

The application of guided peer feedback in facilitating L2 writing: Action research with tertiary-level language learners in Bangladesh

Mohammad Aftab Uddin Chowdhury

School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

Mohammad Akteruzzaman

Department of English, East Delta University, Bangladesh

This study is based on action research conducted with 117 students attending their introductory English language courses at two universities in Bangladesh. Peer feedback (PF), an essential part of collaborative learning, is an important alternative mode of assessment and can provide a deeper and clearer understanding of the learners' aptitude and thus, aid the instructor in facilitating the learners. Not only can the learners benefit in terms of critical thinking while evaluating their peers, but also the peers can improve through the knowledge-sharing process. The objective of this study was to modify the notion of PF among the students as they were found to be producing vague, short, and shallow remarks on their peers' writing. The study uses the PF comments on peers' writing collected during the observation stage of an action research project to identify the weaknesses in the participants' feedback to their peers. Then, it documents the process during which the causes of the weak PF are discovered and addressed, and learners are made more aware of the importance and benefits of PF. Finally, it examines the outcomes of a second round of PF, illustrating the improvement in the quality of the PF and the increased satisfaction of providers and recipients of the PF.

Keywords: peer feedback; L2 writing; academic English; collaborative learning; Bangladesh

Introduction

This paper describes an action research project implemented within a context of university English language learning in Bangladesh. The goal of the action research was to change the poor perceptions and use of peer feedback in that context to make it a useful tool to supplement the work of the teachers and to empower the students by improving their willingness and ability to interact with their peers about their writing which was predicted to build their confidence, improve their self-monitoring and make them better writers. The paper begins by defining the key issues, then it documents the process of the action research and its findings, and finishes with some conclusions about the benefits achieved.

Defining peer feedback

Peer feedback (PF) is a process where the members of the same learning community are engaged in assessing and providing feedback to their co-learners leading to a beneficial learning output for both the provider and the receiver (Greenwood & Delquadri, 1995; K. Hyland & Hyland, 2006). It incorporates comments, suggestions, and questions provided by the learners to their peers on their writing (Flower, 1979). Other forms are peer editing

(Skipper, 2001), peer review (Brathwaite, 2009; Kurihara, 2017), peer evaluation and response (Nielsen, 2011), peer assessment (McDonald, 2015), corrective feedback (Topping, Buchs, Duran, & Keer, 2017), peer learning (Boud, Cohen, & Sampson, 2013), peer-assisted learning (Lee, 2017), and feed forward (Gambhir & Tangkiengsirisin, 2017). Studies suggest PF is fruitful in ensuring learner autonomy (Duran & Monereo, 2005), creating sensible and responsible writers (Jones, 2011; Ware, 2004), enhancing mutual appreciation among learners (Askew & Lodge, 2000; Falchikov, 2013), and facilitating second language learning through sociocultural engagement (Lantolf & Appel, 1994).

Application of PF in L2 writing compared to teacher feedback

In terms of second language (L2) writing, the application of PF generates mixed reactions. On the positive side, PF is valued as it stimulates learners to discover the areas of improvement in their peers' writings which empowers their own writing aptitudes in the process of learning (Cai, 2011; Nicol, 2009). It is also proposed as a process that can trigger the inner critic of learners for assessing their own writing (Rollinson, 2005) where second language writers can help each other by creating a communal platform for the learning and exchange of ideas (Ware, 2004). Liu and Hasen (2018) suggest that PF can be resourceful for both the receivers and givers because during the process of writing, the learners become the "sources of information and interactants for each other" by playing the roles of "teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts" (p. 1). It is also useful in successfully interpreting their peers' writings, becoming reflective, and improving their own editing skills (F. Hyland, 2000). Ferris (2002) further claims that "it is more engaging and motivating to work on a peer's paper currently under construction than to always look only at models, especially because the author is usually working on the same general assignment that the editor is" (p. 103). PF is also believed to be a significant way of making students better writers and more critical thinkers (Gascoigne, 2004; Leki, 1990; Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger, 1992).

Conversely, some literature questions the credibility of PF, particularly when compared to teacher feedback (TF). They mostly focus on the reliability and validity of PF as an authentic mode of assessment. It has been suggested that the concept and typological features of PF are not visibly demarcated and the stakeholders are often perplexed when it comes to the models of implementation (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006). Mendonça and Johnson (1994) critique the relevance of PF and emphasize that learners from the same academic level might fall short of appraising their peers' works in an appropriate manner. In many cases, the comments or remarks can be misunderstood and remain ineffective (Weaver, 2006). Bitchener and Knoch (2010) worry that PF limits the linguistic input which can be derived from a teacher in a more suitable manner; and K. Hyland and Hyland (2006) extend this argument by claiming that PF portrays notable deficiency in developing communicative competence.

There is some suggestion that there has been insufficient use of PF. Liu and Hasen (2018) hold the view that PF has been ignored over the years. Shulin (2013), based on an extensive study, found PF to be used infrequently. At the same time, TF also has constraints. K. Hyland and Hyland (2006) consider TF to be "frequently misunderstood, vague, inconsistent and authoritarian, overly concerned with error and often functioning to appropriate, or take over, student texts by being too directive" (p. 84). Ferris (2007) argues that, in some cases, TF can be "insensitive, and at worst, abusive and hostile towards students" (p. 166). Zhao (2010) asserts that students often fail to internalize the feedback given by their teachers as they accept the remarks passively since the teacher

plays the roles of a facilitator, evaluator, coach, and judge. Zamel (1985) and Truscott (1996) view TF as unreasonably inclined towards grammar, mechanics, and the formal aspects of writing. This brief review of the literature suggests that PF has substantial possibilities as a complement to TF if employed suitably.

Research problem and hypothesis

The research problem, realized through an initial idea-sharing session with the learners, relates to the observation that the learners were found adapting faulty and irrelevant approaches to PF. Their reactions suggested that the learners are dependent on the feedback provided by their teachers. Given that language teachers in Bangladesh lack sufficient training and the classes are excessively large (Barman, Sultana, & Basu, 2007; Rahman & Karim, 2015), it is often impossible for teachers to provide effective feedback and they cannot accommodate PF due to the shortage of allotted teaching time. Besides, they tend to insist on grammar skills while giving feedback, thus, paying less attention to the content and development of the topic, even at the tertiary level. This creates a problematic situation for the learners as they fail to comprehend the basic notions of feedback. They take it granted that the purpose of receiving feedback from teachers is only to rectify their misunderstanding of grammar and accuracy whereas issues like structure, organisation, and development of thought stay underrated. This affects learners' own realisation of the processes and functions of L2 writing.

It is hypothesized that if PF is integrated as an integral part of teaching L2 writing, it can have a positive impact on the learners' own understanding of the writing process, organization, and structure. This would be beneficial for both the provider and the receiver, and can be productive if applied correctly (Chowdhury & Akteruzzaman, 2015). While learners are checking their peers' copies and providing feedback, they would be able to simultaneously locate and identify their own weaknesses. During the peer-review process, participants go through several roles which are usually undertaken by the teacher. This will give them a sense of authority and self-esteem that eventually will develop their own L2 writing skills and their learner autonomy. Equally, implementing PF has the potential to assist teachers in enhancing and supplementing their own understanding of L2 learning and creating a sustainable learning environment which can support large classes in a more engaging manner.

The study

Research questions and framework

The action research framework proposed by O'Leary (2004) was adapted for this study. Research questions were formed for the four stages of the action research (Table 1) but it should be noted that stages 3 and 4 were combined in implementation.

Population and setting

The participants were selected from two universities in Bangladesh. All of them were attending their introductory English language courses (ENG 101). These foundation courses aim at developing the students' English language skills for future academic success as well as providing them with a foothold of English through several practical activities, e.g. group work, pair work, oral presentation, group project, and assignment. In total, 117 students from four separate sections participated in the research process.

Table 1. Stages of the action research and the research questions

AR Stage	Purpose	Research Questions
1	Observation	What are the most common remarks that the learners make while providing feedback on their peers' writing? How helpful are those remarks for the receivers?
2	Reflection	What are the causes of making such comments? How can their previous experience correlate to their current strategies?
3	Planning	How can guided PF be utilised in this case? Can correcting their notions of PF produce desirable output?
4	Act	What goes well as remedy? What needs to be changed?

Data collection and instruments

Data collection was tailored to match the stages of the action research project: observation, reflection, and planning and action. During the observation stage, all participants were asked to write four pieces of academic text. One each in the genres of: summary, paragraph, compare-contrast essay, and argumentative essay. These texts were then randomly redistributed and participants gave each other PF. This feedback comprises the first data set. As part of the reflection stage of the project, an *Attitude/Motivation Test Battery* (AMTB) questionnaire (Gardner, 1985) was used to gather students' reasons for the PF comments they made and their responses became an additional data set. In the planning and action (combined) stage, after further training had been given to participants by their teachers, participants were asked to create four new pieces of writing within the same academic text types and then give each other PF. This feedback became a new set of data and a final survey was conducted after that second feedback session had finished. Data sets were compared to identify changes in participants' attitudes towards and understanding of PF. The data were processed using Microsoft Excel. At the end of the project a second AMTB survey was conducted aimed at finding out the extent to which participants believed the project had enabled them to better understand the purpose and use of PF and to become better providers of PF.

Statement of ethical consideration

The norms of ethical consideration were maintained during all the stages of the research. Data remained confidential and participant anonymity was ensured throughout. All data gathering was subject to informed consent. The researchers explained to participants the need to be open and clear in their responses to the questionnaires.

Stages of action research

Observation

Primarily, the initial challenge was that the learners felt highly constrained when asked to write comments on their peers' writing. Their perspective suggests that checking and evaluating are considered the territory of the teacher. If someone else is checking their copies, they do not accept the decision happily. It has a negative impact on both the parties

as the writer often feels insulted that a peer comments on their writing. From the feedback providers' perspective, it becomes perplexing as they do not think of themselves as profound readers and sometimes feel offended by the audacities of their classmates. Evidently, this leads to the creation of apparently positive, short, and encouraging notes for their peers. The students give little attention to the feedback task, and sometimes provide feedback to a 250-word essay in merely two to three minutes. Most of them fail to realise that providing PF is a learning opportunity for them and by the proper utilisation of PF, they can also improve their own understanding of academic writing. Also, the learners typically display reluctance because they see providing PF as a burden. They take it for granted that the feedback is unnecessary and meaningless on the grounds that these comments are just their random considerations and thus sometimes they abruptly criticise someone. Most of the students are not aware of the fact that while providing feedback, they should be thoughtful about the content of the topic, language, and issues related to the development of the writing. For the purpose of the study, the students were asked to write four academic texts, namely summary, compare-and-contrast essay, paragraph, and argumentative essay. These texts were randomly distributed among them for a round of PF. All PF was then collected and analysed (see Tables 2-5).

The data show that most of the participants' remarks do not address any specific area, they tend to write fragmented sentences or phrases as feedback. After comparing the original texts with the feedback given, it is clear that much of it is unfair, biased, or prejudiced, some is overrated and irrelevant, and a few feedback comments attack the texts' authors personally. Many of the comments are not justified. This is particularly noticeable where extreme comments, both positive and negative, are used. For example, some of the texts receiving the comment "awful" were found by the researchers to be above average and some receiving the comment "wow" were below average. The incoherent behaviour noted in this phase led to the second phase of the action research in which data was collected to identify the probable cause of the incoherence.

Table 2. PF on summary

Category	Representative Comment*	Number of Responses
Exclamation	Wow	21
Structure	The structure is not followed correctly	21
Brief comment on mechanics	Many grammatical mistakes	19
Brief positive feedback	Great job	18
Extreme negative remark	Boring	14
Clarity	Unclear idea	12
Spelling	Bad spelling	10
Others		2

*Note: Comments were categorized according to their content. The representative comment reflects the content of the categories.

Table 3. PF on compare-and-contrast essay

Category	Representative Comment*	Number of Responses
Clarity	Not clear to me	23
Brief positive feedback	Way to go bro	20
Vague feedback	Needs more practice	17
Negative remark	Could do better	16
Inconsistent remark	Better luck next time	15
Brief comment on mechanics	Take care of your grammar	14
Extreme negative remark	Awful just like you	11
Others		1

*Note: Comments were categorized according to their content. The representative comment reflects the content of the categories.

Table 4. PF on paragraph

Category	Representative Comment*	Number of Responses
Brief positive feedback	Good job	24
Vague feedback	Many errors	21
Inconsistent remark	Bad handwriting	18
Spelling	Spelling errors	17
Organisation	Did not touch the topic	15
Extreme negative remark	I expected better	12
Structure	Where are the examples?	9
Others		1

*Note: Comments were categorized according to their content. The representative comment reflects the content of the categories.

Table 5. PF on argumentative essay

Category	Representative Comment*	Number of Responses
Brief positive feedback	Nicely put	24
Brief comment on mechanics	Terrible sense of grammar	23
Extreme negative remark	Waste of time	19
Positive but inconsistent feedback	You nailed it bro	16
Extreme negative remark	Does not make any sense	14
Positive but inconsistent feedback	I can see a future genius	12
Extreme negative remark	At first learn how to write	8
Others		1

*Note: Comments were categorized according to their content. The representative comment reflects the content of the categories.

Reflection

In the reflection stage, an AMTB questionnaire was distributed to find out why participants employed shallow and overly generalised comments. The findings show that the learners are just following their respective teachers who use the same patterns of giving feedback. The learners have no idea about how to write PF and they do it in a way they consider acceptable in the light of communal practice and peer pressure. Table 6 clearly demonstrates that their previous experience and misconception are hindering them from acknowledging the incentives of PF in their academic performance.

Table 6. Findings of AMTB questionnaire

Responses	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My friend might take it negatively if I mark his writing.	71	25	15	3	3
My writing teacher always writes comments like this.	65	31	8	8	5
I do not know how to write feedback.	61	42	12	1	1
I feel comfortable doing it this way.	53	38	18	7	1
I do not think much while giving feedback.	49	44	21	2	1

Planning and action

This stage involved three different phases. In the first phase, the teacher assumed an authoritative role. Detailed discussions took place allowing the teacher to gather data about the aspects of PF that the learners need to be instructed on. Eight categories emerged. A checklist containing sample PF comments was created for the students (Table 7). The teacher also delivered detailed and precise guidance on the strategies of reading and the process of giving PF on writing; and elicited students' ideas regarding PF and the significance of PF in academic writing followed by an explanation of their misjudgements. Students were introduced to a list of Dos and Don'ts (Table 8) to follow while giving feedback.

Table 7. Checklist of eight feedback categories for students

Criteria	Effective Application	Partial Application	Needs Improvement
Content	I can understand the content clearly and easily.	Content is clear, however, sometimes I had to guess.	There is no evidence of understanding.
Structure	I can distinguish all the necessary parts and sub-parts of the writing.	Few of the parts are missing.	I found no sign of following the structure.
Accuracy	All the sentences are written accurately.	I could find some errors.	Almost all the sentences and words are incorrect.
Consistency	The ideas are presented as per the requirements of the topic.	The writing is a consistent one, however, I had to infer in some places.	There is no sign of consistency.
Devices	I could see all the three required devices: Coherence, Cohesion and Unity.	In some places, the writer failed to apply the devices appropriately.	There is no sign of using the devices.
Mechanics	All the sentences have the appropriate use of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	I found some errors in the use of mechanics.	There is no sign of applying the mechanics.
Examples	I saw enough and related examples where necessary.	Examples were irrelevant and insufficient in some places.	I found no examples.
References	The writing is well supported by appropriate references.	References are missing in some places or sometimes not relevant to the topic.	No references were found.

Table 8. Dos and don'ts while giving feedback

Dos	Don'ts
Maintain a positive tone while writing feedback.	Attack someone in personal grounds.
Use specific words in order to mention the areas to work on.	Write superficial or flowery comments.
Try to focus on substantial ideas.	Make comparisons with other writers.
Write meaningful phrases or sentences.	Make haste in putting comments.
Use identifiers like symbols to indicate the problematic areas in writing.	Anticipate ideas before exploring the writing properly.

After this new round of instruction, students were required to write a second set of academic texts in the same genres as those in the first round but with new topics. After completion, the texts were randomly re-distributed among participants for PF. For this second round of PF the participants were reminded to use the checklist and dos and don'ts list as provided. When completed, all PF was submitted for examination.

The PF data from this round was scrutinised specifically for evidence of comments within the eight identified categories that had been the focus of the instruction within this stage of the action research. All participants had made use of the eight categories and their feedback was grouped according to the degree to which it had been used (Table 9). Of the 117 participants, 58.44% (mean score) used the categories extensively, 32.48% moderately and 9.08% to a minor, but still acceptable, degree. The criteria for forming these groups are: comments pointing towards a precise area to work on are labelled *extensive*; comments mentioning the area of improvement without being specific are labelled *moderate*; and comments expressing a generalised view or providing an overall report are labelled *acceptable*.

Table 9. PF Usage of the eight categories of PF in the second session

Category	Extensive Improvement	Moderate Improvement	Acceptable Improvement
Content	57.26%	33.33%	9.40%
Example comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can see that you have such a nice content, still, it would be great if you could add some more logical information to support your stand. You have used a wide range of simple sentences, however, some variations in sentences could have improved the output. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The content is reasonably developed though some parts need more attention. Your content is simple, but sometimes I found it loosely connected with the topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I recognize the content plainly and quickly. I found your content clear and accurate.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think some of the sentences have failed to express your appropriate opinion, particularly in the counter argument section. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The content needs a proper development and address the prompt more directly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The content needs more work.
Structure	54.70%	35.90%	9.40%
Example comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A well-written essay with a lot of details though a careful attention to the structure could have made it better. The structure could have been followed properly as the two body paragraphs have different structure. I think including supporting details in the summary has hampered the structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I see you have used different essential elements of writing understandably. You could stick to the proper structure of writing. Some major parts/sub-parts of the structure are not included. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure should be followed. You have maintained the structure throughout the whole essay. Please follow the structure.
Accuracy	60.68%	29.06%	10.26%
Example comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your essay has some great points; however, you have made mistakes in some basic areas like subject-verb agreement and tense. You need to be more careful towards grammar as most of the sentences, other than two, contain errors in terms of using appropriate preposition, tense, and voice. The sentences of your paragraph are accurate but you have wrongly used gender in some places. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You could take grammar of the sentences seriously to deliver your message in your writing clearly. I found ungrammatical issues in almost every sentence. You have paraphrased the text well but you need to consider using more grammatically correct sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your sentences are found accurate and grammatical. A lot of wrong sentences found. The essay should be rewritten with correct sentences.
Consistency	52.99%	33.33%	13.68%
Example comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sentences are complete, grammatical, and have successfully conveyed the idea. You have addressed the topic in the body of the essay accurately but the introduction seems to be overly general. The summary is consistent but the last main idea was not included. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have done well as I had no problem in connecting the sentences you used though I had some difficulties in comprehending some sentences. Your writing is found consistent, but I got confused at some points. You could try to have a proper consistency between ideas and sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas are not presented logically. The concepts are loosely connected. The paraphrased text correctly presents the source.

Devices	62.39%	24.79%	12.82%
Example comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other than the introduction and conclusion paragraphs, the three body paragraphs need to be reorganised. • You should separate the main ideas of the paragraph by using transitional words. • You have developed a nice essay though you could have used some discourse markers in the reason paragraphs to keep the flow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You should be more careful about the use of devices as I can see some loosely connected sentences. • You could use devices to make your writing smooth and readable. • Devices should have been used in the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the three devices (Coherence, Cohesion and Unity) are found in your writing. • I have seen no application of devices. • Devices are not used.
Mechanics	58.97%	35.04%	5.98%
Example comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have a huge collection of words and a lot of expressive sentences; however, you might need to pay more attention towards punctuation and organisation. • Your sentences are meaningful and effective but I guess you lost track in the last two paragraphs due to problematic spelling and punctuation. • The summary looks great though you could distinguish between ideas while using complex and compound sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the sentences in your writing are having correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. • There are multiple errors in using mechanics I found and identified in your writing. • You could be careful about the mechanics while writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The essay has severe issues with devices. • All the sentences have problems. • Mechanics have been applied properly.
Examples	64.10%	32.48%	3.42%
Example comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like your examples because they are relevant, however, you could have made them more specific to the context of the topic. • The examples are fine but the one about television in the second paragraph seems a little farfetched. • Most of the examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I found various examples in your writing. • You could avoid using irrelevant example in your writing. • To justify your opinion, you could add more examples in your writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples are not found. • Examples are related and support the argument of your essay. • Good examples.
References	56.41%	35.90%	7.69%
Example comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have supported your explanation with relevant references, yet, the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various relevant references are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I found many unrelated sources in the essay.

	references could have been stronger at some points e.g. in the second paragraph where you talked about television.	appreciably mentioned in your writing.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the refutation part, your sources should be mentioned properly instead of writing www.google.com only. • I think mainstream newspapers should be cited, not unverified online news portals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes you could use references to support your opinion. • Some references are found irrelevant and not connected with your content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References could have been better. • Many good references.
Mean scores	58.44%	32.48%	9.08%

Discussion of findings

A comparison of the two rounds of peer-feedback shows that the second round, which occurred after the teacher had provided focused training and assistance, includes more effective and useful comments which are more logical and appropriate. These comments are more academic, more engaging, and show signs of greater reflection.

The open discussion between the teacher and students which occurred during the planning phase of the project prior to the second round of PF, illustrates students' belief that PF can aid them in various aspects (see Table 10 for questions and sample responses). From their responses it can be inferred that applying the appropriate strategies helps them harness a proper form of language while writing PF. Unlike their statements in the first round of PF, these statements are not impulsive. Some of the respondents confirmed they could locate their own errors while involved in the PF process. In addition, the remarks are more specific in terms of addressing the areas to improve. This seems to have provided the writers with an opportunity to become clearer about their own essays. The discussion also illustrates an understanding that PF should avoid making the recipients feel humiliated and disturbed which, in turn, acts as a catalyst for fellow learners to rectify their errors through thoughtful observations.

Table 10. Stage 2 teacher-student discussion questions and sample responses

Open-ended Questions	Representative Responses
How can PF help you in studies both as a receiver and provider?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think I can compare and contrast my own shortcomings. • I have discovered that I have been using some prepositions incorrectly.
What are the most important elements to check while working for your peer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation and development, I guess. • Maintaining consistency and accuracy should be the ones.
What are the similarities and dissimilarities that you find between you and your friend when you are checking the copies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My writing seems to be less logically connected to the topic compared to the one I checked. • We both can write correctly but his vocabulary is more enriched.

- How can you help your friend write better without hurting his/her feelings through PF?
 - By being friendly and positive in commenting.
 - We need to avoid using negative words or any expression that might hurt someone’s feelings.
- Have the instructions and list have been useful for your own understanding of PF?
 - Now I can realise that being fast and abrupt while looking into any write-up never helps.
 - The lists are helpful since I can understand the significance of PF and how it helps in discovering my own shortcomings.
- Who can benefit from PF activities?
 - It helps in both ways.
 - I have found many areas in my writing that should be improved while checking the copies.
- Among the eight categories, which one/ones pose a challenge to you?
 - For me, maintaining proper mechanics and organisation seems to be challenging.
 - Developing an essay following the structure thoroughly is the part I should work on.

A few of the participants added in the discussions that the training session and the PF practice developed their self-confidence in deconstructing and analysing someone else’s ideas, perceptions, and development of thought which enabled them to approach their peers after class to exchange views. Some also suggested that through implementing the techniques they had learned, they were more successfully able to identify areas of the texts which needed work and this aided the peers in improving further.

Contrasting with the previous unspecific and shorter PF comments, their comments in the second PF round are empathetic and helpful. In summary, it can be noted that this pedagogical use of PF creates a systematic improvement in overall performance and assists in detecting the specific errors of genre-specific writing.

Finally, the results of the second AMTB survey (Table 11) conducted at the end of the study show participants’ beliefs that they have developed a clearer understanding of PF and are better able to implement it. This suggests that PF is likely to have a constructive influence on academic writing in this context.

Table 11. Responses to the final questionnaire

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I can now locate my own areas to improve while writing.	83	22	9	2	1
Giving feedback has increased my confidence level.	76	38	1	1	1
Feedback seems more logical to me now.	68	41	8	0	0
Receiving and giving feedback have improved my knowledge of content, structure, and organization.	58	51	7	1	0
The guidance provided to me has cleared many doubts.	54	49	10	2	2

Conclusion

This study has clarified learners' perceptions of PF and how those perceptions can be changed by training from a teacher. At the outset, the participants had a problematic notion of PF tied to previous experiences of receiving feedback. This small-scale action research project has demonstrated that PF can yield fruitful and effective outcomes in the context of L2 writing if applied correctly, and that a well-designed method can considerably improve the learning experience. It would be useful to conduct further studies on PF to verify these results and to look at the effectiveness of training for PF in relation to other language skills like speaking and listening.

About the authors

Mohammad Aftab Uddin Chowdhury is a doctoral student at the School of Languages, Literacies and Translation of Universiti Sains Malaysia. He was previously a lecturer in English at the Institute of Languages of BRAC University, Bangladesh. He has a keen interest in discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and curriculum and material development.

Mohammad Akteruzzaman is an assistant professor of English at East Delta University in Bangladesh. He is interested in collaborative learning, error analysis, the relationship between language and power, and world Englishes. He is currently pursuing his MPhil in applied linguistics at the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh.

References

- Askew, S., & Lodge, C. (2000). Gifts, ping-pong and loops – linking feedback and learning. In S. Askew (Ed.), *Feedback For Learning* (pp. 1-18). London: Routledge.
- Barman, D. B., Sultana, Z., & Basu, B. L. (2007). *ELT: Theory and practice*. Dhaka: Friends Book Corner.
- Bitchener, J., & Knoch, U. (2010). The contribution of written corrective feedback to language development: A ten month investigation. *Applied Linguistics*, 31(2), 193-214. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amp016>
- Boud, D., Cohen, R., & Sampson, J. (2013). *Peer learning in higher education: Learning from and with each other*. London: Routledge.
- Brathwaite, S. S. (2009). *The efficacy of peer review in a university-level ESL writing class*. (Unpublished masters thesis), The University of Alabama, 2009.
- Cai, J. (2011). A contrastive study of online peer feedback and online teacher feedback on Chinese college students' English writing. *Foreign Language World*, 134(2), 65-72.
- Chowdhury, M. A. U., & Akteruzzaman, M. (2015). Teaching the structures of academic writing through peer review: A study on the beginners of English language courses at BRAC University. *GSTF J Educ*, 3(1), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.7603/s40742-015-0005-2>
- Duran, D., & Monereo, C. (2005). Styles and sequences of cooperative interaction in fixed and reciprocal peer tutoring. *Learning and Instruction*, 15(3), 179-199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2005.04.002>
- Ellis, R., Loewen, S., & Erlam, R. (2006). Implicit and explicit corrective feedback and the acquisition of L2 grammar. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 28(2), 339-368. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263106060141>
- Falchikov, N. (2013). *Improving assessment through student involvement: Practical solutions for aiding learning in higher and further education*. New York: Routledge.
- Ferris, D. (2002). *Treatment of error in second language student writing*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Ferris, D. (2007). Preparing teachers to respond to student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16(3), 165-193. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2007.07.003>
- Flower, L. (1979). Writer-based prose: A cognitive basis for problems in writing. *College English*, 41(1), 19-37. <https://doi.org/10.2307/376357>
- Gambhir, R., & Tangkiengsirisin, S. (2017). Peer Feedback and feedforward towards EFL argumentative writing. *The New English Teacher*, 11(2), 1.
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Attitude/motivation test battery*. Ontario: University of Western Ontario.

- Gascoigne, C. (2004). Examining the effect of feedback in beginning L2 composition. *Foreign Language Annals*, 37(1), 71-76. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2004.tb02174.x>
- Greenwood, C. R., & Delquadri, J. (1995). Classwide peer tutoring and the prevention of school failure. *Preventing school failure*, 39(4), 21-25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988x.1995.9944638>
- Hyland, F. (2000). ESL writers and feedback: Giving more autonomy to students. *Language Teaching Research*, 4(1), 33-54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688000400103>
- Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2006). *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Jones, D. (2011). Feedback in academic writing: Using feedback to feed-forward. *Language Education in Asia*, 2(1), 121-134.
- Kurihara, N. (2017). Do peer reviews help improve student writing abilities in an EFL high school classroom? *TESOL Journal*, 8(2), 450-470. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.282>
- Lantolf, J. P., & Appel, G. (1994). *Vygotskian approaches to second language research*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.
- Lee, I. (2017). *Classroom writing assessment and feedback in L2 school contexts*. Singapore: Springer.
- Leki, I. (1990). Coaching from the margins: Issues in written response. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp. 57-68). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Liu, J., & Hasen, J. (2018). *Peer response in second language writing classroom* (2nd ed.). New York: University of Michigan Press.
- Mangelsdorf, K., & Schlumberger, A. (1992). ESL student response stances in a peer-review task. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 1(3), 235-254. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/1060-3743\(92\)90005-A](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/1060-3743(92)90005-A)
- McDonald, B. (2015). *Peer assessment that works: A guide for teachers*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Mendonça, C. O., & Johnson, K. E. (1994). Peer review negotiations: Revision activities in ESL writing instruction. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28(4), 745-769. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587558>
- Nicol, D. (2009). *Transforming assessment and feedback: Enhancing integration and empowerment in the first year*. Mansfield: The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.
- Nielsen, K. J. (2011). *Peer evaluation and self assessment: A comparative study of the effectiveness of two complex methods of writing instruction in six sections of composition*. Boston: Boston University.
- O'Leary, Z. (2004). *The essential guide to doing research*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Rahman, M. S., & Karim, S. M. (2015). Problems of CLT in Bangladesh: Ways to improve. *International Journal of Education Learning and Development*, 3(3), 75-87.
- Rollinson, P. (2005). Using peer feedback in the ESL writing class. *ELT Journal*, 59(1), 23-30. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/cci003>
- Shulin, Y. (2013). EFL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding peer feedback in L2 writing classrooms. *Polyglossia*, 24, 74-79.
- Skipper, M. (2001). *The effects of peer-editing on high school students' writing ability*. New York: Sheppard Pratt Center for Human Development, Goucher College.
- Topping, K., Buchs, C., Duran, D., & Keer, H. v. (2017). *Effective peer learning: From principles to practical implementation*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning*, 46(2), 327-369. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1996.tb01238.x>
- Ware, P. D. (2004). Confidence and competition online: ESL student perspectives on web-based discussions in the classroom. *Computers and Composition*, 21(4), 451-468. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S8755-4615\(04\)00041-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S8755-4615(04)00041-6)
- Weaver, M. (2006). Do students value feedback? Student perceptions of tutors' written responses. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 31(3), 379-394. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930500353061>
- Zamel, V. (1985). Responding to student writing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19(1), 79-101. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3586773>
- Zhao, H. (2010). Investigating learners' use and understanding of peer and teacher feedback on writing: A comparative study in a Chinese English writing classroom. *Assessing Writing*, 15(1), 3-17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2010.01.002>