

THE IMPACT OF GIVING AND RECEIVING PEER FEEDBACK ON THE PRODUCT OF UNDERGRADUATE EFL STUDENTS' WRITING PROJECTS

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of giving and receiving peer feedback on the writing projects of undergraduate EFL students. The study involved six Indonesian undergraduate students enrolled in an article writing course, who participated in peer feedback activities. Using qualitative case study methods, data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis to assess the students' experiences. The data was analyzed using an interactive model including data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The study found that peer feedback significantly improved students' writing by enhancing their skills in spelling, grammar, and idea development. It also revealed that both giving and receiving feedback played crucial roles in boosting students' writing performance, confirming theories that peer feedback fosters effective revision and overall writing quality.

Keywords: Peer-feedback; Academic writing; Writing evaluation; EFL writing

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the growth of research has explored the role of peer feedback in the writing process as it is considered to give an exceptional scaffold to students' "draft-revision-product" writing process (Yu, 2019). Peer feedback, as one of the feedback provider's identities, is defined as an activity where students can provide feedback on their peer's work and receive feedback on their work (Carless & Boud, 2018). In doing peer feedback, students were given the process of considering and specifying the significance, level, or quality of a product or performance in writing (Topping, 2009, p. 20). In peer feedback sessions, every student played the roles of a feedback giver and a feedback receiver (Cao et al., 2019). The feedback giver or the reviewer is a role who reviews their peer's writing draft and provides comments or revision advice. Meanwhile, the receiver was the role that received comments or advice to be discussed with the feedback giver (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009).

Peer feedback is generally considered as beneficial for enhancing students' performance in improving skills, acquiring a language, self-monitoring, and confidence-building (Yu & Lee, 2016). Peer feedback can enhance students' awareness of audience and genre, prompting further revisions of content and structure (Berggren, 2015), and it can also evoke common experiences of challenges in writing boost improvement through collaboration and negotiation (Yang, 2015).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Peer Feedback

Peer feedback, also known as peer response or peer assessment, is a learning activity where students of similar skill levels provide feedback on each other's work to identify strengths, flaws, and areas for improvement. Peer response, also known as peer feedback, is a learning activity in which students with similar levels of skill provide feedback to one another on their essays, presentations, or other classwork to identify their strengths, flaws, and areas for progress (Yu and Hu 2017; Wu and Schun 2020). Peer feedback is a process involving the actions performed by students to think about and specify the degree, value, or quality of a product (consisting of qualitative feedback and quantitative assessment) (Topping, 2009: 20) and to acquire, comprehend, and use feedback (Winstone et al., 2022: 224) within the framework of a writing process. It involves both qualitative feedback and quantitative assessment, helping students understand and apply feedback within the writing process. Through dialogues about performance and standards, students collaborate to enhance their writing by offering constructive feedback on strengths, errors, and ideas for improvement.

Previous studies have yielded the effectiveness of peer feedback on each role separately. Numerous studies have examined the efficacy of peer feedback, asserting that it enhances the writing performance of recipients, especially in areas such as spelling, grammar, referencing, idea development, and logical coherence (Hu & Lam, 2009; Pope, 2001; Topping, 1998; Yang, 2016). The feedback receivers could also develop their writing technique, affirm others' opinions and ideas, and effectively revise their writing (Rollinson, 2005; Venables & Summit, 2003). Literature that discussed the impact on the peer feedback receivers had shown that receivers could acquire significant experience in problem detection, particularly in recognizing different types of writing issues and developing viable solutions (Patchan & Schunn, 2015). A study by Greenberg (2015) found that feedback reviewers demonstrated superior performance compared to receivers in revisions regarding content complexity and rigor.

Steps

Jiang (2011) outlined three steps of peer feedback: pre-peer feedback, conducting peer feedback, and post-feedback. Initially, teachers educate students on peer feedback through techniques like brainstorming. During the peer feedback phase, students provide feedback based on initial instructions and develop their strategies with teacher guidance. In the post-feedback stage, teachers monitor, evaluate, and train students, fostering their engagement in problem identification, analysis, and proposing improvements. This process helps students develop skills in identifying errors, understanding writing issues, and exploring revision approaches (Patchan & Schunn, 2015). In peer feedback sessions, students act as both reviewers, who provide comments and revision advice, and receivers, who discuss and utilize the feedback (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009).

Advantages

Peer review benefits reviewers by improving their writing skills in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and structure (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). It also enhances motivation for revision (Tsai & Chuang, 2013), writing accuracy, and general quality (Li et al., 2010), as well as domain-specific skills (Zundert et al., 2010b). Providing feedback helps students actively consider task-specific processes and criteria (Huisman et al., 2018). Both giving and receiving feedback maximize writing performance, particularly in spelling, grammar, referencing, idea development, and logic (Hu & Lam, 2010; Pope, 2001; Topping, 1998; Yang, 2016).

Disadvantages

Huisman et al. (2018) found no direct link between peer review perceptions and writing performance, noting that students often view peer review as a task focused on correcting grammar and format rather than exchanging ideas. This focus on local issues over global content can lead to less constructive feedback, which negatively impacts students' ability to revise effectively (Patchan & Schunn, 2015, 2016). Additionally, Liu and Sadler (2003) observed that peer feedback can sometimes be hostile or overly critical, while Zaccaron and Xhafaj (2020) noted that students might feel threatened by peers seeing their errors.

Academic Writing

Writing involved creating and organizing ideas into coherent sentences and paragraphs to convey meaning (Nunan, 2003). It was a complex cognitive activity that allowed writers to

explore and develop concepts, requiring planning, goal setting, monitoring, and assessment (Ghaith, 2002; White & Arndt, 1991). Academic writing was crucial for students' future academic industry employment (Cameron et al., 2009). It differed from everyday language in that it was used in educational settings, guided by technical vocabulary, and required high-level thinking skills (Sarkaya, 2020). It followed specific rules on content, structure, and style to present academic research (Karagol, 2018). As defined by Berger (2009), academic writing conformed to university standards and conventions for expressing knowledge. Its purpose was to investigate topics through thorough analysis and an objective perspective ([Gillett et al., 2009](#)). In essence, academic writing involved a structured, high-level process used in educational contexts to present research.

METHODOLOGY

Research Subject

This study was carried out in an English Education Department writing class at one of the universities in Surakarta, Central Java. The participants of the research were 6 undergraduate students who enrolled article writing course. The participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: in the sixth semester; taking an article writing course in the sixth semester; and willingness and interest in the research topic.

This research used case study method to examine the impact of giving and receiving peer feedback on the students writing. Stake (1995) stated that in qualitative case study research, the use of observation, interview, and documents review were suggestible. In addition, Dul and Hak (2008) proposed a qualitative interview, using archives, questionnaires, and observation for this research methodology. Data was gathered through interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis focusing on participants' experience in giving and receiving feedback in peer feedback activity. Participants were interviewed about their experience of peer feedback activity on the writing course. Additionally, the researcher analysed participants' writing drafts. Finally, a questionnaire was shared with the participants to be filled focusing on the types of given and received feedback on students' writing drafts.

The researcher used triangulation to validate the data. Cohen (2000: 112) defined triangulation as "the use of two or more data collection methods in the study of some aspects of human behavior". Moleong (1989: 195) stated that source triangulation determined the validity of the data by using some sources in the same situation. In this research, the sources of the data that were used were participants and documents.

This study used an interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014) that used three main steps of data analysis which were (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) drawing conclusions and verification.

1. Data condensation

The data was selected, focused, simplified, and/or transformed into the full body of written field notes, interviews, transcripts, documents, and other empirical materials.

2. Data display

The researcher organized the data in the form of descriptions, charts, relations between categories, flowcharts, etc.

3. Conclusion drawing/verification

The researcher categorized the data, looked for the pattern and theme, and then deduced the data.

RESULT

The data revealed that during peer review, feedback was primarily direct and indirect corrective feedback. This information was gathered from students' interviews, questionnaires, and audio recordings of peer feedback sessions. Direct corrective feedback involved providing the correct form of mistakes, requiring a lengthy process for the feedback giver to identify and correct errors. Indirect corrective feedback indicated that an error existed without providing the correction, leaving it to the feedback receiver to find the correct form.

The students claimed that in the process of peer review, the feedback was given in direct and indirect ways. Students differed in providing feedback to their peer's writing drafts.

Student 1: *"Dalam banyak kesempatan, feedback disampaikan dengan membandingkan penjelasan dosen dengan pekerjaan teman. Apabila ada yang salah, saya sampaikan bahwa pekerjaan teman tersebut belum sesuai dengan penjelasan dosen dan mungkin bisa diperbaiki sesuai dengan penjelasan dosen tersebut."*

Student 2: *"Dijelaskan beserta solusinya. Dimana kekurangannya dijelaskan dan segera diberikan saran solusinya seperti apa."*

Student 3: *"Sekadar memberi tahu saya bagian mana yang kurang atau hilang."*

Student 4: *"Biasanya hanya kekurangan sesuatu tanpa memberikan solusi."*

The data from the students' questionnaire showed that based on five indicators of writing including grammar, vocabulary, content, mechanics, and organization, the students gave feedback in the form of direct and indirect feedback. It showed that 67.57% of feedback was delivered directly and 32.43% of feedback was delivered indirectly. As specified in the grammar indicator, 64.71% of feedback was delivered directly and 35.29% of feedback was

delivered indirectly. For the mechanics indicator, the questionnaire showed that 75% of feedback was given directly and 25% of feedback was given indirectly. For the vocabulary indicator, it showed that 33.33% of feedback was given directly and 66.66% of feedback was given indirectly. The questionnaire for content indicator showed that 87.5% of feedback was given directly and 12.5% of feedback was given indirectly. For the last indicator which is organization, the questionnaire showed that 100% of feedback was given directly

Table 4.1

Example of given feedback

No.	Example of given feedback	Types of feedback
1.	“Add more references to the literature review”	Direct corrective feedback
2.	“Remove the comma after the word because.”	Direct corrective feedback
3.	“There is a misspelling of the word researcher”	Indirect corrective feedback
4.	“Lacking theoretical references for the classroom management definition.”	Indirect corrective feedback

Affirmative feedback was also found in this study. This type of feedback was usually given when the feedback giver found no errors in their peer’s writing. Affirmative feedback was also considered to confirm students’ comprehension and give reinforcement to the students. Some feedback that was given to the students’ writing draft was as follows:

- “Overall your writing is great.”
- “The literature review is good. The definition is provided with the definition from experts.”

The types of received feedback

The types of received feedback that were identified were direct feedback and indirect feedback. As mentioned before, direct feedback was feedback where it provided the correction of errors and indirect feedback was feedback where the correction form was not provided.

Student 1: *“Dalam banyak kesempatan saya menerima feedback yang hanya menunjukkan bagian tulisan yang salah atau kurang. Namun tidak jarang mendapatkan masukan yang menjelaskan dan memberikan solusi atas kesalahan penulisan saya. Lebih baik dijelaskan seperti apa, apa yang ditambahkan, dan apa yang diganti.”*

Student 2: *“Dapatkan lebih banyak umpan balik yang menjelaskan bagian mana yang salah tanpa solusi atau saran apa pun.”*

The questionnaire data showed the types of received feedback in students' work. Specified to each indicator including grammar, mechanics, vocabulary, content, and organization, the feedback was received differently in types. For the grammar indicator, the feedback was received directly by 71.43% and indirectly by 28.57%. Differing from grammar, for the mechanics indicator, the received feedback was 50% directly and 50% indirectly. The data for vocabulary indicator, the received feedback was 66.66% received directly and 33.33% received indirectly. For the content indicator, the feedback was received 83.33% directly and 16.66% indirectly. In addition, the data showed that 83.33% were received directly and 33.33% were received indirectly for the organization indicator.

Table 4.2

Example of received feedback

No.	Example of received feedback	Types of feedback
1.	"The abstract is not comprehensible and it is not suitable for the topic."	Indirect corrective feedback
2.	"The literature review is lacking definition from experts. I suggest you add more of it."	Direct corrective feedback
3.	"Lacking article between the word in and teaching process."	Direct corrective feedback

The students also received affirmative feedback in their writing drafts. This type of feedback was delivered by the feedback giver to give appreciation for the feedback receiver because of their good work in writing. Some affirmative feedback that was received by the students was as follows:

- "I think your draft is well-written."
- "Your literature review is comprehensible."

The impact of peer feedback

The difficulties in peer feedback practice

During peer feedback sessions, several challenges emerged. Students had a very limited time to complete the activity, which included reading their peer's writing and identifying errors. This time constraint hindered the effectiveness of the peer feedback process. Often, students could only skim the text and could not provide fully comprehensive feedback. Consequently, the feedback recipients struggled to understand the feedback, sometimes needing additional time to comprehend it or to have a follow-up discussion with the feedback provider. Another issue was students' reluctance to give feedback because they

compared their peer's work to their own, which stemmed from their limited writing knowledge.

From the interview, students stated that some difficulties in doing peer-feedback practices were as follows:

Student 1: *“Hanya diberi waktu sekitar 5 menit untuk membaca karya teman kita kemudian langsung memberikan feedbacknya. Untuk membaca dan mengidentifikasi sebuah artikel secara komprehensif, waktunya terasa sangat singkat. Ada pula perasaan enggan memberikan masukan terhadap pekerjaan temannya. Hal ini membuat umpan balik yang diberikan menjadi kurang rinci dan komprehensif.”*

Student 2: *“Saat memberikan feedback, saya mempunyai keraguan terhadap karya saya sendiri apakah karya saya benar atau tidak. Terkadang saya takut memberikan feedback terhadap karya teman karena merasa minder dengan ilmu yang saya miliki.”*

The impact of peer feedback on students' writing product

Peer feedback practices positively impacted students' writing. For those providing feedback, it offered fresh insights and knowledge. This occurred because the feedback process involved reading and analyzing their peers' writing. During this process, they gained knowledge and engaged in critical thinking. By reading their peers' work, they encountered new writing styles, content, vocabulary, and more, prompting them to compare it with their work. Consequently, the feedback providers evaluated and corrected their writing based on the mistakes they identified.

From the interview, the students stated the impact of providing feedback was as follows:

Student 1: *“Kalau memberi feedback menurut saya berarti berpikir lebih kritis dan mengambil keputusan dengan cepat karena waktu cepat, jadi mau tidak mau harus meningkatkan kemampuan membaca skimming scanning. Saya dapat menemukan poin-poin dalam artikel tersebut dengan cepat. Dapat meningkatkan pengambilan keputusan, keterampilan membaca, dapat mengetahui topik dengan cepat meskipun mengetahui benar atau tidak. Tapi Anda bisa mengidentifikasi apa yang salah dan apa yang bisa diperbaiki.”*

Student 6: *“Ada wawasan baru tentang cara teman-teman menulis, seperti apa gaya menulisnya, bagaimana menyusun kalimat yang baik dan enak dibaca. Dari memberi feedback, Anda bisa mengetahui tulisan yang bagus seperti apa dengan membaca tulisan teman.”*

For the feedback receiver, peer-feedback practices offer evaluation, suggestions, and insights to enhance their writing. Upon receiving feedback from a peer, the recipient must first comprehend the feedback to fully understand it. This is followed by a self-evaluation process where they assess whether the feedback is applicable to their writing. Ultimately, after filtering the feedback, the recipient can refine their writing based on the evaluated feedback they have received.

Student 3: “Biasanya saya akan berpikir dulu ketika menerima feedback apakah bisa diimplementasikan ke dalam pekerjaan saya atau tidak. Nanti kalau cocok, implementasikan pada karya saya sendiri.”

Student 4: “Karena ini kerja kelompok, biasanya kita hanya berpikir sendiri tanpa bertanya pada kelompok yang memberikan feedback. Biasanya kita memikirkan apakah feedback ini bagus untuk pekerjaan kita sendiri atau tidak.”

The process of giving and receiving feedback in fact gave the students a good impact on their writing skills. This improvement led to better writing products the students wrote. It could be proven from the students’ writing drafts before and after the peer feedback session. It could be shown from the table below that there were changes made in order to fix the errors that the students made in their writing.

Table 4.3

Before and after students’ draft revision

Before Peer-Feedback	After Peer-Feedback
effective scaffolding involves varied and dynamic support.	effective scaffolding involves varied a variety and dynamic support.
We refer to these as "six diamonds" because, like a diamond's multifaceted structure	We refer to these as "six diamonds" because, like like a diamond's multifaceted structure
Kim (2016) that have adapted the taxonomy functions of language which can be utilized to analyze the peer scaffolding behaviors during EFL writing activities.	Kim (2016) that who have adapted the taxonomy functions of language which can be utilized to analyze the peer scaffolding behaviors during EFL writing activities.
The participants in this study were 2nd semester pre-service English Teachers	The participants in this study were 2nd-semester 2nd-semester pre-service English Teachers.
Li and Kim (2016) have adapted some functions of language which can be utilized to analyze the peer scaffolding	Li and Kim (2016) have adapted some the taxonomy functions of language which can be utilitized utilized to analyze the peer scaffolding
In more detailed,	In more detailed detail,

In each peer feedback session, students took on the roles of feedback giver and receiver. The insights they gained from providing feedback and from the feedback they received from peers served as a foundation for improving their writing skills. Engaging in critical thinking, evaluating the feedback, learning from mistakes, comparing their work to others, and striving to improve their writing skills can contribute to lasting knowledge.

Some feedback that students provided or received from their peers did not consistently result in improvements. The process of comparing their own understanding with the new information from peer feedback, filtering the received feedback, and seeking additional knowledge beyond the peer feedback session could be factors that prevented students from experiencing a direct impact from the feedback. Additionally, some feedback during the peer-feedback session was merely affirmative, only affirming students' work rather than providing corrective guidance.

In several opportunities, the students tended to ask for feedback from the lecturer. The feedback that they received from their peers was usually cross-checked with the lecturers because they felt that it was better to ask the lecturers directly. It was confirmed by the students from the interview as follows:

Student 1: *"Biasanya jika saya memahami maksud dari feedback tersebut, saya tidak melakukan cross check dengan pemberi feedback karena saya pasti sudah mengetahui kesalahannya sebelum saya diberi feedback. namun jika feedback yang saya kurang paham, saya jarang cross check ke teman tapi malah cross check ke dosen karena takut review yang diberikan tidak cocok untuk diterapkan. Jadi daripada kerja dua kali kita langsung crosscheck ke dosennya apakah bisa diubah seperti itu sesuai saran teman yang lain, jadi crosscheck langsung di depan orang yang memberi review dan bertanya ke dosen yang bersangkutan."*

The analysis found that peer feedback, though not leading to major improvements, was consistently helpful. Even minimal feedback encouraged critical thinking and gradual improvement in students' writing. This shows the value of peer feedback as a supportive tool in writing instruction, fostering active participation and collaboration, and steadily enhancing writing skills.

DISCUSSION

This study identified three types of given feedback: direct corrective, indirect corrective, and affirmative. Direct corrective feedback involves explicitly correcting errors,

as described by Ellis (2009), while indirect corrective feedback highlights errors without providing corrections, encouraging learners to self-correct (Ferris, 2002). Affirmative feedback involves positive reinforcement, emphasizing strengths in a writer's work (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Students used these feedback types based on their confidence and understanding, with direct feedback reinforcing knowledge of language rules and indirect feedback promoting critical thinking and deeper engagement with writing conventions (Ellis, 2009; Lalande, 1982). Hosseiny (2014) noted that indirect feedback fosters active revision, while direct feedback improves grammar knowledge.

This study identified three types of received feedback: direct and indirect corrective and affirmative feedback. Nelson and Schunn (2008) found that peer feedback included direct corrective feedback, summarization, indirect corrective feedback, and localization. Direct corrective feedback provides clear examples of correct language usage, aiding learners in understanding complex rules. Sheen (2007) emphasized its effectiveness in deepening language comprehension. In contrast, indirect corrective feedback encourages learners to engage with their errors actively, promoting better cognitive processing and retention of language rules, as noted by Lalande (1982).

The study highlights the positive impact of peer feedback on students' writing. Both giving and receiving feedback were mutually beneficial, as engaging with rubrics helped students improve in both roles. Providing feedback allowed students to critically analyze peers' work, which sharpened their attention to detail, reinforced their understanding of writing concepts, and exposed them to diverse writing styles. This process, as supported by Berggren (2015) and Cao (2019), motivated students to improve their drafts and enhanced their writing skills in various aspects, including grammar, structure, cohesion, and accuracy.

Receiving feedback, particularly from peers, significantly improved students' writing by offering multiple perspectives and helping them identify strengths and areas for improvement. Constructive feedback provided specific suggestions, leading to better revisions and writing outcomes. Cho and Schunn's (2007) theory supported this, showing that feedback effectively enhanced writing quality. Studies by Hu and Lam (2010), Pope (2001), and Yang (2016) also confirmed that peer feedback boosted writing performance, especially in spelling, grammar, referencing, and idea development.

CONCLUSION

During peer feedback sessions, the types of given feedback were direct, indirect corrective feedback and affirmative feedback. Direct feedback reinforced language rules and improved writing skills, while indirect feedback promoted critical thinking and internalization of writing conventions. Both feedback types contributed to the giver's mastery of writing.

The types of received feedback during the peer feedback activity in this study are direct, indirect, and affirmative feedback. Direct feedback was beneficial for learners struggling with complex language rules by offering clear guidance and examples. Indirect feedback, on the other hand, encouraged active engagement with errors, promoting better cognitive processing, retention, and problem-solving skills.

Giving and receiving feedback positively impacts students' writing. Peer feedback sessions foster critical analysis, helping students identify strengths and weaknesses while exposing them to different styles and common mistakes. This practice enhances understanding of writing concepts and encourages revision. Receiving feedback offers fresh perspectives and specific suggestions for improvement. The iterative process of writing, feedback, and revision leads to better writing outcomes, highlighting the value of peer feedback in promoting collaboration and skill development.

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