Revision Analysis of Peer-Written Feedback in L2 Writing

Watcharee Kulprasit

Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thaksin University, Songkhla Campus, Songkhla, Thailand
Corresponding author, Email: watcharee.tsu@gmail.com

_____

Abstract

Feedback is an essential factor in L2 writing, especially in the process-based writing class. This kind of formative feedback is gradually replacing where summative feedback once belonged to. With such an integration, second language writing puts the spotlight not only on the final products but also on the whole writing process, including writing strategies to the polished ones. Particularly, peer feedback is a technique teachers usually employ in L2 writing pedagogy where a scaffolding learning strategy is applied. This approach is still doubtful in terms of its value and potential. Thus, the present study was undertaken to examine how peer-written feedback on EFL undergraduate students' second drafts have an effect on the revision of their final products based on analysis of its categories in order to see its full potential. In so doing, the English major undergraduates' second drafts of their writing assignments and their final products of their writing assignments were collected and analyzed. The quantitative data analysis was used to achieve the objective of the study. The results revealed that, according to six categories of revision analysis, most of the subjects' errors found on their drafts could be corrected as their final products being analyzed due to peer-written feedback they received on their second drafts. To summarize, this study has highlighted the full impact of peer-written feedback on polishing the final writing products.

Keywords: *Peer-written feedback, L2 writing revision, Second language writing, Formative assessment*
_____

1. Introduction

In a general sense, an assessment is related to grades or scores in the final stage of learning. For the most part, a summative assessment or assessment of learning (AoL) takes charge of this situation (Overmeyer, 2009). The grades or scores the students get simply represent the level of their learning achievement. If they receive good grades or scores, those good grades can be an incentive for them to learn further and develop more skills since they can recognize and achieve a sense of great accomplishment. On the other hand, achieving low grades or poor scores commonly leads to the discouragement of learning. This double-edged sword, therefore, reflects the limited use of assessment in pedagogy, instead of its maximum potential. In order to deal with such an issue, the formative assessment or assessment for learning (AfL) has been getting more attention for more effective learning and teaching, especially in writing pedagogy in the EFL contexts. With this sort of assessment, it discloses another dimension of assessment; that is, it can foster learning and teaching, particularly language skills rather than merely mark the students' learning progress or their language proficiency levels.

Formative assessment is a kind of assessment that promotes effective learning. In the writing pedagogy where a formative assessment is employed, the assessment or formative assessment is not the terminal of the writing process but a part of each step in the process. Through the process, the students' writing has been assessed and edited several times before it is well polished as a final product. As a result, the revision process, a significant step of the writing process, is highlighted as a significant role in Response to Intervention (RTI) to push students to be able to develop their writing skill through feedback in the writing process based on the process-based writing approach (Tuttle, 2013).

Since feedback is a central role for assessment for learning or AfL (Spendlove, 2009), the sources of feedback for this type of assessment can be teachers, students themselves, or even their peers. Wherever the feedback is from, it shares the same learning goal; that is, to effectively improve learning and teaching. According to Berry (2008), whatever sort of feedback it is, all of them should be integrated to foster effective learning. Self and peer assessment, specifically, are assessment as learning (AaL), which provides constructive feedback for promoting learning and skill development through meditation and reflection. This procedure also develops their metacognitive, monitoring, or judgmental skills.

[1020]

Gathercole (2013) claimed that several studies based on the empirical theories reported that peer feedback is a major contributor to students' learning development, especially in L2 writing pedagogy. Since language development takes place in the social context based on the sociocultural approaches, students can learn to develop their language proficiency and skills through interaction with other students. In such a case, students can develop their language skills within their zone of proximal development (ZPD) based on Vygotsky's concept.

Besides, revision, another significant step in the writing procedure, is the process of making changes so that drafts can be polished in this process. As Horning and Becker (2006) suggested, three things require consideration for the revision process as a part of the writing process based on the process-based approach illustrated in Figure 1 as follows.
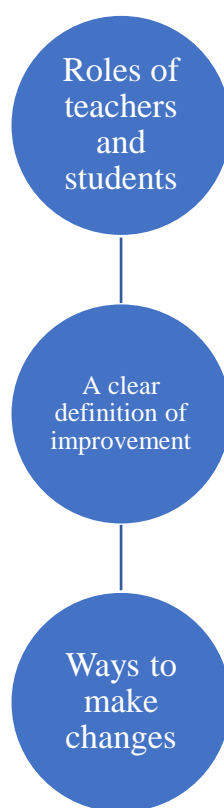
Roles of teachers and students

A clear definition of improvement

Ways to make changes

Figure 1 Three factors in the revision process

Regarding Figure 1, anyone who takes part in the revision process must be aware of their roles in the process; hence, they can play their roles more effectively. What are the roles of students, teachers, or peers? Who takes the roles of writers or revisers? Who plays the role of the readers or critics? Besides, a clear definition of improvement must be given with mutual understanding and agreement. In so doing, the same aim can be reached at the final stage of the process. In such a case, feedback should be given clear enough for the revisers to understand and know how to improve their writing. Finally, everyone must ensure to know ways to make changes. The word "everyone" here involves both the critics who give feedback and the revisers. How can they deal with the feedback they got for their writing improvement?

According to an interesting issue raised by Hyland (2003), teacher feedback is, as a matter of fact, students' preference whereas the value of alternative assessment for pedagogical implication like self and

peer assessment is solely recognized by teachers; though there is still no empirical evidence, especially in L2 contexts. Additionally, there is practically only one teacher for at least twenty students in each class, which means that it is a long wait for all students to get the teacher's feedback apart from a time-consuming task for the teachers themselves. As a consequence, this study takes this research finding to challenge such notions since it investigated the impact of peer-written feedback, specifically-form feedback, on students' writing drafts on their revision (final products) to see if their writing is apparently improved in terms of accuracy. In so doing, it is how teachers refuse to seize the throne. On the other hand, students themselves are active learners who are responsible for their learning and skill development, which is how we increase their strength to overcome their weaknesses (Sackstein, 2017).

2. Objective

To analyze categories of the revision the students make on their final products based on peer-written feedback they received on their second drafts.

3. Materials and Methods

Subjects of the study

English major sophomores were an entire group of the present study. They were taking the Basic Writing Course, a compulsory course for B.A. (English) during the period of study. Most of them (79%) were female, and less than thirty percent (21%) were male. Their ages ranged from nineteen to twenty-one. Since this group of subjects was English majored undergraduates, they had a certain level of language proficiency to contribute to the current study.

Research instruments

The present study was quantitative, of which data were obtained from the two principal research instruments:
1) the subjects' second drafts of their writing assignments
   After brainstorming their ideas in their first drafts, each subject was asked to write the second draft of each writing assignment as the revised version of the self-correction from the first draft. Then, peer-written feedback was given on their second drafts after their peers read them.
2) the subjects' final products of their writing assignments
   The subjects were told to revise the final products of their writing assignments based on the peer-written feedback they received on their second drafts. However, they had the freedom to accept or ignore peer-written feedback. The subjects' responses to the peer-written feedback they received were quantitatively analyzed in terms of numbers and percentages adapted from six categories of student revision analysis according to Ferris (2006) that can be clarified in the following table.

Table 1 Six Categories of Student Revision Analysis

Categories of Student Revision Analysis	Description
Error corrected	The subjects received the correct peer-written feedback on their second drafts, so they could correct the errors on / polish their final products.
Error corrected (incorrect feedback)	The same errors could be found on the subjects' final products since the incorrect peer-written feedback was given on their second drafts.
Incorrect change	Incorrect change made by the subjects was witnessed on their final products, although they received the correct peer-written feedback on their second drafts.

[1022]

Incorrect change (incorrect feedback)	The incorrect change was made on their final products because the subjects got the incorrect peer-written feedback was given on their second drafts.
No change	No response from the subjects was apparent on their final products, although they received peer-written feedback for correction.
Deleted text	The subjects deleted the text being mentioned to be corrected based on their peer-written feedback, so this kind of text could not be seen in their final products.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

This study took the first whole semester of the academic year. During the time of the study, the researcher was an instructor of the course, so the process of data collection could be fully guaranteed. During the first week, an introduction to the course and the writing procedure were given to the subjects, which means they were required to submit seven writing assignments with their drafts after they had been through the writing process with peer-written feedback. For each writing assignment, the subjects were asked to brainstorm ideas on their first draft. After self-correction was done, they wrote the self-polished version of their writing on the second draft, which would be further taken in the peer-written feedback process. Finally, they revised their writing based on peer-written feedback they received on the second draft on the final piece of paper. However, the subjects were demanded to submit only their second drafts and their final products of each assignment for analysis. The whole process was done weekly. The data were collected and analyzed in terms of numbers and percentages based on the student revision analysis categories adapted from Ferris (2006), as previously mentioned.

4. Results and Discussion

After the subjects received peer-written feedback on their second drafts of their writing assignments, they were asked to revise their writing for their final products based on that peer-written feedback. In so doing, their reactions to the feedback could be classified into six forms based on the student revision analysis categories, according to Ferris (2006), as previously mentioned. The results can be presented in Table 2 as follows.

Table 2 Responses to Peer-Written Feedback on Subjects' Final Products

| | Total No. of Feedback | Revision | | | | | |
		Error corrected	Error corrected (Incorrect feedback)	Incorrect change	Incorrect change (Incorrect feedback)	No change	Deleted text
No.	2,348	1,846	53	84	182	130	53
Percentage	100	78.62	2.26	3.58	7.75	5.54	2.26

Table 2 demonstrates that the subjects' revision can be categorized into six groups based on Ferris (2006), that is, error corrected, error corrected (incorrect feedback), incorrect change, incorrect change (incorrect feedback), no change, and deleted text. According to the analysis of the subjects' final products that were revised according to the peer-written feedback they received on their second drafts, it can be remarked that nearly eighty percent of the errors found on their second drafts could be corrected in their final products based on those peer-written feedbacks (78.62%). On the contrary, 7.75% of incorrect feedback they received on the second drafts leads to the errors that could still be found in the final products, whereas it was under six percent when no change was made though peer feedback was given (5.54%). Less than four percent of the errors could be incorrect changes based on the correct peer-written feedback they received (3.58%). Nevertheless, deleting text and error-corrected from incorrect peer-written feedback were the two least common strategies they used to revise their drafts (2.26%).

[1023]

According to the findings, when the subjects received written feedback from the reviewers or their peers on their second drafts, they usually did one thing or another to polish their writing with the peer-written feedback they got. Despite the strategy they employed, every feedback was based on their mutual aim; that is, to improve their writing products, particularly in terms of grammatical aspects. The subjects were asked to improve their grammar, one of the writing traits contributing to good writing, through their peer-written feedback process as being instructed in the first week of the course instruction. Concerning the finding of the present study on how the subjects responded to peer-written feedback on their writing based on the student revision analysis categories adapted from Ferris (2006), it was found that the subjects could correct most of the errors found in their writing based on the peer-written feedback they received on their second drafts. The same finding can be found in Kamimura's study (2006), Wakabayashi's study (2008), Ting & Qian's study (2010), Lei's study (2012), Sotoudehnama and Pilehvari's study (2016), Kuyyogsuy's study (2019), and so forth. It can be inferred that most peer-written feedback they received on their second drafts was the correct direct corrective feedback type (DCF); therefore, it was clear for the students since they knew how they could correct the errors. Unquestionably, the subjects' final products could be easily well polished in terms of accuracy, stressing the power of direct corrective feedback (DCF) on writing's accuracy improvement. Additionally, it revealed that, as L2 students, the subjects possibly had some defined level of L2 proficiency to be able to aware of errors and their correction. Also, they could make a judgment on the peer-written feedback they received in order to correct their errors.

Nonetheless, although, some incorrect changes could still be found due to incorrect feedback from their peers, deleting texts where the problematic grammatical aspects were found was regarded as their last choice for the subjects to deal with their writing in the revision process. This emphasized another practical impact of peer-written feedback incorporated in the writing process. That is, the subjects would try their best to do something following the peer-written feedback they received in order to produce their well-polished final products.

Also, it was worth noting that some errors discovered in the subjects' second drafts were found to be correct on their final products though they received incorrect peer-written feedback. It possibly indicated that some errors on the subjects' second drafts were only the careless mistakes they made when producing L2 as being L2 learners means there was still a limited opportunity for their L2 exposure. The subjects were in an environment where L1 was their daily means of communication. Therefore, it was difficult for them to master the use of L2 and use it fluently. Hence, the incorrect peer-written feedback they received could simply be just an indicator of revising their final products correctly.

Another interesting point that should be mentioned was that the subjects sometimes made no change in their final products if they received incorrect peer-written feedback. This, however, remarks another benefit of peer-written feedback; that is, it could strengthen the subjects' judgmental development skill in order to improve their writing. This skill can be developed as one of the essential characteristics of good writers and is significant since it can be considered as a lifelong learning skill. Not only can they use it in the writing process to improve their writing products, but also in any situation in their everyday life.

Concerning the findings of the study, it is transparently evident that the peer-written feedback helped improve the subjects' writing in terms of accuracy. According to the revision analysis, most of the grammatical errors found on their second drafts could be corrected based on the peer-written feedback they received. As a result, this study empowered both peer-written feedback as an assessment for learning and the role of students to take charge of their language improvement.

5. Conclusion

The present study is a quantitative study on the revision analysis of peer-written feedback on the students' drafts and their final products. According to their responses to the peer-written feedback they received, their final products were grammatically improved. For this reason, this study highlighted an effective empirical role of peer-written feedback in the revision process in L2 writing pedagogy.

6. Acknowledgments

7. References

Berry, R. (2008). *Assessment for learning*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Ferris, D. (2006). Does error feedback help student writers? New evidence on the short- and long-term effects of written error correction. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Authors), *Feedback in Second Language Writing: Contexts and Issues* (pp. 81-104). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139524742.007

Gathercole, V. C. M. (2013). *Solutions for the assessment of bilinguals.* New York: Multilingual Matters.

Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kamimura, T. (2006). Effects of peer feedback on EFL student writers at different levels of English proficiency: A Japanese context. *TESL Canada Journal, 23*(2), 12-39.

Kuyyogsuy, S. (2019). Promoting peer feedback in developing students' English writing ability in L2 writing class. *International Education Studies, 12*(9), 76-90.

Lei, C. (2012). Relations among peer feedback, writing performance, and writing improvement: evidence from a writing class in China. *Reflecting Education*, *8* (*1*), 10-23.

Overmeyer, M. (2009). *What student writing teaches us: Formative assessment in the writing workshop*. Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Sackstein, S. (2017). *Peer feedback in the classroom: Empowering students to be the experts*. Virginia: ASCD.

Sotoudehnama, E., & Pilehvari, A. (2016). The impact of peer review on EFL learners' writing proficiency: Global and local aspects. *PortaLinguarum*, *25*, 35-47.

Spendlove, D. (2009). *Putting assessment for learning into practice*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Ting, M., & Qian, Y. (2010). A case study of peer feedback in a Chinese EFL writing classroom. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics, 33*(*4*), 87-98.

Tuttle, H. G. (2013). *Successful student writing through formative assessment*. New York: Routledge.

Wakabayashi, R. (2008). The effect of peer feedback on EFL writing: Focusing on Japanese university students. *OnCUE Journal, 2*(*2*), 92-110.