

## **The Effect of Peer Feedback on Writing Skill Development**

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**Abstract:** *This study investigates the impact of peer feedback on the development of writing skills in second language learning contexts. Adopting a mixed-method approach, the research combines quantitative assessment of writing performance with qualitative analysis of learner engagement. The statistical results indicate that students participating in structured peer feedback sessions improved their overall writing scores by approximately 20–30%, with the most notable gains observed in coherence, organization, and lexical variation. In contrast, learners exposed only to teacher-centered feedback demonstrated comparatively lower progress, averaging around 10–15% improvement. The findings also reveal a significant increase in revision frequency, suggesting that peer interaction encourages deeper cognitive involvement in the writing process. Beyond measurable outcomes, peer feedback fosters analytical thinking, self-regulation, and audience awareness. The study concludes that when systematically implemented, peer feedback serves as an effective pedagogical tool that enhances both the quality of written output and the learner's active role in knowledge construction.*

**Key words:** *Peer Feedback, Writing Development, Collaborative Learning, ESL Writing, Revision Process, Learner Autonomy, Formative Assessment*

### **1. Introduction**

In recent decades, the teaching of writing in second language contexts has undergone a noticeable shift from a teacher-centered paradigm toward more interactive and learner-driven approaches. Among these, peer feedback has emerged as a practical and pedagogically grounded strategy that not only redistributes responsibility within the classroom but also reshapes how learners perceive the act of writing itself. Writing is no longer treated as a one-step product to be evaluated solely by the instructor; rather, it is increasingly understood as a recursive process in which drafting, reviewing, and revising are interconnected stages. Within this framework, peer feedback functions as a catalyst that activates students' analytical thinking and engages them in meaningful linguistic exchange.[1]

Empirical evidence supports the growing interest in this approach. Studies conducted across various ESL and EFL contexts suggest that students who participate in structured peer review sessions tend to outperform their counterparts in traditional settings. For instance, comparative classroom-based research indicates that learners exposed to peer feedback demonstrate improvement rates ranging from approximately 15% to 30% in key writing components such as organization, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary usage.[2] In addition, observational data reveal that students involved in peer assessment produce a higher number of revised drafts, often engaging in two to three additional revision cycles compared to those relying exclusively on teacher feedback. This increase in revision frequency reflects a deeper level of cognitive engagement with the text, as learners are compelled to reconsider both form and meaning.[3]

Beyond measurable outcomes, the significance of peer feedback lies in its capacity to transform the learner's role from passive recipient to active evaluator. When students are required to assess the work of their peers, they inevitably develop a more nuanced understanding of writing criteria, which in turn influences their own compositions. This dual perspective—writer and reviewer—encourages metacognitive awareness, allowing learners to identify recurring weaknesses and experiment with alternative strategies. Moreover, the dialogic nature of peer interaction creates a less hierarchical environment, where feedback is perceived as part of a collaborative effort rather than authoritative judgment.[4]

Despite these advantages, the effectiveness of peer feedback is not automatic and depends on factors such as training, task design, and the level of linguistic competence among participants. Unstructured or poorly guided peer review may lead to superficial comments or the reinforcement of errors. Therefore, a systematic examination of how peer feedback contributes to writing skill development remains essential. This study seeks to address this need by analyzing both the qualitative and quantitative impact of peer feedback on learners' writing performance, with particular attention to measurable progress and cognitive engagement in the revision process.[5]

### **Literature Review**

The role of peer feedback in developing writing skills has been widely examined in international research, particularly within ESL and EFL contexts. Early theoretical foundations can be traced to the social constructivist perspective proposed by Lev Vygotsky, who emphasized that learning occurs through interaction and collaboration. Building on this framework, peer feedback has been conceptualized as a form of scaffolded learning in which students co-construct knowledge through evaluative dialogue.[6]

Empirical studies conducted by Dana Ferris highlight that feedback provided by peers can be as effective as teacher feedback when students are properly trained. Ferris argues that peer review encourages learners to engage more actively with language structures and rhetorical organization, resulting in noticeable improvements in accuracy and coherence. Similarly, Ken Hyland and Fiona Hyland emphasize that peer interaction promotes a sense of audience awareness, which is often lacking in teacher-dominated writing classrooms. Their research demonstrates that students who receive feedback from multiple peers tend to produce more reader-oriented texts.[7]

Further experimental studies provide statistical support for these claims. For instance, research by Min Liu and Jonathan Sadler shows that students engaged in structured peer review improved their writing scores by approximately 20% compared to control groups relying solely on instructor feedback. Another large-scale study conducted by Xiaoming Yang reports that peer feedback significantly enhances revision quality, particularly in global aspects such as content development and organization rather than surface-level grammar corrections.[8]

Despite these positive findings, some scholars caution against uncritical implementation. John Bitchener notes that without clear guidelines, peer feedback may lack depth and reliability, especially among lower-proficiency learners. This suggests that the effectiveness of peer review depends heavily on instructional design, including training sessions, rubrics, and guided evaluation criteria. The literature indicates that while peer feedback is not a substitute for teacher input, it serves as a powerful complementary tool that enhances both linguistic competence and critical thinking.[9]

## **2. Methodology**

This study adopts a mixed-method research design to examine the impact of peer feedback on writing skill development. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches allows for a more comprehensive analysis of both measurable improvement and learner perceptions.

The participants consisted of 60 undergraduate students enrolled in an English language program.

They were divided into two groups: an experimental group (30 students) that engaged in structured peer feedback activities and a control group (30 students) that received traditional teacher-centered feedback. The study was conducted over an eight-week period, during which both groups completed a series of writing tasks, including argumentative and descriptive essays.[10]

Data collection was carried out using multiple instruments. First, pre-test and post-test writing assessments were administered to measure improvement in key areas such as grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and task achievement. The essays were evaluated using a standardized rubric adapted from international writing assessment criteria. Second, peer feedback sessions in the experimental group were guided by structured checklists to ensure consistency and depth of evaluation. Third, qualitative data were gathered through student reflection journals and semi-structured interviews to explore attitudes toward peer feedback.[11]

Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical methods, including paired sample t-tests to compare pre- and post-test results within groups, and independent sample t-tests to examine differences between the experimental and control groups. The findings were expressed in percentage improvements and mean score differences. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically, focusing on recurring patterns related to learner autonomy, critical thinking, and engagement in the writing process.

To ensure validity and reliability, the study employed triangulation by integrating multiple data sources. Additionally, inter-rater reliability was established by involving two independent evaluators in the scoring process. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly maintained throughout the research.[12]

### **3. Results and Discussion**

The findings of the study reveal a statistically significant positive impact of peer feedback on the development of writing skills among participants in the experimental group. A comparative analysis of pre-test and post-test scores indicates that students engaged in structured peer review demonstrated consistent improvement across all assessed criteria, including grammatical accuracy, lexical diversity, coherence, and task achievement.

At the initial stage, both the experimental and control groups showed relatively similar performance levels, with mean writing scores of 56.4 and 55.8 out of 100 respectively. However, by the end of the eight-week intervention, the experimental group's average score increased to 72.6, reflecting an overall improvement of approximately 28.7%. In contrast, the control group, which relied solely on teacher feedback, reached a mean score of 63.1, representing a comparatively modest increase of 13.1%. Statistical testing using an independent samples t-test confirmed that the difference between the two groups was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that peer feedback contributed meaningfully to writing development.[13]

A more detailed breakdown of the results highlights that the most substantial progress in the experimental group occurred in coherence and organization, where average scores increased by 32%. This improvement can be linked to the dialogic nature of peer review, which exposes learners to multiple perspectives and encourages them to reconsider the logical flow of their ideas. Lexical diversity also showed notable growth (approximately 25%), as students were frequently exposed to alternative expressions and vocabulary choices during feedback exchanges. Gains in grammatical accuracy, while slightly lower (around 18%), remained statistically meaningful and indicate that peer correction can support form-focused development when guided appropriately.

Another important outcome relates to revision behavior. Students in the experimental group produced an average of 2.8 drafts per assignment, compared to 1.6 drafts in the control group. This increased engagement in the revision process suggests that peer feedback not only improves the final

product but also deepens students' involvement in writing as an iterative activity. These findings align with previous research indicating that multiple revision cycles are strongly associated with higher-quality writing outcomes.[14]

Qualitative data further reinforce the quantitative results. Analysis of student reflections reveals that approximately 76% of participants in the experimental group perceived peer feedback as helpful in identifying weaknesses that they had previously overlooked. Additionally, 69% reported increased confidence in their ability to evaluate writing, both their own and that of others. These perceptions are consistent with earlier studies emphasizing the role of peer interaction in fostering metacognitive awareness and learner autonomy.

The results demonstrate that peer feedback serves as an effective mechanism for enhancing writing performance, particularly when implemented in a structured and guided manner. The combination of measurable score improvements and positive learner perceptions provides strong evidence for its inclusion as a core component of writing instruction.[15]

#### **4. Conclusion**

The present study set out to examine the extent to which peer feedback contributes to the development of writing skills in an academic context. The findings provide clear evidence that structured peer review is not merely a supplementary classroom activity but a pedagogically effective approach that produces measurable and meaningful outcomes. The statistical data demonstrate that students exposed to peer feedback achieved nearly double the improvement rate compared to those relying solely on traditional teacher-centered methods, with overall score gains approaching 30%. Such a difference cannot be attributed to chance alone, but rather reflects a shift in how learners engage with the writing process.

One of the most significant insights emerging from the analysis is that peer feedback enhances not only the final written product but also the process through which that product is developed. The increase in revision frequency, coupled with improvements in coherence and lexical range, indicates that learners begin to treat writing as a dynamic and reflective activity. This transformation is particularly important in second language learning, where progress depends on sustained interaction with language rather than passive correction. In this sense, peer feedback operates as a mechanism that activates deeper cognitive processing and encourages learners to internalize evaluation criteria.

At the same time, the results suggest that the effectiveness of peer feedback is closely tied to its implementation. Unguided or superficial peer review is unlikely to yield comparable benefits. The success observed in this study is largely due to the use of structured guidelines, clear assessment criteria, and consistent practice. Therefore, integrating peer feedback into writing instruction requires deliberate planning rather than spontaneous application.

In broader terms, the study underscores the value of collaborative learning environments in fostering both linguistic competence and critical thinking. When learners assume dual roles as writers and evaluators, they develop a more analytical perspective toward language use, which ultimately strengthens their autonomy. Given these outcomes, it can be argued that peer feedback should be recognized as an essential component of modern writing pedagogy rather than an optional technique.

In conclusion, the integration of peer feedback into writing instruction offers a balanced model that combines interaction, reflection, and measurable progress. Its impact extends beyond immediate score improvement, contributing to the formation of independent and critically aware language users.

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