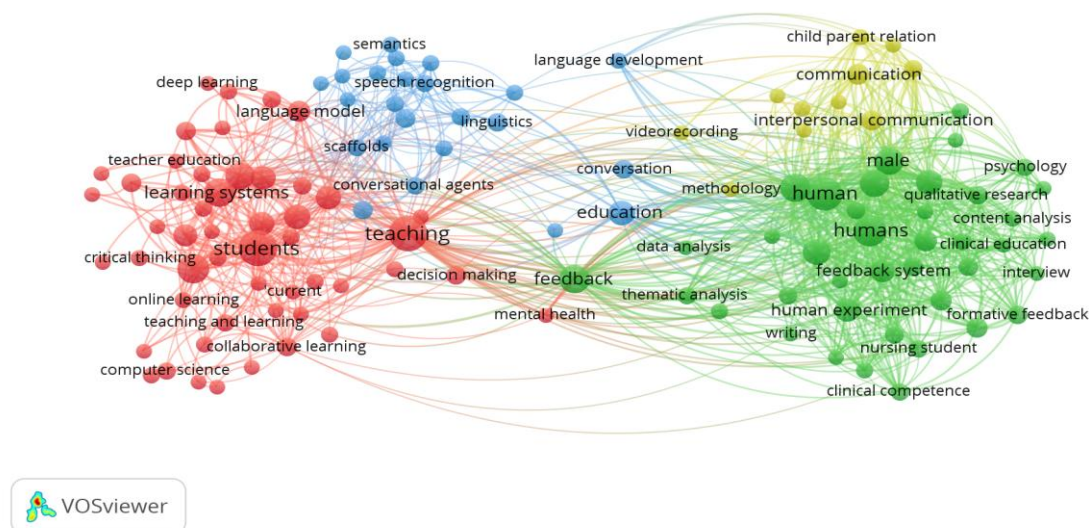


Figure 5. Network visualization of keywords and research themes

Discussion

The findings of this bibliometric review converge on three interconnected insights that extend beyond descriptive pattern-reporting toward interpretive engagement with the studies reviewed in the Introduction.

First, regarding publication trends, the steady growth from 2021 to 2025 reflects a broader disciplinary shift toward interactive, learner-centered feedback models in response to

the evolving ecology of post-pandemic education. This pattern is consistent with the technology-mediated dialogic feedback strand identified earlier in the review of Prasetya & Syarif (2022) and MA et al. (2024), who likewise reported intensified attention to digital and hybrid feedback channels following the pandemic-era shift in instructional delivery. The initial dip in publications during 2020–2021 corresponds to the documented disruption of academic activity during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, while the subsequent surge through 2025 mirrors the expansion of technology-enhanced learning environments noted in the keyword cluster analysis. The minor decrease recorded in 2026 most plausibly reflects database indexing lag rather than a genuine decline in research activity, consistent with standard bibliometric reporting conventions (Donthu et al., 2021). The concentration of publications in journals focused on education and formative assessment underscores dialogic feedback's theoretical alignment with learning-oriented pedagogy, as theorized by Sadler (1989) and Black & Wiliam (1998). However, the clustering of growth in higher education contexts is not merely incidental. It reflects embedded institutional incentives, resource availability, and the historical development of feedback theory within university-based writing instruction and assessment research, a pattern already foreshadowed in the Introduction's observation that the majority of prior dialogic feedback studies concentrate on university settings (Boud & Molloy, 2013; Syahrianti et al., 2023). Secondary school EFL contexts, with their different curricular logics and student developmental profiles, have not benefited equally from this growth.

Second, regarding geographic concentration: the dominance of Western Anglophone output is consistent with broader structural inequalities in global knowledge production (Nicol, 2010). This finding substantiates the empirical gap articulated in the Introduction: bibliometric evidence specifically focused on senior high school EFL classrooms in non-Western settings, including Indonesia, is extremely limited (Purwandari, 2023; Syahrianti et al., 2023). For EFL contexts such as Indonesia, this creates a double marginalization: secondary school classrooms are underrepresented not only by educational level but also by geographic location. The practical implication is that teachers in Indonesian senior high schools are asked to implement pedagogical approaches that have been theorized and evaluated almost entirely in different institutional and cultural contexts, echoing the practical gap identified earlier with reference to Carless & Winstone (2023a) and Paris (2022)

regarding teachers' lack of synthesized, context-sensitive evidence. This methodological and epistemological gap underscores the urgency of locally grounded, context-sensitive research.

Third, regarding thematic gaps, the emerging prominence of technology-enhanced feedback in the keyword network corroborates and extends the digital-environment strand of the reviewed literature (Prasetya & Syarif, 2022; MA et al., 2024), suggesting that future dialogic feedback research in secondary EFL contexts may productively integrate digital tools as mediators of dialogic interaction. Technology can serve as both a constraint-reducer, enabling asynchronous feedback dialogue in time-limited courses, and a scaffold, providing structured prompts for student-initiated feedback dialogue, consistent with the sociocultural scaffolding function described in the Theoretical Framework. However, digital dialogic feedback raises its own equity concerns in contexts of unequal access to technology, a dimension absent from the current literature and the studies reviewed in the Introduction.

These findings collectively underscore the need to move beyond describing what dialogic feedback is toward investigating how, under what conditions, and for which learners it works, particularly in the underexplored terrain of senior high school EFL instruction identified throughout this review.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Conclusion

This review demonstrates a coherent chain of relationships among the constructs examined. The bibliometric mapping shows that growth in dialogic feedback publications is concentrated in higher education and Western Anglophone countries; this concentration, in turn, corresponds to a thematic landscape in which formative assessment, student engagement, and technology-enhanced feedback dominate, while feedback literacy specific to secondary EFL learners remains underdeveloped as a research theme. Because feedback literacy is theorized as the mechanism through which dialogic feedback translates into learner engagement and autonomy (as outlined in the Theoretical Framework), the scarcity of secondary-level feedback literacy research represents not merely a gap in coverage but a gap in the evidentiary basis needed to support dialogic feedback implementation for adolescent EFL learners. In other words, the geographic and institutional concentration of research output directly constrains the development of context-sensitive feedback literacy knowledge,

which in turn limits the field's capacity to inform dialogic feedback practice in senior high school EFL classrooms such as those in Indonesia. This chain of relationships constitutes the central contribution of the present review: it does not merely catalogue what has been studied, but clarifies why the absence of secondary EFL and non-Western research constrains the broader development of dialogic feedback theory and practice.

Limitation

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The analysis was confined to Scopus-indexed publications, excluding research disseminated in Web of Science, ERIC, Google Scholar, regional journals, conference proceedings, or local-language publications. This restriction may introduce a systematic bias toward Anglophone, high-impact research, potentially underrepresenting valuable studies from emerging research contexts. Additionally, because the analysis relied on bibliographic metadata (titles, abstracts, keywords, citation data) rather than full-text content, it cannot capture the methodological rigor, contextual nuance, or classroom-level effectiveness of individual studies. The results should therefore be understood as indicators of research trends rather than direct evidence of pedagogical efficacy. Finally, bibliometric patterns reflect indexing delays rather than actual publication activity.

Implication

The implications of this review span four interrelated domains. In terms of research implications, future bibliometric and empirical studies should prioritize secondary school EFL contexts, particularly in non-Western settings; researchers are urged to conduct mixed-methods investigations examining how dialogic feedback functions among adolescent learners with diverse cognitive, linguistic, and affective profiles that differ substantively from university student populations, and international and cross-national research collaboration should be strengthened, since the co-authorship analysis reveals limited engagement from emerging and non-English-speaking nations; collaborative research partnerships between high- and low-output countries can enhance knowledge transfer, methodological diversity, and the representativeness of dialogic feedback scholarship.

In terms of pedagogical implications, the findings underscore the importance of developing feedback literacy in both teachers and students at the secondary level; pedagogical

development should focus on creating space for dialogue within routine feedback interactions, including through structured feedback conferences, peer review protocols, and written dialogic exchanges, and teacher education and professional development programs for secondary EFL educators should explicitly integrate dialogic feedback principles, with practical training in implementing dialogic interaction within large classes and constrained instructional schedules necessary to bridge the gap between theory and classroom practice.

In terms of policy implications, educational policymakers and curriculum designers should create structural conditions supportive of dialogic feedback, such as flexible assessment criteria, reduced reliance on summative-only evaluation, and time allowances within instructional schedules for feedback dialogue; in Indonesia specifically, national curriculum frameworks could incorporate explicit guidance on dialogic feedback as a component of formative assessment policy, moving beyond summative-only evaluation models toward formative, dialogue-oriented assessment cultures that support secondary EFL learners' language development.

Finally, in terms of methodological implications, future reviews should expand database coverage, consider PRISMA protocols more fully, and integrate systematic review methodologies alongside bibliometric mapping to produce more granular, quality-assessed syntheses of dialogic feedback evidence in secondary EFL contexts.

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